

*Internationally recognized spiritual leader and proponent of peace*

## Laurence Freeman Honoured with Order of Canada



*Fr. Laurence Freeman OSB receives the Order of Canada  
from the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada*

On May 25, in a ceremony at the Governor General’s residence, Ottawa, the Right Honourable David Johnston bestowed upon Dom Laurence Freeman, and 44 others, one of this country’s highest honours, the Order of Canada.

Fr Laurence’s investiture as an Officer in the Order recognizes a lifetime of outstanding service to Canada, and to humanity. Members exemplify the Order’s motto, taken from the letter to the Hebrews, 11:16: *Desiderantes meliorem patriam* – “They desire a better country.”

The Order of Canada’s citation states: “Laurence Freeman is an internationally recognized spiritual leader and proponent of peace and interfaith dialogue and understanding. Founder and director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, he regularly circles the globe to introduce meditation as a means of inner transformation and connection between peoples and religions.

“He works at all levels of society, engaging world leaders as well as the poor, and the organization has expanded to more than 100 countries. A committed advocate of non-violence, he co-founded the Way of Peace gatherings, which bring together Buddhists and Christians, as well as those who have been on the violent ends of religious divides. In addition he is a respected speaker, author and theologian.”

More than 100 meditators from the Ottawa area and beyond celebrated with a party for Fr. Laurence, the evening before, at St Bart’s Anglican Church, across the street from Rideau Hall.

The party, organized by the Ottawa Christian Meditation coordinating committee, was addressed by Dr. Balfour Mount, known as the “father of the palliative care movement” in Canada. Dr. Mount stressed the remarkable energy and love demonstrated by Laurence Freeman in sharing

*Continued on page C2*

### IN THIS ISSUE

From the National Coordinator.....	C3
International School .....	C4
Freeman tour schedule and Calendar of Events.....	C5

Mindfulness Meditation & Psychological Well-Being.....	C6
The Fire & The Rose / Order Form .....	C7
Annual Oblate Retreat.....	C8

## Laurence Freeman honoured with OC *continued from front*

the teaching of John Main in his travels around the world, and his work in the area of inter-religious dialogue and outreach to the secular world. Fr Laurence responded with heartfelt thanks.

Born in England in 1951, Laurence Freeman was educated by the Benedictines and took a masters degree in English at New College, Oxford. He then worked at the United Nations, and in banking and journalism, before joining Ealing Abbey in London in 1975 as a Benedictine novice.

In 1977, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Montreal, he joined fellow Benedictine John Main in establishing a community of monks and lay people in Montreal dedicated to the contemplative prayer practice of Christian meditation. In Montreal he studied theology at the University of Montreal and McGill University, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1980.

After John Main's death in 1982, Laurence succeeded him as Prior of the Montreal community, and continued the work of teaching meditation. In 1992 he returned to England to establish the International Centre of the newly formed World Community for Christian Meditation, grown now to more than 2000 groups in 114 countries.

Laurence is a founder and director of the John Main Center for Meditation and Inter-Religious Dialogue at Georgetown University in Washington D.C., editor of John Main's teaching, and a member of Medio-Media, the publishing arm of the World Community for Christian Meditation. His published books include: *Light Within*, *Selfless Self*, *Web of Silence*, *Common Ground*, *Short Span of Days*, *Your Daily Practice*, *The Pearl of Great Price*, *Jesus The Teacher Within*, and most recently *First Sight: The Experience of Faith*.

He has conducted dialogue and peace initiatives, such as the three-year Way of Peace program with the Dalai Lama, and is involved in inter-religious dialogue with other faiths.



L-R: Paul T. Harris, Fr Laurence Freeman OC, Polly & Mark Schofield, Clement Sauvé.

He is active in encouraging the teaching of Christian Meditation to children, students and young people, and in renewing the contemplative tradition in the Church and society at large. Each Easter on Bere Island, off the west coast of Ireland, he conducts a meditation retreat for young people.

Since 1990, Laurence has been a patron of the Prison Phoenix Trust, which seeks to support people in

prison through the daily practice of meditation. He also promotes meditation as a way of fulfilling the 11th step of AA's 12-Step program.

His current emphasis is on secular outreach through the World Community Meditation Program, a series of meditation seminars covering meditation and children, meditation and mental health, meditation and recovery, meditation and inter-religious dialogue, and the spiritual aspect of business and finance. Additional emphasis is on the networking of young meditators around the world, and developing web-based technology to spread a contemplative message.

In accepting the Order of Canada, Laurence agrees with Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche movement, who said of his own Order of Canada: "It was not just awarded to me, but is a sign of the value of people with disabilities, who for too long have been pushed aside or hidden away in institutions or their families."

For Laurence, too, this is not so much a personal honour but a recognition of the worldwide hunger for a spiritual renewal in contemplative prayer, the need for meditation practice in the current world of chaos, noise and violence, and the recognition that each person is created for a unique destiny and a unique fulfillment in God. All of these are core goals of the World Community for Christian Meditation. The honour, he observed, reflects powerfully on Canada's breadth of vision and wisdom in recognizing the spiritual dimension of the global issues of our time.

– Paul Harris

See page C5 for details on Laurence Freeman's cross-country tour in October 2012

# From the National Coordinator

## Adventure, Challenge, Goodness and Gratitude

My past year as National Coordinator has provided many adventures and challenges. It has made me more aware of the great goodness in people as they live their day-to-day lives. It anchors a sense of gratitude for being a tiny part of God's dance of creation, and for being connected to a community that generates and reflects the source of all love. These are the same experiences we all share in our spiritual journey and in daily meditation.

**Adventure:** Adventures are not about comfort, familiarity or the destination, but about being awake on the journey. Some people have to make elaborate plans and spend a great deal of money to boost themselves out of a sense of the humdrum. A meditator learns that as we open ourselves into the silence of prayer, it is the Spirit who has the best plans for us. For some it's a radical and immediate imperative. For most of us, it is a mysterious plan that is gradually revealed through interior and exterior changes in our lives. But regardless of the rate of revelation, a spiritual adventure will guarantee unexpected, improbable, energizing and challenging new experiences. It bumps us out of complacency and forces us to look with new eyes and a new heart.

**Challenge:** Most of my challenges involve getting over myself, accepting unknowing. Sometimes the experience is joyful; other times it is a painful struggle when I'm afraid to

let go, to learn and grow. There is a fear of failure. All of this is characteristic of challenge. Challenge describes a process we are all familiar with through our twice-daily meditation. When we're fully engaged in process we let go of goals and abide in the present moment. The Spirit owns the outcome; I can only offer a faithful effort.

**Goodness:** God is total goodness. A fruit of meditation is to see Christ in others. Sometimes there is a transcendent

moment when I realize a communication has gone to a different level, that the "I" and the "other" are joined in love. A conversation has become a prayer, and I sense the life-affirming divine love radiating from the "other." It is a moment of unity, and a continuation of our meditation in daily life. The outer and inner reality integrates.

**Gratitude:** I'm learning that gratitude is a foundational attitude, beginning with the gift of the first breath of life. I sincerely thank all who

have so patiently taught and helped me to coordinate our community this past year. Thank you to all of our volunteers who lead retreats, organize events, look after administrative and ongoing services, nurture weekly groups, and support our community in so many quiet ways. Your goodness is divine.

Have an enjoyable summer.

– Colleen Donald  
National Coordinator



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### Canadian Christian Meditation Community National Resource Centre

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What could be better than to spend the last week of May in Connecticut? Spending it in silence with 36 other meditators, that's what – including 8 from across Canada (Vancouver to Moncton) – at the International School Retreat, held May 26 to June 2 at the Holy Family Passionist Monastery and Retreat Center in West Hartford. The retreat was led by Fr Laurence Freeman, assisted by Gene Bebeau, National Coordinator for the U.S., and Liz Watson, National Coordinator for the U.K.

With seven meditation periods and four contemplative walks each day, many wondered how we would manage it. But a beautiful rhythm developed, into which we all settled very quickly, with the contemplative walks preparing us for the meditation periods. A deep sense of community grew among us, though no one said a word to anyone.

Our first full day was Pentecost – a perfect day to begin a contemplative retreat! In his one talk each day, Fr. Laurence explored with us the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. His excellent insights gave us much to reflect upon, as we

made our individual journeys through the week. (The talks are available online at <http://www.wccm.org/content/international-school-retreat-2012-talks>.)

Each retreatant was assigned a spiritual director – either Fr. Laurence, Liz or Gene – with whom we had a daily 15-minute meeting. This gave us a very personal opportunity to explore the movement of the Spirit within us as the week progressed.

The grounds of the Retreat Center were perfect for taking a leisurely walk, looking at birds, making the Stations of the Cross, or simply sitting and enjoying the beauty of God's creation. The weather was hot and sunny but, thankfully, the path for the contemplative walks was shady and cool (especially if you skirted the edge of the trees).

Another high point was the labyrinth, set in the middle of the forest with its path outlined in slate blocks. In the centre was an amazing upright circle made of stones. This became an important focal point for me, and for others too, a symbol of God's endless love.

Fr Laurence suggested that we might like to write haiku as a way of reflecting on our experience. Many people did, and the results were displayed on a board in the dining hall. There was a wide range of poetic ability – some very simple, yet profound, some longer, some humorous. Yet all were signs of the Spirit at work within us.

At the closing eucharist, we each shared briefly through word and symbol one significant moment or theme from the week. It was clearly an exceptional time for every one of us. We all recognised how fortunate we were to have been given this gift of silence. We expressed our appreciation to the leaders, and particularly to Fr. Laurence, for making the time in his busy schedule to make this retreat happen.

– Phil Barnett



Left to right : Phil Barnett, Sheila Soulier, Dianne Leblanc, Magda Jass, Fred Jass, Shirley Desborough, Hans-Ulf Schellhase. (Missing: Frances Barnes had to leave early.)

# Laurence Freeman Cross-Canada Tour

## *The Further Shore: Stretching The Horizon of Hope*

The Canadian Christian Meditation Community (CCMC) is sponsoring a five-city cross-Canada tour by Dom Laurence Freeman from October 20 to 28. The overall theme of the tour is *The Further Shore – Stretching the Horizon of Hope*. Scheduled events will begin in Charlottetown PEI. The other cities in sequence are Montreal (one talk in English, and a second in French hosted by Méditation chrétienne du Québec), Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver.

### Contacts:

Magda Jass (Coordinator, Tour Committee)

**514-489-0998**

Joy Gordon (Committee Member/WCCM-Toronto)

**416-485-9718**

### Charlottetown, PEI

#### Saturday 20 October – Day Retreat

Jack Blanchard Family Centre (Holy Redeemer Parish), 7 Pond Street, 7:45 am-4:30 pm. Cost: TBA. Contact: Sr. Kathleen Bolger, 902-892-6585, kbolger@peimarthas.ca and Tom Garlan, 902-368-7594, tspirit@eastlink.ca

### Montréal, QC

#### dimanche le 21 octobre – Retrait crépuscule

Les Franciscains, 5750 boul. Rosemont (coin Lacordaire), 19h00-21h00. \$20. Contact: Michel Boyer, 514-525-4649, lagrottefranciscains@sympatico.ca

#### Monday 22 October

Conference & Meditation, Loyola Chapel of Concordia University, 7141 Sherbrooke St. W., 2:30 pm-4:30 pm and 7 pm-10 pm. \$45 pre-registered, \$50 at the door, students free. Contact: Magda Jass, 514-489-0998, magda.jass@gmail.com

### Toronto, ON

#### Tuesday 23 October – Twilight Retreat

Charbonnel Lounge, Brennan Hall, 81 St. Mary Street (at Bay St.), St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, 6 pm-9:15 pm. \$30 at the door (no advance registration). Contact: Joy Gordon, 416-485-9718, joyg@sympatico.ca

### Calgary, AB

#### Thursday 25 October – Twilight Retreat

FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219 – 19th Ave. SW, 7 pm-9 pm. \$25 pre-registration only. Contact: Mary Robertson, mrobertson@fcjcentre.ca

### Vancouver, BC

#### Friday 26 October – Evening Seminar

Christ Church Cathedral, 690 Burrard Street, 7 pm-9 pm. Cost: TBA.

#### Saturday 27 October – 10 am-4:30 pm

#### & Sunday 28 October – 10 am-1 pm

#### Non-residential Retreat

Star of the Sea Catholic School, 2250 – 150 St., Surrey BC. Cost: TBA. Contact: Kathy Coyne bcchristianmeditation@gmail.com

## Calendar of Events

For regular updates go to [www.meditatio.ca/News/updates.html](http://www.meditatio.ca/News/updates.html)

### Kingston

**10-12 November 2012:** Fully Alive – Retreat to be held at the Providence Centre, 1200 Princess Street. Led by Lucie Legault (Casey will be on sabbatical). For registration or information, contact Lucie Legault: 819.827.1278, legault.smeltzer@videotron.ca

### North Bay

**7, 8, 9 June 2013** – Biennial Canadian Christian Meditation National Conference at St. Joseph's retreat center and Nipissing University. Plant the seeds, deepen the roots, strengthen the community, reach out to others. Mark your calendar and watch for more news.

### Edmonton

*Coming up in 2013! Save the Date!*

**8-10 March 2013:** School of Meditation: The Essential Teaching. Cost: \$195 for accommodations & meals. Location: Star of the North Centre, St Albert. Contacts: Monique Eng: moniqueeng@hotmail.com – Mia Klein-Gebbinck: miklge@telus.net; 780-354-2108

### Toronto

**18-20 January 2013** – CCNC School 2013. Cost TBA. Sisters of St. John the Divine Convent, 233 Cummer Avenue. Info: Marilyn Metcalfe, 905-831-2945, MEDIT8RMM@aol.com

Want to list an event? You will find a user-friendly form to submit additions at [www.meditatio.ca/Forms/events.html](http://www.meditatio.ca/Forms/events.html).

# MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

## *Psychological & Well-being*



Dr. Lucinda Sykes is a physician who quickly discovered that many patients came to her family medical practice with overbearing psychological problems that required psychotherapy. In her desire to bring well-being to her patients, she began training with Jungian analysts, and later became involved in residential programs with Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn who teaches mindfulness meditation and its therapeutic applications. In 1997, she founded Meditation for Health, a community-based medical clinic in Toronto.

On April 26, Dr. Sykes shared her personal and professional journey with members of the Toronto Christian meditation community, with emphasis on our common practice of daily meditation and explanations of the similarities and differences between mindfulness meditation and Christian meditation. As her own experience attests, one form does not necessarily exclude the other.

Meditation practices vary. Some are religious, some secular. Mindfulness meditation involves paying attention purposefully in the present moment, simply receiving the fullness of our experience, without judging any of it. This version of meditation was introduced into the medical field 30 years ago by Dr. Kabat-Zinn, founding director of the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the

University of Massachusetts Medical School. His investigation showed positive changes and outcomes for patients in pain clinics and anxiety treatment programs.

Dr. Kabat-Zinn's research brought medical research, neuroscience and cognitive psychology into meditation – fields that could generate overlapping, objective research into the positive effects of meditation.

Dr. Sykes shared her professional journey of bringing well-being to her patients, identifying a pivotal experience – a 1993 Bill Moyers interview with Dr. Kabat-Zinn on “Healing and the Mind” – as the trigger for her decision to adopt the use of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) in her medical practice.

Mindfulness, as a therapeutic tool, can help us to recognize (without identifying with) parts of ourselves that we are not proud of, which are sources of anxiety or depression, or which are generally not conducive to our mental and physical health and well-being. This stance of awareness of experience without judgement is not attained easily, but provides a goal that can bring gains in wellness to her patients.

– Joseph Clarkson



We shall not cease from exploration  
 And the end of all our exploring  
 Will be to arrive where we started  
 And know the place for the first time.  
 Through the unknown, unremembered gate  
 When the last of earth left to discover  
 Is that which was the beginning;  
 At the source of the longest river  
 The voice of the hidden waterfall  
 And the children in the apple-tree  
 Not known, because not looked for  
 But heard, half-heard, in the stillness  
 Between two waves of the sea.  
 Quick now, here, now, always—  
 A condition of complete simplicity  
 (Costing not less than everything)  
 And all shall be well and  
 All manner of thing shall be well  
 When the tongues of flame are in-folded  
 Into the crowned knot of fire  
 And the fire and the rose are one.

For information on new titles please see page 12 in the international section.

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# Annual Oblate Silent Retreat 2012

On May 18, 18 oblates and meditators from Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia met in silent retreat at the Cistercian Abbey in Rougemont Quebec. The annual event was organized by Magda Jass and led by Polly Schofield, National WCCM Oblate Coordinator for Canada.

The rural beauty of the Abbaye Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth, nestled in the apple country of southern Quebec, provided that sense of profound peace so necessary for a silent retreat. The Gregorian chant of the monks during Divine Office became a high point in our daily routine. We were blessed with excellent accommodations, fine weather and good food which included apple cider made by the monks from their own orchard.

Our weekend provided the opportunity to meditate in community, always a rich experience, and to receive John Main's teachings from our retreat leader, Polly Schofield, archivist for the John Main Collection and a personal friend of Fr John's. Her love, warmth and respect for Fr John could be felt throughout the retreat, bringing the teachings to life. Polly encouraged us by saying, "Fr John was anchored in reality, in supreme goodness. The passion of his inner experience, with all its urgency, was communicated in his writings." She reminded us that his great gift to us is the universal teaching of Christian meditation, which he passed on with the authority of his personal experience, in the conviction that meditation is the way into that universal communion – love.

Polly shared with us the news of a recent discovery of a work by John Main that is a guideline for his community of the future, based on the Rule of St. Benedict. It is a Rule

intended for oblates like us – an exciting and meaningful find.

In her preamble, Polly said, "The Rule is steeped in tradition, infused with the joy of life, common sense and practicality that was the hallmark of Fr John. Sensitivity and kindness shine from each page of his Rule."

In his own introduction, Fr John reminds us that the centre of a Christian community of prayer is the Lord – to whom we turn and listen, and serve. The Lord resides in the heart of each of us and in the community as a whole, and we are therefore in union with the Lord. This union, he tells us, in our hearts and in our communion, gives purpose to a Christian community of prayer.

"We can therefore say this of such a Christian community," writes Fr John, "That it is a group of ordinary Christians making the pilgrimage of prayer the basis of our life. That it gives each one the opportunity to learn how to listen in three ways – by its teaching on prayer, specifically by communicating the full richness of the Christian tradition of meditation; by its daily practice of meditation; and by a community life that prepares for the experience of the Other in prayer, and creating an opportunity for the Other-centeredness in daily life together."

We all look forward with anticipation to the publication of the Rule, hopefully in the near future. Polly's generosity in bringing the newly discovered work to our attention, and sharing aspects of the Rule in its original form, was an amazing and inspiring experience for us all.

– Shirley Desborough

## Discovery of John Main Rule Announced

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Publications Mail Agreement No. 40007931