



Three years of the London Meditatio Centre

Since 2013 the Meditatio Centre has hosted retreats, workshops, talks, art exhibitions, bodywork, music for meditators from the UK and overseas (p. 6-7)



One of the regular webcasts transmitted from the London Meditatio Centre connecting the World Community

You have a message: "Let's meditate"



Photo by: Mike Lau_ via Visualhunt / CC BY-NC-SA

Meditators in China and Singapore are using mobile messaging apps to coordinate virtual meditation groups and distribute readings. Can technology raise the spiritual awareness of a distracted world? (p.8)

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A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

The Great Peace
Dearest Friends,

It was a lovely spring afternoon in London, warm with just the edge of winter left. I had not seen Calum, my young godson, for some time and took him out for lunch and a walk by the river. He brought with him the camera that his sister had passed down to him. He had become absorbed in its video function. So he was filming everything that we passed by on the street and, when we got down to the river Thames sparkling in the sunshine, he went wild with excitement. Swinging the camera in experimental manoeuvres he chased after a flock of ducks and back again to capture an endless supply of new scenes. There was nothing not interesting enough to film in the beautiful light of the day. Everything shone with the wonder of the world's ever-surprising diversity. Life flooded through him with abundance and excitement. He was radiant and free-spirited with all the colours of life. And it was vitalizing to be playing the life-game with him.

And it was Easter. As it always is Easter. The important theology of Easter is that once it happens it never stops happening. To symbolize that liturgically the church extends the day of Easter Sunday for eight days and the season to forty. 'Ordinary time' which follows Pentecost can never be ordinary again. On the other hand what is extraordinary is that it does remain ordinary. We do not become astral beings. We go back to this life to live it in a new way, discovering its newness afresh continually. We remain delightfully embodied and thrillingly mortal. Death, the great threat to human happiness, takes on a wholly

different meaning in the new experience of life we call Resurrection.

The danger is, that in speaking of these mysteries of faith that revolve at the heart of Christian life we sound to others a bit out of touch with reality. And sometimes Christians can, in fact, sound like promoters of a wonderful holiday resort that they haven't quite yet visited for themselves. In fact, if we have been touched by Resurrection, we *are* in touch with reality, 'the solid reality', as St John puts it, that 'is Christ'.

I was recently speaking with a class of MBA students who had started to learn to meditate. Many of them said

*(...) the conversation is
living with and keeping
company with God*

they wanted to meditate because it offered them a way of dealing with stress. The depth meaning of meditation, of life itself, had been fore-shortened by this great and now universal blockage to real life. I was struck by the depth of this problem, the prevalence of the social malaise we call stress – the anxiety and damage to health it causes, the enemy of all the joys of life, breeder of fear and anger.

Of course life is stressful. It has a visible shelf life that changes daily. Anything that is unpredictable, like life, has to deal at best with probabilities. Anything that shows us that nothing is certain until uncertainty has been fully accepted will ever be easy.

The problem is not stress itself, then, but whether we understand the stressful aspects of life from within the great peace. Or, whether we experience only stress and find that

stress feeds and grows off itself. Then we are deceived – usually by mammon – into thinking that the more stressed we are the closer we are coming to the great idol of Success.

A century ago the most civilized nations of the world were in the middle of 'The Great War' to end all wars that resulted in thirty-eight million military and civilian casualties. Taking a short breather to re-militarise, the ensuing peace of Versailles that was typical of 'peace as the world gives it', led to a new world war that cost up to eighty million lives amounting to three percent of the human family at that time.

Whether it's the death-lust of war or the tragedy of unhappy lives blighted by the diseases of affluence, why is it we find the gift of life so hard to accept? Why does the great peace seem so elusive? Out of the new life that filled the risen Jesus with the playful love of the Holy Spirit he has breathed his peace into us. His physical respiration ceased on the cross. He breathed his last and gave up his spirit. But this plunged him irrevocably into the inner breath of God, the life-cycle that over-rides the cycles of death and rebirth. He entered the source and return-point of all that exists. From this inner breath of the eternal Easter he breathes the great peace into the human heart at the point where we are one with each other in a common humanity.

On Bere Island this year the meditators on the Holy Week retreat took time again to listen to the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The time it took was again richly repaid with a clearer understanding of time and the gift-nature of life which Easter is all about. It comes to us as a story. It is above all a story. Christian

scriptures are not a string of abstract truths plucked from real life. They are a certain, amazingly intimate way of telling a story which plays out in the lives of all those listening – both in their inner lives and their outer lives. Once we have opened our heart to this story, we feel an integration and harmonizing of the inner and the outer – a new simplicity. We see in a new way the unfolding of our own lives.

*

We are in conversation with God. In daily use 'conversation' means a chat, an exchange of ideas through words or other symbols of meaning. But this is a more modern definition, coming into use as culture began to shift away from its spiritual balance towards an excessively rational and outer-directed perspective. From about the 16th century it came to mean only 'talk'. 'Conversation', however, means literally a turning towards something with another. In other words, keeping company with, living with, playing the game of life with...

The New Testament is not a sutra. Later there did come Christian sutras, great intellectual reflections and cathedrals of the mind, which help to interpret the conversation, the telling of the story which is the heart-mind of the gospel. The gospels are simpler than abstract truths. They are strikingly direct, intimate tellings of a story that is both cosmic and personal.

We don't read the gospels only at Easter. Throughout the year the 'lectio' of these texts should be part of our daily prayer-practice. But we always read them in the light of the Easter truth. Christian identity and the Christ-centeredness of our meditation depend in part on the place of this way of prayer in our spiritual

lives. Meditation brings us many benefits and fruits. One of the greatest of these is that meditation teaches how to read the gospels in a way that draws our whole being into the person of Jesus, not only as an historical figure but as a personal and actual presence.

For I in you and you in me together we are one undivided person. *(From an ancient homily for Holy Saturday)*

Christian thought is like a conversation that continually integrates all the reflections and contributions that have been made from ancient times until today. It is always fresh and yet its richness is always growing. We are part

the church's course. They wake us from the sleep inflicted on the hard of heart and the self-righteous. They restore us - as the same ancient homily I just quoted puts it- to the new life that fills us with the great peace, when we allow it to:

I command you: Awake, sleeper, I have not made you to be held a prisoner in the underworld. Arise from the dead; I am the life of the dead. Arise, O man, work of my hands, arise, you who were fashioned in my image. Rise, let us go hence; for you in me and I in you, together we are one undivided person.

As long as we listen to the story



of it and as it changes, it changes us.

Many of us will have felt this as we read of Pope Francis' deep and simple insights into the mystery of Christ. 'Mercy' is his signature phrase, especially to some church leaders who were felt to be becoming increasingly, judgmental and punitive. With wise gentleness Francis is delivering one of the periodic prophetic body blows to the institutional frame of the church that we all need to reset

from the outside, only as observers and sceptics, we will think that the new life it speaks about is a return to the Garden of Eden. But who really wants to go back to Eden? The garden from which the Resurrection reaches into humanity and changes us is not a lost paradise but the kingdom of God. This is a special kind of place - neither here nor there, in us or among us but one that is an experience that simply and *mercifully* is.

So, the conversation is not talking to or thinking about but living with and keeping company with God. And so, it is at its fullest in deep silence. In silence we are not trying to look at the risen Jesus, because then, as outsiders, we will always fail to recognise him. But when we are seeing him in the same glance of love as that with which he sees us, then we recognise him as we are brought to full self-knowledge.

Resurrection shows us the way we need (and want) to follow into the conversation with silence itself. ('Nothing is so much like God as silence', the mystics tell us). To start this conversation is to activate the seed of contemplation planted at birth, our original act of existence. Every follower of Jesus is therefore called to be a contemplative, just as every spouse is called to tread into deeper union. The levels of silence – of tongue, body, mind and heart – are the great milestones of life and - for the meditator – this is one with the journey of our daily practice. As these levels become deeper we become simpler and more childlike. One day we even learn how to play the game of life, once again with unlimited joy.

For the contemplative Christian prayer is not, essentially, speaking to God, or thinking about God. It is about entering into a silent conversation with God through the mind of Christ. It is not about opposing our will to God's or negotiating a settlement over our differences of opinion about what is good for us. It is about an active, whole-hearted surrender to the will of God who knows our needs with an intimate and unique love because he is part of our humanity, sharing with all our woundedness and complexity.

As Christians of our time this kind of language may speak best to those

who have already started the conversation with silence. But for many others it can still suggest an image of a 'personal God' which is suspect and even offensive. It is true that this image of God can be abused. Personal, in human terms, can also mean jealous, possessive and controlling. It is an image that religious people in the three sister religions of the Word, all born in the same troubled and violent part of the world, sometimes claim to be their own exclusively. Twisted out of its true meaning in the silence of the great peace, the idea of a personal God can infantilise us, become a source of oppression in the power structures of wealth and politics and even a justification for the massacre of innocents.

Yet it is still the greatest of gifts – provided we know how to share it.

A Taoist ruler once said you should rule an empire the same way you cook a little fish. (In one of the great Resurrection appearances by the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus does just this). In an

*One day we even learn
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other Taoist wisdom story the crew of a big boat saw a small craft sailing directly into its path. They leant over the side and shouted insults to those in the boat approaching them. Then they realised the small boat was empty and fell silent.

Empty and silent like the tomb of Jesus on the Sunday morning, the new sabbath. The empty tomb is recorded in each of the gospel perspectives on the Resurrection. Finding it empty disturbed and mystified the disciples, and Mary wept. Yet emptiness is the correlative of full-

ness. They are opposites yet perform the same function in the grammar of meaning. The divine kenosis, or self-emptying, produced the incarnation of God in which the fullness of the godhead was able to dwell embodied. We cannot recognise the risen Jesus unless we have looked into and entered the empty tomb of our own heart. It may sound metaphysical theology but it is proven in our human psychology and in daily experience, including the daily practice of meditation, of poverty of spirit. As for the jeering sailors in the big boat (of reason) the discovery of emptiness in the small craft (the egoless self) leads us to silence.

The obvious question reputedly posed to the Buddha once – what do you get of meditation? – is best answered by 'nothing. But I lose a lot.'

Today we need to cultivate this quality of emptiness and silence if we are to survive the impossible contradictions on which we have built our world. These contradictions torment and threaten us – irresponsible affluence and the endless exploitation of the earth, nonstop communication and increasing loneliness, luxury and increasing anxiety. The perennial value of the wisdom of contemplation has been drowned out by a compulsion to put utilitarian or commercial values on everything whether a price-tag is relevant or not. Doing this distorts the value of everything. A young lawyer told me recently how the law firm where he worked was systematically squeezing all humanity out of the work by reducing every fifteen minutes of the day to a billable slot; he had to account even for his visits to the bathroom. At the end of such a process we will find not emptiness, which is the correlative of fullness, but nothingness and a vacuum of meaninglessness.

'Remembrance of God certainly brings comfort to all hearts', says the Qu'ran. The basis for the *dhikr* form of prayer in Islam is the interior repetition of short phrases or the Names of God. Its meaning is to remain in the mindful presence of God while performing the most ordinary actions of the day, like rising from bed or walking. In the same way, John Cassian urged the desert monks, and we their

primarily about thinking of the past. It is bringing the most meaningful essence of events that first happened in the past into the present and making them present now. The theological term for this is *anamnesis* ('do this in remembrance of me'). In medical vocabulary the word refers to a patient's complete and accurate recall of his condition. Spiritually it means recapitulating our past into the present.



Eileen Byrne

successors, to recite their formula, or mantra, while performing any kind of work or service, or on a journey, answering the calls of nature, while falling asleep and on waking up. So, rather than being an esoteric practice for a spiritual elite the prayer of the heart is intended for all as a very simple and ordinary way. It is an immediate, unmediated, way of experiencing that emptiness is the way to the fullness of God. In this incarnate spirituality of daily life, where a contemplative discipline becomes truly part of our life and connects the surface and depth levels of consciousness, we discover that learning and living are the same.

Remembering. Spiritually, this is not a nostalgic exercise. It is not even

There is no greater fear than the fear of forgetting. In dementia, the intimate spouse of the person suffering from this dying of the brain in the one they have loved for a lifetime, watches their loved one progressively fade from reality and withdraw. A very deep act of love is necessary to stay re-membered to someone who is apparently losing even their memory of you as they become dis-membered. Perfect love alone can cast out this fear.

To deal with the inevitable fading of memory – which begins as soon as memory begins to function – we need to understand the present as more than the time shown on a digital clock.

Easter means the experience of presence, the continuum of real pres-

ence in which we are mutually, reciprocally, present to one another and at the deepest level with God. As Jesus was present to the Father and the Father to him, he became present to us by drawing humanity into the most intimate presence of God to Himself which we try to describe as the Trinity. In this ever-present presence, past and future meet. The fear of forgetting, of death itself, fades. The experience of life in the boundless fullness which, as children, we were able to enjoy on occasion, returns in full force.

Before Easter this year we let go of Eileen Byrne, a beloved member and teacher in our UK and global community. I first met her when I was a member of the lay community at the first Christian Meditation centre in London. She was an important link with the foundation of the Montreal community and later became Director of the Centre in London. She was quintessentially English but also a citizen of the world and filled with insatiable artistic and cultural curiosity. When we were in Montreal she once drove me, still a monk in training, up to the country and a very active diocesan youth camp which I rather dreaded going to. As she drove away she shouted back to me in a loud voice: 'Laurence, remember you are a contemplative!' Eileen, I try...

May she rest in the great peace and may all whose paths she smoothed towards a contemplative knowledge of the risen Jesus thank God for the gift she has been to us all.

Happy Easter!

With much love

Laurence Freeman OSB

Special

Three years of The Meditatio Centre: a premier location in London to engage the spiritual life



Christianna Mitchell's exhibition opening, February 2016

"A space to connect with wholeness"

By Shirley Lancaster

A series of thirteen talks, *Roots of Christian Mysticism*, drew me to the Meditatio Centre in 2013. Whether learning about the psychological insights of Evagrius, or the simplicity of Brother Lawrence, these sessions enriched my faith. Similarly, participating in events at the Centre over the last two years has felt like attending a 'university of the soul'. Alongside others I've felt nourished and challenged by study days given by gifted spiritual teachers: Martin Laird, Bishop Kallistos Ware and Kabir Helminski. Small study groups exploring, in a con-

templative way, Thomas Merton and Zen, or the enigmatic poetry of Rilke, brought fresh insights. I've enjoyed the buzz of a packed room exhilarated by a mind-expanding talk by biologist Rupert Sheldrake.

In this exploration I also value the Meditatio Centre's beautiful space and warm welcome; the conversations struck up over tea; the Q&A session that grapples with how to heal a fractured world; the silence we share in meditation which anchors us in that deep dimension we call God, beyond all words. The attention given to yoga, bodywork, music and art also recognises our need for healing and wholeness in mind, body and spirit.

For me, Meditatio Centre is important in providing a space to connect with that wholeness at our centre.

"One feels a warmth and grace here"

By Prof. Mark Burrows, Ph.D.*



It is easy to sing the praises of the Meditatio Centre, one of the premier locations in London to engage matters related to the spiritual life. Lectures, single and in-series, workshops, gallery exhibits, retreat and meditation days: there is surely no other location in the city that compares for depth and range of programs, and few like it anywhere else on this earth. The staff are as bright and welcoming as the space of the centre; one feels a warmth and grace here that lift the heart and bring the mind to song. Perhaps even to dance.

* Past and future presenter — upcoming program on April 23, "Marginal Christianity: Three Witnesses to the God of the Edges".

The life of the Trinity is lived out at the centre of each human life. This is the basic dynamic of all reality. So, once we make contact with our own centre, we make contact with every centre. (John Main)

Special

“A welcoming, tranquil place”

By Christianna Marion Mitchell

I was introduced to the Meditatio Centre via a bar in Camden, a strange connection one might think, even stranger considering the bar is called Spiritualised, but, as it turned out, a very spiritual evening was had by all. A group of musicians who play at the bar regularly had come together and created a beautiful evening with poetry reading, interesting conversation and fantastic music at the Meditatio Centre. While listening to the music I noticed the art hanging on the wall. The artist whose creation these

works were, was the grandfather of Dan Greenwood, who had organised this musical evening. That event occurred back in September 2015. Being inquisitive, I got chatting to Kate Coombs and discovered, to my joy, that the centre exhibited a number of artists during the course of the year. Kate agreed to show my work which has been hanging at the centre during February 2016. We organised a private viewing, which was a great success. Annie Hannan Smith read some of her amazing, very moving

and thought provoking poetry, accompanied by her friend Jo on guitar.

The Meditatio Centre embraces many different activities and hosts a variety of events which tend to attract lovely people. It is a welcoming, tranquil place that sits quietly in a beautiful square in Islington.

ONLINE: To know more about the Meditatio Centre (the full programme and online booking) visit www.meditatiocentrelondon.org.

Belgium

A New Meditation Group in Brussels

By Frits Smulders



In October 2015, an English-speaking meditation group was formed in Brussels. While Brussels already had a French-speaking meditation community, as well as a Dutch-speaking meditation group in Grimbergen, close to Brussels, an Anglophone meditation group catering to the large international community living in Brussels was still lacking. — In line with the World Community’s inclusive approach to spirituality, the new group

is expressly ecumenical. It is open to believers of all Christian persuasions. We also welcome people from other religions and those with no religious background, trusting they will open themselves to the Gospel and to the way we live out our faith in contemplative prayer. Our aim is to reach out to the world and share the gift of meditation with as many people as possible.

Although the group is English-speaking, it is open to all nationalities and our target audience is wider than Brussels’ expatriate community. So far, the group has mainly attracted foreigners living and working here, although we are happy that a number of Belgian nationals have also joined us.

The group convenes and meditates at the Chapel of the Resurrection, an ecumenical place of worship that is con-

veniently located in the centre of Brussels (<http://www.resurrection.be>). The Chapel has a beautiful crypt, which is ideally suited for contemplative prayer in stillness and silence. We gather every Monday evening from 8 to 9 p.m., after which there is time to socialise and share refreshments. More details are available at <http://tiny.cc/brussels-group>.

Please contact Ingrida Sniedze at sniedzei@hotmail.com or Frits Smulders at frits.smulders@icloud.com if you live in the Brussels area and wish to join us. Occasional visitors are also invited to come and meditate with us. — All are welcome. Come as you are. Go as you will become, and return, trusting in the gentle transformative power of meditation that leads us on the journey towards becoming the person we are called to be.

News

Asia

Mobile technology helping people to meditate



meditators who travel for holidays or business. They find Virtual Meditation very helpful as they can participate even when their travels take them outside the Singapore time zone.

Online groups

This is another way to meditate using technology. Check the list of groups with days and times here:

<http://tiny.cc/ongroups>

Technology is a great help in spreading the teaching and practice of Christian Meditation. Below you can learn about two examples of using mobile apps to organize virtual groups and distribute readings and teachings:

China

WeChat is a mobile text and voice messaging communication service very popular in China, similar to Whatsapp. Augustine Xiao Xiao (an oblate who lived in Meditatio House in 2015) uses WeChat to distribute Fr. Laurence's Lent Reflections, reaching out to 13,000 people. He is also using the same tool and other apps (called QQ and YY) to lead online meditation twice a month.

Singapore

In Singapore, Albert Cheah participates in a meditation group at the Church Of Our Lady Of Perpetual Succour. But he has also created another way to help people to meditate:

About 4 years ago it occurred to me that we can do meditation as a group

apart from the weekly meeting in Church. So I set up a separate meditation for the group, but this time in their respective homes using the Whatsapp app. We do this virtual meditation every Monday at 10 pm.

The format is as follows:

Step 1

At 9.55 pm I send a message that reads:

"We will be meditating in 5 minutes."

When the group receive this message they... prepare themselves for meditation in their respective homes.

Step 2

At 10 pm sharp I send this message:

"We shall meditate now", and the Opening Prayer

Step 3

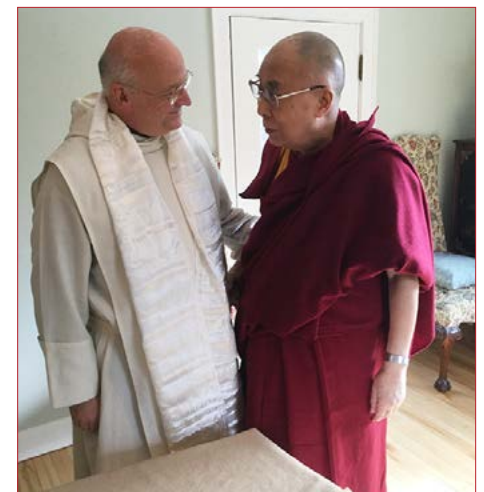
At 10:20 pm I send this message to close the meditation session:

"Amen, goodnight, God bless."

There is no need for any reply after Step 3. Those participating just end their meditation. I made it clear that the Virtual Meditation does not replace their weekly participation in the group or their personal twice daily meditations. I have had positive feedback from those

Interfaith friendship

Fr. Laurence visits the Dalai Lama and discusses the next Way of Peace



Fr Laurence recently went to visit the Dalai Lama who was well but has been receiving medical treatment in the United States. *The Way of Peace* scheduled for April at the Catholic University of America will be rescheduled in 2017.

ONLINE: Watch a video of their conversation here:

<http://tiny.cc/DLamaLF2016>

News

Mexico

Hundreds of children meditating in rural Mexico

By Enrique Lavin

Father Laurence's visit to Mexico started in the city of Guadalajara, on the weekend of 30 and 31 January with three talks to a full auditorium on *Love and the Gift of Failure* at the Ignatian Spirituality Centre. The talks ended with a contemplative mass. Monday we went to Mexico City to meet with the Schoenstatt Community, a group that has been meditating for some twenty years.

Tuesday started with a talk at the Teresian Institute. It was a pleasant surprise for Laurence because the children spoke English fluently. We meditated with two groups and then he gave a talk to their parents. Then a talk at the Universidad Iberoamericana on *Meditation and Leadership*. Later, he spoke at the Archdiocese

of Mexico City. Wednesday, we drove to Alfajayucan to meet with the children of several rural communities. At first, about 300 children dressed in their best clothes were waiting for us. And they were so happy! We meditated and Fr. Laurence told them how meditation makes you free and empowers you to build a more just world.

At the next community there were 150 children. We meditated with them and then he spoke of how finding Jesus in your heart leads you to become a better person. On Thursday he gave three talks at the main church to 150 people from Alfajayucan and the neighboring towns. On Friday, after a visit with the Bishop of Tula, we drove to Cuernavaca for



a three day retreat. The theme was *Healing the Heart through Silence, Stillness and Love*. Overall, this was a beautiful visit filled with many memorable moments and strengthening our national community to share the teaching of meditation with more people.

ONLINE: Watch a video on Meditation with Children in Mexico here: <http://tiny.cc/mexchild>

Italy

National Conference and welcome from Pope Francis at St. Peter's Square

By Silvia Fasciolo

The XV National Conference of the Italian Community was held in Rome in January (22-24). It gathered 120 people from all over Italy and, for the first time, from the South of Italy. "Meditation as a way to Mercy" was the theme chosen for the event in line with the Jubilee Year of Mercy: Laurence Freeman OSB invited us to reflect on Mercy as a call to awareness, a new way of looking at the world, while Maciej Bielawski offered very beautiful and new insights on "The Pilgrim's Tale."

The meeting was also the occasion for the renewal of the Italian Governing Council and of the National Coordinator. After seven years in this capacity, I passed my office on to Fiorenza Giuriani from Milan. I wish all the best to her and to the new members of the Council for a good beginning with deep gratitude for the work we shared that helped me to experience service as joy.

By participating in the Angelus prayer in Saint Pe-

ter's Square and with the unexpected greeting by Pope Francis to the Italian Community, I believe we all experienced the affection of communion with the whole World Community for Christian Meditation.

ONLINE: Watch a short video with Pope Francis greeting WCCM here: <http://tiny.cc/popeWCCM>

WCCM new addresses in London

Meditatio House: 10 Cloudesley Square, London N1
OHT, Tel No + 44 207 837 8567 /
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London EC1R 1XX Tel +44 (0) 020 7278 2070 /
welcome@wccm.org

News

Caribbean

Meditating with the children of Antigua

By Sr Ruth Montrichard



In 2012, our community first met with Bishop Ken Richards, Bishop of Antigua and Barbuda, whose diocese includes the English speaking Islands of St. Kitts and Nevis, Montserrat, Anguilla and British Virgin Islands — all small territories involving much inter-island travel.

From the time of our initial meeting, Bishop Richards was anxious to have Christian Meditation as part of the prayer life of the children of these islands. In February 2016 we had the privilege of sharing this “gift” with the children of Antigua, like the other Caribbean Islands, not a large population but a welcoming one. The Bishop gave his blessing to our visit and put us in touch with Fr. Frank Power who arranged our visits to two schools in St. John’s, the capital city. There was little explanation needed at our first meeting with him on February 8th. He is Irish, had met Fr. Laurence in Ireland, and knew about Fr. John Main and Christian Meditation — so we

were speaking to the converted!

Our first stop on the 9th was Christ the King High School, a Catholic Secondary Girls’ School. Fr. Frank met us here and introduced us to the Principal, Mrs. Pat Collins, and Family Life Teacher Noleen Azille, who accompanied us to the classes. Sessions were done with 50 girls from the Form Twos and Threes (13-16 years olds) and the results were as always: the girls easily slipped into the silence and at the end of the session, the feedback was much the same: “I felt peaceful and relaxed,” “It was good,” “I was close to God,” “I would like to do this at home.”

When we got back to the Principal’s office and she asked about the session, we suggested that she ask the teacher who was with us. The teacher said she was amazed at the positive response and in particular at one girl who had a lot of issues and was always in the Principal’s office — that child was the most attentive and the most involved. Her remark: “If this can

happen to that child, there must be something in it!”

On Thursday the 11th we spent the morning at the St. John’s RC Primary School, where we did sessions with 60 of the grades 4’s, 5’s and 6’s. We were warmly welcomed by the Principal, Mr. George Imhoff, and participated in the morning assembly. We went next to the Religion Room and met with the Religion Teacher, Mrs. Sylvia Christian, responsible for Religious Education in these classes.

She was happy to sit and meditate with the children, and promised to continue to use this prayer of the heart at the beginning of her classes with the children. We ended our visit by introducing meditation to our hosts in Antigua, and left feeling that even though the visit was short, we were able to share the “gift” of meditation especially with the children of Antigua. We are grateful to Bishop Ken Richards and Fr. Frank Power for making this possible.

Australia

Archbishop of Canberra becomes WCCM Patron

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Christopher Prowse, has become a patron of WCCM. Bishop Christopher is an enthusiastic advocate of Christian Meditation and especially encourages meditation with children. Fr. Laurence Freeman will be leading a retreat for priests in Canberra in November this year.

In Focus

Joseph Pang, from Hong Kong



“Lord, what is your will for me? Tell me please!” It was the year 2012. I had been fighting my personal crisis for four years already. I lost everything including my peace and myself. In my prayer, I kept praying to God to deliver me from my crisis. I had been praying for this intention for more than 4 years already, but still there was no sign of relief.

During those four years, whenever the hardship became so unbearable, I resorted to praying the rosary. In my prayer, I usually begged Mother Mary to petition for me so that I could be saved from my hardship sooner. Oddly enough, I also read many Catholic

spiritual books during the same period of time. Around April 2012, I often came across the term “Meditation” in my spiritual readings. I was intrigued and attempted to find out more about it through an internet search and asking help from the priests of my parish. However, my search returned nothing.

So I prayed to Mother Mary and asked her to help me out. This time, my prayer was quickly answered. At the end of May, WCCM held a 7 session workshop on Christian Meditation at St. Jude Church in Hong Kong. This was my first time learning about Christian Meditation. I didn’t recognize this was the turning point of my life.

After the workshop, I joined WCCM. I practiced meditation every day. At the beginning, I only meditated once per day for 30 minutes. After I felt more comfortable, I meditated twice a day. I felt much more peaceful after I practiced my meditation. I began to closely observe my surroundings without much thinking. I am more willing to accept criticism from others -I started to see all these criticisms or ‘comments’ as a way of learning about and improving myself. But still, it was just the beginning. God gave me more than I asked for.

Hold on a sec, what about your personal crisis you were facing? My answer is, without meditation, I would not be able to experience “living at the present moment.” As I went deeper, I realized that the will of God for me was to face the reality of my situation and hardship in the present moment and act accordingly. Yes, it was extremely painful to act amidst the hardship, but this was His will, not as I envisioned it for myself. I understood that those were things that could make me stronger and more mature. More importantly it drew me closer to God, His passion and suffering.

Two years later, in 2014, by the grace of God, my crisis was over. During these two years, when I felt overwhelmed by my situation, I quietly recited the mantra in my heart. Truly, the mantra walked along with me through my darkest valley of my life.

Here, I would like to thank Lina Lee, the WCCM coordinator of Hong Kong. She supported me along this journey. She also taught me so many things about meditation. I also want to thank all the support from the members of my online meditation group, especially Matthew, Lani, Cora and Mary. May God bless you all! Amen.



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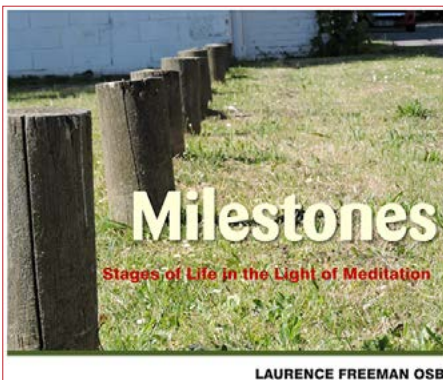
Editor: Leonardo Corrêa
(leonardo@wccm.org)

Graphic Design: Gerson Laureano
Would you like to contribute to the Meditatio Newsletter?
Our next deadline is June 10th.

Resources & Events

CDs

Milestones - Stages of Life in the Light of Meditation Laurence Freeman OSB



Childhood, adulthood, old age, and death are stages we pass through in unique personal ways. Meditation allows the self to develop naturally, moving us by stages beyond the ego.

New Websites

MEDITATIOCENTRELONDON.ORG

Gives you information on all events at the London Meditatio Centre.

MEDITATIO.CO.UK

Is the new website for Meditatio, the outreach of WCCM, that seeks to bring universal spiritual wisdom to the pressing issues of a secular world.

Meditatio Seminar

Hope for the Future: Meditation in Schools

29 June 2016
London, UK

This international event brings together experience of teaching meditation to children from many parts of the world. Teachers and spiritual leaders will illustrate the urgent importance of introducing meditation in schools. Practical resources will be offered to inspire teachers to develop



the spiritual dimension of education. For more information and booking online go here:

<http://tiny.cc/medchld2016>

John Main Seminar 2016

Where the Light Comes in...

Led by Jean Vanier

31 Aug - 4 Sep / Trosly, France

The 2016 John Main Seminar will be held at the international home of L'Arche in France. Jean Vanier will speak on the theme "Where the Light Comes in..." and co-lead the pre-seminar retreat with Laurence Freeman OSB. Because of the limited accommodation and the participants coming from both communities, numbers were very restricted and there is no more residential space. Most participants will join



online through the webcast. In this way you can watch all the talks live, send questions and comments and meditate online together.

The sessions will be available online after transmission. For more information about online participation at the JMS 2016 contact officemanager@wccm.org

To order: contact the resource center nearest to you. Our centres are listed below

VISIT THE CHRISTIAN MEDITATION PAGE AT AMAZON: <http://astore.amazon.com/w0575-20>



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OUR 2015 FRIENDS APPEAL

We are truly a World Community!



Fr Laurence and the Dalai Lama met this year in the USA: Friends for 40 years

It's the time of year again for our Friends Appeal.

This is when we ask you to contribute what you can to the global work of the WCCM – the World Community for Christian Meditation – in spreading our practice to new communities of Christians, often in less advantaged countries, and particularly among the least advantaged members of society.

As Fr Laurence has observed, “The WCCM needs many kinds of support – including financial support – to continue our contemplative mission, and pass on the gift of meditation around the world, especially to the most needy.

“Whatever kind of support you can give will have an ongoing influence, and help more hearts to be opened. The world needs hearts that are open, and minds that can pay selfless attention.”

The ways you can make a financial donation are detailed in the enclosed leaflet. Tax receipts will be issued for donations.

Thanks to a generous designer and printer, WCCM has created a photo book called *Light of the World* to share the vision and mission of the WCCM with donors, volunteers and anyone who wants to find out more about our community.

If you'd like to receive an electronic copy of *Light of the World*, please email friends.wccm@gmail.com and I'll happily send you a copy. Many people have said how helpful this book is when introducing others to Christian meditation – so you may also wish to pass it on!

**With love and gratitude,
Elaine Mills,
Friends Coordinator in Canada**

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A World Community of Love

Most of us have experienced the extraordinary difference between meditating by ourselves, and meditating in a group.

If we are meditating every day, then most of the time when we meditate, we will be alone. Alone with God, to be sure, where we experience the fruits of our meditation, the transformation of our lives, which keeps us on our spiritual path.

But meditating in a group feels different. We feel a greater depth, richness, fullness to our experience, when we meditate with two or three, or six or eight others.

It's hard to describe this difference, let alone explain it, but most of us have experienced it for ourselves. It's why we find so much spiritual refreshment in group retreats – such as the one in Vancouver, and the one in Winnipeg, reported on in this issue.

It is also the basis for what John Main called a “community of love” – of men, women and children – drawn together in silence and stillness, grounding ourselves on the solid rock of reality, and spreading outwards, individually and collectively, in an infinite expansion of spirit.

And this is the basis for the World Community for

Christian Meditation, and its ongoing efforts to invite people in every country to take up the practice, and experience the fruits, of Christian meditation.

The Friends Appeal is the focus of this issue of your newsletter. The money collected through this and similar appeals throughout the world is what helps the WCCM to continue and extend its mission.

The WCCM is made up of small groups like yours, multiplied many, many times, reaching out through silent prayer to touch the hearts of others.

It is a group of groups. And just as meditating in a group magnifies the spiritual richness of our experience, the WCCM works to magnify the effectiveness of our silent prayer.

The photos in this issue (taken from the WCCM group on Flickr) document this work of global magnification. The Friends Appeal is a way to connect, in a tangible way, these groups around the world with your own weekly meditation group, and to blend the silence and stillness of your own meditation, with theirs.

If you can contribute financially to the Friends Appeal, we hope you will. No gift is too small.

**Love & Peace,
Jeff Ewener**



Calendar of Events

Calgary

Monthly Christian Meditation “drop in” sessions at the FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219 – 19th Avenue SW, Calgary.

Thursdays, **September 1, October 6, November 3 and December 1, 2016:** 7 to 8 pm.

Introduction to Christian Meditation: Wednesday, **October 12, 2016,** 7 to 9 pm.

Silent Christian Meditation Retreat Day: Saturday, **December 3, 2016,** 9 am to 4 pm.

To register: phone: 403-228-4215, fax: 403-228-9459

Montreal

June 3–5, 2016: Silent retreat at Rougemont. Make cheques to: Meditation Retreats, send to Magda Jass: 4540 Wilson Ave, Montreal QC H4A 2V4. Include your name, email and phone number.

Toronto

June 3–5, 2016: *The Gospel of Mercy*, A refresher in basic Christianity, four meditative talks by priest, theologian & author James Alison. jamesalison.co.uk

St John's Convent, 223 Cumber Avenue, Toronto, 4 p.m. Friday to after-lunch Sunday. Contact: Nina Honoridez: nhonoridez@yahoo.ca

We can accommodate about 30 residential and 25 commuter participants.

Residential: \$295 single, or \$275 (each) double – 2 nights accommodation, 6 meals, health breaks, use of all facilities.

Commuter: \$240 – includes all of above except accommodation & breakfast.

Donations over and above fees can enable us to offer a few scholarship spaces. Donations of \$20 or more are eligible for a tax receipt.

FROM THE NATIONAL COORDINATOR

We all need Friends. It can't be done alone!

The saying that “we all need friends” applies as much to organizations as to individuals. Our Canadian community of Christian meditators can help share the gift and nurture the practice of meditation in communities around the globe. While it does not cost anything to meditate, it does cost money to create materials, to travel and to teach meditation in various parts of our world.

Your Canadian Friends program provides essential support to the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) in its global mission.

The WCCM is a community of faith, composed of people of different backgrounds and beliefs. Thousands of people in more than 100 countries are connected by their daily meditation. And the fastest growing segment of meditators are children. In over 25 countries, an estimated 100,000 children now practise meditation. One can only marvel at what this will do for Christian meditation in the future!

It costs nothing to meditate. But it costs money to create materials, travel and teach meditation around the world.

What does a Friend do? Friends support the global activities of the World Community for Christian Meditation. Friend's financial support helps in teaching and nurturing the practice in both emerging meditation communities and established communities, particularly the poor and marginalized in society.

Where does the money go? As an example, it enables Fr. Lawrence to continue to travel and teach Christian meditation in other parts of the world, countries such as Ukraine, Mexico, Hong Kong and Belgium.

Your money goes to publish teaching materials, to

translate materials into other languages, and train new instructors. Your money also helps support programs that assist churches, organizations, community groups, prisons, and those working with the marginalized in our own society.

Your financial support helps spread the practice in emerging and established meditation communities, particularly among the poor and marginalized.

How can I become a Friend? You can send in your individual contribution to the Friends program and mention the program to others in your meditation group.

No donation is too small! All donations are gratefully accepted. Your financial support is greatly needed, and much appreciated.

The Canadian meditation community is a community that is very active, vibrant and alive. For many of us, our meditation becomes the most important activity in our lives.

We know that when we meditate, we come to a special stillness at the centre of our being. This stillness is the source of all our action, our movement towards God through Christ who lives in us.

Awareness of what we have received compels us to want to share this gift with others wherever they may be in the world. The Friends program is a meaningful and tangible means to accomplish this important Christ-centred activity.

**Blessings to you,
Jack Murta
National Coordinator**

Canadian Christian Meditation Community National Resource Centre

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105 ch du Richelieu, bureau B, McMasterville, QC J3G
1T5, 450-446-4649. info@meditationchretienne.ca.

Page design: www.katemcdo.com

OUR WORLD



Uruguay: With Archbishop (now Cardinal) Daniel Fernando



Fr Laurence talks with Argentinian meditators



Paraguay: Retreat in Asunción



Our woman in China:
Celina Chan, Coordinator
WCCM China



St Vincent WI: Never too young to meditate



Christian meditation group in Brazil sharing a meal together

All photos in this section: WCCM

COMMUNITY



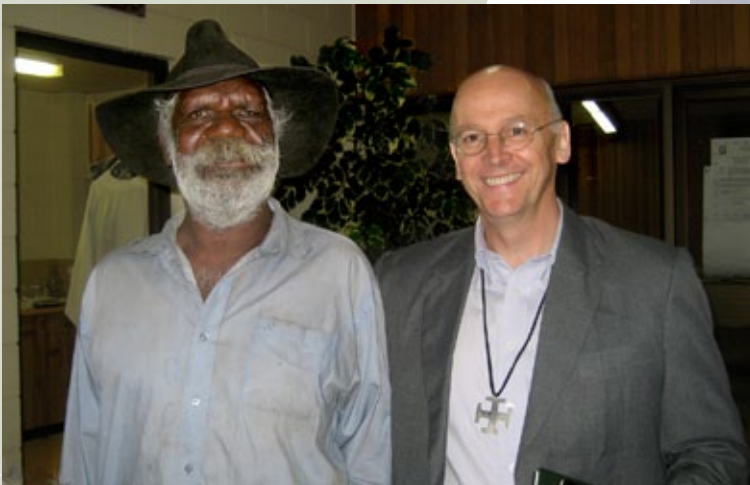
Mexico, earlier this year: Become like little children



France: A meeting of WCCM Europe



Ukraine: Re-weaving the threads



Australia: A meeting of traditions



Interfaith Dialogue: Many ways up the mountain



James Alison, priest, author, theologian with Fr Laurence

OUR WORLD COMMUNITY



Interfaith Dialogue: East meets West



Australia: Student Meditators, Townsville



Morocco: Ancient connections



Barbados: Student Meditators



Retreat in Singapore: Crossroads of Asia



Jean Vanier & Fr Laurence at L'Arche

LENT 2016

Silent Retreat Day in Winnipeg



PHIL BARNETT

Meditation in Winnipeg: L-R Rob Duncan, Diane Guilford, Joan Wilton, Jean Bailey

On a beautiful, sunny but cool spring day, eighteen people gathered at St Paul's Anglican Church for a Lenten Silent Retreat Day.

The format was a familiar one, similar to previous Advent and Lenten retreat days. There were two periods of meditation, each one followed by a video, then quiet time to spend in whatever way we chose.

The videos were of Fr Laurence giving talks. The first was from the Way of Peace dialogue with the Dalai Lama, where Fr. Laurence talked about who Jesus was

for him. The second was from the excellent Trinity TV series, about levels of consciousness.

Both videos were played directly from the WCCM website (wccm.org).

The retreat was held on the day before Palm Sunday so it provided an excellent opportunity for us to prepare for Holy Week. Participants shared that it had been a very helpful and meaningful day and looked forward to the next one!

**Phil Barnett
Winnipeg**

Canadian Christian Meditation Community

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VANCOUVER RETREAT

Balancing Speed with Stillness



LOUISE DUDAR

Technology and meditation. Note wccm-canada website on-screen.

“Finding Balance: Silence and Stillness in a High Tech World”, a daylong meditation retreat, was held at St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Vancouver, B.C., on Saturday, January 30, 2016. Forty participants were in attendance – seasoned meditators as well as people new to meditation.

Luis Zunino – webmaster of our national website wccm-canada.ca – led us through the day with a detailed account of the growth of technology.

The speed of the changes are happening faster than we can cope and it affects our lives. The distractions are many as we browse through the internet or make contact through social media, sometimes while driving or crossing the street.

The lure of technology is addicting – there is no doubt about it.

Luis invited us to counteract the enticement of our digital world – to step out of the rushing river of technology, and onto the solid shore where we find balance in our lives, through Christian meditation in the joy of silent prayer.

In Christian meditation we move from doing to being. In stillness and simplicity we find nourishment for our spirit.

We thank Luis and all the organizers for an excellent day of learning – through the presentations, the meditation sessions and the sharing in small group discussions.

Louise Dudar,
British Columbia Regional Coordinator

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