



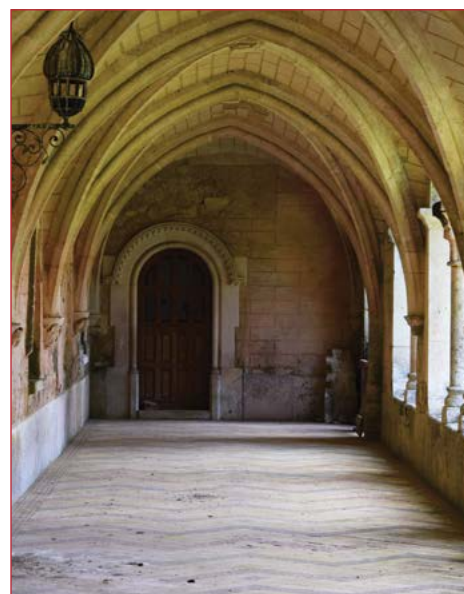
Nurturing peace in the Post-Truth World

Laurence Freeman reflects on how a contemplative life can be an antidote for the contemporary global crisis



Message in a wall in a street in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Photo by Laurence Freeman)

The new Bonnevaux website



The website describes the vision with a gallery of images to convey something of its beauty, development plans, news, comments on the project from meditators around the world - and the easy to use donation page. On the homepage you can also follow the progress of the Bonnevaux fund. (p.7)

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Deeper Friends

A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

A top diplomat recently wrote a kind note of support for Bonnevaux and began by saying in a rather undiplomatic way, 'the world is in a mess'. He added that the need has never been greater for centres of clarity, inclusivity and peace such as we pray Bonnevaux will be with God's help (and yours). The contemplative life has often been misrepresented down the centuries. It has been presented as an option, often a very selfish choice, for a private peace and seclusion, an escape from the world and its problems. Many people, avoiding the work of silence for themselves but caught up in the affrays of the world saw centres of contemplation as dream get-aways.

But, if we see contemplation as a way of living in the present, with minds and hearts wide-open in rationality and compassion, the truth is very different. The contemplative life is ordinary, as ordinary as our own frequent faults and failings, and as our innate commitment to hope and to a more peaceful and fairer world. As ordinary, in other words, when all the layers of sentimentality and commercialism have been extracted from our understanding of its radical, universal meaning, as the birth of Jesus.

The incarnation is the greatest of revelations wrapped up in the simplest of packaging. It illuminates not the institutional, but the heart's meaning of contemplation, the vision of God rather than the observation of God, seeing not looking at. It shows anyone who beholds it that the human journey is the evolution of each person, whatever their gifts or background, towards a state that is, simply, divine. 'God became human so that human beings might become God' sang all the major Christian teachers before the caste-system returned and power-structures obscured the truth that blazed out in Bethlehem.

Not only diplomats today feel the

world is in trouble. 'Democracy ha-ha-ha' as the hurting graffiti in a Brazilian subway, pictured on the cover, declared, is hard to define and today harder for many to believe in. It depends on a deli-



cate balance of force. It requires levels of self-restraint and civility that make it is easy to hijack by populists, cynics and fools. A referendum today, therefore, seems a particularly volatile cocktail for democratic process. To redress a balance that is so imperilled we need more than platitudes and surface change. A more radical and costly change of attitude, such as Pope Francis has initiated in the Catholic Church is demanded by our times.

A friend in the financial world wrote to me after the election, reflecting on all the instability and sadness in the world, that 'there are simply too many people that have not participated in the brave new world we have created'. By 'we' I think he meant all of us who have a degree of comfort and privilege compared with those struggling to survive war and emigration or to feed their families in the dismal parts of our cities. In particular, I think he meant those charged with responsibility for the big decisions

about money and power. Their decisions have doubtlessly made the world a wealthier place. But they are also driving an ever widening wedge between those who have absurdly too much and

those who have barely enough. Jesus said the 'poor you will always have with you'. It is the gap between the poor and the rich, above all, that makes for the tragic mess.

How does contemplation, awakened through meditation, the work of silence, help us redress the balance that is the foundation of the virtues, of justice, peace, health and happiness? How can we teach and share this gift that is free and must remain as free as a bridge of impeccable trust?

Meditation is the simplest and most universal means of awakening the contemplative mind and thus raising the level of wisdom in the world. Acting with an unbalanced view of things, however, we can turn an ancient source of wisdom into just another component, a fad or a product, of our technoculture. However many the miracles and conveniences that science has showered on us and even though it can crudely devalue the human and blur the

identity of the human and the machine, it cannot replace the human. The human is the process of change through which the divine most fully incarnates. God becomes human, not a system or a computer. Meditation, then, is always better understood as relationship not as technique. It is more like marriage or monastic vows or any sincere way of life than a course or an app.

After the novelty of the practice has worn off, and if the discipline begins to take root, the times of meditation become naturally woven into daily life. It all becomes natural and ordinary. But it also becomes transfiguring, a constant agent of change that reveals the depth dimension in everything as soon as it opens and integrates the subtler levels of our selves. As one begins this journey a hard but necessary thing to be reminded of is that it is not like any other experience we are familiar with. It is in about letting go rather than grasping – something particularly hard and counter-cultural today for the busy malls of our minds to see. At the end of his life, the Buddha was asked what he had got out of meditation. He replied ‘Nothing... But I have lost a lot.’ Jesus too emphasized that we cannot find without losing and that discipleship, the most fully incarnate form of the human relationship with the divine, requires that we abandon ‘all your possessions’.

If only it were an experience like others. It would be easier to sell and to master. But then it would not propel us forwards in the direction that our lives naturally seek and need to follow. The experience of meditation is that of an ever deepening, self-renewing relationship. When one thinks it is exhausted it turns and takes on a new lease of life.

John Main famously said, ‘nothing happens in meditation and if it does, ignore it.’ Perhaps not the best way to sell something, but the truest way to lead people to start and continue on

this way of grace. What he means, of course, is what the contemplative wisdom has always taught. Experience, as we usually understand it, is already something past, a snapshot or concept of something we underwent without knowing what it was just because we were so fully involved in it. There was no bit of us standing on the sideline recording and evaluating. We were, it is true, in the experience, but the experience was not compartmentalized in us. The description, even the meaning, comes later because experience is only a vestige in memory. Our hunger for ex-

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perience and of course for novelty and the prestige related to it, runs counter to the whole meaning of contemplation. Understanding this, John Main said that the ‘most important meaning for modern people to rediscover is that of silence’.

Sadly, this is not what the church has taught in recent times. It has marketed the supernatural, the extraordinary and ‘experiences of grace’ because there will always be a market for this kind of thing and for other less service-oriented reasons. But this exhausts the genuine religious spirit and leaves it dependent on images not reality, on the surface not the real depths of God. It is also abstract, intangible except in the imagination, and falsely incarnational.

If, in the early days of meditating, we can find the help we need to strengthen our practice to withstand these initial

challenges and to control our craving for experience, we will soon discover the real work and the wonder of silence.

Silence is creative, refreshing, healing and de-toxifying. It can seem at first, however, as if it were negative and so frightening. To be truly silent, it seems, must mean to disappear altogether. But when we see that silence is reached through the work of pure attention, not on an object of attention, we have breakthrough. We fall into seeing how contemplation is indeed the expanding experience of love. Everything we have called love before is re-mapped. In this we are swept above our small self-consciousness and increasingly, in the bigger picture, the truth appears.

Silence is truthful. Nothing is more important for us in our post-truth world of ‘fake news’ and manipulative mass deception than to remember what truth really is. Merton once said that ‘I make monastic silence a protest against the lies of politicians, propagandists and agitators’. This is true and Bonnevaux will be part of this ancient monastic protest of truth. But today we have to see that the monastic is related not only to monasteries but to the monk within all of us, that part of us which ‘truly seeks God’ and knows that solitude is the condition of real relationship. A community, familial, monastic or global, is as strong as all the solitudes which compose it.

To the mind addicted to noise and novelty, silence will seem like a negative emptiness. In truth it is an emptiness filled with the degree of potential that matches the level of silence attained. Ultimately, until we fall beyond boundaries, into an ‘order without order’, into the freedom that is the life of Spirit, the silence that is God. Meister Eckhart describes this, in the mystical language of paradox, when he said.

In contemplation we become pregnant with nothing and in the nothing

God is born. God begets His Son in our soul. God begets me as His Son.

To be human is to change. As contemplative consciousness grows it is our very way of perception that changes. It is not that we become 'better at meditation' but that we see that real 'experience' unfolds not merely as something we observe or feel during the meditation but through all the dimensions and in every nook and cranny of life. In everything, we become more committed, less doubtful. Faith, not will-power, takes over and surprises us by the way it moves mountains, often at first by reducing them to little hills. Mystery then emerges from the ordinary rather than dramatically descending from the rafters above. Our idea of God (whether we are believers or agnostics) will also change and with it our whole set of our beliefs and values. God becomes more manifested by our discovering meaning through an expanding sense of connection to those around us, including those opposing us and those who live in other worlds, off the radar of our comfortable zones. In all these ways contemplation grows into action and political courage.

Today we feel understandably frightened by the speed of change. We can hardly adapt to the new before it is superseded by the arrival of next disruptive thing. We feel we are losing control and swayed by fear we rashly run after those we wrongly think can control things better. The catalyst of good change – change that moves us towards the human goal – is in fact at first interior not external. External changes are passing states. Interior change happens definitively as self-knowledge develops. As with the meaning of 'experience', the contemplative understanding of self-knowledge sees important distinctions regarding self-knowledge. It is not essentially just what we know about ourselves or how we think of ourselves – self-confidence or self-doubt, for example – but that we are ourselves in the deepest and non-self-reflective silence. It is not what we learn about ourselves

through magazines. It is what we lose and find in our solitude.

This kind of self-knowledge cannot be put into ordinary words or concepts. It is seen at work in its effects, the changes it works on our lives. When we are truly still and the grip of the ego is loosened, things change as they are meant to change. A kind of knowledge that we have never perhaps known before rises up gently, and yet, as in the story of Elijah's encounter with divinity on the mountain, with a quietness and modesty stronger than the earthquake or the storm.

Discovering this kind of knowledge as true power, this kind of change as the healthiest, we reclaim one of the casualties of modernity, the wisdom of stillness. Hesychia. St John Climacus almost sounds like a modern business consultant selling mindfulness when he speaks about 'hesychia (as) accurate knowledge and management of one's

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thoughts. Stillness of soul is science of thought and a pure mind. Brave and determined thinking is a friend of stillness. It keeps constant vigil at the door of the heart.' Clearly, then, meditation has benefits for the mind. There is nothing anti-intellectual about laying aside one's thoughts or leading the mind into or enter the heart through the path of stillness. The fear that stillness spells death soon evaporates and we discover instead a whole new range and brilliance of life. All organisations, democracy included, work better when people have clearer and calmer minds and are able to tell the difference between fake news and the simple truth.

Walking Jesus' 'narrow little path that leads to life', the Buddha's 'middle way'

or St Benedict's 'nothing in excess', requires balance. The balance of moderation demands vigilance to avoid falling into extremism. Moderation may make for less exciting news items, but it is in fact more thrilling because it awakens the senses and the intelligence on higher levels. It avoids dullness and enhances enjoyment of the truth. In the business world, 'stability' is seen as necessary for investment and productivity. Usually this means no more than 'peace as the world gives it', provisional and easily upset short-term solutions. The peace of Christ, however, arises from the heart of reality not from its surface weather patterns. A conscious contact (not just a self-conscious experience) is necessary to transmit this peace into the human, from the heart itself. Politics, business or religion, without heart are unable to make the world a better place.

We all desire change, but on our own terms. Our image of what we want to change is limited by what we desire. We become no more than creatures of desire. And so, it binds us to suffering, sadness and suffering, products of the cycle of desire, satisfaction and disappointment. It traps us in a realm of images and abstractions. The problem, in restricting change to what we desire, is desire itself. We never desire enough. The feast of the Epiphany reminds us how the whole potential, the glory of human destiny, is manifested in the person of Jesus and now through the cosmos in the body of Christ. Glory is always eager to burst through the ordinary things of life and allow us, even within our present limitations, to see the world as a paradise.

Meditation works by transfiguring desire: at first through those twice-daily periods where we commit ourselves wholeheartedly to poverty of spirit in the renunciation of desire. Increasingly, as change takes deeper root in us, we see how desire is changed in all areas. What and how we desire are no longer blindly controlled by illusion. Eventu-

ally we come to understand what the mystics really meant when they said we should desire only God. At first this might seem an embittered rejection of the world and all its beautiful ways of manifesting the divine. Religious people who lack heart jump onto this language and twist it in order to repress and control the natural desires and joy of life. But once the process of transfiguration is underway we see what it truly means. To desire only God means to resonate in harmony with everything that is real.

Change is the only thing that doesn't change. In the heart of God we find our deepest sense of belonging and transcend our self-consciousness. This is eternal change (the meaning of 'eternal life') and becomes the eternal now, the stillness in which the divine self-knowledge of love emerges and changes us. In the I Ching, the Chinese 'Book of Changes', wisdom is the ability to recognise where at any one moment we are in the perpetual cycle of change. In hexagram 20 on contemplation this is shown leading cyclically into the mystery of reality, just as every birth leads to an endless series of changes and experiences. In this Chinese wisdom text, contemplation is described as the space 'between the ablution and the offering'. Similarly in the Latin word *contemplatio*, *templum* refers not to the building structure but to the space in which it is erected. I think this is why when people come to Bonnevaux it is not just the building but the space in which it floats that reveals itself to them as an entry into contemplation and peace.

If the way home in this space is so simple and evident, why do so few seem to choose it? Life is continuous choice, often between the lesser of two evils as in democratic elections. But we are always facing a choice between right and wrong, the best life-partner, a new password or career. Too many choices create anxiety. Choices that only we can make often make us feel lonely. No doubt this is why, as our world fills up with choice

and complexity, a complementary hunger for simplicity arises. We look instead for an economy of effort, the place of the choiceless choice where we give our assent rather than pick one option. But why do some people want to meditate and others don't? Why do those



who want to meditate have to compete with part of themselves that resists it?

Maybe it is because we assume that it is only, or even primarily, about ourselves choosing. Yet: 'you did not choose me. I chose you', Jesus tells us. He adds that his choice is so that we can go out and bear lasting fruit – not just experiences that come and go but a continuous transfiguration that truly begins when we ourselves have begun to incarnate. The knowledge of being chosen unsettles us. It threatens our ego-control and often forces us into a combative relationship with whoever we feel is doing the choosing. But by learning (through discipline) and allowing (through letting go) the contemplative way of seeing we realise that to be chosen and to consent to it is the greatest freedom.

Aquinas said that what is new about the New Testament is the grace of the Holy Spirit operating in the heart. We don't choose this but we say yes to it.

To say yes is partly a choice but mainly an act of faith in which we surrender ourselves into an absolute equality. Isn't this what we celebrate God doing with us in Bethlehem? If we see it in a contemplative light we have found the key to our present dilemma. We have found

the wisdom way of radical simplicity. We learn over time how to celebrate diversity rather than fear strangers and how to mingle rather than separate. Contemplation is necessary for our next step of evolution.

All of us who serve the community on our international team join me in wishing you, and all those you serve, a happy and holy season of the Lord's birth and epiphany. Please keep Bonnevaux in your heart in a special way as a future place of contemplation and unity to serve what I have been trying to describe in this letter; we pray we will be able to welcome you there one day.

With much love

Laurence Freeman OSB

Special

25 years of the WCCM The vital role of weekly groups

By Paul Harris



Paul Harris at the London Centre in 1989 with Sr Madeleine Simon RCSJ, founder of the centre, oblates Thom Powys and Polly Schofield and Fr Laurence.

The John Main seminar which was held in the idyllic village of New Harmony, Indiana, USA, from August 28th to September 1st, 1991, in retrospect confirms the great turning point in the world wide expansion and practice of Christian Meditation. It was a personal joy to meet the 125 meditators at the conference from various countries including the USA, Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland, Belgium, Italy, India, Australia, Singapore and Thailand.

The seminar was led by the venerated Benedictine monk, Bede Griffiths, on the theme: "The New Creation in Christ". Laurence Freeman commenting on these seminar talks has said: "Bede manifested a radiant strength of vision and authority. He also showed a startling balance as he walked a razor's edge between radical prophecy and a deep respect for Christian tradition. He used John Main's teaching to crystallize his own vision of meditation and contempla-

tive spirituality and particularly the need for community".

In fact many of us who attended the seminar were impressed by Bede's remarks on spirituality with its roots in a human community. His insights about community beautifully paved the way for the subsequent dialogue to discuss Laurence Freeman's vision of a global inclusive family to shape the future direction and organization of the Christian Meditation community.

The discussion at the seminar on the possible birth of an International organization was lively, vibrant and sometimes chaotic. But with the assistance of Bede Griffiths, as well as the consensus built by Laurence Freeman, and the deft handling of divergent views by the Canadian chairman, Balfour Mount, the baby (WCCM) was delivered joyfully and peacefully.

From a personal viewpoint one of the most important aspects of the seminar discussions was the unanim-

ity regarding the vital role that weekly Christian Meditation groups would continue to play in the new WCCM entity. The participants in the discussion were well aware that Jesus formed the core of his ministry with a small group of twelve, and that the early Christians met in homes in small groups for mutual support and to affirm their common faith. It was understood at the John Main seminar that the weekly meditation group would be an essential pre-condition of the new World Community for Christian Meditation.

With my own 33 years involvement in the practice of Christian Meditation and the starting of new weekly groups, I am delighted at the importance the WCCM gave, and continues to give to John Main's insight about the vital role of groups. We now know that groups are the primary means of sharing the teaching. Around the world small groups are redefining religion, and spirituality is once again becoming alive in the humble meeting places of the weekly group meetings.

The prayer that leads from the head to the heart, from fragmentation to unity, from isolation to caring, grows in the fertile ground of the weekly meditation group meeting. This is the spiritual revolution taking place around the world today.

Paul Harris is a WCCM Patron, former director of the first Christian Meditation Centre in London, a National Co-ordinator of WCCM Canada Christian Meditation Coordinator, and author of eight books on Christian Meditation and John Main.

News

Bonnevaux

Website shows the vision of our new home: www.bonnevauxwccm.org



The Community is working globally to make Bonnevaux possible - the new International and Meditation Retreat Centre in Poitiers, France. In November a new website was launched to inform and engage people around the world towards the same goal.

The website describes the vision, with a gallery of images to convey

something of its beauty, development plans, news, comments on the project from meditators around the world - and the easy to use donation page. On the homepage you can also follow the progress of the Bonnevaux fund.

There is a short video about the vision of Bonnevaux: watch here: <http://tiny.cc/bonnevauxvid>

What people think about Bonnevaux

MARY MCALEESE (President of Ireland from 1997 to 2011)

It is past time for the World Community to have a permanent home, a centre of deep peace and an invitation to reconciliation in our troubled and troubling age but also our age of educated young problem solvers and consciences formed by equality, democracy, compassion and courage. (...) It is a venture worth encouraging and supporting, another light in

the darkness, another heart that welcomes all, another home for the soul.

DIEGO M ROSA (Abbot General of the Olivetan Benedictine Congregation)

I am now delighted to learn of the Bonnevaux project. Its ancient monastic roots and spirit of tranquillity make it an ideal place for stabilising the centre of the World Community. It has a very great potential. It is inspiring and I pray new forms of our life

may flourish there.

RICHARD ROHR OFM (Founder of Center for Action and Contemplation)

I fully congratulate the World Community for embarking on the project of this new center for its whole community and for all who are seeking depth and peace. It is a truly beautiful place and I am sure it will communicate the beauty of the peace of contemplation. Having an ancient monastic origin adds a whole other dimension to the spirit of this unique place.

REV'D SARAH BACHELARD (Anglican Priest and theologian from WCCM Australia)

I believe that Bonnevaux will be a place of refreshment and hospitality, one that will enable all who come to deepen their own pilgrimage to the heart of God, and so to bear the fruits of this journey in their lives and communities at home.

ŁUKASZ TOMBOREK (Poland)

For us, young students and people in Poland the vision of the living Christ must be renewed. So many of us feel the lack of his presence and are seeking substitute pleasures. They feel 'Who wants to be in a church that is just a piece of stone without any life-giving presence?' I hope the Bonnevaux centre will become a home for our lost selves and the wounded hearts of our friends. I really desire to participate and help in this work.

(...) through our union with Christ we are connected, not just with the source of our own being, but we are connected to the source of all being, and all beings. (John Main)

News

Laurence Freeman in the Caribbean (11- 26 October)

By Sr. Ruth Montrichard



Group photo at the retreat in Tobago

Fr. Laurence arrived in Trinidad from Miami and started his visit meeting with our leadership team. This was followed by 120 instructors working with at-risk young people. Later that evening we headed for San Fernando where many had been enquiring about Christian Meditation. About 80 attended the session. On the next day Laurence was hosted by the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business where 75 persons attended a Meditation and Leadership session.

In Tobago, Laurence spoke and led a weekend retreat. The 43 participants included Meditators and Group Leaders from Trinidad, Tobago, Barbados, St.

Lucia, St. Vincent, Jamaica and Grenada. We used some time to show the WCCM 25th Anniversary Video and share information on the New International Home in Bonnevaux. We were privileged to have with us Bishop Jason Gordon, Patron of WCCM-Caribbean.

These islands are small but have nourished the seeds of Christian Meditation in many ways. Fr. Laurence's visit nurtured what was already there on each island, encouraged the leadership and re-emphasized the importance of Christian Meditation in the lives of people.

On the island of St. Vincent, the visit

began with dinner with Bishop Gerard County, who is very keen on promoting Christian Meditation. We had an early interview with Radio NICE and our first session was with a group of teachers who have adopted Christian Meditation and with Sister Martha who is coordinating Meditation in the Schools.

On St. Lucia we were interviewed by the local TV before meeting over 100 teachers from five secondary schools.

On Barbados we were greeted by our Patron Bishop Jason Gordon who organized dinner for priests and religious; Fr. Laurence gave a talk and meditated with the group.

Our final session was held on Sunday morning for all interested in starting Meditation groups. The head of Codrington, the Anglican Theological University was interested in introducing Meditation to the students and Bishop Jason promised to work with him to this end. Back on Trinidad we spent the last three days sharing meditation and Mass and meeting to plan the way forward for WCCM- Caribbean.

Visit to Venezuela 28 October - 2 November

By Susana Ortega

On 28 October Fr. Pepe Martínez greeted Laurence with a late lunch in his Parish of Manzanares. Later in the afternoon there was a meeting with the National Council Team. On the next day we had a meeting with about 70 people from meditation groups. Fr. Laurence delivered a conference on peace and justice: "The meaning of peace and justice cannot be found in words but in the silence of our temple within." In the

afternoon, he met oblates.

On 30 November we had a one-day retreat with the participation of 126 laypeople and consecrated. The theme was "Be Calm: Finding peace in the storm, Jesus calmed the storm around him and in the hearts of those with him in the boat." At the end of the retreat, there was the profession of one oblate, one novice and three new postulants. As a fruit of the retreat a new meditation group was formed.

The following days we had two visits to "Fe y Alegría schools", "Jesús Maestro" in Petare, and "Las Mayas" in Co-

che, both located in very poor barrios. These started with meditation with a group of children followed by a talk to an audience of pastoralists, teachers and parents from various schools.

We had two events focused on the topic of Christian Meditation and violence. One was a forum with two panelists who addressed the increasing violence in Venezuela at macro and micro levels and then Fr. Laurence talked about "Breaking the cycle of violence. The courage to love your enemy and change the world is found in the depth of our own heart." Next day Fr. Lau- ▶▶

News

rence gave a conference at the Universidad Central de Venezuela: "Breaking the cycle of violence. The courage to love your enemy and change the world is found in the depth of our own heart and in the community that contemplation creates."

On the last day Fr. Laurence delivered a conference to consecrated people: "The love of God flooding our inmost heart: For St. Paul this is the essential Christian experience. For us it is the fruit of contemplation as the source of our vocation." During his visit, Fr. Laurence did interviews for local TV and radio stations and SIC Magazine.

It was a very fruitful visit. On one hand there was a strengthening of our Community in Venezuela and on



the other hand, given the increasing political tension and social violence, Christian Meditation is becoming a means to inner peace, dialogue and reconciliation. The visits to Fe y Alegría schools was a boost to our alliance with them and a wonderful platform

to teach children to meditate, and have an incidence in reducing violence in the poorest neighbourhoods.

ONLINE: Watch a video of a visit to a school in Venezuela here: <http://tiny.cc/vnz2016>

Meditation and Ageing Seminar in Sydney



Photo of the second day of the Seminar

Fr. Laurence Freeman led a two day seminar on Meditation and Ageing (19 - 20 November). He kicked off the seminar by reminding us that the word "Contemplation" is derived from the latin for "temple" and refers to the sacred space within the temple rather than the physical structure itself.

Neil Miller and Sarah Bachelard, Anglican priests, delivered a presentation on ageing and spirituality, highlighting

the benefits of "apprenticing oneself to one's own disappearance."

Neil and Sarah then emphasised two particular aspects of the letting go process – Lament, the process of suffering and complaining, and undergoing, a particular way of being in the world that becomes more relevant in old age, a practice of yielding oneself with passion, of letting go, but not of giving up.

Laurence invited three school chil-

dren aged 10 & 11 who had practiced meditation since kindergarten to share something about the role of meditation in their lives.

The afternoon also held a panel discussion based on pre-written questions from the participants. Finally Laurence spoke about Bonnevaux, a new contemplative and meditation retreat centre. A scholarship fund is being established to enable meditators from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend Bonnevaux.

On Sunday the seminar continued at the chapel of the Benedictine monastery in Arcadia, north-west Sydney. Laurence spoke of the value of monastic wisdom - Celtic and Roman - in developing meaning in modern lives emphasising the importance of 'coming home' to ourselves and the need for self-knowledge.

ONLINE - listen to all talks here: <http://tiny.cc/agesem2016>

News

Brazil

Fr. Laurence visited Brazil in December (1-11). He led retreats and gave talks in Vinhedo (São Paulo), Campina Grande (Paraíba), Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais) and Rio de Janeiro. He shared the vision of Bonnevaux. All the donations at the retreats went to the fund. The Brazilian community showed great generosity and enthusiasm about the idea.

The Philippines



The Community in the Philippines organized a Retreat Workshop from 11 to 13 November, with 27 participants at the Order of the Carmelites' Titus Brandsma Center in Quezon City.

Two children also took part in this event. It was an opportunity for them to go deeper into the essential teachings of Christian Meditation.

Leonard Cohen: You Want it Darker

Review by Jim Green



*I've seen you change
the water into wine
I've seen you change it
back to water, too*

So opens Treaty, the second track on what has turned out to be Leonard Cohen's final album, *You Want it Darker*. In all of the songs – and throughout his life – he picks a joyfully defeated route through painful oppositions: *so water and wine are joined by glory and shame, devil and angel, lost and found, don't and do*. The polarities get more detailed in another song (*Steer Your Way*) when the uniquely gravelled voice of sadness and joy steers between the ruins of the *Altar and*

the Mall, the fables of Creation and the Fall, as well as the Wisdom of the Way... and the women whom you bought.

In this album – his last imperfect offering – the prophet-poet is channelling St Augustine (*I was*

fighting with temptation, But I didn't want to win), St John of the Cross (*You want it darker, We kill the flame*), as well as speaking for *every hung-up person* in the whole wide universe, as his fellow poet-prophet and Nobel laureate would say.

Along the way there are the shifting moods and bleak epiphanies that Cohen-followers love him for. And now, because he knew it was almost closing-time, the tone is valedictory, regretful, affirming – all at once. There seems to be much here about the loss of faith, *the Truth that you believed in yesterday*, the constant shifting between water and wine... Yet my overwhelming sense in listening to these miraculous

creations is that loss, this passionately rendered, becomes indistinguishable from finding and being found.

Treaty is the stand-out song for me. In it he dares, yet again, to meditate on what can seem the most fundamental and intractable of polarities: *you and me*. As ever, it's not clear whether God or a lover is being addressed. By now, perhaps, it's simply the Other. The song is reprised in the final track as a string quartet, but Leonard suddenly speaks one last time at the end, in one of the most heart-felt and heart-breaking pleas I have ever heard:

*I wish there was a treaty
we could sign
It's over now, the water
and the wine
We were broken then
but now we're borderline
And I wish there was a treaty,
I wish there was a treaty between
your love and mine*

He makes me wonder, yet again, whether a wish so fully expressed is itself the very salvation he is seeking. May we share the peace in which he rests.

In Focus

Sicco Claus, from The Netherlands



My first encounter with meditation was when I started studying theology. I was taught Zen by a friendly, elderly priest from the student parish. It is hard to say why I was attracted to it. Was it the desire for experience alongside all the cognitive stimuli fired at me during classes? For a few years I kept on meditating with frequent infrequency. However, slowly my practice disappeared into the background of my life only to reappear for short periods once in a while.

About ten years later my father became seriously ill. He was diagnosed with cancer and passed away within a period of barely half a year. In this sad period my life shook to its foundations. In those days I went to the

gym regularly. Suddenly I asked myself the question whether the proportion of time between devoting myself to transitory matters, and my spiritual life, thus that which is enduring, was in balance. The answer was: 'no'. God received about one hour and a half a week; masses in my parish are quite extensive. My body received three times as much.

Precisely in these turbulent days Laurence Freeman appeared on the Dutch television in a series on Christian spiritual leaders. His teaching, but in fact even more his way of manifesting this teaching, struck me. I realized that Zen always had remained somewhat strange to my Christian identity and perhaps for that reason became central in my life. But here a way of meditating was presented that was fully integrated within a Christian spiritual discourse. Immediately after having seen the documentary about Freeman and Christian Meditation I started looking for a group in my residence The Hague.

During the almost six years that have passed since then, I became more and more fascinated by Christian meditation. First primarily in a practical sense. I managed to give meditation a central place in my life,

enriching it in a wonderful way. However, I also became increasingly interested in the intellectual background of the spiritual way John Main had introduced me to.

Notwithstanding Main's frequent warnings against reading too many books on meditation, I embarked on an intellectual journey into Christian meditation. Gradually I discovered that until now fairly little scholarly attention has been given to Main's small but rich spiritual oeuvre and that some aspects of his teaching perhaps remained somewhat underexposed.

These observations resulted in the development of a PhD proposal which in June of this year was rewarded with a scholarship for teachers (see picture). So for the next few years I have the privilege of being able to occupy myself with the reconstruction of Main's spiritual teaching, both in its theological and practical dimensions. However, I will not leave it at that and will explore what the relevance of his teaching might be for some hard problems that plague present day, North Atlantic 'secular' culture. Luckily I don't need to start from scratch and can take Charles Taylor's analyses as a starting point for this assessment.



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(leonardo@wccm.org)

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

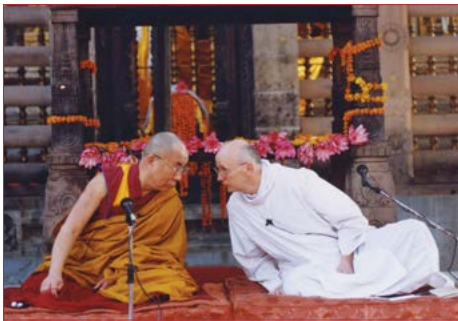
Events & Resources

Calendar 2017

19 April, Washington DC, USA

The Way of Peace

**HH The Dalai Lama and
Laurence Freeman OSB**



This year the Way of Peace will focus on the questions of spirituality, religion and education. Students from CUA and Georgetown University who belong to the Way of Peace Fellowship will also participate and Sean Hagan will be the moderator of the dialogue. More information: meditatio@wccm.org

24 June - 1 July, Siena, Italy

Monte Oliveto Retreat: Silence

**Led by Laurence Freeman
and Giovanni Felicioni**



A thirst for silence characterises our un-silent culture of over- stimulation and continuous mental talk- show chatter. In a post-truth world where we believe less and less, silence performs a healing and restorative role - it restores meaning to words and ritual and reassures us that truth is really real. More information: monteoliveto@wccm.org

More important dates & events:

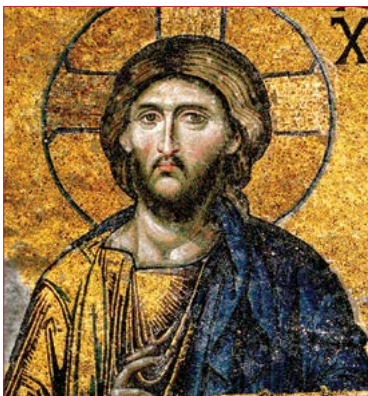
9-16 April
Bere Island Holy Week Retreat
Contact: theresawccm@gmail.com

8-25 July
**Pilgrimage to
Kashmir & Ladakh, India**
More info:
http://tiny.cc/wccm_india2017

15-22 September
Health & Meditation Retreat
Contact: theresawccm@gmail.com

22-24 September:
Bere Island Music Festival
Contact: theresawccm@gmail.com

1-8 October:
**Fara Sabina School Retreat, led by
Laurence Freeman**
Contact: som@wccm.org



John Main Seminar 2017

10-13 August, Houston, USA

Praying with the Masters Today, presented by Bernard McGinn

7-10 August, Pre-Seminar led by Laurence Freeman OSB

The John Main Seminar 2017 will explore the development of contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition from the early to the contemporary mystics and show that these great mystics are not just historical monuments, but active resources for those drawn to the contemplative life. For more information and registration visit: http://tiny.cc/JMS2017_RG

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

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



UK and Europe
www.goodnewsbooks.net
email: orders@goodnewsbooks.net
Tel: +44 (0) 1582 571011

USA: www.contemplative-life.org
contemplativewisdom2@gmail.com
Tel: +1-520-882-0290

CANADA: www.wccm-canada.ca
email: christianmeditation@bellnet.ca
Tel: +1-514-485-7928

ASIA
email: enquiries@mediomedia.com
Tel: +65 6469 7671

NEW ZEALAND:
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email: order@pleroma.org.nz
Tel: 0508 988 988
(Within NZ Only)

AUSTRALIA:
jopanetta@gmail.com
Tel: +61 2 9482 3468

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN MEDITATION FOR STUDENTS

Transforming Education



Members of the first provincial contemplative retreat offered through the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE).

This fall, October 19-21, 2016, the Institute for Catholic Education supported 28 Catholic Education leaders from across the province of Ontario as they came together for three consecutive days to learn about Christian meditation as a practice.

“Inviting your students to enter into silence opens the door to experience God’s presence deep within.” So Paul Tratnyek assured us. Paul was co-facilitator of the retreat, along with Mary Theresa Coene, Religion and Family Life Consultant at Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board, who this summer visited Catholic schools in the Townsville Diocese in Australia, at the invitation of Ernie Christie. Ernie generously contributed many of the materials we used.

As a form of contemplative prayer deeply rooted in ancient monastic tradition, Christian meditation continues to pick up steam across the province.

Ontario Catholic educators, within all divisions, are coming to embrace this experiential learning practice, for its legitimacy, strong credibility and tremendous value.

During our retreat, we began to see silence as an invitation to a grace that allows us to see from the heart – the presence of God’s beauty at work. The teachings of John Main OSB were highlighted. We learned of Fr Main’s three guiding principles, which shape the practice and experience of Christian Meditation for children and adults: silence, stillness and simplicity.

We learned that Christian meditation, as apophatic prayer, has a “present moment” focus that prioritizes “being before doing”. This is an integral component to our wholeness as human beings. In a DVD recording, Fr Laurence Freeman explained that too often the

Continued on page C4

**WCCM-Canada
National Conference
Toronto
May 26-28, 2017**

See pages C6 and C7

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Movements of the Spirit

Winter tends to be an interior season in our northern land. Even lovers of outdoor activities – hockey, cross-country skiing, ice fishing – have to come back indoors eventually.

For Christians, of course, this is the season of slowly growing light – from the solstice, when the first tiny light of Christ pierces the darkness, to the hot noonday of the Passion, Easter and Pentecost.

This season makes a good metaphor for the Christian journey of meditation. For us, too, it begins within. We go into our spiritual room and shut the door, and seek the silence and stillness that will allow us to hear the prayer of the Holy Spirit.

Meditation can seem such a solitary practice.

But this is not the way John Main saw it and taught it. For him, the practice of Christian meditation led directly to the development of community – a community motivated by love, bound together by a common spiritual experience, and called to share that experience and that love with the world around them.

Most of us have seen how meditation transforms our relationships – with those we love, those we work with, even those we may not even like. We become slower to anger, less resentful, more reflective, understanding, compassionate. Few of us become saints, but we all get a little bit closer.

We change because our vision changes. We come to see the commonality between ourselves and others.

We see in them the same depths we have been able to see within. So that solitary experience of meditation, shut away in our room, actually throws open the doors between us and the world around us.

This is the spirit of the Canadian Christian Meditation Community, or WCCM-Canada. It inspires individuals – to begin and to lead meditation groups, to become regional coordinators, to join the National Council, and to share the gift of meditation in any way they can.

Sharing this gift can cost money. Rentals, insurance, publicity and other expenses for retreats and teaching activities, such as Greg Healy writes about in this issue. The National Conference, coming up – see page C6. Designing and printing the newsletter you're reading right now.

Last issue contained a brochure for our Annual Appeal. If you made a donation, thank you very much. If you haven't yet, please pull out that brochure and consider a donation of any size. Or go to our website (wccm-canada.ca) and push the "Donate" button at the bottom of the page.

Meditation is an interior practice that moves us outward into the world – just as the Christian message begins in darkness and expands into the full light of the spirit. If you can contribute to the work of our community, thank you and God bless you.

**Love & Peace,
Jeff Ewener**

A LIFE OF GENEROUS SPIRIT

Group leader Beryl MacIntosh dies at 93

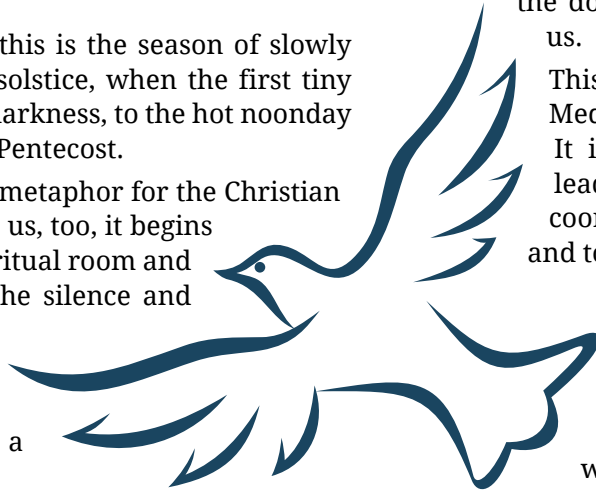
A Christian meditation group leader in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Beryl MacIntosh, has died at the age of 93. A member of the United Church, she led the weekly group in her own home for 22 years.

She was an avid reader, concentrating on her love of meditation and spirituality, and graduated from St Francis Xavier university in 1984, majoring in psychology and theology.

She was a valued member in many charitable organizations in Antigonish – including the United Church women, Palliative Care Society, and Jean Vanier's L'Arche. She is survived by four daughters, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

In the 1990s I visited a weekly group meeting in her home and was deeply impressed by her hospitality, as well as her dedication to sharing John Main's teaching with neighbours and family members.

**Paul Harris
Ottawa**





Educators on retreat at worship.

demands of our society and technological culture condition us to place doing before being. Stress and distractibility continue to be our greatest barriers to the process of cleansing our minds and following our hearts. However, the daily practice of Christian meditation is a discipline that helps us be in the present moment.

Mary Theresa introduced our first experience of Christian meditation – “Keep your feet flat on the floor... eyes gently closed... sitting upright... palms on your lap... you are feeling comfortable and relaxed... interiorly repeat ‘MA-RA-NA-THA’...” – and followed by striking a high-pitched, beautiful note on a chime three times. That sound resonated within the souls of Catholic leaders committed to learning and modeling this prayer in school classrooms throughout the province.

As an invested learner during these three days, I can honestly share with confidence that I was receptive to this experiential learning. My qualitative experience of going deeper in a contemplative way really put me in touch with God’s gentle presence... I was able to recognize and feel a natural flow of the Spirit within me, moving me into a place of peacefulness.

As my learning journey continues in this area, I thirst to understand more about the key teachings of John Main and Laurence Freeman. As a group of 28, we have committed to an ongoing professional dialogue within our collaborative learning network. Christian Meditation is an inclusive practice that has the potential to be transformational.

– **Greg Healey**, Religious Education and Family Consultant, Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board

Canadian Christian Meditation Community National Resource Centre

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Phil Barnett, Joseph Clarkson, Jack Murta,
Mark Schofield, Jeff Ewener and Denise Connors

Send submissions to newsletter coordinator Jeff Ewener at newsnotes@bellnet.ca.

échos du silence and the French version of *Meditatio* are available from Méditation chrétienne du Québec, 105 ch du Richelieu, bureau B, McMasterville, QC J3G 1T5, 450-446-4649. info@meditationchretienne.ca.

Page design and layout: www.katemcdo.com



The Spirit of John Main Lives On

The 21st International Congress on Palliative Care was held at the Palais des Congrès in Montreal, from October 18–21. The biennial Congress – founded by Dr Balfour Mount, “the father of palliative care in Canada” – is considered one of the world’s preeminent gatherings of palliative care professionals and others with an interest in the field.

At the invitation of Dr. Mount, John Main gave the keynote address to the 4th International Seminar on Terminal Care, as it was then known, entitled “Death: The Inner Journey”. This was on October 6, 1982, and was Father John’s last public talk.

For the past 34 years, Polly Schofield has been preparing a “Quiet Room” for the delegates to the Congress, and leads two meditation sessions a day. The “Quiet/Meditation Room” continues to offer a place of silence and retreat from the bustle of the Congress – and continues to be much appreciated.

“Death: The Inner Journey” is available from the National Resource Centre as a booklet, and the French version “La mort: Le voyage intérieur” from MCQ. It has also been published as the penultimate chapter in John Main’s book *Community of Love*.

**Polly Schofield
Montreal**

Calendar of Events

New Brunswick

Calling all Maritimers!

**The School of Christian Meditation:
Essential Teaching Weekend.**

From 7 p.m. Friday April 28
to 1 p.m. Sunday April 30, 2017

**Villa Madonna Retreat House,
Rothesay, New Brunswick**

- Deepen your understanding of John Main’s teaching
- Learn more about the history of meditation in the Christian tradition
- Understand the stages of the spiritual journey
- Know how to respond to frequently asked questions
- Be more confident in talking with friends and others about Christian meditation

For info: Dianne Leblanc
diloulebl@nb.sympatico.ca or 506-386-6094

Further info will be sent to group leaders soon.

Montreal

Silent retreat at Rougemont

June 23–25, 2017

\$160 room with shared bath. Make cheques to: Meditation Retreats. Include your name, email, phone. Send to Magda Jass: 4540 Wilson Ave, Montreal, QC. H4A 2V4. Magda.jass@gmail.com

Ottawa

**The Mercy of God: Silent Weekend
Retreat with Joseph Clarkson:**

Friday 7 p.m. (Registration 5:30) to
Sunday, March 31 to April 2, 2017

Galilee Centre 398 John Street N., Arnprior ON. To register: retreat2017@rogers.com, or call Stephan: 613-820-1267. Space is limited. \$250 single, \$210 each double, \$150 commuter. Deadline for full payment: Feb. 15.

Winnipeg, MB

Meditation Silent Retreat Day
Saturday, March 25, 9:45-3:30

St Paul’s Anglican Church, 830 North Drive. Bring a bag lunch (tea and coffee provided). Suggested donation: \$10. Info and registration: phil.barnett@mymts.net

Meister Eckhart and the Eternal Birth Within Us

“If I were king, and were not aware of it, I would not be king,” said Meister Eckhart.

Yet, as John Callaghan told a Toronto audience of twenty, January 26, God is being born within us every moment, if only we would become aware of it. “A stick is there because of God,” said Eckhart, “but the stick is not aware of this.”

John was the January speaker in the Toronto Christian meditation community’s monthly series of Knox Talks, held at Knox College on the University of Toronto’s downtown campus.

John first became aware of Eckhart in 1980, and was soon pulled into the mystical depths of his vision. It is a vision that pulls people across religious traditions.

Knowing of John’s interest, people often ask him: “Eckhart – he’s a Buddhist, isn’t he?” Or, “He was a Daoist, wasn’t he?” Or, “He’s a Sufi, right?” Laughing, John said at these times he feels he has to defend the Christian team: “Heck no,” he says, “he’s one of *ours!*”

Eckhart was born around 1260 in Germany, and died March 17, 1328. That makes him a contemporary of Dante. Thomas Aquinas died when Eckhart was about 14.

At 18, Eckhart joined Aquinas’s own Order of Preachers, the Dominicans. He had a stellar career as Prior and teacher, appointed to the Dominican chair of theology at the University of Paris when he was in his 40s. Ten years later he became only the second theologian since Aquinas to hold that chair a second time.

But it was as a preacher that Eckhart’s fame spread, in his own lifetime and in ours. As Dominican Provincial for Saxony, he was not only the chief administrator, but preacher and spiritual director for several dozen convents, both for women and men.

Eckhart’s main idea, to which he always returned, John told us, was the unity of the divine and the human. God, said Eckhart, is continually giving birth to himself within us. Our role is to empty ourselves, and let that birth take place.

A favourite Eckhart theme is the expulsion of the money-changers from the temple. He warned us against trying to make deals with God. We agree to empty ourselves – *except* for our desire to be respected for our position, which we cling to, or admired for our wisdom or our holiness. But when we set condi-

tions, we are setting up our own will against the will of God. And that’s when Christ comes at us with his whip.

As John observed, meditation is intended to bring us to that emptiness, to make us aware. We can’t do that intellectually – we can *talk* about it intellectually, but we can’t *be* it.

For Eckhart, “the deepest part of ourselves is the highest.” The ground of our being is the ground also of God’s being. God breaks through that ground to reach me, and I break through that ground to reach God. Then God is incarnated in me – and I am the son of God.

This was provocative – though it’s little more than an echo of John 17: 20-23. Eckhart was investigated for heresy, but died before a decision came down.

For centuries he was forgotten in the Church, and was only revived in the 19th century, just when Hinduism and Buddhism were first becoming known to Western philosophers. The many parallels among these ideas were noted.

The old suspicions remained. The Dominican Order set up a commission to investigate his case, and in 1992, its then-Master, Timothy Radcliffe, summarized the Commission’s results. Eckhart, he said, “is a good and orthodox theologian.”

Today Eckhart’s writings are available in several editions, including an inexpensive Penguin, translated by Oliver Davies. And his appeal, in these days of increasing inter-religious dialogue, continues to spread.

So it was not so surprising when John told his audience at Knox that, in his opinion, one of the best summaries of Eckhart can be found in the words of Rumi – the Persian Sufi poet, who was himself a contemporary of Aquinas:

The wine of divine grace is limitless
All limits come only from the faults of the cup
Moonlight floods the whole sky, from horizon
to horizon
How much it can fill your room depends on its
windows
Grant a great dignity, my friend, to the cup of
your life
Love has designed it to hold His eternal wine.

Jeff Ewener
Toronto

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY

Biennial National Conference May 26–28, 2017

St. Michael's College, University of Toronto
50 St. Joseph Street, Toronto, Ontario



Journeying Towards Spiritual Wholeness

Born in Liverpool UK in 1954, Paul Geraghty was a 21-year-old law student in London when an unplanned meeting with John Main changed the direction of his life both externally and internally. Five years after that initial meeting he emigrated to Canada in 1980 to join the fledgling monastic community in Montreal, becoming the first monk to make solemn vows in the community in 1985 and being ordained priest the following year. After leaving the Priory in 1989 a temporary two-year post as chaplain to the Montreal Children's Hospital turned into a 26-year ministry in the intensive care unit and the emergency room. Recently retired from that work, Paul is refocusing on the gift he was given in that encounter with the man who has always remained his spiritual father and authentic teacher.

As we journey towards spiritual wholeness, the worlds we live in, both communal and personal are often fragmented and disjointed. The mystics, poets and scientists show us the possibility of living out of a far deeper experience of unity, harmony, integrity and joy. With the help of their insights we will reflect on the journey of meditation as the path into the experience of a life rooted in unity, communion, spiritual wholeness and outreach.

During the conference Fr. Geraghty will lead three plenary sessions. The conference will also include four workshops and a panel discussion relating to the theme of the conference by members of our community such as Marilyn Metcalfe and David Walsh and two others to be confirmed. The National Council will also be holding a short general meeting.

St. Michael's College is located in downtown Toronto and is easily accessible by public transportation. There will be a number of parking places available on the College property, at the going rate. Accommodation will be in student residences. A detailed program and all other necessary information will be sent to registrants.

Registration fees:

\$355 Single / \$310 Double (per person) residential. Includes 2 nights accommodations, 6 meals, health breaks, use of all facilities.
\$245 for Commuters - Covers same as above except for breakfast and accommodation.

Limited space available - 100 residential and 50 commuter places. Book early to avoid disappointment.

To Register:

Please complete the form below and send to WCCM-Toronto, c/o Nina Honoridez, 31 Adelaide St. East, P.O. Box 561, Toronto, ON M5C 2J6, together with a cheque or money order made out to WCCM-Toronto in the appropriate amount per above. Please note registrations will close on Friday, May 19, 2017. Refunds will not be provided after that date.

For additional information, contact Nina by telephone 647-995-9282 or email: nhonoridez@yahoo.ca

Registration Form to the Conference "Journeying Towards Spiritual Wholeness", May 26–28, 2017, Toronto, Ontario.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ Email: _____

I wish to register as follows: Single or Double or Commuter

Vegetarian meals Special health/medical needs? Specify _____

Donation towards Scholarship Fund \$ _____ (Optional)

National Conference

May 26-28, 2017, Toronto, ON

Fr. Paul Geraghty, a protege of Fr. John Main, will lead the **CCMC Biennial National Conference** with three plenary sessions on the theme of *Journeying Towards Spiritual Wholeness*.

Workshops - Four workshops and a panel discussion related to this theme will be led by community members.

David Walsh on Meditation and Social Justice

Marilyn Metcalfe on Meditation and Health

Rev. Kevin Flynn on Meditation and Higher Education

Paul Tratnyek on Meditating with Children

Venue: St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, 50 St. Joseph Street, Toronto. Accommodation available at student residence.

Registration - Hurry! Limited space available for residential and commuter participants. Book early to avoid disappointment! Deadline for submissions is May 19, 2017 but there may be no places left by that date. Please see opposite page for registration form and details or wccm-canada.ca.

Canadian Christian Meditation Community

P.O. Box 52, Station NDG, Montreal, QC. H4A 3P4

514-485-7928 christianmeditation@bellnet.ca www.wccm-canada.ca

- I wish to: receive/renew the printed Newsletter – suggested annual contribution \$15
 receive the electronic version – suggested annual contribution \$10

(A tax receipt will be issued for donations./contributions)

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THE INNER JOURNEY - INDOORS!

Retreat Day in Winnipeg

October 15 was a beautiful fall day. A day to be outside, working in the yard or going for a walk.

Yet 20 people chose to come to a silent retreat day – inside!

There was actually lots of time for going outside during the personal silent times, and most people did. There was a lovely outdoor labyrinth to walk, too, which provided a different way to meditate.

The pattern for the day involved two meditation periods and two videos from *The Essential Teaching* DVD – *The History of the Tradition* by Liz Watson and *The Stages of the Journey* by Kim Nataraja.

During the sharing time at the end of the day it was clear that the videos were much appreciated and that the whole day had been very worthwhile. We all look forward to the next one on November 26, 2017.

Phil Barnett
Winnipeg

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Christian Meditation and Yoga Retreat

On October 14, twenty-one women came together for two nights to share in the gift of prayer, silence and yoga. It was the fourth retreat that Sister Kathleen Bolger, Teri Hall and Rachel Leslie (both highly qualified instructors) have hosted together at the historical Belcourt Center in South Rustico, PEI.

The theme of the weekend was Prayer of the Heart and the practice of Christian meditation was the grounding foundation for the weekend. The embodiment of prayer was further emphasized through the dynamic movement of yoga postures and the stillness that naturally follows each exercise. Silence was experienced for twenty-four hours so that the participants could journey to the interior of their soul. Each woman was able to take the time to be in her heart with consideration and compassion. After breaking

silence one woman said, “Now that I can talk, I have nothing to say.”

Light and heart-warming meals were prepared from scratch by the center’s caretakers, Earla and Martin Avery. The entire staff welcomed us as if we were their own family.

When we said farewell we not only said goodbye to each other, we also said a goodbye to the Belcourt Center. In the spring the doors of the newly built retreat centre will be opened in Stanley Bridge. The new centre is named Our Lady of Hope (see pictures on the web). The date for next year’s Christian meditation and yoga retreat is already booked and the theme will be Grace and Gratitude.

For more information you can contact Teri Hall at teri@peiseaglass.com

Rachel Leslie

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
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