

Christian Meditation

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY



Meditation With Children IN SCHOOLS

See pages C4 and C5

SPRING 2018 ISSUE

Christian meditation and L'Arche	C2	Calendar of events	C5
Friends Program.....	C3	Meditation on the Sunshine Coast.....	C6
Meditation with Children in Schools.....	C4	Meditation on the Prairie.....	C7
Christian meditation with children <i>en français</i>	C5	Polly Schofield: Sharing meditation with educators.....	C8

ALL THE USUAL CATEGORIES OF DIFFERENCE DISAPPEAR

Christian meditation and L'Arche



PAUL TRATNYEK

Meditation with l'Arche: Rev. Glenda Meakin in front: "Laughter and fun"

Over the past year, a few meditators have been sharing the gift of Christian meditation with L'Arche core members and their assistants. It has been a time of grace and joy and fun and silence.

Paul and Teresa Tratnyek originally suggested we explore the possibility of meditating with members of L'Arche Stratford. Once a month Sherri, Tracy, and Kevin come with their assistants to meditate and then share a meal, at Paul and Teresa's home in the country. And once a month we go to visit L'Arche members at their centre in Stratford, and meditate with Dalton, Justin, Gerald, Tracy and their assistants.

Maranatha is the name of one of the L'Arche homes in Stratford, so it was already a familiar word for use

as a prayer word/mantra. Some of the core members are unable to be still – so we teach the basic simple teaching of John Main and leave it to each person to pray as they can.

Usually the core members themselves decide how long to meditate. Fifteen minutes seems to be the choice for now.

The silence draws us all closer to one another, as all the usual categories of difference disappear. It is a beautiful experience of unity – which then carries over to the dinner table and the breaking of bread together. There is much laughter and fun. David and I feel privileged to be part of the group.

**Reverend Glenda Meakin
Stratford**

WCCM FRIENDS SHARE THE GIFT OF MEDITATION

We need friends like you!

Each year, our Friends Program provides vital financial support to the many efforts of the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) to share the gift of meditation worldwide.

This financial support helps in teaching and nurturing the practice in both established and emerging communities, particularly among the poor and marginalized. Recently, the community in Poland worked in solidarity for children in Aleppo, Syria – organizing a special day of meditation in Warsaw with the theme “Awareness and Solidarity with Syria.” It was broadcast via internet and about 80 people both in Poland and Syria sat together in the meditation.

Since then, in a partnership with the NGO Light for Syria, Community members have been raising funds to purchase milk for the smallest victims of the war.

Where does the money go?

To meditate costs nothing. But to purchase materials and supplies, to travel and teach meditation in countries near and far – that costs money. The Friends Program enables Fr. Laurence to give retreats, talks and presentations, especially in emerging countries.

It supports the School of Meditation, a worldwide organization that trains meditation teachers and provides the resources to support and nurture meditators globally.

Meditatio is the WCCM’s outreach effort – the programs, publications and events that bring the fruits of meditation to the wider world, and seeks to bring spiritual wisdom and values to bear upon the pressing issues of our time.

Through seminars, media and the formation of young contemplatives in the world, Meditatio takes meditation into the worlds of business and prisons, mental health and addiction, education, environmentalism, and interfaith dialogue.

Recently, Mark Carney, the Canadian-born Governor of the Bank of England, spoke at a Meditatio seminar, held in conjunction with Regent’s University in London. His theme, “Leadership and Values”, reflected an important aspect of Meditatio’s social outreach.

The Friends Program also funds distribution of regular resource materials – including this quarterly WCCM Newsletter, and the audio recording of talks – to thousands of meditators in more than 120 countries worldwide. The Program also supports the translation of resource materials into many languages, to support our local multicultural communities, and to reach out to the world community. It funds publication of books and audio and video resources, which may not be commercially viable, but are necessary to the work of the Spirit.

Today the fastest growing segment of meditators is children. In over 25 countries, an estimated 100,000 children now practice meditation. A whole generation of meditators is growing up, who could potentially transform the world!

How can I become a friend?

You can make a donation to the Friends Program, and introduce the program to others in your meditation group. No gift is too small. All gifts are much appreciated – and every one will have a direct impact on sustaining and advancing our community’s mission.

As Father Laurence has said, “No monetary value can be linked to meditation. It is freely given and freely shared, like the gospel. And this is why the teaching of meditation is, for us, a form of evangelization. Because of this, we are aware how precious the gift is. And that is precisely why we feel the urge to share it with others, and to be part of the communion of meditators across the globe.”

Elaine Mills

Coordinator, CCMC Friends Program

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CHRISTIAN MEDITATION WITH CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS

Growing by leaps and bounds!



Paul Tratnyek addresses the Catholic Principals Council of Ontario Executive: Stimulating interest

Christian meditation with children and youth (CMC) continues to grow in Catholic schools across Ontario. This past fall we were invited to facilitate a professional development day in eastern Ontario with staff from a high school and the elementary school next to it. They were very receptive and keen on bringing Christian meditation to their students.

One of the most supportive organizations bringing CMC into schools has been the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO). CPCO has published articles written by Fr. Laurence, Ernie Christie (Townsville, Australia) and myself that speak to the value and need for teaching Christian meditation to children and youth. Their professional magazine is entitled "Principal Connections." It reaches the desks of 2500 principals and vice-principals throughout the province.

This past summer Mary Theresa Coene (Vice-Principal) and I facilitated an overnight contemplative retreat with the Executive Council of CPCO. The retreat sparked a new awareness of the history and value of meditation in our Christian tradition. It also stimulated interest in the practice and experience of Christian meditation as taught by Fr. John Main, and an appreciation of the way its fruits and benefits tie in with the Ontario Ministry of Education's goal of student well-being.

Following the Executive Council retreat, I was invited to facilitate two more retreats on CMC for the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board's principal and vice-principal associations in October and November. Both leadership groups were eager to introduce CMC in their schools.

On December 5 the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCDNB) had Polly Schofield

do a presentation for their school administrators and faith ambassadors at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Burford with 90 participants in attendance. (See article, "Sharing Christian meditation with educators" on page C8.)

On February 23 there was a presentation to CPCO's Council of Presidents in Toronto. The eighty participants will soon receive the CCMC's resource publication, "Christian Meditation with Children." We are blessed to be working with a strong leadership team of principals and their executives, as we continue to witness the growth of CMC in English-speaking Catholic schools throughout the province.

In March, representatives from the French Catholic school board, *Conseil Scolaire Catholique*, visited a French immersion school and an English-speaking school in BHNCDNB, to experience CMC in the classroom, as they begin to look at introducing CMC in their own schools.

We have also begun to connect our work with that of the *Méditation chrétienne du Québec et des régions francophones du Canada* (MCQRFC). They are doing excellent work and have taken an innovative approach in bringing Christian meditation to children and parents within their context. (See article, "Christian meditation with children *en français*" opposite.)

As we continue to grow and evolve, we will continue to work closely with the CCMC's National Executive Council, and to explore how best to support the growth of CMC across Canada.

**Paul Tratnyek, School Liaison
New Hamburg ON**

MÉDITATION CHRÉTIENNE DU QUÉBEC

Christian meditation with children *en français*

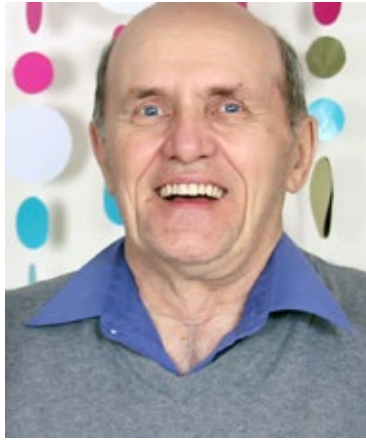
Last June we emailed all the dioceses of Canada (approximately 120 bishops) that have a francophone component, and sent them an invitation to host the program *Jeunesse et Méditation* or Meditation with Children:

Méditation chrétienne du Québec et des régions francophones du Canada (MCQ) is sharing with you our flagship “Toolbox” for our ‘Youth and Meditation’ project. Since there is no religious teaching in Quebec schools, we have chosen to make Christian meditation with children available to all French Catholic churches, and to convey this information to officials of the Diocesan Pastoral Care and all their employees.

Our approach is to focus on the parishes’ sacramental initiation programs, the catechetical path, in order to connect with the youth movements, the *P’tite pasto*, etc. The integration of Christian meditation into these varied activities may surprise more than one group!

So from mid-August to mid-September, a team of five MCQ members contacted Diocesan Pastoral Agents across the province of Quebec, through letters and follow up phone calls, to provide information about Christian meditation with children (CMC). We received a warm welcome from the bishops, along with affirma-

tion and appreciation for what we are trying to do. The bishops who responded genuinely care about our work in bringing the gift of Christian meditation to children.



Pierre Therrien, Méditation chrétienne du Québec et des régions francophones du Canada

Given the current situation in Quebec – low church attendance and a lack of financial resources to hire parish and diocesan staff to support the work of evangelization – it is difficult to find leaders in the diocese or parish to work with. Seeing this, we wrote a curriculum, the “Toolbox”, to provide a free training program for their volunteers and the church leaders.

Yvon Thérout, our Board President, sent a letter to the bishops at Christmas. As a follow-up to the responses we received, we have decided to focus our attention on those dioceses where we have been welcomed to reach children. Our main approach to bringing CMC to parishes

will be through the sacraments of initiation preparation programs. This will be our main focus in 2018 – to reach parents through the sacramental preparation programs. More than sixteen dioceses have asked us to keep in touch with them for a near-future action plan.

To date, two dioceses have set up an action program to make Christian meditation available for their youth and parents.

Pierre Therrien
Québec, QC

Calendar of Events

British Columbia

May 25-27

Essential Teaching Weekend

Little Flower Monastery at Carmel Hill, Deroche, BC.

Contact JoAnn jlcullen@telus.net or 604-922-8856

Quebec

June 22-24

Annual Oblate Retreat (open to all)

Archival Talks of John Main
presented by Polly Schofield

Rougemont, Quebec

Contact Magda Jass at magda.jass@gmail.com
or 514-489-0998

Ontario

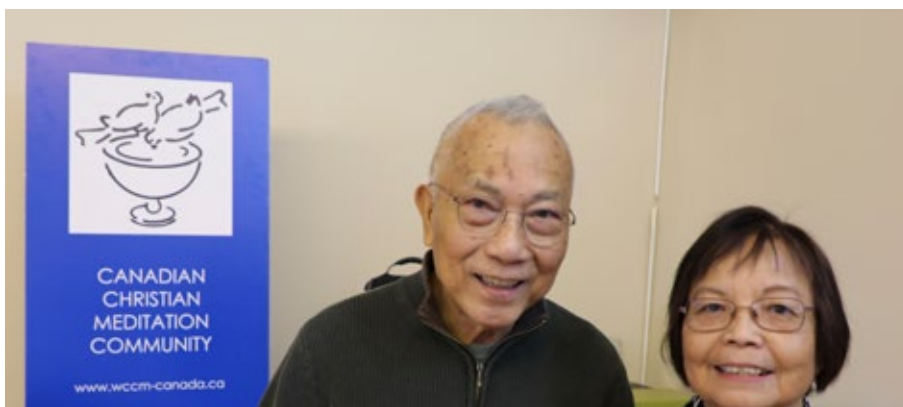
September 21-23

Essential Teaching Weekend

Alexandria, Ontario
With Rev Phil Barnett

Contact Jake Lapierre
at jdlapierre@cogeco.ca

Moving from distraction to presence



LEO CULLEN

Ted and Cora Alcuitas, longtime group leaders



Lucette Brind, Fr Jack Dias, JoAnn Kelly-Cullen: "Set aside time to be with God every day"

An "Introduction to Christian Meditation" retreat was held at Saint Mary's Catholic Church, Gibsons BC, on Saturday, March 24, 2018.

Over forty people came together for the event, travelling from communities up and down the Sunshine Coast – Madeira Park, Davis Bay, Sechelt – and from as far away as Powell River (nearly three hours by car). Several even ferried over from Surrey and Vancouver, on the mainland. Participants included seasoned meditators as well as those new to the practice.

The retreat opened with a warm welcome from Saint Mary's pastor, Father Jack Dias, who recalled with gratitude his experience of contemplative prayer in the seminary. He encouraged us to set aside time to be with God every day.

Following an overview of the World Community for Christian Meditation, we viewed the video, "The Essential Teaching", by Father Laurence Freeman. Long-time group leaders Ted and Cora Alcuitas led us through the introductory meditation – inviting us to move from

doing to being through silence, stillness and simplicity. Cora and Ted also spoke of the importance of the weekly group, and shared the rich support and benefits that come from meditating with others.

A PowerPoint entitled "Roots of the Tradition" illustrated how contemplative prayer has always been at the heart of the Christian faith. Beginning with Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God", it continued through scripture and the teachings of the saints and mystics, down to our present-day contemplatives such as our own John Main.

Many participants said how much they valued learning about the history of meditation in the Christian tradition.

Our day closed with a final meditation. Once more we shared the experience of silent prayer – leading us from the mind to the heart, and from distraction to presence.

JoAnn Kelly-Cullen
British Columbia Regional Coordinator

MEDITATING ON THE PRAIRIE

Spiritually refreshed in silent prayer



A cold blustery day – but warm inside

On a cold blustery Saturday, last January 27, St. Mary's la Prairie Anglican Church in Portage la Prairie held a Silent Day of Prayer.

We had meditators come from Winnipeg, as well as from Brandon (over 100 km away). Twenty-two people gathered to enjoy the day of silence.

The day's agenda was developed by Reverend Phil Barnett, and included time for silence, two videos

and two periods of meditation. During the day people were invited to spend their silent time in the historic church with its beautiful stained glass windows.

At the end of the day, many people expressed how refreshed they felt after a day of silent prayer.

**Gail & Rob Brooks
Portage la Prairie**

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AN ENCOUNTER WITH POLLY SCHOFIELD

Sharing Christian meditation with educators

As Advent began, educators with Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCDNB) were blessed with the opportunity to encounter Polly Schofield, and to enjoy a deepening of our experience of the prayer of Christian meditation.

Polly's beautiful presence and kind heart made a strong impact on the Brant Haldimand Norfolk staff. The group listened closely to her stories and reflections, and her sharing of the teachings of Fr. John Main. We meditated, and then shared a lovely meal together. There was also time for small talk and reflection.

The experience was described as very "homey", by one educational assistant who serves as a faith ambassador in her school community. She went on, "You could just tell that Polly would be the type of person you would love to sit and have tea with, to meditate with, and to learn from. I could have listened to her for hours!"

Christian meditation has been a vibrant part of the BHNCDNB's prayer life for several years now. In the words of one teacher: "I have been meditating with my students for the last four years. I always enjoy this time in my teaching day, but I do

question it once in a while. There are just so many curriculum pressures. But when I listened to Polly speak, I knew I should stop questioning and just keep meditating with my class, for them and for myself."



Polly Schofield: Stories, reflections, and sharing the teachings of John Main

CHRIS ROEHRIG

The principal of a school with over 400 students told the group that the whole school meditates together once a week. He explained that it helps them build community – to live the experience of Christian meditation as a school body, as well as in their classrooms with their teachers. And of course, they can also meditate on their own outside of school time.

Coming together with Polly and our colleagues was truly a delight. It is important to recognize the beauty of prayer, and to honour its important and valued place in our school communities. It is with gratitude that we say a special 'thank you' to Polly for serving us at BHNCDNB with her memories and her presence, and

for simply being. God's grace was visibly present that day. We were blessed to be with her.

Mary Theresa Coene
Vice-Principal, St. Gabriel Elementary School

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