

Meditatio

Newsletter of The
World Community
for Christian Meditation



www.wccm.org

Registered Charity No. 327173 - INTERNATIONAL EDITION, Vol 42 No 2; July 2018

Facing Change, Seeing Connection

Laurence Freeman on how a contemplative
consciousness can bring hope for a world in crisis

JMs
2018

20/23
SEPTEMBER

BRUGES

35th
JOHN MAIN
SEMINAR

A CONTEMPLATIVE RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS OF CHANGE jms2018.org

Visit www.jms2018.org for more information and registration

This issue

6 News

The Guiding Board Meeting
2018: a time of transition for
our Community

8 News

The latest news on
Bonnevaux: Seeds of
Community, Sings of Change

12 Resources

Details on the new School of
Meditation website:
theschoolofmeditation.org



Dearest Friends,

A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

Dearest Friends,

Perhaps like many others in recent times I have felt tempted to disconnect from the daily news. I can understand the friend who told me he does not follow the news at all anymore giving all his time to his family, his work and his inner life. I asked him wouldn't he like to know if there was a new government or world peace had broken out. He said he would hear it from people at work.

I can sympathise but I wasn't and am not convinced by this. I understand the effect of the continuous sadness, anger and frustration resulting from unwise or even malevolent global and national governance. There is a depressing vacuum in the new kind of leadership we need to navigate the forces of change disrupting our world.

As the desert father once said: "the time will come when the world goes mad and the mad people will look at a sane person and say 'he is mad because he is not like us.'" In a time when truth is trounced and real news is called fake news and so all news is suspect, it is easy to feel powerless and hopeless. But unrestrained, this mood leads straight into what the desert fathers called *acedia*, a de-energised state, a dark night when it seems the dawn will never come and where giving-up replaces letting-go. In Harry Potter's universe the 'dementors', foul, wraith-like creatures that feed on human happiness bring about this state in their victims. To get too close to them is to be drained of life and hope and be left with nothing but your worst memories.

So why keep up with the bad news?

Why not eat, drink, be merry, play in the sun and fulfil only our most immediate responsibilities? The reason I haven't succumbed to the temptation (though now I get my news from better sources) is twofold. Firstly, even if the reality is that the powers of unreality are mastering the world, we have a duty to face that reality and to keep paying attention to the good that still exists in the world and indeed in everyone, even the worst of leaders. Secondly, we need to face the whole truth and fulfil all our responsibilities if we are to contribute to what we are each indissolubly part of. We belong to the world as we belong to a family, like it or not.

*In reality, the deeper our
solitude the stronger is our
sense of connection, of inter-
dependence*

To be at all is to be with. The Self is distinct from the Ego because in the consciousness of the Self we see how we are connected to everything within a great unity of the web of being. The Ego falsely claims it exists outside everything except its own admirers or dependents, always an 'objective' observer, ever pursuing its particular objectives and self-interest. This disastrous self-deception illusion leads eventually to loneliness in the most desperate degree.

In reality, the deeper our solitude the stronger is our sense of connection, of inter-dependence – and consequently of personal and social responsibility. This was the point I was making in the talks at the Monte

Oliveto retreat last month: that loneliness is a failed solitude and solitude is the acceptance of our uniqueness. Only in solitude can we truly love and know how to give our self.

The spiritual path is not merely a part of life for which we have to find time. Life is the spiritual path. Sometimes, though infrequently, a serious spiritual practice like meditation leads to a special and frightening kind of interior crisis. In it we are faced with a perception of the universe as being nothing more than what it is, what we see, how it works. Expressed like this it seems to have a harmless, even peaceful is-ness. We can see the world as it is, without the usual filters. But at times the angle of this perception shows us a universe with no meaning other than its own eternal, cyclical existence. It may be vast and wondrous but its lack of depth and meaning or of any personal connection is terrible.

Any crisis in life – of loss, transition or fear of death – could trigger this. It can also come on suddenly, unannounced. Then it is the crisis. At first, it can expose an unfathomable feeling of isolation. It seems that nothing but our own rationality can help us. But rationality – our ability to analyse and explain things – is easily overpowered by the brute force of this revelation. The best advice from the wisest sources is 'don't fight it'. In fact we need to allow failure, to permit all our defences, all our bolt-holes, all our false consolations to be overwhelmed by this wave of reality surging towards us. 'It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God'.

It will seem as if – if God exists at all – that God is nothing but the infinite "I Am", an Ego of unimaginable

magnitude and indifference to others, including its own creation. Many mystics have reported on this experience. Because they face it and don't trivialise it, their value to us today in developing a contemplative response to the crisis of change (the theme of our Seminar in September) is invaluable.

They describe it honestly because they have discovered the self-transforming truth that glows at the deep heart of it. Perhaps we will all pass through this experience (hopefully briefly) at the moment of death or during our preparation for death. The sure hope in the face of this unavoidable darkness is that there is always something next. Embracing that inevitability creates the hope on which all human effort and society itself depends. Hope empowers us to let go. Once we are in the letting-go mode of consciousness, rather than stuck in the clinging mode, the boundless cosmic solitude in which all attachments are dissolved can unfold fully. Something next. Something comes after the perception of the bare mechanics of the universe. We find ourselves to be in the great I Am, not outside it. We are found there, confident at last that only illusion exists outside of it. This at least is not fake news.

Our urgent responsibility today, each of us, is to find the particular way in which we can experience this truth and be carriers of the good news it enshrines. We don't do this as individual messiahs but as disciples in community. Even Jesus claimed that his authority was not his own but flowed directly from the source, from the I Am. He formed and empowered a community that is still growing. It is still imperfectly trying to discover in

each person and in each generation what he meant. As meditation teaches us imperfection does not harm us. Infidelity does.

All of this explains the John Main Seminar this year, hosted by our Belgian community in the contemplative city of Bruges, near the beautiful Beuginage where medieval laywomen once asserted their right to a spiritual life free from oppression and patriar-

experience the paradox that enlightenment is taking responsibility and realising that we can never be in total control. Another paradox helps: sometimes we need to become empty to see the fullness, to be alone in order to see where we belong. The Sufi poet Rumi describes this in his poem 'Acts of Helplessness' written when 'you cry through the night and get up at dawn, asking, that in the absence of



Charles Taylor

chal control. The Seminar will bring together contemplative minds from diverse fields – politics, religion, medicine, economics, education, science, philosophy. The contributors are men and women of standing and deep knowledge in their areas of expertise. They will reflect on the great forces of change affecting their specialised areas. But we will also seek a synthesis and understanding of the common patterns within the crises of change, especially with the help of Charles Taylor's comprehensive mind.

Change is always disturbing especially when we cannot predict or control it. Not much can be managed or outsourced for long. We need to

what you ask for your day gets dark'. He describes the dark night of unfulfilled days 'when acts of helplessness become habitual'. And he sees that those very acts are the signs we need to find direction. 'Excuse my wandering,' he says at the end of the poem, but 'how can one be orderly with this? It's like counting leaves in a garden'. He ends: 'sometimes organisation and computation become absurd.'

Nevertheless it is important that we *think* - and think *clearly* - about the challenges pounding us. This is why, in the Seminar this year, we are bringing great minds together with meditation that we believe will open the way forward for our so often confused

and self-destructive world. We will not claim that meditation will solve all our problems. Maybe it would if we all tried it. But, as that won't happen, we need to see meditation not as a problem-solver but as an 'habitual act of helplessness'. Only those, who do it, really know how it changes them, by clarifying their minds and by opening their hearts day by day in whatever field it is their destiny to inhabit.

At the Monte Oliveto retreat we explored the paradoxical human destiny of 'being alone together'. Failing to live into this paradox, we slip into the epidemic of loneliness and disassociation that is sweeping through the affluent world today. It is sobering to ask why Haiti has the lowest suicide rate in the western hemisphere while our over-satiated consumer societies are witnessing a dramatic rise in suicide especially among the young. In reaction to this dilemma, we are becoming an increasingly therapeutic society – often to a degree that inhibits our being able to create or to celebrate. While we can be pleased at the progress in being able to admit our personal problems and to care for them, the danger is growing that we become collectively fixated on our individual unhappiness.

Perhaps it began with the Declaration of Independence and the assertion of the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. At times, when under oppression or in a crisis in our development, this does need to be declared. But what happens when we have become independent, self-determining, when our parents have become dependent on us, when freedom to act as we wish is found to be far more limited than we had imagined and when the happiness we are pursuing comes to seem

more a duty we are failing in than a right we actually enjoy?

Love is all we need. Not the primitive stage of love where we seek ourselves. But the full-blown love in which we contemplate the other and care for their well-being more than for our own. At what turning point in the human journey do we see happiness in terms of others rather than just ourselves?

The greatest spiritual teachers call us not just to 'follow' them but to be their disciples – to learn from them. Only in the depth of personal relationship, the frightening full intimacy of discipleship, of the love that few dare to risk, can we learn how to re-centre our selves. The gravitational pull of ego-consciousness often seems irresistible. It is as if it can only be temporarily transcended before we sink back into self-centredness, seeking our own happiness, endlessly asking why we haven't found it yet. We feel helpless. But we are still reluctant to exercise those 'acts of helplessness' that would actually turn things around. The great teachers of the wisdom traditions teach us that in the worst crisis of change, however hopeless or uncontrollable it seems, our meditation, those contemplative acts of helplessness, are the best means available to let go and keep moving forward.

Jesus does not call us not to pursue personal happiness directly. We trample over too many others if we

do that. Instead, we are invited to attend to the needs of others in order to find the true happiness of the Self that so far transcends that of the ego. But how can I help others when I have so little myself?

"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?", Peter asked at the feeding of the multitude. As the individuals in the crowd started to re-distribute what they had with each other, he discovered the miracle of transformation released by sharing.



Bonnevaux

In a time of change, when we tend to retain our resources in self-protectionism, this truth, not some external magic or mastery of events, is the redemptive wisdom.

Mahayana Buddhism reflects this, too, in the idea of the bodhisattva way of life. We looked at this teaching over the days at Monte Oliveto. It begins with a desire to awaken the mind to truth but it then requires that we ac-

tually practice it. It is like the transition from wanting to meditate to actually learning to meditate. However often and badly we fail, the faithful commitment will lead us home. In pursuing our own happiness we undermine whatever happiness we have. But by seeing ourselves as 'medicine for the sick' and determining to reduce the suffering of others as a first priority we can stare down the forces of denial and despair which arise from the self-centred mind. These dark doubts are then exposed as 'weaklings to be subdued by wisdom's gaze'. As ever, we find our true strength in embracing our actual weakness.

Speaking about the teaching and living the teaching are not the same thing. In our Bonnevaux vision we are risking to live it; and it is teaching me something about the mystery of change. Looking back to some of the turning points in our community, our move to Montreal, the death of Father John, the transition from Montreal (where I am writing this today on my birthday) to the World Community and its many transitions over the past twenty-five years, there are a lot of changes to learn from. The question, in the crisis of change, is not only 'how do we get through this?' but 'what next?'

There is always something next. Even when we do nothing, there is something next. Often if, from fear or denial, we do nothing what comes next is harmful. If, from hubris or impatience, we do too much it can be harmful too. So what we do needs to be measured.

Bonnevaux is the next thing for us. It is our way to align with the force of change that our community, by serving its mission, must face. As I visit Bonnevaux regularly – early next year

I will move there permanently - I have seen more clearly why we have been led there. Our 'monastery without walls' does not need centralisation but it needs a physical centre for it to grow, for a new generation of teachers of meditation to be nurtured, for pilgrims to come and find a stepping stone to the next level of their journey, for the institutions and professions of the world to encounter the contemplative consciousness they have lost. And, anyway, who does not need a home?

Stability in the right kind of centre is the best condition for growth. The right kind of physical centre is whatever best reflects the true centre,

However often and badly we fail, the faithful commitment will lead us home

which is the heart. You know that you are in touch with the heart when you can face reality with the minimum of fear and the highest level of love, seeing the world not only in its darkness but as also bathed in the light of truth, of beauty and of simple human kindness. The best solutions to problems arise from this simplicity of perception.

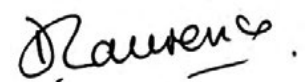
So, Bonnevaux represents a big change for the World Community but also a way for us all to learn how to deal with change in the best and most humane way. It began and continues as a work of faith, our being faithful to the story so far and so to the next thing. In terms of people, finances and everything else, I must tell you there are no absolute certainties. That means the fulfilment of the Bonnevaux potential will depend upon the faith that others, new and old, friends and members of the commu-

nity, will tangibly put into it: time, talent and treasure.

I feel this to be a powerful affirmation of its rightness. So far, at each turn there has been a touch of grace, an unexpected gift, the passing tip of an angel's wing. Two of our core community at Bonnevaux, whom I thanked for their sacrifice in giving up so much to serve it. They said they didn't look on it as a sacrifice but as a privilege. The young volunteer who had never meditated before but who came for three weeks and immersed herself in the rhythm of the daily life and has been meditating since she left. The architects who come and meditate with us in between the technical meetings. The workmen who do not play radios on the building site in order to maintain the spirit of silence. The French community who have formed five skilled working committees to cover different aspects of the project. The visitors from many parts of the world who have visited and stayed on site or nearby in order to share and support the daily building-up of this new centre and home – that we hope will become a small working model of how life can be lived in the crisis of our times.

Thank you for keeping Bonnevaux in your hearts and intentions so that our community can change and change for the better for generations to come, long after the global crisis we are facing today has been navigated and humanity faces new and more hopeful possibilities.

With much love



Laurence Freeman OSB

News

The Guiding Board Meeting 2018

A time of transition for our Community



The Guiding Board meeting 2018 was held in London 21- 24 March. This annual meeting shapes the community's priorities and discusses long-term challenges, harmonising the local and global aspects of the community. This year, the discussions covered Bonnevaux, in aspects like the renovation work, fundraising and planning of future life and programmes. The Board agreed that one of our main goals at this stage is to strengthen the individual and communal sense of Bonnevaux as a home for all meditators and a witness to the world of the gift of meditation and a way to develop contemplative consciousness in all fields of life.

Another part of the discussion recognised that the World Community has entered a time of transition. The need for change and a commitment growth at different levels (organization, the international team, succession plan) was part of the discussion. This is not restricted to succession planning for individual leaders, such as Fr Laurence, although this is impor-

tant to address. But it also involves envisioning the future in all leadership roles, in developing a new generation of teachers (that is already coming to the fore) and in the priorities of our in-reach and outreach work.

A key proposal discussed was about developing a Faculty of Teachers. This would be composed especially of meditators able to lead retreats and events at an international level. Connected to that is the need to stimulate young people to grow in the teaching and personal commitment by sharing in and learning through retreats, seminars, pilgrimages and online courses. A major priority is finding a leader for the youth dimension and build a network to support its growth. We will pilot an event with this in mind for young people at Bonnevaux in July of 2019.

Many countries have been generous in supporting the community's international work, Bonnevaux especially. But the challenge remains to help the local meditator see their connection to the greater family. This is not just about financial giving but

nurturing the feeling of participation and shared responsibility for the whole. A 'member' of the WCCM is described in the Constitution as someone who meditates in the tradition of Christian meditation as passed on by John Main. This is central to our sense of community. But the idea of creating the opportunity for an optional annual members' financial contribution was positively discussed.

This year the GB received some topics for discussion via a new channel on the website, called "Ask the Guiding Board". One question some members asked the GB to look at was an apparent "gender imbalance" in some Community activities, especially major speakers at events. The Board spoke of this in small groups and in plenary session. The sense was that there is a good representation of women in leadership in the WCCM globally, especially in terms of National Coordinators. But it was agreed that the GB calls for improvement in having more women teachers leading events and more women patrons. The Board has already initiated this in the John Main Seminars of 2018 and 2019.

Two other topics discussed were promoting more interfaith meditation groups and the need to raise the consciousness of the environment and sustainability in all activities and events of WCCM. The Board felt that especially Bonnevaux and events like Meditatio Seminars and the John Main Seminar could achieve growth in this area.

News

Interfaith Meditation for Peace, Manchester



Meditatio initiated an *Interfaith Meditation for Peace* on the 25th of May at Manchester Cathedral. It commemorated the victims of the Manchester Arena terrorist attack last year and also celebrated the spirit of unity and peace that it generated. Fr Laurence spoke at the event and the programme included periods of meditation, interfaith readings, and a Peace Flag Ceremony by the World Peace Prayer Society with a meditative walk led by the Thich Nhat Hanh Sangha. Read an article by David McKenna and listen to the talk by Fr Laurence here: <http://tiny.cc/mchpeace18>

Working and Meditating with the marginalised in the UK

Meditatio is pleased to announce that it is partnering with the Homelessness Charity Depaul UK and the Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough, to offer the opportunity for three people from our Community to spend time living and working in the John Paul Centre in the heart of Middlesbrough, UK. The required funding is currently being sourced to provide a small stipend and living costs for the successful applicants. The vision is for the volunteers to establish a daily meditation programme at the centre whilst at the same time receive professional training from Depaul. The project will be supervised by Terry Doyle, a WCCM Oblate who works for Depaul. For more information contact terry-doyle@live.co.uk

Meditatio Seminars

UK

The Meditatio Seminar ***Contemplative Christianity - Today*** (11-13 May) brought Prof Bernard McGinn to Derbyshire, UK. The event had 160 participants and included workshops with Revd Dr Sarah Bachelard, Prof Mark Burrows, Chris Hurley, Daniel Soars and Dr Monica Tobon.

One in Christ - Why do LGBTQI people feel excluded by the Churches? was the theme of an evening led by Sarah Bachelard and James Allison at the Meditatio Centre in London on the 15th of May.

Malaysia

The WCCM Malaysia held a Meditatio Seminar on 9th June entitled ***Compassionate Presence: Interfaith Approaches to Palliative Care***, in Petaling Jaya, with 140 participants, many from the healthcare profession from across the country. A few were from Singapore, India and one from England. It was a unique, uplifting, luminous event. Input sessions were interwoven with music, poetry, song and dance reflecting the rich diversity of Malaysian culture. The talks were by a range of healthcare professionals from the government and private sectors who were both inspiring and inspired by the event.

In sharing our meditation together, we are not trying to possess one another or to change one another. Each of us seeks to be to the fullest of our potential. (John Main)

News

Bonnevaux: Seeds of Community, Signs of Change



Group visit during the Neighbor's Day in Bonnevaux (May 26th)

By Laurence Freeman OSB

Building work at Bonnevaux has been progressing and we are on schedule. Exterior work on the Abbaye – the main building where the community will be based – is almost complete and the interior work is starting. Work on the barn – the Conference Centre – has just begun. Both should be complete by next Easter. The stables – the guesthouse – begins in the Fall and is scheduled for the end of 2019. Necessary planning permissions – such as for the retreat 'cells' which are part of a later phase – have come through. We are planning for an inaugural celebration for June 15th next year.

A happy surprise has been discovering vestiges of the original monastery – windows and arches – which we are incorporating as signs of the long spiritual tradition of Bonnevaux we

are continuing. A small vaulted area (previously used for storage) has been designated as an icon chapel and place of silent adoration.

The small resident community is meditating morning, noon and evening and welcoming guests and volunteers. Recently, meditators and new friends have come from Finland, Holland, France, Germany, UK, Ireland, USA, Australia and Canada to share the life and work. WCCM France has engaged fully with realising the Bonnevaux vision in practical ways. A number of working groups concerning legal and financial, environmental and programme planning are working together.

Much daily manual work involves the organic vegetable garden. It's a joy to see the potatoes, squash, rad-

ishes, lettuce and tomatoes and other natural food grow and grace the community table from the pure earth of Bonnevaux. Local environmental agencies have done a survey praising the unspoiled state which the property has preserved. We see ourselves as stewards of the land to help it be a sign of practical beauty and harmony between humanity and the environment.

Financially we still need your continued support – especially for the second half of Phase One, the guesthouse and heating system. We have been blessed by the generosity of many donors in the form of small and major gifts, from individuals, national communities and foundations. We have (wonderfully) come half way. But it is still a journey of faith and work in progress. So please: if you have not contributed yet will you think of doing so?

Can you also remember Bonnevaux in your will so that it will be strengthened for future generations? And if you have already helped, can you contribute a bit more, thus helping Bonnevaux realise the vision of an inclusively Christian contemplative centre growing the seed of peace and friendship in our troubled world?

A small community is already established at Bonnevaux. Major building renovation will be underway until next year so there is limited accommodation. If you would like to visit or stay please contact Andrew Cresswell
Email: accueil@bonnevauxwccm.org
Phone: +33(0)644139745

Visit the website
www.bonnevauxwccm.org

News

25th Anniversary of WCCM Malaysia: Pilgrimages to Indonesia... and Bonnevaux!



The Malaysian group at the JMC with Indonesian meditators

By Patricia Por, WCCM Malaysia National Coordinator

We have been asked 'Why Indonesia?' Firstly, Indonesia has the largest number of meditation groups (116) and the only John Main Centre in Asia. Secondly, we share a common national language and are culturally very similar. Thirdly, the country is close by and the trip affordable. But most of all we wanted our meditators to experience what it means to be part of a wider community. On arrival in Jakarta, our group of 22 pilgrims, accompanied by Fr. Paul Cheong, OFM were welcomed by Mrs Kindawati, National Coordinator WCCM Indonesia. 'Ibu Kin,' as she is fondly known, was our host, tour leader and guide. She went out of her way to ensure our trip went smoothly.

Daily engagements over the six days took us to five different churches and cathedrals, each with its own distinct architecture and historical background. The most striking of these was the Santa Maria de Fatima (Toasebio) church,

built in the early 19th century with all elements of a Chinese temple in the heart of Chinatown, Jakarta.

Our time at Lembah Karmel Cikanyere offered a serene space for contemplation. It is a retreat enclave run by the Daughters of Carmel. What a privilege it was to spend a quiet day on the Feast of the Ascension in this haven of peace and tranquillity tucked away in the highlands. We next travelled to the nearby Franciscan Monastery of Cipanas, which also houses an orphanage and were welcomed by Fr. Martin Harun, OFM, a retired Dutch priest. We were entranced by our trip to Bogor Botanical Gardens, about to become one of three world heritage sites for Botanical Gardens, the other two being Kew Gardens in London and Singapore Botanical Gardens. Following this expedition, we were invited to the home of one of the local meditators for meditation and fellowship with the Bogor

meditation community.

In Jakarta, we toured Istiqial Mosque, situated alongside the Gothic style Catholic Cathedral. It was deliberately positioned such by the late President Sukarno to symbolize religious harmony. Later, we stopped at the oldest Buddhist temple in the city, the Sin Tek Bio Pagoda. We also felt honoured by the opportunity to meditate in the 'Vatican church' at the residence of the Papal Nuncio.

The highlight of our experience was the Sunday morning contemplative mass celebrated at the John Main Centre, donated by an Indonesian meditator, Mr. Suhendro. Beautifully crafted buildings in quiet green surroundings offer a conducive atmosphere for retreats and other related activities.

Throughout our trip, we were extended tremendous hospitality by the Indonesian community and were deeply touched by the number of people who took time off from work to be with us. Many came from afar and some accompanied us on our trips to various locations. Our times of meditation together were richly binding. The warm fellowship over meals even included a evening of karaoke fun.

It was so wonderful to see such a vibrant, young meditation community in action. A million thanks to Mrs Kin and her team for making us feel utterly welcome and at home, and for bringing alive the reality that Meditation creates Community.

Our next destination... Bonnevaux! Here we come for the 'du Plat Principal'!

News

Paul Harris' new Q&A's about Christian Meditation

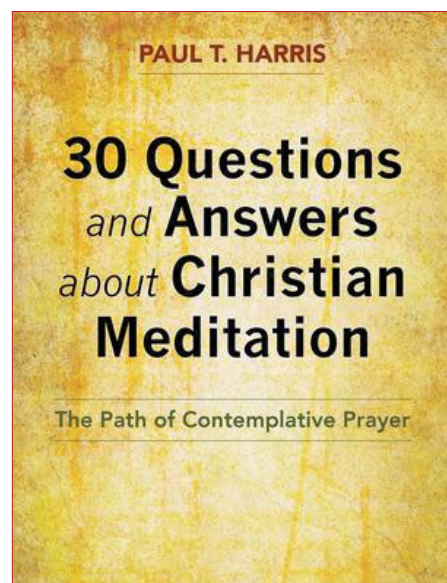
By Darrell Taylor

The question-and-answer approach in this book has a long tradition in the teaching of religion and spirituality. Scripture experts tell us that Jesus asked 183 questions in the gospels to help create dialogue and a response to his teaching. Benedictine monk, John Main, had a custom of encouraging questions at the end of his talks about this way of prayer. Paul Harris continues the tradition in his new book of questions and answers pertaining to the practice of Christian Meditation.

Drawing upon 35 years of meditation practice, as well as his experience giving workshops, retreats and conferences worldwide, the author provides a step-by-step explanation of Christian Meditation for the beginner, the curious and the ongoing meditator. He is a former Canadian coordinator of Christian Meditation,

Patron of the World Community for Christian Meditation, and a weekly meditation group leader. This is his eighth book on the subject.

The new questions cover such topics as the differences and similarities between Christian Meditation and Mindfulness practice; the current ubiquitous interest in teaching children to meditate; and the inner healing of childhood trauma that takes place during this way of prayer. Other topics include the important role of John Cassian (360–435 AD) in the teaching of contemplative prayer; the significance of the 14th-century author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and his advice on the repetition of a prayer word; and an in-depth look at the life of Benedictine John Main and his key role in the teaching of Christian Meditation in easy-to-understand language for people today.



30 Questions and Answers about Christian Meditation: The Path of Contemplative Prayer. Novalis Publishing, Toronto, Canada. 125 pages. Foreword by Laurence Freeman.
MORE INFO: <http://tiny.cc/qabkPaulH>



Contemplative Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Led by Laurence Freeman OSB

15 Feb 2019 - 10 DAYS

<http://bit.ly/HL2019>

In Focus

Martin and Deirdre Quiery

Leadership Consultants from Northern Ireland who live in Mallorca and travel the world working in over 30 countries



Martin and I met at Leeds University in the Catholic Chaplaincy forty years ago. Martin's career developed from being a textile physicist, an engineer, later a Chartered Accountant and then a Leadership Consultant. I started my career in Financial Services and then moved into a Consulting and a Sales role with a US Global Talent Consultancy. After a lucky lead I signed a contract which meant that I achieved my annual sales target in one client visit. The resulting 6 months' salary gave me an opportunity to encourage Martin to explore what he wanted to do with his life. He was happy as a Financial Director and enjoyed working with his team

but I was convinced that life held more meaning for him.

At that point – 16 years ago, we had been meditating for 4 years – so when I was offered the opportunity to be Country Manager for Ireland we decided that the best way to make a decision about what to do would be to create our own one week silent retreat when on holiday in Mallorca. We thought that being in silence for a week would allow wisdom to bubble up from beneath the small "self." At the end of the week we each took a piece of paper. I wrote upon my page – "Go to Ireland." Martin wrote on his "Come to Mallorca."

I asked Martin "Why do you want to do this?" He said, "I think we will learn a lot here." I realised that the reason I wanted to go to Ireland was out of fear. What would happen if neither of us had a job? As soon as I realised that it was fear holding me back – I changed my mind. We gave away the possessions acquired over 22 years of marriage and headed for Mallorca with two suitcases and the cat, Ziggy. We rented a remote house in an olive grove with no running water, no TV, no internet, no telephone and only sheep for neighbours. It

was impossible not to feel a part of Nature. We were connected to the orange and olive trees around us, the clouds which flowed over the mountains, the sea which sparkled in the distance and the sheep whose bells tinkled ceaselessly into the night.

We discovered a Christian Zen meditation group run by a Catholic priest in Palma. We meditated while slowly building our Consultancy Company – Seven Rocks Consultants. We read the books of John Main and Laurence Freeman. My Mother from Belfast had meditated with a WCCM group attached to Holy Cross Church many years before. In the week before she died, she said to me, "Why don't you give up your big job and follow Laurence Freeman?"

Martin and I joined Laurence on Bere Island for the Holy Week retreat. We then created two meditation groups in Mallorca. Although we explored Zen and Vipassana meditation – it has been fulfilling to join WCCM and to deepen our understanding and practice of the Christian contemplative tradition – keeping the contemplative flame alive for leaders worldwide and for local Mallorcans, Germans and Swiss living in Soller.



Meditatio Newsletter is published four times a year by the International Office of The World Community for Christian Meditation, St Marks, Myddelton Square London EC1R 1XX, London, UK.
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7278 2070

Editor: Leonardo Corrêa
(leonardo@wccm.org)

Graphic Design: Gerson Laureano

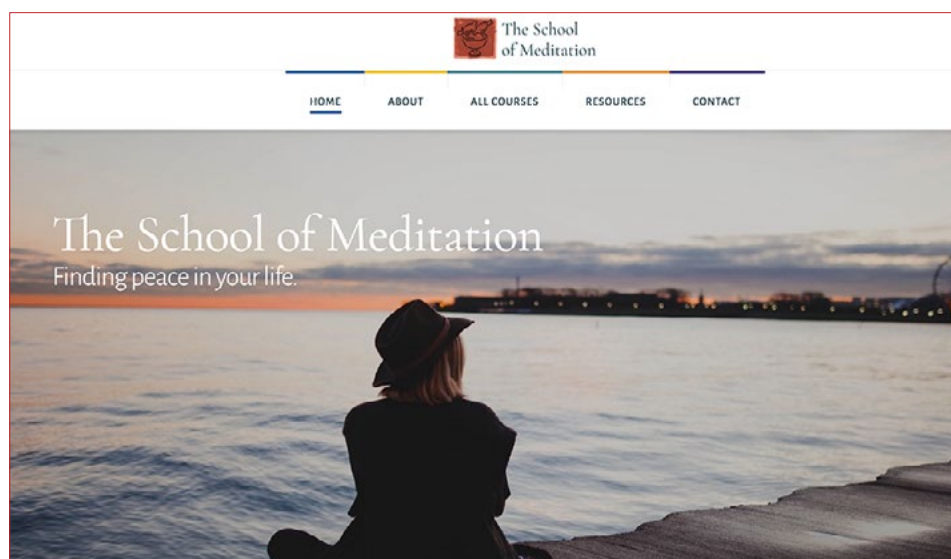
Would you like to contribute to the Meditatio Newsletter? Our next deadline is 10 September.

Resources

New School of Meditation website

www.theschoolofmeditation.org

Designed to help you on your journey of meditation explore the website for a range of resources. There are also new online courses: *How to Meditate*, *An Introduction to Christian Meditation - A Six Week Course* and *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*.



CDs

Praying with the Masters Today 2



This CD continues with the theme of contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition. CD 1 presented the tradition as observed in the early church. In this CD, McGinn discusses the modern mystics including the Carthusians, Cistercians, Julian of Norwich and others.

Listen to or download the tracks:

<http://tiny.cc/MED2018B>

Order a copy of the CD:

<http://tiny.cc/mcginn2nd>

The Roots Course



It provides an overview of the contemplative tradition starting from Jesus spanning 2000 years! The entire course is divided into 3 terms and each term consists of 8 Lessons. Each lesson focuses on a mystic, and we learn about the times they lived in, their life witness and their spirituality. Each lesson also has extracts from their writings and inspirations to help us in our spiritual practice. There is also a bibliography, audio and visual recordings to allow you to explore further.

For more information visit:

www.theschoolofmeditation.org

Watch online and
Download the Teachings
www.wccm.org/media-page



The WCCM Media Page is an easy way to find all our multimedia resources - audio and video - ready to enjoy online or download. The playlists and tracks are organized in categories, such as Retreats, John Main Seminar, Education, Leadership, etc.

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

VISIT WCCM's ONLINE BOOKSTORE: <https://mediomedia.com/>



UK and EUROPE
www.goodnewsbooks.co.uk
email:
orders@goodnewsbooks.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 1582 571011

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

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

ASIA
email: mmi@wccm.org
Tel: +65 6469 7671

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

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

Christian Meditation

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY



Meditation With Children IN OTTAWA

See pages C4 and C5

SUMMER 2018 ISSUE

Monthly Knox talk in Toronto	C2	Meditation with Children in Ottawa.....	C4
New online school / Essential teaching in B.C.....	C3	Father Laurence tour this October	C6
Mini retreat on the Seaway.....	C8		

THE MONTHLY “KNOX TALK” IN TORONTO

“To be on the path is the only thing necessary”

On the last Thursday of most months of the year, the Toronto Christian meditation community holds an evening of meditation and mingling, headed up by a talk on a subject of interest by a member or friend of the community.

In May, the room in Knox College in the University of Toronto was filled to capacity. The featured speaker was a popular favourite, Ottawa’s Paul Harris.

A long-time Ottawa resident, Paul was born in Toronto, 91 years ago. He became a journalist at the *Globe and Mail*, and went on to direct the Catholic Information Centre as it struggled to fit the teachings of the Second Vatican Council into the daily lives of ordinary Catholics, Protestants and others in Toronto.

Paul’s talk was full of reminiscences and humour about those experiences. Yet its real purpose was to sketch the profiles of four remarkable spiritual personalities, whose influence upon his own spiritual journey has endured to this day.

The first was Catherine Doherty, founder of today’s Madonna House Apostolate in Combermere, Ontario, near Algonquin Park. Born a Russian aristocrat – and Paul still prefers to call her simply “the Baroness” – she fled to Canada after the revolution. When the Depression struck, she founded Friendship House – a precursor to Madonna House – to serve the poor of

Toronto, and then in several US cities.

In 1941, Catherine met one of the volunteers at the Harlem Friendship House, in New York City, a young layman struggling to find his own spiritual way forward. His name was Thomas Merton, and he never forgot the guidance he had gained from the Baroness.

In 1948 Paul Harris met her, and she remained his friend and mentor for 40 years. It may be that Merton learned from the Baroness the same lessons Paul did: the spiritual value of manual labour, the way of life in a Christian community, and an understanding which had remained with her from her early religious life in the Orthodox Church, the vital role of contemplation in the life of the spirit.

In the 1950s, Paul met his second great influence – co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement and possible future saint, Dorothy Day. He saw immediately, he recalls, that this was a woman who put the Gospel into action, committed to the poor and to social justice. She reminded him of the Baroness.

Paul surprised his audience with the news that Dorothy Day was a meditator, who first developed her own practice from reading the classic book *The Way of the Pilgrim*. She also became a Benedictine Oblate in 1955.

Continues on page C7

We love to hear from you!

New email addresses for WCCM-Canada

The email addresses for a number of programs of WCCM-Canada have changed. This will save us a very large portion of the money we used to pay for the service.

Even better, it gives our email addresses a strong identification, consistency and memorability, as you can see below.

The new addresses for the newsletter, the Friends program, the Benedictine Oblates, and our National Resource Centre (for books, materials and information) are, respectively:

newsletter@wccm-canada.ca

oblates@wccm-canada.ca

friends@wccm-canada.ca

christianmeditation@wccm-canada.ca

The general phone number for the National Resource Centre **has not changed**. It is still **514-485-7928**. Be sure to leave a message, and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

NEW ONLINE SCHOOL OF MEDITATION

“Learning to be”

Every so often, says Fr Laurence, a really significant milestone occurs in the World Community for Christian Meditation. The latest is the launching of the new School of Meditation website.

Found online at www.theschoolofmeditation.org, the School website brings together and makes accessible many of the rich resources of the WCCM community. Even more, the site offers online courses in different subjects related to our practice and our journey.

To start with, the School offers three courses:

- How to Meditate
- A Six-Week Introduction to Christian Meditation
- The Roots of Christian Meditation (Part 1)

The first one, How to Meditate, is free of charge, and consists of three lessons. The other two are longer and charge a fee.

This is only the beginning, and more courses will be added on a regular basis. It is intended, in the words of Fr Laurence, to “energize and strengthen the lived commitment to the practice that is the heart of our community.”

And in the words of Fr John, our first teacher of meditation:

In the silence of meditation, when you go beyond thought and imagination, you begin to understand that being is what life is about. In meditation you are learning to be. The wonder of it is that the more simple you become, the more you are able to enjoy to the full the gift of your being.

ESSENTIAL TEACHING WEEKEND IN B.C.

Faith and perseverance on the long road to the heart

A diverse group of twenty-four people came together on the weekend of May 25-27 to learn more about Christian Meditation – its origins, the discipline and, perhaps, how to teach it to others.

Some of us were experienced meditators. Others were just beginning their search. Still others were already leading meditation groups.

All came out enriched and inspired to share the gift of meditation. To help them, each was presented with a book, *Sharing the Gift, Resources Book for Passing on Christian Meditation*.

The weekend was held at the Little Flower Monastery in Deroche, B.C., run by the Discalced Carmelite Fathers.

Embarking on a journey of meditation is not a linear walk. It follows a more circuitous path, like that of a labyrinth – sometimes you don’t know if you’re on the right path at all! But eventually if you are faithful, you learn to persevere and discover that “you are on the path that leads to fullness of life,” as Rev. Phil Barnett told the attendees.

Phil is the coordinator of the Canadian Christian Meditation Community’s School of Meditation, which organizes Essential Teaching Weekends like the one in Deroche.

Phil and his wife had made a long drive to B.C. that week, from their home in Manitoba, and he turned

Continues on page C6



L-R: JoAnn Kelly Cullen, (BC Regional Coordinator), Rev. Phil Barnett, Colleen Donald (former National Coordinator) and Fr. Alexander Braganza OCD

Canadian Christian Meditation Community National Resource Centre

P.O. Box 52, Station NDG
Montreal, Quebec H4A 3P4
514-485-7928

christianmeditation@wccm-canada.ca
www.wccm-canada.ca

Editorial Team

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

Send submissions to newsletter coordinator Carolyn Boerboom at newsletter@wccm-canada.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

MEDITATION WITH CHILDREN IN OTTAWA

“Let the little children come to me”

This year, just before Easter, I contacted Jan Bentham, Religious Education and Family Life Education Coordinator with the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB) requesting an update on the growth of Christian Meditation with Children (CMC) in Ottawa’s Catholic schools.

Here is an excerpt of that email:

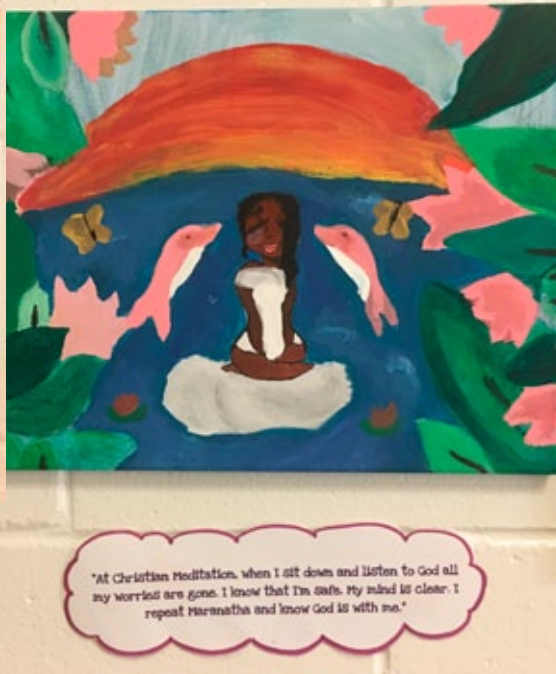
I know that over the past two years, some Christian meditators who have family members or acquaintances that teach have been invited into classrooms on a casual basis to introduce CMC to the children and teachers. Yet I’m wondering if there is any school where their efforts have taken root to make it an important and regular part of the school day.

Reply:

We promote Christian meditation whenever we have the chance. We had several staff attend Ernie Christie’s workshop, *Putting into the Deep* (2015). We have distributed Paul Tratnyek’s book across the board. We have many schools and classrooms using Christian meditation regularly, but I am not always aware of who or when.

We recently highlighted Christian meditation at our recent midyear retreat with Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Corporation (EOCCC) at Galilee.

The bishops are very much in favour of Christian meditation and it is referenced in the new





I like Christian meditation because I feel peaceful and I love the word of God.



Letting God enter your heart to fill it with confidence and good!



TRUST

Christian meditation means patience and trust to me.

religion program, *Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ*.

Our teachers have had a great deal of exposure. We actually have one school that does whole assembly Christian meditation. We continue to promote this and will be giving it more and more promotion in the coming years.

It's good to know that CMC has taken root in the Board's classrooms. The Toronto Catholic District School Board currently has a pilot project where 20 classrooms in 7 different schools are involved. It would be encouraging to see the OCSB's promotion of CMC eventually result in something similar.

Paul Tratnyek, to whom Jan refers, was recently appointed the WCCM's International Coordinator for Christian Meditation with Children. Paul provided a provincial update on CMC, which appeared in the April 2018 CCMC newsletter. He mentions that this

past fall a professional development day was facilitated for the staff of a high school, and its neighbouring elementary school, in the Algonquin Lakeshore District School Board in Eastern Ontario. He indicates that they were very receptive and keen on bringing Christian meditation to their students.

Paul's book, which Jan also mentioned, is *Christian Meditation with Children*, available from WCCM-Canada's bookstore for \$5. To order your own copy, use the form on page C7.

An Ottawa teacher asked her Grade 4 students to draw pictures of what Christian meditation means to them. Some examples are reprinted here.

**Theresa Ziebell
Ottawa**

Theresa's article, and these stunning works of children's faith-filled art, appeared originally in the Ottawa Area Christian Meditation Community's 2018 Summer Newsletter.

RETREATS IN MONTREAL, OTTAWA, TORONTO

Fr Laurence's visit to eastern Canada, Oct 3-12

The canvas of life on earth is filled with brilliant light but also at times deep darkness. This is reflected in our personal journey. Meditation teaches us how to keep steady through these changes. We also learn that this light shines in the dark and can never be extinguished. This contemplative knowledge is born from experience and changes not only us but the world.

This is the conference theme – entitled *Light & Shade: The Ups & Downs of Life* – which Fr Laurence Freeman will be addressing, at events in three eastern Canadian cities this October.

Fr Laurence will spend several days in Montreal in advance of the conference there – leading a retreat with our sister organization of French-speaking meditators, *Méditation chrétienne du Québec et des régions francophones du Canada*, and attending a session of the *International Palliative Care Conference* – a biennial event created by Dr Balfour Mount, a founding figure in the field of palliative care in Canada, a long-time meditator, and a close friend of Fr John Main and Fr Laurence.



Three cities, three conferences

All three conferences will be led by Fr Laurence Freeman, director of the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM). Fr Laurence is the acknowledged spiritual successor to Fr John Main and, like him, is a Benedictine monk. He is also an international speaker, an acclaimed retreat leader, and a spiritual writer and autobiographer.

Fr Laurence has long been active in inter-religious dialogue and peace initiatives, and in the teaching of Christian meditation to children and students. He is dedicated to working for the recovery of the contemplative wisdom tradition in the Church and in society at large.

In 2009, Father Laurence was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada, in recognition of “his contributions as spiritual leader and director of the World Community for Christian Meditation and as a proponent of peace and inter-religious dialogue and understanding.”

Fr Laurence will be in western Canada in 2019, when the annual John Main Seminar is held in Vancouver.

MONTREAL

Tuesday 9 October

Two Sessions: 2:00-4:30 p.m.
and 7:30-10:00 p.m.

Concordia University, Loyola Chapel,
7141 Sherbrooke Street West

\$60 for both sessions with pre-registration,
\$30 for one session (afternoon or
evening) with pre-registration, or
\$40 at the door for each session

For info or pre-registration: Pat Brabant
514-484-0845, brabant.patricia@videotron.ca

OTTAWA

Wednesday 10 October:
7:00-10:00 p.m.

St Paul's University, Gigués Hall
Amphitheatre, 223 Main Street

\$30 at the door – seating is limited

For info or to reserve a seat:
cmadventretreat@gmail.com

TORONTO

Thursday 11 October:
6:00-10:00 p.m.

Cody Hall, St Paul's Anglican
Church, 227 Bloor Street East

\$30 at the door, \$10 for students
with ID – no pre-registration

For info: Elaine Mills, 416-962-7111,
wccmtoronto2@gmail.com

Essential Teaching Weekend in B.C. continued from page C3

that experience into an allegory for the long journey of meditation. The two of them took their time, stopping along the way to enjoy the places they passed through, rather than hurrying on, thinking of nothing but their destination.

Similarly, he said, we pass through many stages on our journey of meditation. We should pay attention to and appreciate exactly where we are on that journey, at all times.

“Even from one meditation period to the next, there can be a huge difference in our ability to say the mantra continuously,” Phil explained.

The Little Flower Monastery is located in a beautiful setting at the foot of a mountain, an inspiring venue for an inspiring weekend.

Ted Alcuitys
Vancouver BC

The third pivotal personality Paul encountered was the theologian Gregory Baum. Born in Berlin to a Jewish mother, the teenage Baum was sent to England in 1938 to study English. Later coming to Canada and Catholicism, he became an Augustinian monk in 1947, and developed into one of the great theologians, in a truly great generation of Catholic thinkers.

An advisor to the bishops at the Second Vatican Council, he was a passionate advocate for social justice, for fellowship with Protestantism and non-Christian religions, and for throwing open the Church's windows on the world.

He was also a profoundly spiritual man who calmed and inspired those around him. Paul, who met him just before the convening of the Vatican Council, was deeply affected by Baum's humanistic approach to religion. He told the audience that Gregory Baum had opened his heart, and the hearts of many others, "to a faith centered and grounded on Jesus in the Gospels."

And the fourth personality who changed the direction of Paul's spiritual path was John Main. Unlike the other three, Paul never met Fr John, but their encounter was

as consequential as any of the others. "John Main influenced and changed my entire spiritual life forever," he told his audience.

For Paul, John Main unified and harmonized the lessons he had learned from his other spiritual mentors, especially in his teaching on love and serving others. "All four of them saw contemplative prayer and action as two sides of the same coin."

Thus it was John Main who – for Paul, as for so many of us – brought the Christian message vividly and inescapably to life. He summed up this experience in the words of Lucy McDonald, a dear friend of his in Ireland, who had also been a friend of Fr John's.

She wrote, "In the passing years since John Main's death, I have come to realize his wisdom, and that to be on the path is the only thing necessary. Meditation is still a struggle, still a discipline, and the distractions are still there. But the slow transformation of one's life into love is what makes the struggle so worthwhile."

**Jeff Ewener
Toronto**



Paul Harris: "The slow transformation of one's life into love"

Canadian Christian Meditation Community

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

514-485-7928 • christianmeditation@wccm-canada.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)

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____
 Telephone _____ Email _____

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO CCMC
 Or by credit card:

Card #: _____ Expiry: _____ / _____

PUBLICATIONS ORDER AND DONATIONS			
Quantity	Title	Price	Total
_____	30 Questions and Answers about Christian Meditation. Author: Paul Harris See book review in the International section.	\$17.00	_____
_____	Christian Meditation with Children. Author: Paul Tratnyek	\$5.00	_____

POSTAGE (Price + 10%) _____

TOTAL _____

DONATIONS / NEWSLETTER _____

TOTAL AMOUNT _____

Mini Retreat on the Seaway: Simply be

On Saturday, May 12, 2018, Seaway Area Coordinator Robin Lane welcomed everyone to their Annual Spring Mini-Retreat, held this year in Brockville at Wall St. United Church. In attendance were 35 meditators from Athens, Kingston, Morrisburg, Ottawa, Belleville and Brockville.

Denis Paquette, our guest speaker from Ottawa, presented two talks. His first was entitled “Attitudes I can carry with me as I meditate.” Meditation, he admitted, is difficult to do. Fortunately, there are attitudes, both active and passive, that we can adopt to help us.

Denis observed that we come together to meditate for different reasons: perhaps to find peace and order in our life, perhaps to feel closer to God, perhaps even to contact Him (or Her).

We want to find God, but in reality we have already been found. God is within us. We just need to be receptive to His presence.

This attitude of openness leads us to what God has to offer us: love and confidence. We open our hands to be renewed, to share and to give. We let go of our separate self – with all its judgements and thoughts that bombard us in our daily life – and we simply allow the Divine to reveal Itself to us. The good news of the Bible is that the Kingdom of God is here and now. God is working in us right now. In meditation we make space for Him to re-create us.

By repeating the mantra, Maranatha, we simplify everything. By focusing on the mantra, we free ourselves from the thinking process and from our attachments. We are free to really listen to others and to experience God, who is already within us.

If we adopt an attitude of letting go and letting be, we free ourselves of ego – which will resist! In meditation, we surrender to God’s love and to His world as it is, and as it should be. If we adopt this attitude, we will experience fewer anxious moments and gain the freedom to just be, and to trust God. We will connect our self to our Self.

When we make a decision to rest in God and simply be, beyond our sense of self, we let go, and experience awakening in God.

After lunch, in his second talk of the day, Denis spoke about spirituality. He said that renewal is at the heart of creation. We need to look with faith and confidence, with the eyes of the heart, as we watch what happens in the journey of our daily life. Each of us needs to love and to be loved, to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, and to serve.

We are made in the image of our “Maker” and are to follow “the Way” as Jesus did, among the people He met along the way. For we are all on a journey, discovering ourselves and others.

We are fed by God who fills all our needs and desires, just as Jesus took care of His disciples. There is suffering along the journey, but the suffering deepens the meaning of the joy we experience.

The way we express our spirituality is our journey. There are many traditions, many ways of expressing our faith, among all the many faiths of the world. God is love and loves all. He wants us to continue on our long road to ourselves, and to Him

**Jeaneine Beaupré
Morrisburg ON**

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
Canadian Christian Meditation Community
P.O. Box 52, Station NDG
Montreal, Quebec H4A 3P4
Email: christianmeditation@wccm-canada.ca
Tel: 514-485-7928
www.wccm-canada.ca
Past issues of the Newsletter can be found at:
The Medio Media Canada Bookstore:
www.mediomedia.ca

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40007931