

Meditatio

Newsletter of The
World Community
for Christian Meditation



www.wccm.org

Registered Charity No. 327173 - INTERNATIONAL EDITION, Vol 43 No 1; April 2019

Resurrection beyond time

Laurence Freeman reflects how Resurrection send us into life in a new way



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Dear Friends,

A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

During our WCCM Pilgrimage to Israel last month we visited the city that the gospels call 'Jesus' own city', Capernaum. Born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, once he began his teaching and travelling mission, he moved his base of operation to Capernaum on the north-east shore of the Sea of Galilee. Now it is an archaeological site but then it was an international highway connecting with the wider world. Here, he spoke regularly on the sabbath, called his disciples and healed people. From the fifth century a church existed on the traditional site of Peter's house – perhaps the 1st century house whose foundations we visited and where Jesus came (Mt 8:14) to heal Peter's mother-in-law. Perhaps (many perhapses) it was where Jesus made his home whenever he came back to Capernaum.

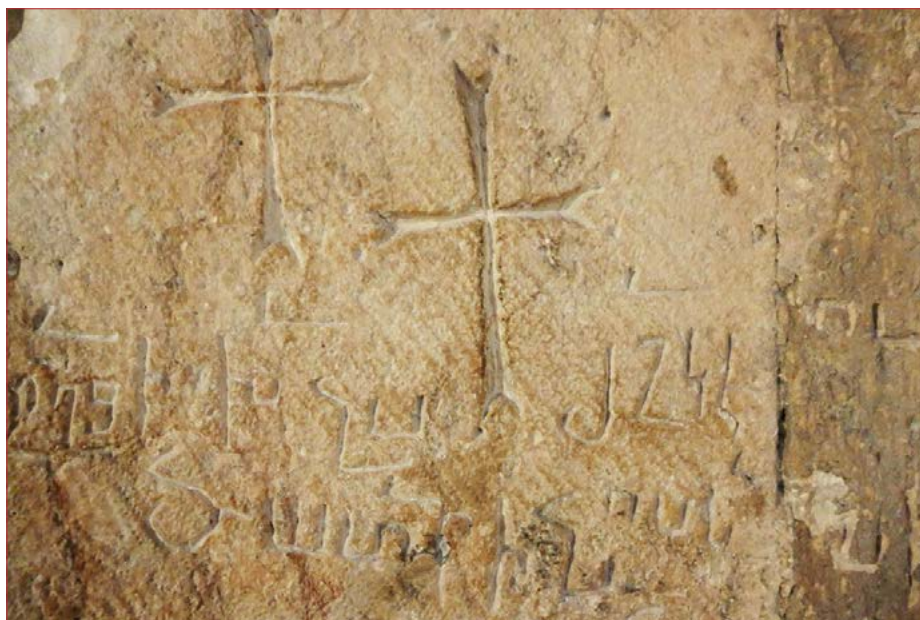
Such ideas are probabilities at best. But it is moving as well as enlightening to stand there, realising that it was here (or somewhere very like it) that Jesus of Nazareth was also Jesus of Capernaum, a short distance from the Jordan where he was baptised and from the level field on the mountainside where he gave his great Sermon. It is moving because it brings home to us the historical, human reality of the Word made flesh. (I am writing this on the Feast of the Annunciation). The cosmic Christ was once a local Jesus. It is enlightening because it opens us – or, at least, it made me feel – how the dimensions of time and space we inhabit are only some of the many dimensions that constitute reality. General Relativity says we live in three dimensions of space and one of time. String Theory thinks there may be up to twenty-

six other dimensions. Space and time may be merely 'curled' up, they say, in other dimensions on a sub-atomic scale.

So, (I won't say 'perhaps' any more), once a local always a local. Jesus of Capernaum like each of us, is local and global, historical and timeless. In geography every location on the earth is unique and at the same time similar to all other locations. In physics a point does not

die but continues to grow?

Pilgrimage to our own religious sacred sites and to those of other faiths helps ground us in a spiritual mystery enfolded in time and space. Meditation is the interior aspect of this pilgrimage. It can be practiced within the house of our own faith, alone or with guests. The guests may then invite us to their homes to meditate with them there. By meditating together, we open to the all-



Inscriptions on a wall at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem

have dimensional attributes: it is a 'unique location'. I don't understand this, but it can help at least to begin to understand the mystery of Christ. This mystery is the experience of the Resurrection. We need examples, symbols, analogies, sacraments, to help us see that contradictions can co-exist, like the two sides of a coin. We cannot approach any mystery without being confused at first. Remember the first time you meditated and what you thought about it afterwards? If you have lost someone you loved, remember how you became aware that the love did not

inclusive spiritual dimension of reality. We recognise it because it heals divisions and engenders love.

When I was a boy studying history at school, we learned that a clever-sounding way to start an essay was 'XXX was a time of transition'. We were reminded by our teacher that every age is transitional. Nevertheless, today, we are all acutely conscious of being a transitional generation in almost every aspect of life. When we see how rapidly change is happening around us, we call it a 'time of crisis'. Then, interiorly, we can feel at a loss, caught up in its

rush and confusion. Language then falters and fails us. We use extreme terms – crisis, cliff-edge, danger, disaster – for almost everything. The media thrive on the ‘breaking news’ and ‘live feeds’ of extreme events. In such a world, it’s more than ever important to be aware of the multiple dimensions of reality and not identify only with what we can see and touch in our comfort zone. Regardless of religious belief, we need the spiritual dimension that enfolds all dimensions. And this is why a contemplative mind is necessary to survive and navigate modern life. And why, if we are truly concerned for the next generation, we need to make meditation integral to our children’s early formation and education.

Religiously, the crisis is as acute as in all the social and ecological aspects of our world. Religion has largely failed to connect with the spiritual needs of people. Christianity is widely dismissed as a retrosexual morality – attended by the hypocritical embarrassments that carries. A spiritual black hole has opened in our consumer culture and our institutions. Because of all this, the spiritual dimension, that enfolds and connects all dimensions of reality, is often hijacked by reductionistic techniques that soon become new forms of superstition and magic or just more packages in the commercial market-place. The old gods are dying. New gods are ascending and replacing them.

‘gods’ depend on the worship, enduring belief and sacrifices of their devotees. They (and their representatives) get their power from the people. Socrates saw this long ago, when he understood the

meaning of myth and the natural basis of the gods. He paid the price of rejection for telling what he saw. While the old gods are strong, they and their supporters can be brutal. But, when belief and devotion move away from them, the old gods – old religious systems and rituals – weaken. They struggle for numbers. Yet, it is hard to live without gods. There is a non-materialistic side of humanity that demands expression, symbolism and seeks meaning. ‘gods’ help us satisfy this, however superficially - the pantheon of media celebrities, frenetic shopping centres running their devotees into debt they cannot

*A cyclical pilgrimage into
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opened for humanity...*

afford, the gods of war and misinformation and drugs. The old gods – religious devotion, consecrated life, the mystique of celibacy, the power of priesthood, Sunday worship – find it hard to compete.

Religion and culture are woven together. When one evolves so must the other. Otherwise they split and we feel increasingly disconnected. Of course, we are more than our cultural conditioning. So, the life of spirit still teaches and touches us: when we fall in love, when we fall out of love, when we fall sick, when we briefly enjoy physical perfection, when we give birth, when we sit by a death-bed. But increasingly, daily life, however affluent, looks like a wasteland even to the young who normally

see things with hope and optimism. The dimensions of time and space themselves are filled with stress, psychological suffering and the feeling of entrapment. We can try to escape because there is no lack of escape routes in fantasy, distraction, addiction and other ways of self-harm.

We need another kind of wasteland, a desert, to find our way back to the sense of wonder in the multidimensionality of reality. ‘Oh, what a beautiful world!’ We can then find our unique point of location, where we belong and where we know who we are because we are known. There are no ‘gods’ in the desert, just our own demons and the angels we need.. There is only the God who is and who has no name.

Jesus spent his Lent in the Judean wilderness. He practiced self-restraint and dealt with the demons we all know. He knew the seeds of pride, greed and self-fixation in the human psyche. We should never be complacent about having fully mastered them. It was after his time in the desert of self-preparation that he settled in Capernaum and his voice began to be widely heard. Our own forty days are similar - a time of self-restraint to repair some of our obscured spiritual vision – giving up something and doing something extra. Undertaken seriously, we soon feel how this purifies, focuses, our whole way of seeing and acting.

‘In Lent we are preparing to celebrate Easter.’ This sounds trite, unless we understand what celebration means. It is more than ringing bells, eating chocolate and smiling. It means that the dimension in which the Resurrection of Jesus is experienced is opened wide. We no longer

look at it from the outside. We see ourselves within it as a dimension of Jesus of Capernaum giving us direct access to the hidden dimensions of reality. In a strange way this is so for believers and non-believers. To believe is a wonderful asset. Those who have it like to share with others. But what matters even more than belief, is faith, which is our deepest capacity to relate to reality. We can share the benefits of what we believe with those who don't, provided we can meet in the experience of faith – the experience beyond words and thoughts that we find in meditation.

Lent prepares us to celebrate the Easter mysteries more deeply each year; it is more than a liturgical celebration. It is a cyclical pilgrimage, deeper into the dimension of reality that the Resurrection has opened for humanity across all dimensions, backwards and forwards in time; and in every unique location, the West Bank of the Palestinian territories, and Christchurch, New Zealand, Bonnevaux and your own home town. In the desert we tried to purify the doors of perception. We wanted to be more open to the dimension that enfolds every dimension. Our effort, like our daily meditation, is a sign of good faith relating to what we cannot see or prove or understand. But which we come to know. When we look back over Lent and evaluate what we did or didn't succeed in, we should not evaluate it falsely. It is not about how *perfectly* we kept it but how far we advanced in *self-knowledge*. Perfectionism is a false light manufactured by the ego. Self-knowledge is the light of our spirit illuminating all dimensions of reality.

'Dimensions of reality' sounds very abstract. But they refer to levels of experience. Meditation, as John Main often said, is about experience not theory. Anyone can enter

this experience, even though words fail us when we try to describe the meaning and nature of what we experience. It is the same for the ways we undergo the cycle of death and resurrection in our lives. It is not a dogma but an experience. We know we have experienced resurrection in our lives: when something seems to have died in us and yet, even after what might seem a long three days, life is wondrously renewed and expanded. St Augustine said the Resurrection of Christ is more than a belief. It is the essence of Christian faith. It is our faith. And faith – meditation teaches us each day – is pure experience.

So, how do we *feel* the Resurrection experience?

For sure, not as we feel most other kinds of experience. It is commonly

*Self-knowledge is the light
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said that millennials prefer experiences to possessions. They are less interested than their parents in buying material things or settling down in stable commitments. They like to go to many places, participate in different kinds of events, do new things and keep their options open. However generally true this is, it is a feature of modern culture. Products are not marketed on the basis of their content or usefulness as much as on the kind of 'experience' they are associated with. Serial experiences like this suit the new gods of our time better than the old gods who expected regularity, observance and fidelity.

The gospel tells us that the Resurrection of Jesus is encountered in the spiritual dimension. Experience in the spiritual dimension is

faith. It is not part of a series of ever new and exciting experiences – but about the deepening of relationship. This kind of experience cannot be bought or traded or even observed and evaluated from outside. It is as much within as without. Through self-knowledge – the kind in which we know ourselves known, – Christ is formed in us. It is not a one-off. It grows. And so, there are temporary and partial ways of experiencing the Risen Christ. If we try to pin him down, he slips away as he did at Emmaus and, definitively, at the Ascension. And yet, after these partial enlightenments, we do not doubt our experience. On the contrary, our faith deepens.

Why should it be like this? We could think that God is playing games with us or 'testing' us. That might be a childlike way of putting it but not so attractive to people today. To understand it, we need to relate to the dimensions of reality we cannot see as clearly as those of time and space. The physicist David Bohm tried to explain how these different dimensions relate by comparing the 'implicate order' and the 'explicate order'. The Implicate order is the deeper reality which *enfolds* all other dimensions. In this order, space and time no longer dominate relationships between things – or people. It is the ground from which reality emerges. The Explicate order is the *unfolding* of this, in the way a digital signal unfolds itself to produce images on a screen.

I once met Bohm while waiting for a yoga class, but I hadn't read him then and we didn't have time anyway and it wasn't the right space. Although he was very interested in meditation, he wasn't religious as far as I know. Maybe his ideas don't help everyone, but they suggest to me a mystical and scientific vision of reality that resonates with

the wisdom of the spiritual traditions. Concerning the Resurrection, it helps us see how the ordinary experience of daily life connects to the experience of that deeper, unfolded dimension in which the Resurrection is fully encountered. There were 'appearances', unfoldings, of the Risen Jesus. Ten are described in the New Testament in a way that is both ordinary and mysterious. These encounters transformed the lives of those touched by them. It seemed to them even more real than the physical kind of encounter bound in time and space. Ever since then, down the centuries, lives have been touched by the Resurrection and take a new direction. Without leaving the ground of daily life, they expand into new dimensions of reality. If this were not so, why would we be celebrating Easter this year?

The Resurrection doesn't make Jesus a god, new or old. His followers are members of a religion bearing his name, but only secondarily. *Primarily*, they are those whose faith in him and union with him is growing continuously. This unfolds – with ups and downs, as in all relationships – and leads us into dimensions of his reality that astonish the mind and break open the heart. As this is what the Resurrection means, the present time of transition is not the end of Christianity, as so often predicted, but another end in the many forms of the 'explicate' Christian order through which it has always evolved and will continue to, until the 'end of time'.

In the desert, at the foot of Mount Sinai, the chosen people panicked and rebelled and chose other gods. They made the golden calf from their trinkets and worshipped it. When Moses returned and saw the shenanigans going on, he smashed the tablets of the Law (it didn't seem the right time to deliver them). He

then smashed the god-statue, ground it into powder and made the people drink it. They re-owned their projections and tasted reality again.

'gods' are projections, splinters of ourselves. That is why they depend on us. We blame them when bad things happen but only dig a deeper hole of unreality and of alienation from our true selves. When we imagine God as a god we do the same. We blame 'Him' for 'allowing' bad things or for 'inflicting' them on us as punishment. The desert and the Resurrection expose the fatal self-

grace that transforms despair into hope, bitterness into love.

Resurrection doesn't make us immortal. We still die. But it changes the way we live and therefore how we approach death. This is faith. As faith deepens, meaning emerges. We recognise the pattern of the Resurrection experienced over and over from childhood to the end. As I finish this letter, I recognise this pattern once again.

Today in London, as the trees are washed in spring green, we are packing up Mediatio House and the community is moving to Bon-



Meditatio House Community in London packing to move to Bonnevaux

deception in this kind of religious mentality. Meditation, in Christian faith unites the experience of both the desert and the Resurrection, of Lent and Easter. It opens a new kind of religious consciousness for a humanity come of age.

In silence and stillness, we experience that God is present in our suffering, whatever causes it – whether genes or a deranged gunman. Our compassion for those suffering – as we saw globally after the Christchurch tragedy – is itself a manifestation of the spirit of God. If we are the victim, we are empowered to endure in faith what cannot be changed. And we experience the

nevaux. A leaving and an arriving, a death and resurrection. There is still much to do to complete Bonnevaux; but it's ready enough for us to start to live there and to celebrate the beautiful mystery of our faith. Please keep all that Bonnevaux can be for the world and for our community in your heart this Easter, as we will keep you in ours.

With much love

Laurence

Laurence Freeman OSB

News

Meditatio Seminar

Contemplative Care: Healthcare and Meditation

WCCM New Zealand hosted a two-day seminar at Auckland City Hospital



Contemplative Care: Healthcare and meditation was the theme of the first Meditatio Seminar organised by NZCCM. Held at Auckland City Hospital on 17 and 18 January, 2019, the event was led by Fr Laurence, and included speakers from the fields of mental health, hospice care and general practice. As well as plenary talks there were workshops and panel discussions, interspersed with several short periods of meditation each day.

While the majority of speakers were from the Roman Catholic and Anglican Christian traditions there were also speakers from other spiritual traditions, including Buddhists and people from an indigenous Maori spiritual background. The variety of perspectives from a range of excellent presenters greatly enhanced the seminar. Participants at the seminar included healthcare professionals, clergy and religious,

as well as interested meditators, not only from New Zealand but a number from the meditation communities in Australia and Fiji.

The sessions did not address the complex ethical issues involved in contemporary healthcare services, but rather focused on providing holistic care for the sick or dying person that responded to their needs as a human being with a spiritual nature. In busy healthcare institutions focused on technological therapies, finding silence and time for such a caring approach is challenging. Various speakers talked about how their own spiritual orientation and meditation practice enabled them to be responsive to the individual whom they were caring for in their professional practice.

The seminar was chaired by Dr. John Collins, a nephrologist and Associate Professor at the University of Auckland. "We had 140 people at-

tend the seminar, which is remarkable given mid-January is peak holiday time. Our speakers did justice to the topic of contemplative care and we have received great feedback from the people who attended the event. It exceeded our expectations in many ways," he says. Given the success of this initial seminar, it may be followed in due course by another focussing on a different topic such as the environment. ONLINE: Watch the videos at <http://tiny.cc/CHSemNZ>

Malaysia: videos of a Seminar on Palliative Care now online



The WCCM Malaysia Community last year held a Meditatio Seminar entitled Compassionate Presence: Interfaith Approaches to Palliative Care, in Petaling Jaya, with 140 participants, many from healthcare professions from across the country. The videos of this seminar are now available.

ONLINE: Watch the videos at http://tiny.cc/CP_Mal18

News

Pilgrims' voices from the Holy Land

Laurence Freeman led a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in February (16-23). The theme was "A Contemplative Journey to the Holy Land", with participation by a very international group. Some participants share their experience:

JM Rebueno, Philippines:

February 20, 2019, I made my declaration of love with the WCCM Oblate Community as an adult who have had a full life running the gamut from innocence to willful disobedience to God's will beyond biting into Eve's apple. I have made a similar declaration half a century ago as a silly adolescent facing possible death under the crushing torrents of an angry waterfall. Then, in the loudest silent cry I ever made, I surrendered the last seconds of my life to Him "Thy will be done!" On hindsight, it was a cry for God's mercy – to forgive me out of His Love for all my silliness. It certainly gave me strength to accept the inevitable. As an adult choosing to love God requires steel courage: to refuse giving in to my needy self yet at the same time to have compassion for the Eve's that muddle my choices and action to love God. This is the constant challenge I am happy to take. I pray that being true to my oblation will give me the inner strength to respond accordingly.

In the subterranean Chapel of the Apostles beneath the Garden of Gethsemane before my abbot Fr. Laurence and the community of oblates and pilgrims participating in the pilgrimage, I made my final oblation. I had twice the blessing to repeat privately my fi-



JM Rebueno's Final Oblation at the Chapel of the Apostles, Jerusalem

nal oblation on the rock that received Jesus' sweat of blood as He declared His ultimate expression of Love for the Father with "Thy will be done!"

Paul Dunn, USA:

It's hard for me to summarize how meaningful this pilgrimage was for me because it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. I am an Oblate and couldn't imagine visiting the Holy Land without a Contemplative community to journey with. Fr Laurence far exceeded my hopes for a deeply prayerful and fully alive spiritual experience. We visited practically every holy site mentioned in the four mysteries of the rosary. I will forevermore experience greater meaning while meditating on each decade of the rosary because of this trip. Because I was there. I touched, heard, and saw each holy site and have real personal memories of these sites. Every day we took turns praying morning and evening prayer.

A few peak experiences for me were sailing on the Sea of Galilee, renewing my baptismal vows on the Jordan River, walking the Via Dolorosa,

sa, kissing the spots where Jesus was born and where he died, and praying at the Wailing Wall.

Lina Lee, Hong Kong

My heart is still overflowing with joy and gratitude. I not only reconnected with Christ at all the biblical holy sites, but we pilgrims from diverse backgrounds and different countries were also united in one heart and one mind walking with Christ and His apostles, experiencing His presence all the more. I came to convey my deep gratitude to the gracious Lord for rescuing my life physically, not knowing that there is so much in store - never had I such contentment from union and solidarity from our pilgrims as one group, one family with every one's faces becoming radiant like angels. Assuredly this will be preciousy cherished and remain a source of enlightenment and strength in the days to come.

Fr Laurence will lead another pilgrimage to the Holy Land, including other sites not visited this year: 13-20 February 2020

News

WCCM Singapore celebrates its 30th Anniversary

By James Loh



Presentation remembering the early steps of WCCM Singapore

On Sunday 20 Jan 2019 WCCM Singapore celebrated its 30th Anniversary. About 100 of our community leaders and friends gathered for lunch at a local swimming club. We invited Fr Laurence and our spiritual director, Fr Eugene Vaz to grace the

happy occasion.

The atmosphere was edifying. We could all feel the positive energy and vibes of a community that has come this far. The journey came its many ups and downs and challenges like every growing community. Through

the support of the global community led by Fr Laurence, Peter's leadership and guidance and the many contributions from all our dedicated members, we have indeed crafted a contemplative identity for ourselves.

At the gathering we reminisce the past 30 years with a power point presentation of the activities of the 30 over groups that we have in Singapore. Fr Laurence also gave each attendee a copy of his book "Good Work" to commemorate all the good works done by the community.

The gathering ended with a presentation of Bonnevaux, our global community future home.

WCCM Singapore has plenty to be grateful for and we look forward to the many opportunities available for us to be of service to the church and the larger human society we are part of.

Wisdom Workshop in Scotland



Laurence Freeman spoke on the theme "Sources of Wisdom" in a day workshop in Edinburgh. The event organized by the Edinburgh International Centre for Spirituality and Peace took place at the George Young Hall, LifeCare Edinburgh on 9th February.

Group leaders' meeting in Germany



In Germany, the first group leader's meeting took place in Paderborn, at 'Haus Maria Immaculata' on the first weekend of February. Some of us met for the first time and we shared meditations, reflections, discussions, walks and a beautiful mass at the Michaelskloster (St. Michael's Monastery), home to our Sr. Theresia and Sr. Gabriele. To get to know each other was the primary cause for this weekend, as well as discerning the future shape of the German, Austrian and Swiss collaboration. **(Susanna Melzer, German National Coordinator)**

Interview

Jim Green: "There is a hidden invitation within the incapacitating experience of depression and anxiety"



Why did you decide to write a book on meditation and depression? What was the intention? Why this title?

Jim: The idea for the book had been around for some time. A few years ago I wrote a small booklet, *Meditation & Mental Health*, which proved very popular. Laurence Freeman also mentioned to me just how many people he was meeting who wanted to talk to him about meditation and depression. It seemed clear that something more detailed was needed to support people dealing with these dif-

ficult issues. Hence the current book. Its title – *Giving Up Without Giving Up* – reflects something central to the way in which we might respond to frightening (sometimes seemingly unbearable) times in our lives. There is a hidden invitation within the incapacitating experience of depression or anxiety. We are invited to find a way of letting go of old, unhelpful strategies and ways of thinking about ourselves; but without giving up completely on the possibility of new growth and a deeper understanding of who we really are.

It seems to me that meditation is a very helpful vehicle for doing just that. In the practice, we explicitly set out to disengage from the exhausting and punishing agenda of the ego, while remaining open to – what? There are many ways to describe it: presence, grace, healing, love. Beyond description, the best way is to sit and be open to the experience, without capturing and labelling it.

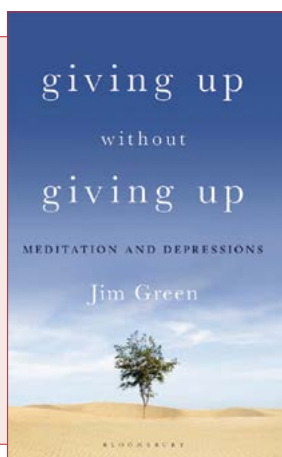
The sub-title, *Meditation and Depressions* is in the plural (*depressions*, not *depression*) because I wanted to gently challenge the readiness with which we use that word. Depression

has become almost a cultural and di-agnostic cliché. Every experience of anguish, terror, grief, loss of vitality and purpose is unique and needs to be attended to as such. Every era and every culture has its different ways of describing and responding to these experiences. I wanted to honour the richness and the healing potential within that insight.

What did the process of writing this book teach you, or change in you?

Jim: It reminded me that there are no easy solutions; that meditation is not a 'cure' for what we call depression; that there is much unavoidable pain that we must face and go through in this life. But I also had my faith strengthened that the practice of meditation (and the friendship of meditators) can sustain us as we patiently learn to heal. It can help us to respond with our whole being to Goethe's wonderfully challenging words:

*And so long as you haven't experienced
This: to die and so to grow,
You are only a troubled guest
on the dark earth.*



Giving Up Without Giving Up

Meditation and Depressions

By Jim Green

More information and order online: <http://tiny.cc/GvUpJG>

"If it is true that all human griefs have their roots in our inability to sit quietly in our own company for five minutes, this spare, candid and calm introduction to meditative practice will be a life-saving gift for many living in or on the edge of the darkness that regularly overtakes us in this uncontrollable world." – Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury.

News

Seven new things to know about Bonnevaux as the residential community begins

1 - Renovation still in progress



Thanks to the generosity of our global community, Bonnevaux is already a reality, with the opening of the Abbaye at Easter and of the Conference Centre in July. Our main emphasis now is the Guesthouse due for completion at the end of the year. Please visit the Bonnevaux website to see how you can contribute.

4 - Young Adults Retreat



This retreat will combine meditation, bodywork, work on the land, scripture and sharing. It will focus on the theme of *Living Different* (July 24-31). The retreat has two parts: days at Bonnevaux sharing in the life of the community and some days walking the Camino to Santiago de Compostela, (July 31 - August 4). For more information and registration visit <http://tiny.cc/BnvxYAR>

2 - Blessing and other events in 2019



The Blessing of Phase One of the Bonnevaux renovation (The Abbaye and the Conference Centre) by Monsignor Pascal Wintzer (photo), Archbishop of Poitiers, on June 15th 2019. You can check all other important events here:

<http://tiny.cc/savdtBnvx>

5 - A Tree for your Trip

A new initiative was launched to fund the plantation of an orchard at Bonnevaux, and to offset the carbon emissions of visitors trips. They will use old varieties and permaculture principles for the orchard. More info: <http://tiny.cc/treetrip>

6 - Visitors and Volunteers

If you have interest in visiting Bonnevaux or want to spend some time as a volunteer contact Andrew Cresswell via email: contact@bonnevauxwccm.org

3 - Meditatio House Community moves to Bonnevaux



The small oblate Community that was living at the Meditatio House in London moved to Bonnevaux. This included Fr Laurence - our director is now officially a Bonnevaux resident!

7 - New website & other ways to stay informed

The Bonnevaux website will be re-launched soon. We will keep the same address:

bonnevauxwccm.org

To follow the latest on Bonnevaux you can also check our social networks:

facebook.com/bonnevauxwccm

instagram.com/bonnevauxwccm

You can also subscribe to The World Community Monthly news here: <http://tiny.cc/WCNews>

In Focus

Taynã Malaspina, Brazil



I was born into a Catholic family and studied part of my childhood in a Catholic college. Around the age of 23, I had a crisis with the Catholic Church. I found some people in the community incoherent and I felt distant from God. There was a relationship, but not an authentic communion. Besides, I missed a more contemplative dimension in my spiritual life. It was during this period that I began the search for meditation and found it in Buddhism. I practiced Buddhism for two years and in that period I was delighted with meditative practice. I thought the concept of Bodhisattva wonderful, attaining enlightenment to help others and free beings

from suffering. But something was still missing. Buddhist philosophy was very rich, but there was no such thing as Christ, and the spiritual vision was a little far from what I believed. Then I found Christian Meditation and from that began one of the richest periods of my spiritual journey.

I can say that until then I had a conceptual vision of God, through what I had learned from books, catechesis and other forms of knowledge. As I learned from Fr Laurence, I was prepared to answer the first question Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" But I was not prepared to answer the second question: "And who do you say that I am?" However, through Christian meditation, I have approached the experience of God, and it is only through experience that we can at least try to answer that second question. The conceptual sense of God has been replaced by communion with God. Communion and unity with God lead us to see life differently and to live out of our essence. The present moment is flooded with meaning and we transcend our ego to move toward the other.

Thus, I came to live the original meaning of the word religion (Religare) linked to our reconnection with God and our essence. I was able to transcend a dogmatic view of an ingrained system of beliefs. Once, they asked Carl Jung if he believed in God and he replied, "No, I know God." Believing depends on belief, knowing depends on experience.

On the one hand, we have Karl Marx saying that religion is the opium of the people and Freud classifying it as a neurosis. On the other hand, we have John Main and Laurence Freeman, saying that religion leads us to a new unity and to what we are called to be. We have the Dalai Lama saying that the true religion is one that makes us a better person. And Rumi, an Islamic mystic who says: My religion is to be alive in love. Everyone may be correct, depending on how we relate to religion. Only experience can help us understand these interpretations.

Christian meditation brought a huge gift to me: the experience of God. And when we are touched by this experience, the feeling of being at home comes along and all other searches become secondary.



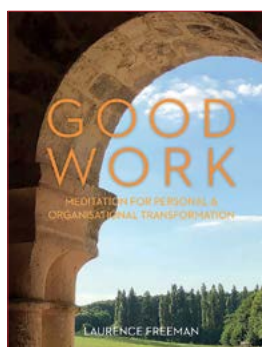
Meditatio Newsletter is published four times a year by the International Office of The World Community for Christian Meditation, St Marks, Myddelton Square London EC1R 1XX, London, UK.
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Graphic Design: Gerson Laureano
Would you like to contribute to the Meditatio Newsletter? Our next deadline is 10 June.

Resources & Events

Books



Laurence Freeman defines good work as 'work that brings out the best in the people who do it, and brings enduring benefit to those who are influenced by it'. This book is

about how meditation helps to make work good work, while transforming the workplace environment through more humanly rich and enjoyable encounters. The emphasis throughout is on practice rather than theory. The language is inclusively secular. The approach is wisdom-based rather than a merely physical or psychological one. The spark for this book came from a series of talks Laurence Freeman gave to the staff at DP Architects, Singapore in 2017, where they now continue to meditate every morning before work begins. You can order the book online here: <http://tiny.cc/GWwRk>

Audio & CDs



The latest Meditatio CD Series. Listen to or download the tracks: <http://tiny.cc/Med2019A>
Order a copy of the CD: <http://tiny.cc/Discipleship1>

John Main Seminar 2019: Exploring the meaning of a Contemplative Christianity today

The churches are almost empty or sold, as if they've reached their tipping point, and from the pulpits, god slid out.

Lisa Jacobson,
'There Are Stones That Sing'

And it's not only the pervasive secularism of Western culture that's at issue here. Many of us who meditate also find our old ways of participating in the Christian tradition coming under strain. As we grow in contemplative consciousness and leave behind tribal and dualistic forms of religion, we can struggle with how

to believe and belong. In this Seminar, I hope we might begin to explore the meaning and embodiment of a contemplative Christianity for our time. What is it in the Christian tradition, the practise of Christian faith, that remains a necessary gift for a world in crisis? How do we articulate, share and embody this gift? As we move to Bonnevaux and as our outreach to the secular world continues to grow, it seems an important moment to reflect on the significance of being a World Community for Christian Meditation. I hope many can join us. (Sarah Bachelard)



John Main Seminar 2019: A Contemplative Christianity for our Time (August 5-11)
led by Rev. Dr. Sarah Bachelard
Pre-Seminar Silent Retreat - **Sources of Wisdom** led by Laurence Freeman
Vancouver, Canada.
Visit: <http://jms2019.org/>

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



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

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

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

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

ASIA
email: mimi@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

QUEST UNIVERSITY, SQUAMISH, BRITISH COLUMBIA



HURRY!

Early bird rates end on

June 21

Registration closes on

July 15

JOHN MAIN SEMINAR



VANCOUVER, CANADA 2019

AUGUST 8 TO 11

AUGUST 5-8 Pre-seminar retreat

AUGUST 12-14 Post-seminar pilgrimage

DETAILS ON PAGE C8

SPRING 2019 ISSUE

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The Seed Is Planted



Paul with Noreen Ward at the display table as Kathleen Denkwalter monitors the resources.

The Catholic Independent Schools of Vancouver Diocese hosts an annual Catholic Educators' Conference "to provide the spiritual and professional growth of Catholic educators, for the development of Christian community, and to provide leadership in the development of a dynamic, evangelistic school system." JoAnn Kelly-Cullen, Regional Coordinator for British Columbia and the Yukon, made arrangements to have a session on Christian meditation with children offered at this year's conference held Feb. 14-15, 2019 in Vancouver. This provided us with the opportunity to plant seeds in bringing Christian meditation with children to schools on the west coast.

Members of the local meditation community in Vancouver set up and staffed a display table in the vendors' area for exposure to the Canadian Christian Meditation Community. The table provided resources on Christian meditation and Christian meditation with children specifically. The community's presence provided an opportunity to raise awareness of Christian meditation and to network with educators. Interaction with those dropping by the table was very positive.

Paul Tratnyek, the Canadian Christian Meditation Community's school liaison, offered a 75-minute presentation on the history of Christian meditation, research on the fruits and benefits, the method of

meditation as taught by John Main, the experience of Christian meditation in Ontario Catholic schools and practical approaches for teachers to introduce the practice. The 70 participants were taught how to meditate and experienced Christian meditation first hand at the start of the presentation. They responded with much interest and enthusiasm.

A list with school and email contacts for teachers and principals interested in further information and resources was set up both at the display table and in the breakout session room. Paul is following up with an initial invitation offering resources and further support to those who signed up. He will also network with senior school administrators and principals he met at the conference to try and establish a few pilot schools to introduce Christian meditation among staff and students. Meditators in the Vancouver area will offer support to educators requesting local support.

The feedback received by the organizers of the conference from the session participants was extremely positive. The time and energy used to create the opportunity to present at this major conference in Vancouver will hopefully mark the beginning of a flowering of Christian meditation with children on the west coast of Canada and potentially continue to spread into

Continued on page C4

REFLECTION FROM OUR NATIONAL COORDINATOR

Easter

Humility is a wonderful quality to have!

It is the basis for our relationship with God and with each other. Humility makes us recognize our own weakness and defects so that we are in a much better position to be understanding of the shortcoming of others.

In John's gospel, Jesus "got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him." (John 13:4-5) Some call this act by Jesus the whole gospel in miniature. It is certainly the ultimate act of humility.

The washing of one's feet was always done by slaves because no one else would do it. At that time and in that part of the world most people wore sandals and the roads were always dusty and dirty. It was considered filthy and demeaning work to wash one's feet so it is no wonder Peter was so shocked by what Jesus was doing! Here was someone who healed many people, drew large crowds to hear Him speak, spoke to women and children, a leader they all gladly followed and He was now stooping down to wash their feet. The disciples did not expect Jesus to become their servant and they found it very hard to accept. (John 13: 6-9)

Jesus' example is one we all need to keep in mind because we have been called to become servants to others. To walk with Jesus is by definition to serve others. It is a road that is not always well traveled by most people. In fact most of us shy away from going down this road even as we often instinctively know that we will someday do so.

The great American poet Robert Frost said this very well in his classic poem entitled *The Road Not Taken*. This poem is about a man who faces a decision about seeing two roads and trying to decide which road he will travel down. Reflecting on this he says:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood,
And I,
I took the one less travelled by,
And that made all the difference.

Each life has many different roads. Being a follower of Jesus is being willing to take the road "less travelled by." It can seem difficult and at times a lonely road but if followed, the road will lead to a completely different and wonderful way of life. If you have the courage to take that road you will discover God's unconditional love and you will be moved to love other people as Jesus loved them.

The road less travelled by makes all the difference in our lives simply because Jesus died on the Cross on Friday and rose from the grave on Easter Sunday. During Easter we go from feeling despair to joy, all in the course of a weekend.

And that is why Easter is so special!

Jack Murta
Ottawa

Canadian Christian Meditation Community National Resource Centre

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Montreal, Quebec H4A 3P4
514-485-7928

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

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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



Paul addresses the audience at the Catholic Independent Schools of Vancouver Diocese annual Catholic Educators' Conference

other provinces through the National Conference for Evangelization and Catechesis being hosted by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in Ottawa on April 4. Paul and Mary Theresa Coene, a principal from the Brantford area, will be presenting.

A big thank you to the Vancouver and area Christian meditation community!

“The only thing that matters is to start again. To keep starting to be on the way, to be open to the pilgrimage.”

– John Main, *The Heart of Creation*

Paul Tratnyek

REACHING A MILESTONE

Antigonish Meditation Group Is Celebrating 25 Years

Our Tuesday Meditation Group in Antigonish, NS will soon be celebrating 25 years of practicing. This grew out of a visit by Paul Harris where the elements of silence and spirit were introduced.

The group began in people's homes. Then it moved to a place set aside for any group or individual to meditate.

Currently our home is in the multi-purpose room at St. James United Church which is centrally located and completely accessible.

The celebration marks not only the WCCM tradition but also the many other practices in our small community. Pathways to Meditation will be held on June 14 and 15 in St. James Church Hall with meditation and mindfulness being explored. We welcome any and all to come to this event. Inquiries can be sent to fwittgens@gmail.com

**Fran Wittgens
Antigonish, NS**



Christ hands the keys of heaven to Peter, Hieronymus Wierix, after Maerten de Vos, 1563. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Giving the Gift of Meditation To the World

Our Friends Program provides vital annual financial support to the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) towards sharing the gift of meditation worldwide. This financial support is critical to all of our activities and especially helps in teaching and nurturing the practice in both established and emerging communities, particularly those poor and marginalized. Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$25.

Where does the money go? To meditate costs nothing but to create materials, to travel to and teach meditation in countries near and far 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 world-wide organization that trains meditation teachers and provides the resources to support and nurture meditators globally. Meditatio is the outreach of the community consisting of programs, publications and events that brings the fruits and benefits of meditation to the wider world. It seeks to bring universal spiritual wisdom and values to bear upon a world in crisis; from politics to medicine, church, science and the economy. Through seminars, media and the formation of young contemplatives in the world, it takes meditation to the worlds of business, mental health, addiction, education, environment, prisons and interfaith dialogue.

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 supports **translation of resource materials** into many languages to support our local community and reach out to the world community. It also funds **publication of books and audio/video resources** which may not be commercially viable but are necessary.

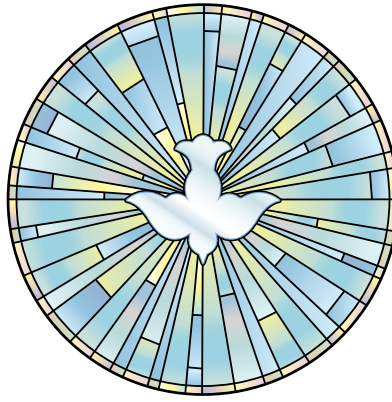
The fastest growing segment of meditators is children. In over 60 countries, more than 100,000 children now practice meditation. A whole generation of meditators is emerging who could potentially change the world!

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 will have a direct impact on sustaining our community's work and 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 be part of the communion of meditators across the globe'.

In peace,

Elaine Mills
Coordinator,
CCMC Friends Program



Calendar of Events

Rougemont, Quebec

June 21-23

Annual Oblate Retreat

All are welcome

Information: Magda.jass@gmail.com

Tel: 514-489-0998

Arnprior, Ontario

May 3-5

Christian Meditation Weekend Retreat with Denis Paquette

Fortify Your Life: Dive Into Faith!

Gallilee Centre

398 John Street North, Arnprior ON K7S 2P6

No previous meditation experience is required. Everyone is welcome.

\$250 single and \$210 double occupancy,
\$150 local commuter. Call 613 521-3234 or

email william_meek@bell.net for assistance.
Space is limited so register as soon as possible.

Toronto, Ontario

Monthly Teaching Meetings

The theme for the Monthly Teaching Meetings at Knox College for the 2019 season is **Meditation and Daily Life**. All of the following monthly teaching meetings will be held in Room # 4, Knox College, 59 St. George Street, University of Toronto (St. George Campus)

7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Contact: Elaine Mills 416-962-7111
wccmtoronto2@gmail.com

May 30, 2019

Br. John Buckingham:
Food for the Pilgrim

June 20, 2019

Satsung & Video

John Main Seminar – August 8-11, 2019

Quest University, Squamish, British Columbia

A Contemplative Christianity for our Time

Presented by Rev. Dr. Sarah Bachelard

Preceded By

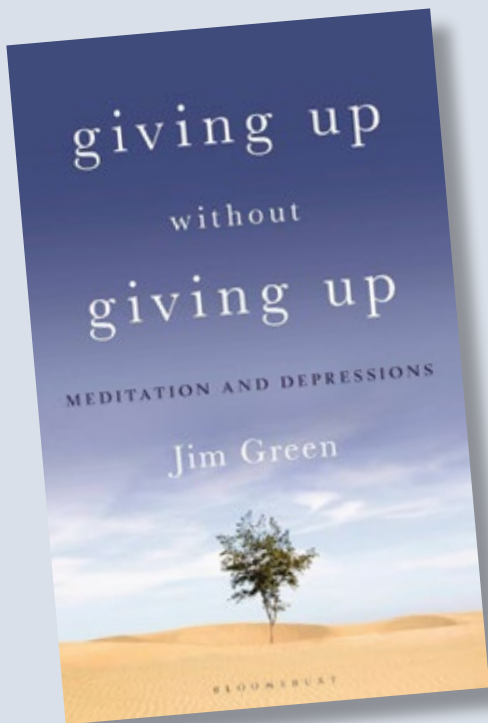
Sources of Wisdom

August 5-8

Pre-Seminar Silent Retreat with Laurence Freeman, OSB

To register online with a credit card for the seminar and/or retreat,
go to: www.jms2019.org or www.wccm-canada.ca/upcoming-events

For more information email: registration@jms2019.org



Giving Up Without Giving Up

A simple, intelligent guide to meditation and contemplation for those dealing with depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

Drawing on his experience of meditation within both the Buddhist and Christian contemplative traditions, as well as his own times of personal loss and bewilderment, Jim Green offers us a moving account of just how this wisdom practice can accompany each of us as we make 'the gentle pilgrimage of recovery'. He offers a thorough and practical approach to our times of personal desolation, centered on the practice of meditation, showing how we can learn to treat ourselves and each other with care and compassion.

Giving Up Without Giving Up explores the possibility that we have much to learn from the desert times in our lives, when it feels as though we are losing everything, most of all any sense of who we are.

Price \$24.00

“Jim Green has described a new approach to the corrosive suffering of depression. His special gift is shown in connecting to the sources of healing found in literature, faith and contemplative practice. Anyone suffering from depression who reads this book will feel both understood and gently guided forward.”

– **Laurence Freeman**
Director of the World Community
for Christian Meditation

“If it is true that all human griefs have their roots in our inability to sit quietly in our own company for five minutes, this spare, candid and calm introduction to meditative practice will be a life-saving gift for many living in or on the edge of the darkness that regularly overtakes us in this uncontrollable world.”

– **Dr Rowan Williams**
former Archbishop of Canterbury

Canadian Christian Meditation Community

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receive the electronic version – suggested annual contribution \$10

(A tax receipt will be issued for donations /contributions over \$25)

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Or by credit card:

Card #: _____ Expiry: _____ / _____

PUBLICATIONS ORDER AND DONATIONS

Quantity	Title	Price	Total
_____	Good Work – Laurence Freeman	\$15.00	_____
_____	Giving Up Without Giving Up – Jim Green	\$24.00	_____

POSTAGE (Price + 10%) _____

TOTAL _____

DONATIONS / NEWSLETTER _____

TOTAL AMOUNT _____

John Main Seminar & Related Events

Pre-Seminar Silent Retreat

Laurence Freeman, OSB, August 5-8

Sources of Wisdom

Through talks and times of silence, Laurence Freeman, OSB will reinforce the power of meditation and reflect on sources of wisdom in our time. His talks will explore the sources to be found in *Spirit, Failure, Scripture and Silence*.

John Main Seminar

Rev. Dr. Sarah Bachelard, August 8-11

Contemplative experience increasingly looks like our best hope for the world. But what does this mean for Christianity itself, in an age where many say 'just meditate', who needs religion?

In this year's John Main Seminar, Sarah Bachelard explores this challenge and will lead us to fresh insights for the church and society at large. Contemplation and the transformation of consciousness have been claimed as the only real solution to the urgent questions and overwhelming issues of our time. And yet, the notion of 'contemplative Christianity' can be seen as problematic from two perspectives.

From the point of view of 'Christianity', some struggle to recognize the legitimacy and significance of contemplation. Over the past thirty years, a considerable focus for the WCCM and others has been to re-introduce meditation to the life of Christian communities. From the point of view of a contemplative mind, however, 'Christianity' itself can be seen as a problem. Meditation, mindfulness, contemplative pedagogy and programs of conscious leadership are widely touted

in the West, yet are often detached from their roots in faith. The fruits of contemplative practice are understood to be accessible independently of religious belief or devotion. The question then arises: what is the meaning and point of faith, and of Christian identity? Why not just meditate, leaving behind the problematic dogmatic and textual trappings of a tradition whose use-by date has been reached in a world come of age?

Post-seminar pilgrimage

August 12-14

First Nations Culture. Tour of the coastal region and visit to the provincial capital – Victoria.

Aug. 12 – visit Stanley Park totem poles for a meeting with representatives of the local indigenous community for an introduction to their culture; then drive to North Vancouver and have a program at St. Paul's Church, on the Squamish Mission Reserve with the local priest and Squamish Elders – then lunch with members of the community. Take the ferry to Nanaimo and drive to Victoria, stopping in Chemainus to see the wall murals.

Aug. 13 – After breakfast, a morning visit to the Royal BC Museum and then afternoon at leisure to enjoy the capital of the province. Optional: Whale watching adventure.

Aug. 14 – After breakfast drive along the beautiful coast, past 0 Mile Marker, Uplands and the University of Victoria to the famous Butchart Gardens, then with the ferry to the mainland and visit the fishing village of Steveston before ending the day in Vancouver late afternoon.

Recordings of the retreat and seminar will be available on the WCCM website following the events.

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
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P.O. Box 52, Station NDG
Montreal, Quebec H4A 3P4
Email: christianmeditation@wccm-canada.ca
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www.wccm-canada.ca
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The Medio Media Canada Bookstore:
www.mediomedia.ca

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