



WCCM

Newsletter of The World Community for Christian Meditation

Registered Charity No. 1182213

WCCM: 30 Years of Spreading the Revolutionary Seeds of Meditation

IN THE LIGHT OF THE COMMUNITY ANNIVERSARY, LAURENCE FREEMAN PROPOSES A REFLECTION ON TIME - WHAT PASSES AWAY AND WHAT IS ETERNAL?



Waiting for the Easter Sunrise, a traditional contemplative practice during WCCM retreats throughout the years (Photo by Laurence Freeman)

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Dear Friends

A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow (*Heb 13:8*)

The most important thing to recognise in the human condition is the distinction between what passes away and what is eternal. The eternal, the ever-present, remains forever young through the passage of time. The damage that time inflicts can be continuously healed and so even suffering and loss lead into God's boundless wholeness. If we cannot relate to the timeless, the things of time lose their meaning. If we can, then even what dies or is lost is also seen to be precious. We can accept everything, every person that passes away with infinite love and care: indeed with reverence because everything, even what is here today and gone tomorrow like the flowers of the field, manifests God. Everything is sacred. Everything is filled with the glory of God and 'Christ dances in a thousand places'.

As the opening quotation about Christ suggests, *Being* is our source and destination, and both are *now*. It is the touchstone of meaning even in the smallest things; and from it flows hope in darkness and the renewal of life in death. When we are 'in Christ' nothing is meaningless. Nothing is wasted. We are in a 'new creation'. The dark night through which humanity is passing at present is our opportunity to recover at a higher level this ancient faith in Being, in humanity and in our world.

On September 4th the John Main Seminar 2021 – the second one online – will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the WCCM. It is a milestone moment for us all, members and friends worldwide, to celebrate, to ponder its meaning; and to see what has been manifested through the community up to this point. Then to glimpse what is our future direction. During this daylong event we will hear the inspirational uplifting testimonies of some who were eyewitnesses at the beginning

of the community and from younger people who have boarded the train and who will lead in the future. We will see how miraculously a small seed grew into a beautiful tree and put out brave new branches.

We will see how deep, intertwined and alive our roots are and how many new branches of our mission they are producing. Roots are invisible but most are in the topsoil close to us. Connected to the deeper taproot, their aliveness keeps the tree growing. At Bonnevaux we have magnificent trees about 400 years old. The original parts of the Abbaye building are a thousand years old and there is evidence of even earlier habitation in the grounds of this 'good valley'. To know who

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Nothing is wasted*

we are, where we have come from and where we are going means to be aware of our roots. Not just for our community. This is something humanity has to remember about itself at this critical point of evolution. Our little, though global, celebration of the WCCM will contribute something to that greater re-discovery of human meaning and purpose.

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The community was named late. Its seed lies in the life of John Main, our founder. His roots in the spiritual tradition he transmitted are nourished by the same life-force. It is not cultish therefore to learn from his life and return often to his words: all spiritual traditions see the sacred energy in their founders. For me personally he was my initiation into the person of Christ. Fr John encountered meditation from an Indian monk and made it part of his life in his twenties; he lost it for a decade but, after he began his

practice again in his forties, he became increasingly aware of his mission to teach it. His first step was to start a small meditation community at his home monastery, a prototype for our other communities over the years and finally for Bonnevaux. He gave his first public teaching at the monastery of Thomas Merton who had reawakened popular awareness of the Christian contemplative tradition. While he spent time there in solitude Fr John made his decision to start a new branch of the monastic tree in Montreal specifically devoted to the teaching of meditation. These links show the roots of his own journey through different spheres: the universal tradition, Christian faith and his monastic lineage. Much of his interior life (like that of Jesus' first thirty years) was hidden. When he began to teach openly his life shot forward like a comet. This began in 1975 and flowered over the next amazing seven years until, like Elijah, he was taken away in the whirlwind on December 30th 1982, too early, but certain that what he had planted would continue to grow.

On the day after the funeral at Mount Saviour Monastery where Fr John is buried, we left by car before sunrise. As often happens after the catharsis of a funeral, we were upbeat. The impact of absence was waiting to strike later. We began to doubt the direction we were heading in when we noticed the rising sun in front of us and remembered we should be travelling west. It's always hard to admit mistakes, but eventually we turned around: the first of many necessary changes of direction in the years ahead. The community at that time, the seed of the WCCM, was new and fragile. His successor was immature and had many weaknesses. Yet these and other imperfections proved to be exactly how the power of God operated. Over the next nine years this local community of meditators, monks and oblates became the root of an emerging global family of Christian

meditators, weekly groups and national communities. The transition from local to global was to prove painful. Representatives from around the world met at New Harmony in September 1991 for the John Main Seminar led by Bede Griffiths who spoke on John Main's vision of community (later published as *The New Creation in Christ*). It was the Pentecost of the WCCM.

Fr Bede was a powerful support and loving friend in the years after Fr John's death.

cloister to rescue a world adrift: new wine skins were needed for the new wine that would flow from a vine rooted in the eternal and the universal.

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Loss brings suffering and death, the ultimate loss, is inseparable from life. Without them it would be impossible to discover life's meaning. As we review the past thirty years, preparing to look ahead, we remember innumerable teachers

was said to be the 'seed of the Church'.

Modern people thirst for meaning in life. Yet meaning is not a same day delivery, it emerges. Even if we can't express it well in thought or words we can feel and recognise it. The insights that come and the risks we take because of this emerging spirit of wisdom prove themselves over time by their fruits. To experience it we need personal connection and commitment. Without these personal insertion points with the tree and its roots, experience becomes meaningless, lacking the blood of life and the fire of love. It becomes absurdly fleeting, like the photos posted on Instagram which disappear after they have been viewed once. We have many ideas and opinions but not a living connection with the purpose of the plan we are living. Reason itself degrades in this absurdity and we miss the delight – both blissful and acute - of finding the mystery of our own destiny.

In modern culture life is being rapidly drained of ultimate meaning and purpose. In desperation many seek it in self-destructive ways. Lacking the personal connection that can come only from personal commitment they sink into alienation and isolation: relationships as consumer items, culture as entertainment, education as qualifications for employment, politics as soap opera. Because he could see these signs of the times forty years ago, John Main also saw the value of meditation for a world disconnected from its roots. His wisdom rose from his rootedness in Christ and his tradition. He saw that in a secularised and superficial world the self-inflicted wounds of humanity were multiplying exponentially. Healing, the primary care of the patient, lies in the experience that meditation opens to everyone who practices it.

He knew that meditation was not a quick-fix but that it was the simplest place to start. Raimon Panikkar said of John Main that 'he possessed the genius



Jay Stewart and Laurence Freeman at Bonnevaux

He recognised in John Main the prophetic spirit that had earlier called him into a daring new venture when he replanted his roots in India. He said of Fr John: 'in my experience (he) is the best spiritual guide in the church today' because of how he was restoring meditation to the heart of Christian life while also building a bridge of mystical unity between faiths and cultures. As monks, both Fr Bede and Fr John were trained in an ancient Christian monastic culture. Both initiated new, adapted forms of the tradition in a rapidly altering world and in a church that, despite its own attempts at self-reform, was failing to provide the spiritual wisdom society thirsted for. As monastic contemplatives, indeed mystics, they were united to Christ as their vine and had the prophetic vision to see that this wisdom was pushing out of the

and many who helped form the community we are today. Each one obeying their unique call, they helped transmit the gift Fr John had left to future generations. Many in the community today did not know these early teachers in person but their witness and influence helped form us. It is right to name them as part of our story and we plan to do this in a special place in Bonnevaux. They are many but I think now especially of Doreen Romandini, Eileen Byrne, Eileen O'Hea, Patricia Ng and most recently, Jay Stewart who had a teaching gift I had hoped would flourish longer with us but who left early. I see them as witnesses in the transmission of the wisdom of meditation that is the work of the WCCM. 'Witness' literally translates the Greek word for 'martyr'. In the early days of Christianity, the death of martyrs

of simplicity'. If you want to understand what this means, well, first meditate and then read *Word into Silence*. In his first book he delivered a manifesto of contemplative consciousness for our time, showing the three-way link between the essential experience of meditation, the essence of Christian faith and the critical emergency of our times.

There is nothing essentially new or modern about the Christian context of meditation. Its aim is to turn to our own nature with total concentration, to experience our creation first-hand and, above all, to turn and experience the living Spirit of God in our hearts. The life of that Spirit is eternal and indestructible and in this sense the truths that make the Christian context of meditation are always new and permanently modern. (p.5)...

This both expresses the 'essential teaching' of our community and connects it to the perennial philosophy of humanity. Meaning is connection and the conscious experience of this truth through participation and discovering our purpose in life in the ground of being. Whatever happens we will exist for a time, living or partly living. But we only flourish if we have found meaning in a personal connection with being. This connection is made deep in the field of silence and becomes the energy that drives the birth, growth and evolution of every new branch.

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The root of the word 'meaning' leads us back to the origin of consciousness itself. It is related to 'mind, memory, contemplation, being attentive and careful'. It *signifies* something because if we are connected we see everything as a sign. Our world hungers for meaning and purpose in order to unify and to correct the wrong direction we are taking. But the oldest sense of 'meaning' is an *act of memory*. We have forgotten ourselves. As a result we have become dis-membered.

The WCCM has become part of a global process of re-membering that Jesus said the Spirit would guide: *the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and will remind you of all that I said to you. (Jn 14:26)*.

What do the past thirty years of the WCCM mean? It emerges when we see the community as part of something greater than itself. Our life within community is always greater than our individual selves. It is part, and we are all part, of a great work: the Christ-healing of the forces of division and forgetfulness that lead to inhumanity and a terrible loss of

The WCCM believes in meditation as a simple way to wholeness, healing and peace

love. Our personal concerns are never insignificant. But in the community, mystically part of the Body of Christ, the greater meaning connects us to something, a reality, a presence through which we come to know ourselves differently. Meditation is the start of a revolution. The community it creates keeps the revolution spreading. Every social revolution promises greater happiness and justice but only this kind, the conversion of heart, delivers its promise, a fulfilment beyond anything we can imagine, in a way we can't predict and through a transformation beyond illusion into our true self. This is the extraordinary meaning of meditation.

The WCCM is not selling meditation as a product. Nor does it need to compete with other communities or traditions. It believes in meditation as a simple way to wholeness, healing and peace: a way to live more humanely. Redemptive meaning is found in the eternal, daily cycle of seeking and finding God, being changed and thereby changing our little bit of the world. Meditators put this into practice by actively installing a daily practice of

nonaction. We define a 'member' simply as someone 'who meditates in this tradition'. There is no membership fee except this. Personal growth in the fruits of meditation is the real profit margin. It brings us all, rich and poor, high and low, young and old, into a place of meaning, of deep connection and transformative commitment where we find we simply want to share it with others.

Meditation energises a life that becomes ever fresher, younger: something new and demanding but wonderful even as we grow older. Each of us has an inner call that we cannot reject without running away from ourselves. When we begin to answer this call, it feels as if we are in control. We may even feel heroic or generous. Over time we come to see that we are merely disciples: *When you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'*" (Lk 17:10)

Serving the whole that we are part of makes us humbler and more free. It is a way of leaving the partial self behind, no longer orbiting around old self-referencing systems. Meditation creates and sustains community because communion with others is part of this path. The life of a community is different from marriage but can be as rich and mysterious. It is as difficult and rewarding as all human relationships and so only deep solitude can support it. Community does not only mean living under the same roof. It means learning together in the discipline of love what life means.

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Looking back. Looking into what is happening now. Then we can look into the future. Where will the WCCM be in thirty years from now? It is easier to say where I (or you) will be then! Looking ahead in a faith built and renewed in continuous re-commitment becomes an act of hope; so in hope we look ahead. This is not like an institution making projections. With a contemplative consciousness we see what we can see and accept

what we can't and avoid fantasising about the unknown. To live wisely, hopefully with uncertainty.

Shortly before he died, I asked Fr John what I should do? At that instant I was probably more concerned about his absence and about myself than the future of the community; but I would have welcomed clear instructions or predictions to ease the uncertainty looming in the coming catastrophe which would upset all our plans. He thought for a while and then with a strong look said, 'you will do what you have to do'. It did not give instant relief. Now I see what a liberating empow-

and we have Bonnevaux. It is a network in which different generations can mingle and collaborate. The wisdom of age and prudence and the wisdom of youth and impatience teach each other. Our teachers understand that, without hiding our roots or diluting the teaching, we can transmit the gift of meditation to the most needy, using appropriate language for each group as Paul the Hebrew once did in Athens. Bonnevaux already promises to be a multifaceted centre of a diverse community embodying the 'essential teaching' in its daily practice and becoming a place for nurturing teachers and future leaders and for

the sense of wholeness and sense of the sacred which bestows wisdom. Does it seem like a crazy world when you hear the news? The fool has said in his heart there is no God (Ps 14:1)

This is why I am proposing to our Guiding Board that we adopt for this anniversary year the theme of 'Unified Consciousness'. If some say, 'what on earth does that mean?', it will still have worked. Meditators, however, will intuit from their daily practice of oneing that this consciousness is already happening globally. To acknowledge this releases the hormone of hope: that we can and will change direction. Our community is part of this necessary hope. If it is beautiful, a small part manifests the whole. In this work numbers matter less than purity of heart.

In New Harmony in 1991 meditators gathered from around the world to name and give structure to the community that meditation was already forming. We felt part of a tradition that John Main had passed on. Like him, we had to be true to it and develop it further. Every new transmission of wisdom is a creative revolution. Each of us is involved in handing on this torch of contemplation which spreads the light of wisdom in the world. Looking back, we may see and miss the leaves that have fallen from this tree. It would be foolish to try to stick them back on. Seeing them fall makes us more conscious of the miracle of the eternal cycle of life and the tender love that sustains it.



Laurence Freeman, The Dalai Lama and John Main in Montreal, 1980

erment it was. It reflected another saying: *Do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself. (Mt 6:34)*. We need to plan, pay insurance premiums, fundraise, care for people and things and do budgets. But, knowing we are part of a tradition flowing through time, an integral part of a whole, we won't be anxious about the future. Anxiety robs us of the gift of peace.

The community is at a very different place than in 1982 or 1991. We have strong, flexible structures for guiding the community inspired by the Rule of St Benedict: the Guiding Board, Executive Group, Trustees, Medio Media, directors for different areas, protocols for national communities, a growing Oblate community, programs for formation of leaders and teachers, an Academy in the making;

welcoming all seekers and pilgrims. They are reliable forms which will ensure succession in all kinds of community leadership including mine. Yet all forms change. Together we can change wisely.

In another sense we are in exactly the same place as we were thirty years ago. As always, there is uncertainty and new projects, like Bonnevaux and the Academy involve risk. The pandemic taught us to adapt promptly to change so we can continue to share the pearl of great price in new ways. Of course, we have changed in thirty years but it is the same tree. We can see better that all meditators have a call to contribute to the crisis of humanity of which Covid is only a part. As John Main, with other prophetic voices taught, the crisis at root is our accelerating loss of

They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream... like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in due season (Ps 1:1-3)

Happy birthday. Come to the party on September 4th!

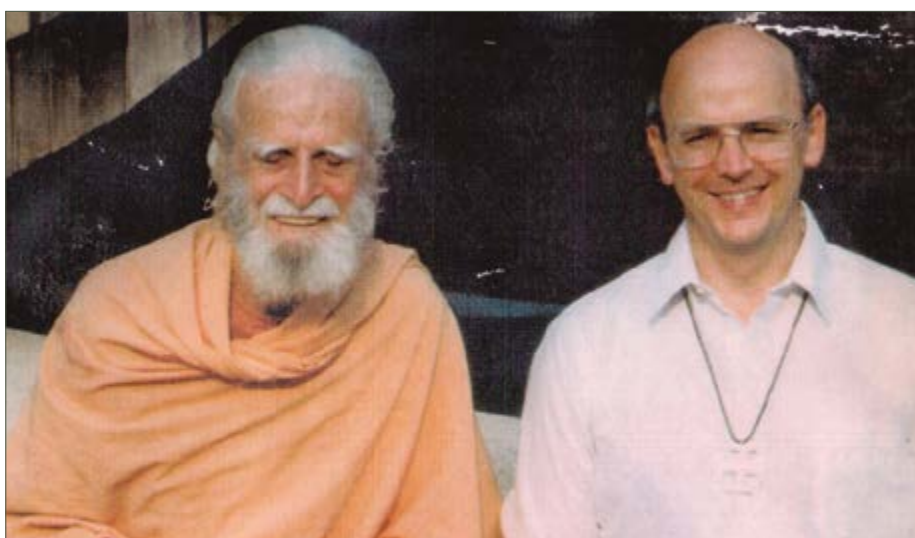
With much love

JMS 2021

Community of Love - Celebrating 30 Years of the founding of WCCM

AN ONLINE JMS UNITING THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY ACROSS THE TIME ZONES ON THE 4TH OF SEPTEMBER

This year's online John Main Seminar will be an overview of the life and development of the Community since it was named at New Harmony in 1991. The real founding had begun long before this in the personal journey of John Main. And it is an ongoing process: a community now present in more than a hundred countries and in 67 National Communities. We will hear testimonies and personal experiences of meditators who form a generational bridge covering these years. As we better understand ourselves shaped by the Spirit we also see how it empowers us to plant seeds of contemplation in our troubled world. Our multi-cultural celebration will be both joyful and reflective, looking back so that we can look forward. It will spotlight the teaching gifts of younger meditators and celebrate the ripening commitment of WCCM teachers who have



Bede Griffiths (who led the JMS in 1991) with Laurence Freeman

taught among us for years. This collaboration of the generations will show how the essential teaching of the WCCM has opened new channels between the community and the world and continues to do so. The day will be a rich mosaic includ-

ing a teaching by Fr Laurence on the 'WCCM and the New Christianity', short talks, meeting with meditators from around the world in small groups, a video on the history of WCCM, celebrations in art, music, poetry – and, of course, meditation together.

Past, future & the joy of living in the present moment

Personal testimonies of young and older members of the Community:

Pascale Callec (France): meditation and the environment;

Kath Houston (Australia): National Communities, emerging trends and patterns;

Magda Jass (Canada): the early days of WCCM and the importance of Community;

Enrique Lavin (Mexico): teaching meditation to children in rural areas;

Taynã Malaspina (Brazil): John Main's theology and its connection with young

people in search of meaning;

Martin Malina (Canada): the enriching challenge of being a national coordinator;

Jonathan Maresca (USA): how his stay at Bonnevaux, the community and the contemplative life has shaped his life so far;

Sr Denise McMahon (Fiji): meditation and the call to be a missionary;

Peter Ng (Singapore): how it was in New Harmony (1991) and the growth since then;

Nick Scrimenti (USA): his research on

John Main and his experience with meditation at the John Main Center;

Vladimír Volráb (Czech Republic): his research on John Main and the setting up of the WCCM Academy;

Josie von Zitzewitz (UK): how John Main's teaching influenced her life as a WCCM Oblate.

JMS 2021 ONLINE: 4TH SEPTEMBER

MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION:

[HTTP://TINY.CC/JMS2021](http://tiny.cc/jms2021)

News

International Oblate Retreat: love growing in diversity

BY EILEEN DUTT, INTERNATIONAL OBLATE COORDINATOR

“...’Be still and know that I am God’ is not an escape from the problems of the world. But it is the answer to the problems of the world...The stillness is greater than the turmoil, greater than the violence, greater than the hatred... And nothing describes more directly our meditation and the needs of the world.”

Fr. Laurence

The 24 hour meditation, held on July 8th, prior to the International Oblate Retreat, was a warm, all inclusive event. Our aim was to let our light be seen and our silence be heard-with over 1800 participants we believe we succeeded!

The International Oblate Retreat, held July 9th-11th was our first online gathering with Oblates and friends around the world. As always when Oblates meet, the Spirit presides. The growth of our global community, which had become so evident during the pandemic, manifested itself in the number of Ceremonies -12 at each stage.

The opportunity to gather together and listen as Fr. Laurence talked us through the Benedictine guiding pre-



Receiving new Oblates during the online retreat

cepts of Obedience, Stability and Conversion was invigorating and most welcome. The way in which he covered the three touched the hearts of us all. In a world of babble and polarized opinions, we were reminded how important it is for us to learn to remain simple, silent, and in stillness so as to listen deeply, with attention, to the events around us, to the interactions of and with people, and to our own experiences and emotions in order to know and

understand ourselves and the world in which we live better. Above all, we were reminded of the importance of our commitment to being a community of love in which we, not only walk the same path with the other, but do so gently and lovingly so as to draw the other “into the light of true being” as John Main said. The retreat has given us a chance to appreciate the constant growth in diversity and conversion of our own community.

Bonnevaux Retreat Centre: blessing planned for April 2022

Bonnevaux is adapting to a new phase regarding COVID. The Community is open now to the public for short and long stays, following a protocol. The Retreat Centre will open for some test events in November. A formal blessing is planned for March/April 2022. You can follow updates and check new events by visiting bonnevauxwccm.org.



Leadership

Angelene Chan, on the new book “Contemplative Leaders”: reflections invite us to dig deeper

BY ANGELENE CHAN



The idea for the Bonnevaux Business Meditation Group (BBMG) was mooted by Fr Laurence and Peter Ng in late April, early May of 2020 when COVID-19 raged across many parts of the world, and the number of infections rose globally at an alarming rate. People were dealing with many fears under lockdown: feeling isolated or displaced, worried about catching the virus, concerned for their separated family members, and anxious about financial hardship.

Because the BBMG was started to help business and working people respond to the crisis in a contemplative way, the word “business” was originally included in its name. The word “business” also indicated that the group is not intended to be an exclusively Christian group, although it is led by Fr Laurence, a Catholic priest.

It is a secular meditation group where people of any or no spiritual tradition are welcomed. Some members are not in business, but are teachers, professionals who work for non-profit organizations, policy makers, etc., and the word “business” was eventually dropped from the name to make it even more inclusive. The group now known as the Bonnevaux Meditation Group (BMG), met online for the first time on May 15, 2020, and has continued to meet once a week for about 45 minutes. Meetings start with a talk by Fr Laurence, group members, or invited speakers, and end with a 20-minute silent meditation.

The BMG’s aim is to help its members begin and sustain a daily meditation practice. Meditating as a group encourages members to remain with the practice. The temptation to quit can be strong, especially for new meditators. The BMG is there every week for members to support each other.

For me, a book form is still a very effective medium to share knowledge. By publishing “Contemplative Leaders” we hope to reach outside our group and encourage more people to take up meditation or be more regular in their practice. We hope that working people who may not be familiar with meditation will obtain a better understanding of what meditation is through our personal stories and reflections. We hope they will find the experiences of other working professionals relatable and be encouraged to join our practice.

The reflections are testimonies of

meditation as an effective way to overcome life’s challenges. When we read or hear about other people’s experiences, we learn more about ourselves. Through our own thoughts and our own responses to their sharing, we are invited to dig deeper. Ultimately we hope the reflections will inspire desire or resolve for inner change in the readers.

Contemplative Leaders

CONTEMPLATIVE LEADERS
Personal Reflections by Members of the Bonnevaux Business Meditation Group

introduced by
LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB

Personal Reflections by Members of the Bonnevaux Meditation Group (BMG)

ORDER HERE:
<https://mediomedia.com/>

Environment

Contemplation and the Fires of Climate Crisis

REFLECTIONS AFTER LIVING THROUGH THE DEVASTATING FIRES IN AUSTRALIA, 2020

BY LINDA CHAPMAN

How are we to live in this broken world? I hesitate to suggest that the Black Summer fire crisis could have a purifying, simplifying effect if we are awake to it. I hesitate because I in no way want nature to be paying this price of our possible awakening. She does not deserve this. On the other hand, if we are not to wake up because of this calamitous crisis then the cost will be very much higher.

Reflecting on living through these days of fire, I'm conscious that the practice of meditation integrated into daily life has proven to be significant at such a time. And, just as the fire threats grow and recede so our thoughts become insistent and demanding or spacious and quiet in turn as we practice meditation. Like the southerly that came the day fire was closest to our home, and cleared the sky within minutes, so we may suddenly find a clear space open within. We can neither control the wind nor the Spirit. Meditation is not a theory or an idea. It's a practice that, when lived, enables us in times of ease as well as times of crisis.

The practice of meditation is a grounding and stabilising influence. At times of acute crisis it can enable some equilibrium. It must never become a soporific. The bushfire crisis in Australia, or as one journalist has called it the pyro-hydro-climate crisis, is an international catastrophe. Many are extremely angry and despair of any possibility of the kind of immediate policy our government needs to enact to reduce carbon emissions. Anger can energise action. Jesus' response to the injustice and exploitation of the Temple moneychangers led to his turning of their



Remains of the old Cadgee church pulpit, and after the fire, the metal cross seared on the earth

tables. As a community we need to do the same. Anger, channelled as deep and persistent conviction and action, is an appropriate response to present conditions. A contemplative response is measured and spiritually intelligent but no less insistent than any form of activist protest. The times in which we are living demand radical action. Come what may though, if we lose our capacity for love, then we forfeit our Christian vocation and identity. We can only live in this broken world as truly human beings when we act with truthful and courageous love for the common good.

Contemplative consciousness is clear-sighted, compassionate and wise. In a country such as ours, where the politics of coal and climate has been so polarised and toxic, the discipline of contemplative practice seems vitally important. The bitterness of activists is easily understood. Yet we must 'maintain the rage' in a way that subverts the old adversarial system. We must dive deeper and return to our 'adversaries' not hatred but intelligent, insistent and compassionate action. The daily practice of

meditation is like a filter through which we can allow our own toxic thoughts and feelings to become transformed into energy for that action.

We would be foolish to think that the climate crisis has also receded. The image of the cross burnt into the ground after the fire swept though is a haunting reminder that the earth is being crucified. We must keep our attention on what needs to be done.

COP26 & WCCM

Glasgow is preparing to host the vital COP26 Climate Change Conference from the 31st of October to the 12th of November. Postponed from last year because of COVID, it is now even more urgent that the international delegates negotiate with their focus on the needs of the whole world, and take fully into account those communities already suffering. All information about WCCM events before and during the conference will be provided, including online meditations and talks. To learn details on how you can get involved and to get updates, visit : <http://tiny.cc/evmwccm>

News

More Research on John Main and Christian Meditation

AS A CONTINUATION OF OUR SERIES, WE LOOK IN THIS ISSUE AT THE WORKS OF CARLOS (FROM SPAIN) AND THOMAS (FROM GERMANY)

A Moral Theology PhD on John Main

BY CARLOS MIRAMONTES, SPAIN

Currently I am conducting my Moral Theology PhD research on John Main's life, experience, insights and theology. Moral Theology is now less conceived as a reflection on what to do, and more as a reflection on the structure of Christian life itself, its fundamentals, processes, and how to structure it looking at its integral realization. In the course of my research I have come to believe that the essence of John Main's insight is that the Christian life based on meditation, that is, meditation interpreted in daily life, in the end brings people to live authentically. As John Main says in the last chapter of

Moment of Christ, giving ourselves totally in meditation, losing ourselves in doing that, handing over all our thoughts, preoccupations, plans, and even memories in meditation, can lead us to direct contact with the interior silence that we can "touch." We come in contact with our very being, in which "we are, move and exist," as Saint Paul would say. John Main's texts contain much more material to research, extract and develop, including his views on man, on God, on the world, on the essence of religion and also on morality. There is so much work yet for me to do!



The influence and effect of Christian Meditation in leadership of organizations and companies

BY THOMAS ZIMMERMANN, GERMANY

The many challenges of the current time, interconnected with the increasing disintegration of religion, family and value systems within our modern society, have caused me to become interested in finding an approach to reevaluate our decision-making process based on common deep-rooted beliefs. Hence, I see it as crucial to create new reference points in our fast-paced modern life.

In my work I will research the influence of Christian Meditation on current and potential leaders in organizations and companies. My main focus will be on leaders and entrepreneurs connected to the WCCM who have had relevant leadership experience in their professions.

Based on personal positive experiences, I plan to address the effects of meditation on the professional everyday lives of leaders and document its relevance on a scientific level. I would also like to highlight the added value of meditation to economic undertakings and, thus, establish a future-oriented leadership model.

In this context, I intend to conduct an explorative analysis by interviewing entrepreneurs as well as managers, who integrate meditation into their daily lives.

I will examine personal experiences and the associated effects on individual leadership behavior, the associated

perception as well as the influence on employees. I will also work out possible integration approaches in the various fields of action of organizational practice. Concluding, I shall exhibit how meditation, reintegration of values and beliefs as well as personal reflection within an organizational body can lead to a process of social transformation—all of these outcomes starting with the individual and arising from the strength of introspection/ meditation.

NEXT ISSUE:

We will highlight the research by Vladimír Volráb, from Czech Republic

In Focus

Carina Conte, Uruguay



Growing up in Uruguay, my early encounters with the divine were evidenced by my grandmother's loving devotion, and the deep silence I encountered on my occasional visits to church. It was a time when rituals and moral precepts were the dominant tone of most of the voices that spoke of God, and this focus pushed me away from religion as a teenager and a young adult. My career path took me quickly to executive positions in marketing and management, and these professional responsibilities, combined with raising children, became a heavy burden to bear. By 35 I was overworked, stressed, and out of balance. My stress level brought

on physical discomfort; the need for change was evident.

Help came in the form of Martín, a wonderful Yoga instructor. He introduced me and my husband to yoga, taught us meditation, and walked us through the sacred teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism. As we went deeper, I found it difficult to integrate the experience of meditation and the teachings; I was confused and yearning for more. Reading the Bible as part of the meditation practice was the next step, and the presence of Christ soon began to take root in our hearts.

One day, as I was seeking deeper insights into Christianity and meditation, a Google search finally connected the dots: there was a Benedictine monk who taught Christian Meditation, and he was leading a retreat in Córdoba, quite close to Montevideo! We went off to the retreat with our friend Philippe Sauval and his wife. Our 2011 journey was truly a one-way trip. Listening to Fr. Laurence was for us like putting the pieces of a puzzle together.

Philippe became WCCM National Coordinator in Uruguay, where there was only an incipient community. I began teaching children to meditate in our local parish, an amazing gift of

love. My husband and I and several friends each started meditation groups for adults, where we discovered the grace of spiritual friendship and community. Sharing the path of Christian meditation with my husband, Pablo, has been a revelation of unity in Christ that brought new depth and perspective to our life together.

As for work stress, I can't say I never experienced it again after beginning to meditate, but the permanent burden and the illusion of control I felt disappeared. Compassion and hope became faithful companions, turning around my leadership style from controlling and demanding to delegating and nurturing growth. Meditation has also fostered creativity, inspiring in me a new way of expressing the spiritual growth experience through icons and other paintings. It also led to further personal development through the study of coaching as a way of helping others in their own growth paths.

At the beginning of this year I was asked to take on the National Coordination of WCCM for Uruguay, a challenge that honours me and fills me with joy. I trust God will continue to grace our community with his love and patience to lead us in his path.



WCCM 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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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 & Events

New Meditatio Centre Website

The Meditatio Centre London recently relaunched its website with a new design and features. Visit here: <http://meditatiocentre.london.org>

Video

JMS 2020 talks available for Supporting Members



The sessions of the John Main Seminar 2020 with the theme "One Heart, One Hope - Indigenous Wisdom and the Future of Humanity" are now included in the Supporting Member area. The recordings are available in English, Spanish and Portuguese. Alex Zatyryka (photo) was the keynote speaker. Supporting Members receive unlimited access to our growing library of online courses, recorded retreats and seminars. For more information visit <http://tiny.cc/bsmwccm>

Audio

Meditatio Talks Series 2021 B Apr-Jun

These talks reflect on the meaning of attention because attention is at the centre of human meaning, Laurence Freeman says. In moments of crisis, as during the present pandemic, what really matters is our encounter with love through the attention we receive. Meditation is a way of exercising our muscle of attention. Download & listen online: <http://tiny.cc/medt21b>



WCCM online events

Series in Progress:

- * Health Series: next sessions on Love, the Universal Healer and The Harmonies of a Healthy Life
- * Speaker Series: next sessions with Bela Hatvany and David Lorimer
- * Talks for Younger Adults with Laurence Freeman
- * National Communities online retreats led by Laurence Freeman

14-16 OCT

Beyond Words, Beyond Dualities
- online retreat led by Liz Watson

MORE INFO & REGISTRATION:
visit <http://wccm.org>

Bonnevaux events

These are in-person retreats hosted in a test-phase, before the opening of the Retreat Centre

10-13 NOV

Seeing with the Heart, a retreat led by Cynthia Bourgeault

29 NOV-5 DEC

Saving Time - Advent Retreat led by Laurence Freeman and Giovanni Felicioni

MORE INFO & REGISTRATION:
visit <http://bonnevauxwccm.org>

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Christian Meditation

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY



SUMMER 2021 ISSUE

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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Retreat into the Stillness of Silence

Mid-May, at the aptly-named Our Lady Of Hope Retreat Centre, we experienced the paradox of the old becoming new again! It was with quiet expectation that our small group of pilgrims climbed the hill overlooking the Atlantic Ocean in the fresh bloom of spring on Prince Edward Island. We had a new lease on life, embarking, for the first time in over a year, on an actual in-person Christian Meditation retreat.

The theme of the retreat, *Silence in Stillness*, was especially evocative, given the universal self-imposed isolation that has marked the last year of our global culture. The times have been marked by a social silence, despite the virtual communities that have sprung up to keep our bonds alive. Now our privileged little band was going to be *physically* silent in the shared stillness of a spiritual retreat. What was once an experience shared by many, was now welcomed by us as a treasure and viewed with new eyes.

Many in our little group had begun at the Martha Spirituality Centre in Charlottetown, meeting regularly. The community morphed into an online Christian Meditation group, picking up new members as the pandemic settled in for the long term. Now, a year later, Prince Edward Island had survived with only two overnight hospitalizations and no deaths. Our good sense, and sacrifices based on common bonds had taken us through seemingly unscathed. Not untouched though. The isolation from family and friends was felt by everyone.

However, after a few setbacks, we were finally given the go-ahead in May for an in-person silent Christian Meditation Retreat. So fifteen fully-masked meditators settled in for three days and nights of socially-distanced community. The COVID protocols had surprisingly little impact on our retreat, because the Christian Meditation model has always rested on silence and stillness. Pandemic protocols led us to forgo facilitated talks, instead relying on CD talks by such wise teachers as John Main, Lawrence Freeman,

Gerry Pierce, and Rev. Glenda Meakin for our contemplative guidance. Our retreat coordinators, Sr. Kathleen Bolger, Lynda Fitzgerald and Karen Langevin, designed a program that was rich in thematic material, inspirational music and prayer, during three meditation sessions each day. Given the CD format, they could then settle back, during gently guided meditation, leaving it to the Holy Spirit to lead themselves and the other meditators into a special stillness.

In *Word Into Silence*, John Main spoke of that special gift meditation gives: “We are conscious of our wholeness and unity, and as we stay in this state of consciousness we experience a growing awareness of our unity with all persons, with all creation, with our Creator.” (John Main OSB, Pg 22).

During our retreat there was a blessed opportunity for personal and communal growth. Meals shared, walking meditation, and awareness of our joint commitment to journaling and prayer, forged us into a caring community. Woodland walks, exploration of the patient unfolding of the season, gave us a special awareness of our connection to everything. The spectacular scenery, blooming flowers, budding trees, and the silent panorama of slow-moving fishing boats far below, took us to a sense of that unity John Main spoke of.

What a gift this short excursion into silent stillness was! After the retreat, during our regular Zoom Meditation sessions, we could speak about how much more easily we could slip into our mantra. It seems that the wisdom teaching that “discipline is key, meditating twice a day”, was a lesson we could all take back to our Zoom meditation community. We also were able to share the images from our time in retreat, with Karen Langevin preparing a special Zoom pictorial presentation. And of course, as we bid farewell for the summer, we followed our ongoing zoom ritual, of raising a virtual cup of tea to one and all.

Respectfully,
Nancy Murphy

That Holy Space, In Between the Words

When Indigenous communities across Canada are suffering the pain of grief and loss after the discovery of 215 bodies of children buried beside a residential school in British Columbia earlier this year, what are we to say and do?

For all that has been said and done – and most of our words and deeds have not been loving – now is the time for us to stop talking, and listen.

Listen to the voices that have not been heard. Listen to the stories that have been muted. Listen to cries of the grieving and mourning people. Listen to the first peoples on this land we now occupy. Now is the time for our words to cease, and our ears to do the working.

The practice of meditation realigns the landscape of our inner lives. Specifically, the prayer of the heart over time begins to change how we speak and how we act, when we engage the world around us. The discipline of prayer is like learning a new language for our lives.

Learning a new language requires those involved in the conversation to slow down, to speak clearly, to choose your words carefully. And, more often in the conversation, to listen.

A small way we can align our heart with our words and actions is indeed to slow down. It's okay to allow space amidst our speech. By speaking slowly and creating spaces of silence between our words we open up room for the heart – the heart of love – to come out. When we stop our talking, or at least slow down our speech, we give permission for others to find their own words.

And I can't think of a better way, these days, to love others who are grieving.

I want to thank the meditation group leaders across Canada who gathered with me in a Zoom room in the late Spring to listen to each other. In Zoom rooms we can't all be talking all of the time. For these online meetings to work well, everyone needs to do more listening than anything else. Especially in large groups, as this one was (over fifty attended)! Thank you for practising healthy relationships by hearing each other and allowing for that holy space to grow, in between the words.

Martin Malina
canadacoordinator@wccm.org

MÉDITATION CHRÉTIENNE DU QUÉBEC ET DE RÉGIONS FRANCOPHONES DU CANADA (MCQRFC)

30th Anniversary

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Méditation Chrétienne du Québec et de Régions Francophones du Canada (MCQRFC). The journey has been a long and fruitful one. It began in 1991 after the departure of the Benedictine monks from the Island of Montreal.

Along with Jean Pelletier the driving force behind Les amis de John Main was Michelle Dubuc, a social worker who was bound and determined to keep the legacy of John Main and Christian meditation alive for francophones and francophiles. It started with the early translation of one of John Main's books: *Un mot*

dans le silence, un mot pour méditer. This was followed by the translation of two of Laurence Freeman's books as well.

Early on Michel Boyer was attracted by an advertisement for a *retreat en français* at l'Hermitage de Ste Croix featuring Laurence Freeman. In attendance were forty people thirsty for more understanding and experience of Christian meditation.

Michelle Dubuc brandished the torch and ensured that a group of meditators continued to meet after the

Continued on page C7

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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

ONLINE VIA ZOOM ESSENTIAL
TEACHING WORKSHOP
(ETW) SPRING 2021

Alberta- Saskatchewan Zone



The fourteen participants who attended the first-ever Online Essential Teaching Workshop in Canada gave the workshop a definitive thumbs up in all categories including Leadership, Organization, Content, and Structure. Perhaps more importantly, as described in the comments below, workshop participants experienced joy in community, and a sense of safety and trust in small group discussions with workshop leaders, facilitators, and each other.

- *An extremely professionally run event, from beginning to end. Technically smooth throughout. Competent, engaging, empathetic presenters / facilitators. Good group size. Lovely, wise, faith-filled people in every chair, or should I say every screen!*
- *The highlight was the sense of community in learning and sharing.*
- *Being together as a group from across the country and the depth of each person.*
- *The sense of community and trust that developed naturally.*
- *The highlight for me was learning how to facilitate a meditation and getting to build a larger more soulful community of like-minded people.*

The Spring 2021 ETW was held over two weekends which involved one Friday evening (April 23) from 6:30-8:30 pm and two Saturdays (April 25, May 1) from 7:00 am-3:30 pm. In addition to majority representation from Alberta, participants from Ontario and Prince Edward Island gave the ETW experience a national flavor. The highly competent and deeply appreciated resource team comprised Phil Barnett, Denise Connors, and Mia Klein-Gebbinck delivered three plenary talks and facilitated group discussion on *The Essential Teaching, History of the Tradition, and Stages of the Journey*. The highlight for several participants was having the opportunity to prepare and develop a 5- to 10-minute talk on Christian Meditation.

I thought I hadn't prepared enough for [the talk on meditation]. I was wondering if I was sharing something too personal. I prayed to the Holy Spirit and I spoke with honesty and feeling. Everyone appreciated my testimony. This is part of my journey to start witnessing about my faith.

Other highlights included contemplative walk, “the contemplative walks were a great way to reset our minds and energy to the next set of talks and fellowship” and balance of information, work, worship, and sharing. Participants also appreciated receiving Christian Meditation information and resources, and a pre-recorded personalized video message from Fr. Laurence!

Feedback on the Zoom format experience was very positive overall, though some participants look forward to having face-to-face experiences in the future.

Yes, it was effective in creating a community in short time and cost effective. Yes, it was a very positive and encourage learning environment.

For sure would attend another Zoom workshop but suggest they not exceed a day at this time. People are getting “zoom fatigue”.

Overall, it was a much blessed experience for everyone. As one participant commented later in the week, “I’m still in the after-glow”.

The local organizers are very grateful to the Resource Team members, Phil, Denise, and Mia, for their kind and thoughtful mentorship.

You can find more information about the ETW at <https://wccm.org/teaching-resources/the-essential-teaching-program/>. If you are interested in participating in an ETW, please contact your Regional Coordinator.

Patricia Harasym

Regional Coordinator for the
Alberta/Saskatchewan Zone

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, and teach meditation in countries near and far costs money. For the past year we were able to reach out to more people through our online platforms.

The Friends Program enables Fr. Laurence to offer retreats, talks and presentations in emerging countries, when financial sponsorship is unavailable from local sources. We are looking forward to resuming many of these activities as travel restrictions start lifting.

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

Donations can be made by cheque to:

Ibolya Agoston,
11411 98 St, Fort St John, BC, V1J 7B5

by credit card, or online through
CanadaHelps: The Canadian Christian
Meditation Community.

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,
Ibolya Agoston
Coordinator, CCMC Friends Program



The Teaching of Dom John Main

Oblate Retreat - open to everyone
Saturday 28 August, 9 am to 5 pm EST

The retreat will be based on the writings of Dom John Main now in the archives of Georgetown University, Washington. Also, his recorded spiritual teachings given in Montreal between 1977 and 1982.

This is a Zoom-based event. The links to the Zoom meeting account will be sent to you with the final program a week before the event.

This event is offered free of charge, but small donations will be gratefully received

Tentative Schedule

9:00 am	Welcome and Introduction	Magda Jass	2:00-2:45 pm	Second Conference	Polly Schofield
9:15	Dom John Main	Recorded Talk	3:00	Dom John Main	Recorded Talk
9:30-10:00	Meditation		3:15-3:45	Meditation	
10:15-11:00	First Conference	Polly Schofield	3:45	Moderated Q & A	
11:15	Dom John Main	Recorded Talk	4:45	Dom John Main	Recorded Talk
11:30-noon	Meditation				
noon-1:30 pm	Lunch Break				

Online registration: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/la-communaute-de-meditation-chretienmeditatio-meditatio-c/events/the-teaching-of-dom-john-main-open-oblate-retreat>

In person registration: call Magda Jass at **514-481-8746** – magda.jass@gmail.com

JUNE 13, 2021 OVER ZOOM

National Group Leaders Meeting

We had over 50 in attendance! It was great to see the faces of so many committed group leaders from across the country. And it was just so good to listen to each other express our challenges and hopes. If anything, what impressed me was our resiliency and our capacity to change. What impressed me were the different ways and contexts in which groups will 'make it work' in challenging times. Bravo!

In other words, there isn't a cookie-cutter approach for developing onsite/online 'hybrid' groups, when we emerge from the pandemic. Yes, we need to learn some technical skills, and we already have! Many groups reported that their numbers have gone up significantly when transitioning to online group meetings over the past year. So, we can't just stop our online groups. It's more a question of balancing these online needs with a return to in person meetings, however that will look like.

I believe, overall, it was a helpful and encouraging meeting for many who have made major adjustments and adapted to changing realities for their groups over the past year.

In the break-out rooms, which included four or five group leaders mixed together from all parts of the country, the questions considered were: How do you envision balancing online with onsite needs as we emerge from the pandemic? And, to those who did not lead online groups over the past year, how have you reintroduced, or will reintroduce, meeting in groups again?

The poll question had to do with the primary format you have used recently to present the pre-recorded/written 'talks' from the WCCM. The choices were: the CD, audio download from the WCCM website, reading print copy from daily devotions or the 'talks' manuscript, using your own material from a mystic or spiritual reading, or you don't use talks/readings in your meditation group.

While (isn't this often the case using tech?!) we ran into some technical difficulties during the exercise, we did get some useful results. From those who participated in the poll (over half) the majority download the audio file. In second place, a large number read a paper copy of the talks manuscript or other material from the WCCM. Then, a smaller yet significant number present your own material obtained from

readings or resources to do with contemplation, spirituality or meditation. Finally, the smallest percentage playback the talks using the CD. No one reported not having any talks/readings during your meditation group meetings.

The chat feature in the Zoom room allowed participants to pose questions about running a group meeting, some of which were addressed towards the end. Questions ranged from how to modify the reading/talk when a newcomer attends, a list of female voices in the WCCM from which to draw (Sarah Bachelard, Kim Natajara, Glenda Meakin, Eileen O'Hea, Liz Watson, Cynthia Bourgeault, to name a few). Others asked about any upcoming 6-week intro courses to Christian Meditation.

A recurring theme was seeking technical support. For example, when a group uses other video conferencing media besides Zoom, such as GoToMeeting. Others asked about having a workshop to learn about using 'share screen' or playing back audio during a meeting. Many of us are still growing into and learning about this new online medium.

I'd like to host another group leader meeting online in the Fall. Still to be determined, whether it will be a short, focused session more about 'how to' on Zoom; or host another Canada-wide session similar in format to what we just experienced, but the break-out rooms being designed to include leaders from your region, etc. I believe we need to identify those in our community who do have technical skills and who could facilitate a more detailed, workshop approach to support those with these questions. If you have suggestions or would like to help, I would love to hear from you.

In closing, I encouraged group leaders to reach out to one another, share resources, and do things together more. The pandemic, if anything, has forced us to ask for help when we need it, combine our efforts, and cooperate more than ever before. The pandemic has exposed our fundamental common humanity and unity. It's time to embrace that unity in visible and tangible ways.

Seeing all those faces on the Zoom screen affirmed that belief, for me.

**In Peace,
Martin Malina, Ottawa
prmartinmalina@gmail.com**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

with Laurence Freeman, OSB

at St Paul University in Ottawa, 10 to 12 June 2022

Join us for the next CCMC conference in June 2022, a time to gather together for fellowship and prayer, a time to renew friendships, a time to renew our faith.

Questions and suggestions are welcome as we plan this event. Please email william_meek@bell.net.

Registration will open October 2021.

STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS AS THEY DEVELOP.

30th Anniversary MCQRFC continued from C3

retreat. She then sought to establish an interim board of directors and found a series of locations for an office for the group. There ensued the establishment of a provisional board followed by a registered charitable number, letters patent as well as a duly elected Board of Directors.

Michelle Dubuc served as coordinator for the group from 1991 to 1997, followed by Monique Piché until 2003 and then Michel Boyer from 2003-2015. There followed a series of coordinators until Rosario Lopez left the organization for another employment in 2020.

A huge step forward for the organization occurred from 2014 to 2019 under the influence of Yvon Thérroux, then Board Chair. A very prized Échos du silence, the biannual publication, gave the franco-phone community of meditators a voice for testimonials, reflections and book reviews.

Prior to leaving the coordination of MCQRFC, Rosario had ensured continuation of group meditation through the use of Zoom meetings. Since then our executive secretary Marc Bellemare and a dynamic

board of directors has supported the regional leaders and facilitators support the practice of meditation for twelve online communities as we await the end of the pandemic.

In the wake of the pandemic and our increasing dependence on the internet to support virtual communities and to celebrate our 30th anniversary, our website has been entirely reconfigured to modern software that is user friendly and easy to update for our staff.

We have had a series of well attended retreats by Fr Michel Boyer osb, our spiritual director, as well as others planned throughout the year. Our AGA will be held on September 11. The highlight this year will be a three-day online retreat with Eric Clotuche in early October of this year. For more information on activities and resources available please feel free to consult and/or join our membership at https://www.meditationchretienne.ca/. Bienvenue!

Louise Hébert-Saindon Board Chair MCQRFC

Canadian Christian Meditation Community

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Table with 4 columns: Quantity, Title, Price, Total. Row 1: Contemplative Leaders (see page 8), \$22.00

POSTAGE (Price + 10%) _____

TOTAL _____

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TOTAL AMOUNT _____

The Silence that Sings

We, the community of Manitoba, hosted the second virtual meditation retreat day of the pandemic year, on May 15, 2021. The organizers prepared a complex virtual agenda with the aid of the Zoom platform. The presence of 16 attendees from all over the country traverses a very social experience through the click of a technological link: we accessed God together.

We listened to the podcast 'A Church Come of Age' by the theologian retreat leader Rev Dr. Sarah Bachelard, "as she explores how it can feel to be involved in Church these days and the strains meditators may experience in the old ways of participating in the Christian tradition," she stated.

"The churches are almost empty or sold, as if they've reached their tipping point, and from the pulpits, God slid out." Bringing humour to the crowd.

'There are stones that sing' is the title of a poem from the Australian poet Lisa Jacobson. "And all that fanciful gold leaf on heaven's floor was incinerated by our telescopes... And bits of tattered God fell down," she continued.

"Well, this is how it can feel to be involved in church these days."

If today's Christians lack the conviction and enthusiasm to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus, it might be because they forget that their reason for being fundamental is to exist for others. God is not a reflection of our consciousness, but we are His reflection of our consciousness and his image. The way to discover this truth lies in the silence of our meditation.

Meditation unveils the essence of purity and greater in depth understanding of our physical world experiences. Humility and self-acceptance bring growing awareness. Living liturgy can be unanswerable, shallow, and cliché if the depth of the meaning of the words is not understood.

Meditation helps allow the absorption of the knowledge into the spirit for holistic transformation. It is a great feeling when I meditate with the windows of my room open, I sometimes hear the whispers of the wind, 'whooshing' and imagine my prayers are carried swiftly on those same winds to God. Other times, I imagine the rays of the sun, or the chirping of the birds softly singing my prayers to God.

Church doors were closed during Covid-19, and hearts open to a deeper contemplation of what God means personally while still attempting to embrace each other on social media Christian worshipping meeting groups.

One of the ultimate desires I seek through meditation, is exultation. The Bliss of the Blessed, such as; the excitement when one's favorite sporting team wins a game; our pandemic is over, a birthday celebration which is a symbol of new beginnings, exploring new places in unlimited circumstances, the euphoric wave one feels when Canada Day arrives on July 1, and everyone celebrates.

Inner peace, calmness, tranquility, or answers to prayers from the divine are other goals I seek.

With loving kindness, have a blessed Summer.

**Lily Sotomayor
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

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