



WCCM

Newsletter of The World Community for Christian Meditation

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Silence and Celebration

LAURENCE FREEMAN ON THE JOURNEY OF A GROUP OF YOUNG MEDITATORS AT WORLD YOUTH DAY



WCCM group at the vigil with Pope Francis in Lisbon

This issue

6-7 News & Articles

Testimonials of meditators at World Youth Day in Portugal

10 News & Articles

World Congress of Benedictine Oblates in Rome: diversity and unity

11 In Focus

Jenny Scott from the UK: a journey towards the ground of being

Leavers Friends,

A letter from Laurence Freeman OSB

We are beginning to sense how great a watershed the Covid pandemic has been for our world. It has made us frightened to come out, retreating into the comfort zone of virtual zoom reality, and it has shaken our trust in authentic authority. For many it created a false solitude that compounded the pre-existing epidemic of loneliness which only inter-iority, true solitude in unity with others, can cure.

And yet (beware of single explanations) at the same time, and while it was keeping people locked indoors, it helped many to search more deeply for the inner room of contemplation. Our community's online programme was born during Covid specifically as 'a contemplative path through the crisis'.

Over its first months, I noticed a familiar face present at nearly every online event. When I spoke to them later, this person told me of the deep personal conversion they had undergone during the shutdown. Every online event took the process deeper. As I listened, I could see the signs of this personal change: a greater openness of mind and gentleness of manner, a sense of humility at what they had undergone, a new tenderness.

It's the same message for all but there's a different take-up for everyone: Like the business student I spoke with about his learning to meditate who taught me that the path of true meta-noia doesn't always run smooth. He had started a daily practice of meditation, once a day. I asked him what he felt about the 'work of the mantra'. He said 'well I feel it's right and I am drawn to it. But it's difficult'. So, I asked what he did when he found it difficult: he said he put on his headphones and listened to a guided meditation or soft music. But he was open to discuss this and at the end seemed grateful to hear what I, or any experienced meditator, would have sug-

gested: stay with the mantra, gently and faithfully, and take the headphones off.

*

Believe me. Even with the mantra, meditating outdoors, under a hot sun, amid a crowd of hundreds of young people, with those closest to you singing 'Happy Birthday' in every tongue at maximum volume, is a challenge. It was a crazily wise idea formed among the twenty-two young adult meditators (from



Young Meditators in Fatima before World Youth Day

Indonesia to Mexico) with whom I attended the World Youth Day last month. We sat in a circle on the ground hoping to be a sign with our 'flash meditation mob'. Signifying what? That you don't have to be solemn or churchy to enter the inner room of contemplation; that meditation is a part of life like birthday parties and travel and meeting new people.

The unity of our small flash group connected and, so we hoped, witnessed to the boisterous crowd around us. Altogether, the million and a half young Christians from a record 200 countries richly represented the chaotic catholicity of the church, a huge spectrum of individuals, communities and types of theology. Anyone who thinks the church can enforce standard beliefs and practices had better read the Acts of the Apostles and come to the next World Youth Day

in Seoul. I'm not saying it was the Heavenly Jerusalem yet – often more like the earthly one on a global scale. But as the waves of joyful young people intermingled, flowing through the streets of Lisbon, the question that nudged me was 'what is the essence of this experience of unity?' Not a football team or a rock star. Nor just one theological preference. The source of such unity is not easy to explain. It lies beyond the horizon of our vision. But then I remembered Wittgenstein, the

difficult-to-understand philosopher of the simple. He said that to understand all human beliefs and behaviour, we must take into account the vital distinction between 'what can be expressed and what cannot be expressed but *only shown*'. To those with eyes to see and ears to hear – at times noisily and at other times silently – this unity was being *shown*.

*

I couldn't think of any political rally or sporting event that would unite so many people on such a scale. If only the church was better at living out this immanent unity in its ordinary life; and if the media was more objective in reporting what this unique kind of celebration of inter-cultural shows about human potential.

Of course, the whole event was a flash-multitude of a million or more, not

something to confuse with the challenge of the normal. Yet for its short week of super-vitality and despite its magnitude, it was on a human scale. The young meditators were a diverse human group small enough to both recognise and embrace the big differences between us, individually, linguistically and culturally, from an investment banker to a theology student. It was also authentic enough to open the eye of the heart to a mysterious personal presence, who could be *shown* but not photographed and who was the source of our unity beyond our inner horizons, the mutual friend of our friendship.

Our mutual friend, Jesus, showed us that unity isn't uniformity. It can't be pushed inside a box which an external force can stifle or suppress, control or contain. The long history of social and personal oppression shows the resilience of humanity's unity in freedom. This ultimately irrepressible source of unity is ever the enemy of oppressive forces. Nevertheless, the dark fantasy of Orwell's '1984' or Simone Weil's prophecy of 'totalitarian bureaucracy', seems ever more real today in the mass surveillance and enforcement of pitiless control in China or in the secret algorithmic worms of mass media. Anonymous forces driven by greed for power can only degrade our sacred human freedom and divine catholicity if we let them.

In its perverted application of science, technology and media, the language of mass communication becomes lies and nonsense, absurd denials of the obvious, which few dare to expose. Truth is twisted into alternative realities, peace becomes the result of aggression, justice is betrayed in the warfare of special interests, love is reduced to desire, conversation to a jungle noise. Without the defence of reality, for which the contemplative mind is prepared to sacrifice itself, the best inventions of the human mind are enslaved into the service of the gods of mammon

and nationalism. Creative imagination is possessed by the demon of pride into devising more clinical means of mass destruction; forms of 'communication' are deliberately designed to obscure, addict and polarise; the earth sciences capable of solving our self-made crises are misused to exploit the remaining finite resources of the biosphere; and economics, capable of achieving fairer distribution of wealth, expands the gap between the rich and poor and alienates us all from our common home on this fragile planet.

Rhetorical lists of our problems today are easy to make. Yet, once we have seen the essential point and are ready to

Our mutual friend, Jesus, showed us that unity isn't uniformity.

ask questions about how to change - our personal lives or the fate of humanity - we should suspend analysis and ask the redemptive question that initiates real change of direction. The first transformative step of recovery is asking: 'what can I do?' Those who poured out into the Judean wilderness to find a prophet asked John the Baptist, 'What shall we do?' Cassian and Germanus asked their desert teacher, 'give us a practice'.

*

There are many arts within the art of prayer. Practiced in good faith, they do not exclude each other. Like different instruments in an orchestra, even if they seem to use very different means they all lead into the one prayer of the Spirit.

There is the art of the work of silence, the grand poverty of spirit as Cassian called it which has formed and renews our community. We gain this poverty, the first Beatitude, by the 'renunciation of all the riches of thought and imagination'.

It is the central understanding of prayer in the whole desert tradition: the 'laying aside of thoughts'. We shared it with many of the young pilgrims in Lisbon who seemed hungry for spaces of silence and stillness especially amid the constant activity and noise. But another art of prayer, the reading of scripture, which by contrast uses words and imagination, enrichingly interweaves with the way of silence and mental stillness. We need both as a plane needs two wings to stay on course.

*

When saying the mantra gets hard meditators who have learned their art resist the temptation to put on their headphones. Even with a sense of failure we can embrace and enjoy the work of the Word, 'in prosperity and adversity', and learn what it means to turn life into a pilgrimage by being a pilgrim in everything. Then we benefit from each step we take on our daily path, even the backward ones, welcoming the friendship of others and the many nurturing practices and surprises that enrich the path.

One of the most nourishing of these complementary practices is the art of reading wisdom texts in a way that allows them to read us, transform our perspectives of living and reveal that the sacred is everywhere. As we learn how to read in this way, the texts subtly, often imperceptibly merge throughout the day with our thoughts, speech and memories. Like friends, companions, teachers they become inexhaustible wells of wisdom.

I have just started a series of online sessions called 'Between the Lines: How to read the Bible and other Sacred Texts'. Reading in the way that sacred texts should be approached so that we can discover their hidden treasures is one of those rare things of great value: something that is a good thing in itself. Freshly each time, it opens new wonders of consciousness, always refreshing our tired

minds or low spirits, while also preparing us to return to meditation and the essential work of poverty.

The wisdom of great texts like the Bible weave in, merge and overlap with those in other traditions. Wisdom is a language of revelation with many dialects, many tongues. Following these tracks with patience and attention, we understand how we are already members of a great family of wisdom, greater than we could imagine. We always have many more relatives than we think, and the more we discover them the more we experience the boundless kinship with the living and the dead, with those far and near, remembered and lost in memory. All humanity belongs to the family of wisdom which expresses itself in great writing passed down the millennia. As in a large family reunion which brings different generations and cultures together, the different parts of the clan as well as each individual feels an enrichment of identity by celebrating in unity all our differences. Every time we read a sacred text – not so much commentaries but the original – we celebrate that unity.

But for many churchgoers, and followers of other faiths, scripture is only heard mumbled from the lectern, then preached on, usually moralistically rather than mystically, from a pulpit. Without attentive hearing there is no transformative listening and without listening the muscle of attention atrophies as it is doing in our age of distraction. Basic knowledge of the texts and traditions is necessary: less than half of self-identifying US Christians can even name all four gospels. In inattentive minds the half-heard, over-preached words become a jumble. The empty spaces between the lines that offer us room to expand and soar are often jammed with slogans and the sacred quickly becomes the political.

Words we think we know pass in one ear and out the other without ever awak-

ening the mind with the great surprise that dawns by recognising new realities. Kafka described true reading as ‘like an axe for the frozen sea within us’.

*

For many, especially the younger generation, not only sacred texts but any form of reading from a page is frighteningly unfamiliar. It makes them feel their loneliness. A student once told me she preferred to study on her computer in a noisy café because she found the silence of the library creepy. Another told me that he derived most of his knowledge from YouTube and hardly ever read from a physical page. But after starting to meditate, he had gradually been drawn to read books for the first time. He revealingly described his sense of the difference between word and image. YouTube was easier, more passive, but he didn’t retain its content very well. Reading was harder but gave the surprise of ‘meeting another mind’. What he read entered long-term memory. This suggests what St Bernard meant when he spoke of the ‘word becoming flesh’ when we attend to it lovingly and allow it to slide from mental to heart consciousness.

St Benedict made daily reading one of the three pillars of the monks’ life. He prescribed an extra hour during Lent. This is the more surprising as literacy rates were low in the 6th century, so many would have learned to read only as they learned to live the monastic life. It was part of their learning how to pray. Nevertheless, he seemed to believe that all monks could – in fact, should – read; and, like many abbots since, he had to exhort them to make it a serious and regular practice. Today, many busy emailers in contemplative communities struggle to ‘make time to read’, just like their counterparts in more worldly occupations.

Why this emphasis on reading in the contemplative tradition? Not in order



Meditation during the vigil at World Youth Day

to make us scholars or winners on quiz shows or pass exams. But because the process of attentive reading sheds light on our interiority and enticingly draws us towards the inner room. Reading is beneficial for everyone because the attention demanded leads to stillness and so to a clearer, less self-centred mind. For the contemplative practitioner it is an essential part of their life. Every child needs to learn how to read. As contemplatives we need to learn how to read in this way. A little training helps us to engage with scripture and wisdom texts in a transformative way. I hope my course will help people to discover this for themselves because in this, as in any learning, experience is the teacher.

*

The art of reading is the first stage of the art of prayer itself because like pure prayer, ‘lectio’ helps me take the attention off myself and see that the essence of pure prayer is other-centred attention

This type of reading is not for entertainment or information. It is for mental training and deep enrichment in the

knowledge of the self. It is a journey of discovery that expands to show how all relationships of daily life – the ones we enjoy or struggle with or merely dream may happen one day – will lead into vaster and more interior spaces. Reading familiarises us with our own minds and makes for a healthy relationship with ourselves. To read sacred or beautiful texts well is to become more transparent and honest with ourselves because they repay our attention by reading us. Reading mirrors our mind as mind mirrors what we read. But with the greatest texts we see *through* the looking-glass. We cross the frontier of language and imagination. *Our* “relationship with God” is liberated from duality as we move into union with the web of relationships that make up the world.

Actually, this simply describes the human journey itself. Meditation, supported by a good diet and discipline of reading with other contemplative practices and a commitment to work as service, does not explain but *shows* us what being human means. This sustains the lifelong process of metanoia, changing our mind and its worn-out habits and expanding our horizons of vision. What we see is what we become. In a culture as addictively fixated on images as is ours, re-learning the art of reading offers a way back to the visionary capacity - beyond imaging - of the contemplative mind.

Offer your very selves to him... the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will discern., what is good, acceptable and whole. (Rom 12:1-4)

How does this degree of change happen? Life is a buffet of catastrophic events, excruciating losses, exhilarating

celebrations and profound healings. But the deepest changes unfold quietly, out of plain sight, unstoppably and with an overpoweringly gentle and generous sense of meaning. Wisdom texts, like the Tao Te Ching for example, provoke us to understand why ‘peace and quiet govern the world’, even when we see the world in turmoil. And in a world of

attention we need to make to the real. They are more than about re-charging drained batteries. They are transformative. The process of metanoia begun with meditation in common continues back home and back at work. The experience of self and its new way of seeing is free and freeing for those who take the risk of daily practice and live each day in



Labyrinth and Chapel at Bonnevaux

bursting agendas we are reminded, as in Psalm 46, why we should ‘be still and know that I am God’.

In the coming series of talks I would also like to show how reading these universal texts needs direct, not second-hand contact. Let us read them with our own eyes. This releases a spring of joy that is so often blocked for modern people because personal experience is so often screened and externalised. To learn to read in this way we need to be lured away from screens. The bait is simply what gives us joy and teaches us to prefer the real and unpackaged over the imitation.

Meditation and places, like Bonnevaux, where meditation is practiced daily are more than escape routes from the problems of the world. They point, however humanly, to the sacrifice of

transformation. The way is the biggest challenge: to trust the simplest thing we can find.

Contemplative experience nurtured by the twin practices of meditation and sacred reading simplifies everything. It allows the paradox of reality to open like a flower and germinate the seeds that become the fruits of the spirit. Wonderfully, meditation merges with daily life. And the places, like Bonnevaux, where we can learn the pilgrimage of metanoia and return to refresh the practice, becomes an everywhere.

With much love

Laurence Freeman OSB

News & Articles

World Youth Day 2023 - finding silence everywhere

GROUP OF YOUNG MEDITATORS TAKE PART AT THE GLOBAL GATHERING IN PORTUGAL

Portugal hosted the World Youth Day (WYD) from 1 to 6 August 2023 in Lisbon. WYD is a gathering of millions of young people from all over the world with the Pope. A group of young meditators from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia/Canada, Finland, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and the UK took part, led by Laurence Freeman and Taynã Malaspina, the WCCM Director for Meditation with Young Adults. The programme included a retreat in Leiria and a visit to Fatima prior to the WYD events.



"Flash Mob" meditation session at Miradouro São Pedro de Alcantara, Lisbon

Taynã Malaspina*, Brazil



"The experience of coordinating a WCCM young people's group at World Youth Day will forever reverberate in my soul. The most striking thing was to realise in practice what a community is made of: love. We always read this in the books by Fr Laurence Freeman and Fr John Main, but experience is the best teacher. We were with twenty young people of different ages and nationalities, but sharing a common unity: the desire to

experience Christ's love through silence. It was exciting to be in silence at a vigil with 1.5 million young people. It was moving to hear the Pope say, "In the Church there is room for everyone." It was touching to hear Fr Laurence transmitting contemplative practice to young people from all over the world in the chapel in the City of Joy. Now we go back to our ordinary lives with a reflection from the Pope, "What will we take back with us to the valley of our daily lives?" Drawing on the day's Gospel, the Holy Father proposed three verbs: "to shine, to listen, and to be unafraid." *WCCM International Coordinator for Meditation with Young Adults.

Johanna Wisoli, Indonesia

"The meaningful experience of WYD showed me that even though we were all coming from different parts of the world, we all belong to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The walk to the night vigil made me

think of the journey of life. It reminded me to be a simple and humble person and, when challenges on the journey make me want to give up, to keep on praying and asking for God's strength. At the end, when everything has worked out for the best, I can only be grateful to God and rejoice in the beautiful journey He has just engraved in my heart."



News & Articles

Enos Mantoani, Italy



“For me, two aspects were very important, and they are intertwined. The first is the deep, moving and loving feeling of belonging to a community. The second is the practice of meditation. We experienced directly Fr John Main’s insight that “meditation creates community”. Indeed, meditation was the ground on which the little community that we formed was founded, and the practice nurtured the roots of this community, making it grow day by day, adventure after adventure, despite our different nationalities, stories and backgrounds.”

Rafaella Noschese, Brazil



“The most important experience for me was the group connection of sharing our lives, thoughts and feelings. It made me feel at home.”

Hung Emily Kwan Yiu, Hong Kong



“I am so glad that I could be part of the WYD with the WCCM group, with all its friendly and welcoming members. I particularly enjoyed the group sharing and the talks provided by Fr Laurence after the morning meditation, which inspired me a lot and reminded me of how meditation helps with my daily life and enhances the congruence between my mind and behaviour. I also enjoyed the moments spent together with the group, and I hope to see everyone again in the future!”

Miguel Gonçalves, Portugal



“I would like to highlight the opportunity to share the WYD experience in community with Fr Laurence and the WCCM group of young people of different countries, ages and cultural backgrounds, but all united by a sense of belonging in the shared silence, joy and faith in Jesus.”

Patricio Lynch, Argentina



“This was a great opportunity for me to know more about the Community and to spend time with Fr Laurence as well. I just loved it; it was a beautiful experience. It was a balance of having silence in our apartment and the messiness outside. But I loved both.”

Grace Reynolds, UK



“There was a lot of chaos and noise, but we were still able to practise meditation and find silence throughout. I didn’t know that was possible. There were many moments where I thought, ‘We’re going to meditate now?!’ but it was actually really beautiful.”

News & Articles

“From Anxiety to Peace” with a group of young French people at Bonnevaux



A retreat, led by Laurence Freeman, with young French-speaking adults, was held at Bonnevaux from 7-9 July. The theme was “De l’anxiété à la paix” (“From Anxiety to Peace”). Thomas Litzler, one of the participants, shares his experience: “This retreat gathered a very nice group of young people around the practice of meditation and the exploration

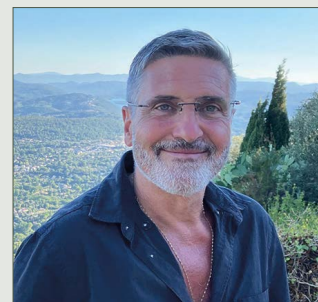
of the Bible. The atmosphere was joyful and simple. We had people from very diverse backgrounds, so the sharings were deep and enriching for all of us. I left very motivated to continue exploring the Bible through the exercise of “Lectio Divina” which gave me a glimpse into the richness and spiritual wisdom of the words.”

Retreat with Canadian community in a time of leadership transition



Bonnevaux hosted a retreat from 18-23 July with the Canadian Community on the theme of “Friendship: Finding Oneself in the Other”, led by Fr Laurence. It was an opportunity to celebrate the leadership transition of WCCM Canada, as André Choquet took over from Martin Malina as National Coordinator. The Community is grateful to both Martin and André for their service.

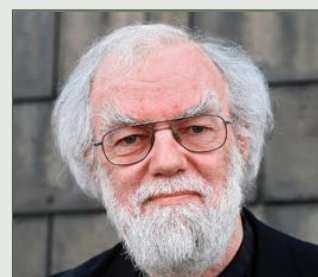
Upcoming events in the programme



31 October - 5 November

Embodiment: creativity and healing, making all things new – Yoga & Meditation Retreat (fully booked)

Led by Giovanni Felicioni



14-19 November

Good Measure, Pressed Down and Overflowing: How Contemplation Shapes our Action

Led by Rowan Williams

5-10 December

Waiting for Change, Waiting for Transformation – Advent Retreat

Led by Laurence Freeman and Giovanni Felicioni

24-25 December

Online: Christmas Eve Vigil and Christmas Contemplative Eucharist

<http://bonnevauxwccm.org>

News & Articles

Earth Crisis Forum 4: *Ecological Grief*

DR JASON M. BROWN WILL LEAD THIS ONLINE GATHERING ON 12 OCTOBER

Earth Crisis Forum 4 will be held at 11 am Vancouver time on 12 October on the theme of "Ecological Grief". This online forum, the fourth in the series, will be led by Dr Jason M. Brown from Simon Fraser University in Canada, and will include breakout group sessions and a time of meditation.

Dr Jason M. Brown has a diverse academic background, with undergraduate studies in anthropology, a master's degree in forestry and

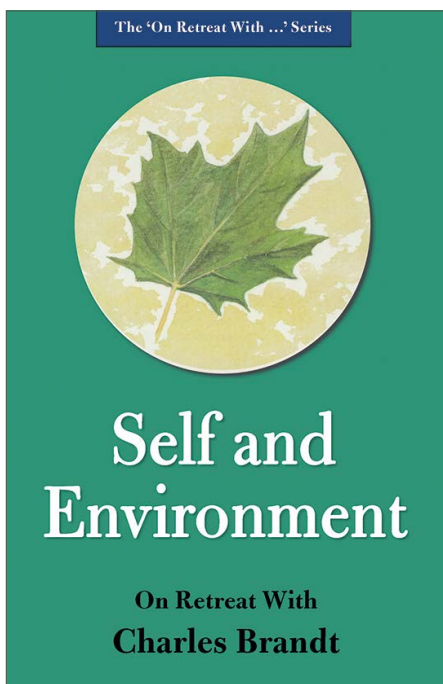
theology from Yale, and a PhD from the Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability at the University of British Columbia. He teaches courses on the humanities and environmental studies. More information on his work can be found at <https://holyscapes.org/>.

For more information about Earth Crisis Forum 4, visit the Earth Crisis: Climate and Ecology page at https://wccm-int.org/med_eccm.



Self and Environment: On Retreat with Charles Brandt

MEDIO MEDIA IS RELAUNCHING THE BOOK FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1997



"Self and Environment" is part of the "On Retreat With ..." series. In this volume, Charles Brandt, writing from his hermitage in the forests of British Columbia, leads us to a fuller sense of the sacredness of creation and of our oneness with nature. He explores the damage inflicted on our sense of self and of God by the split we have created between humanity and the natural world.

He helps us recover wholeness by showing how meditation and insight into the beauty of the earth offer vital hope for a world in crisis. The 'On Retreat With ...' series responds to the spiritual needs of people living the busy and stressed lifestyle of our current time. Each title in the series offers a personal retreat led by an experienced spiritual guide. You are helped to use the time

and space at your disposal to create a retreat, a return to your spiritual centre, which will refresh and enhance the spirituality of daily living.

Charles Brandt (1923-2020) was trained as an ornithologist and environmentalist before being ordained a hermit priest in British Columbia. He occasionally led retreats during which he shared the fruit of his solitude with others. 'My hermitage is located deep in the temperate rain forest of the Oyster River. The logging road, along with other trails through the forest, is where I practise walking meditation. I do not think of the road as leading anywhere. It is the road to nowhere, the path on which I journey and have been journeying for a lifetime ...' To order the book visit <https://wccm-int.org/selfenv>

Contemplating Earth - an online course by Jim Green

Jim explores how contemplation is fundamental, enabling us to act wisely and urgently, living through this crisis with hope. More information here: <https://wccm-int.org/cearth>

News & Articles

Congress of Benedictine Oblates: diversity and unity



WCCM Oblates: Dorothy (Canada), Janet (UK), Catherine (Switzerland) and Leonardo (Brazil)

The Fifth World Congress of Benedictine Oblates was held in the Primatial Abbey Sant'Anselmo, Rome, from 9-16 September. The theme was "Moving Forward - Living the Wisdom of the Rule". WCCM was represented by a group of four oblates.

Catherine Charriere, Switzerland

We have been received in a real Benedictine way that feels like being welcomed by Christ in person. It has been very warm, joyful and special. The talks

are really extraordinary and profound. It is something that I can bring back to my life and to the Community. Meeting oblates from different parts of the world, seeing how different everyone is, is very enriching. The trips to Montecasino and Subiaco were lovely breaks in a very full schedule. I would like also to highlight the "Island of Silence" element of the programme which was a teaching on the importance of silence to the oblate, and the session on Christian Meditation by Elba Rodriguez (WCCM Colombia)

came as a nice surprise.

Leonardo Correa (Brazil)

It is such a gift to be there. Everyone has been very welcoming. Benedictine hospitality from the beginning. The talks have been very stimulating, especially the one by the keynote speaker (Donato Ogliari), which have very much touched on aspects of what we are experiencing in the WCCM oblate path: the silence, the discretion, the Synodal process happening in the Church. I have resonated a lot with that. It has been an experience of the diversity of the Church. I was in Portugal for World Youth Day. And while the experience there was very different, I have found some striking similarities in terms of the global aspect and the diversity of the event.

Janet Robbins (UK)

Right from the first day, I realized how very special this is and what a privilege it is to be here. Probably behind that has been the acceptance of me as an Anglican. There are just ten of us here who are not Roman Catholics, and yet we have been made so welcome. And of course, that's how it should be. This is a Benedictine Congress. But to be able to be together, to be at one with one another, has been an unexpected gift.

Dorothy Wood, Canada

This is the first time I've been in the flesh with oblates from elsewhere than Canada. And it's really wonderful to see the commitment of oblates from around the world and the richness that they all bring. And the value of unity in diversity. I think where there is diversity, God is at work. I really feel that God is at work here, and it's helping me to make my commitment more concrete.

In Focus

Jenny Scott, UK



I first tried a meditation class as a university student. There were lots of people sitting on beanbags in a dingy room and we were told to relax. I didn't return.

My next attempt was about ten years later when I enrolled in a local meditation class. It was slightly better; I remember sitting at my kitchen table staring into a candle, trying to focus on the flame while letting go of all my thoughts. I was trying to get pregnant at the time and it was part of my strict relaxation regime!

Again, it didn't stick. In hindsight I think it was because while I was curious about the practice, I was largely using the meditation as a means to an end; to belong, to destress.

And then I encountered WCCM and

Fr Laurence. Meditating became a completely different experience. It became integrated into my life and, most importantly for me, into my faith. It was no longer something separate, a tool to allow me to perform better in the rest of my life. It was simply about deepening my relationship with God, then being open to whatever followed from that.

I now try to meditate every day. I get up early, drink a glass of water and sit in the rocking chair in the corner of our living room. I try very hard not to check my

Meditation brings all my internal contradictions into the open

phone for overnight messages or tidy the mess from the evening before; Mary and Martha ringing in my ears.

I can go months when my meditation times are restless and distracted. I will always say the mantra throughout, but it can sometimes be a tick box exercise; I'm saying it but I'm not attending to it - I'm making a mental list of what I have to do that day or turning over a mistake I've made at work. It's amazing how that can feel more engaging or important than being open to God. But I've learnt to accept this without going down

the rabbit hole of judging or condemning myself. That pure acceptance that I have found by resting transparently in God has been one of the most liberating experiences I've ever had.

Taking the pressure off judging myself has made me much less judgemental of others. It's also made me more aware of and even appreciative of the contradictions within me. Instead of them being a tangled, swirling mass that threatens to take me under, I'm learning to see them as part of the richness of being.

Meditation brings all my internal contradictions into the open, which turns out to be an incredibly spacious place, easily large enough to hold them all. I find I can sit with them peacefully, without trying to rationalise or justify them.

I still find it very challenging to carry that "peace that surpasses all understanding" through my day. I emerge from my 20 minutes full of resolve to being open to the spirit in everything I do... until my first encounter with a delayed train or a daughter who is running late for school. And then I meditate again, prise open my closed heart and hope to take an infinitesimally small step towards living from the ground of my being.



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Would you like to contribute to the WCCM Newsletter? Our next deadline is 10 November.

Events & Resources

John Main Seminar 2023

Voices of hope from Bonnevaux

CYNTHIA BOURGEOULT, ANDREW HARVEY AND LAURENCE FREEMAN LED THE REFLECTIONS ON “NEW WINE, NEW SKINS”



The John Main Seminar 2023 was held at Bonnevaux from 14-17 September. Cynthia Bourgeault and Fr Laurence spoke from Bonnevaux and Andrew Harvey joined online. The Retreat Centre was full to capacity and in addition, there were more than 300 participants online.

“Dear God, gather us all in the chalice of your heart, that we may become the flowing wine, in a new wine skin you will give us to inhabit...” **(Cynthia Bourgeault - prayer at the closing Eucharist)**

“The most profound lesson I received from Laurence is when he said that contemplation is martyrdom. I was so moved by the truth of that. It showed what a noble task it is to stay concentrated in the depths of yourself through contemplation, allowing the very intensity of the process secretly to keep burning away your illusions and fears and fantasies.” **(Andrew Harvey)**

“There is a providence at work: it exists, in our perspective, through the realms of chance, time, and the unpredictable to which we should always be open. Meditation keeps us open to that dimension where we are not in control, not predicting. Then we are real: neither pessimistic nor falsely optimistic. We are just in the present.” **(Laurence Freeman)**

Online Resources

“Share Your Story” and inspire others to meditate



Meditation in daily life is at the heart of our community: the experience of Being as the foundation of all Action. Help strengthen and enliven our community by sharing with us how meditation has changed your life.

‘Share your story’ helps us to celebrate our successes in spreading the gift of Christian Meditation. It can inspire people to donate, fundraise or volunteer, which makes it possible for us to continue our work. Make sure to share your story in your own language! Learn more: <https://wccm-int.org/systory>

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

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

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

ASIA
mimi@wccm.org
Tel: +65 9661 0362

AUSTRALIA
www.wccmaustralia.org.au/store
jopanetta@gmail.com
Tel: +614 0978 4357

NEW ZEALAND
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VISIT WCCM's ONLINE STORE: <https://mediamedia.com>



Christian Meditation

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY



SUMMER 2023

New National Coordinator André Choquet.....	C2-C3	Retreat Day at Canmore.....	C8
Freedom from Addiction.....	C4	Stewart Creek Canyon Hike in Banff	C9, C12
Good News from Ottawa's Oldest Hospital	C5	Financials for 2022.....	C10
Christian Meditation in Dufferin-Peel Classroom	C6	Appeal Letter from the National Coordinator	C10
Benedictine Annual Oblate Retreat.....	C7	New at the Bookstore.....	C11
Brandt Oyster River Hermitage Appeal.....	C12		

Interview with the new National Coordinator, André Choquet

The *Canadian Christian Meditation Community Newsletter* welcomes André Choquet as the incoming National Coordinator. André graciously accepted an invitation to be interviewed.

Can you share how your meditation journey began and where it has led you?

My upbringing was in Montreal during the tumultuous 1960s and '70s. Quebec independence, women's liberation, and the abandonment of the Catholic church occurred over two decades. Like a lot of Quebecers, I moved away from the church, but that didn't stop my spiritual thirst, which led to study in traditions like Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam.

In 1995, at the School of Philosophy in Trinidad & Tobago, I practiced transcendental meditation. Two decades later and at age fifty, Christian meditation found me. I believe God led me to a Sunday afternoon discussion with Fr. Laurence hosted on CBC's Tapestry talk radio show. The title of his talk intrigued me with its boldness: "Meditation is not a luxury; it is a necessity." The assertion was the first I had heard of the link between Christianity and meditation. I was hooked. I had to learn more.

From there, things cascaded. I met Fr. Laurence at a Montreal retreat in 2018, visited Bonnevaux in 2019, and received training as a meditation instructor. During COVID, I helped create the CCMC Toronto Steering Committee. We managed and promoted the World Christian Community of Meditation activities in and around Ontario. The Knox talks moved on-line, attracting 50-90 people at a time. From an idea sown by Fr. Brian Bartley, I created a new way of introducing meditation to young adults and started a coffee hour called *Sharing the Gift of Meditation with Authentic Dialogue*.

I've taught meditation to young professionals, university students, and non-Christians. Last February, I led an introductory course in Christian meditation at my Toronto church, Corpus Christi. In 2022, I established connections with the University of Toronto and Wycliffe College. The hope is to start courses in Christian meditation on campus similar to the success achieved at Georgetown University in Washington.



What is your background and profession?

I am an actuary and chartered investment manager working at the intersection of risk and money. I help design and manage pension plans and care for financial systems that provide security to people of old age. Since 2015, my focus has been on environmental, social and governance (ESG) in pension funds and how pension investments impact people and the planet. ESG factors are growing in importance as humanity tries to tackle the risks of climate change, poverty, and social inequalities. Indigenous reconciliation is also dear to my heart.

How does the WCCM support your spiritual life?

The World Community of Christian Meditation (WCCM) is a gift from heaven. I am thankful for John Main's leadership and unique spiritual depth. The first time I listened to his recordings, blew me away. I couldn't repeat a word, but I knew I was listening to a holy man.

I am equally grateful to Fr. Laurence Freeman, who continues John Main's recording work and so much more. Without these spiritual masters, we would be much poorer in intellectual and spiritual knowledge.

WCCM is the organization that supports my contemplative life. I belong to a weekly meditation group from Bonnevaux. Every Friday morning 30-40 people from all walks of life, from different countries and varied traditions, meet on-line to meditate. The source materials for my coffee hours and introductory meditation courses come from the WCCM.

Mostly, it is the WCCM people that make the difference: my friends in the community in Toronto and the rest of Canada including Quebec, my friends in Bonnevaux, the young people who are becoming interested in meditation, the luminaries who present in webinars and retreats or at John Main seminars. Everyone I know in WCCM genuinely wants to improve the world. And I love them for that!

Do you feel meditation helps you?

In my youth, I suffered periods of depression and loneliness which sometimes lasted a long time. Meditation helped me regulate my moods. It felt like a reset every time I meditated.

Meditation also helped me in my relationships. My tendency was toward self-reliance, independence, and control of my life outcomes. Or so I thought!

Just like meditation taught me to let go of thought and return to the mantra, it transcended to my daily life in teaching me to let go of my desire to control outcomes. It showed me how to let the Holy Spirit guide me. And the results have been impressive! I have learned to let God be... God.

Beyond the physical and mental benefits, Christian meditation gave me a great gift – a deeper appreciation of my faith and of God. And I want to share that gift for the rest of my days.

Fr. Laurence's book *Jesus the Teacher Within* invited me to know Jesus better, reaching beyond my 6th grade education of Him. Over 13 months using my phone, I listened to the entire Bible being read to me. I read books from modern Christian apologists, like *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh and Sean McDowell, and *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel. These scientists approach Jesus methodically, like a detective or archeologist. And they are unequivocal:

“Once you consider all the archeological evidence, you interview all the bible scholars and assemble everything we know through the Apostles, who continued asserting what they had witnessed even under extreme torture, you can only be in one of two camps:

1. Either you are convinced Jesus is the Son of God or
2. You believe he was a lunatic.”

There is no in-between. I consider myself a scientist and I am convinced of the former. That Jesus is the Son of God.

What is your vision for the CCMC during your mandate?

I propose exploring ways and means to respond to the question: “How can we teach meditation for life?” And “for life” I mean several things:

First, as John Main taught, meditation is a life (time) practice. It is a discipline, a habit that is simple but difficult, and often presents with obstacles.

Second, meditation as a life-giving practice. Through meditation, the Spirit of God grows in us, bringing a certain aliveness and enjoyment to everyday living.

My vision includes three solid ideas for teaching meditation for life.

1. Remove obstacles that prevent the CCMC charity from disseminating the teachings of John Main on the gift of Christian meditation. Removing administrative, financial and/or structural impediments that prevent or slow down teaching meditation.

2. Introduce Christian meditation to a younger and more broad-based demographic. Supporting our current membership is important, but we also need to expand as an organization. Social media, electronic devices, and virtual reality leave many young people thinking there is no time to meditate. Yet the opposite is true. Meditation often adds time to our day when less time gets spent worrying about things we don't need to worry about.
3. To challenge dualistic thinking and expose the deep divisions created in society with an “us versus them” stance; people pitted against each other. Richard Rohr, from the Centre for Action and Contemplation, talks about this concept. He challenges us to consider the many aspects of our lives that are already dualistic in nature.
 - Virtual versus real world
 - Contemplative way versus traditional church
 - The many Christian traditions
 - And particularly painful, the Quebec versus the rest of Canada duality

Time gets wasted by picking sides, or by staying on the sidelines but continuing to complain about the dualistic nature of our society. Jesus taught us to transcend the dualistic nature of our existence and challenged us to find a third way with love and the grace of the Holy Spirit as our guide.

By God's grace and the support of CCMC, it is my hope and prayer to realize this vision during my mandate as a National Coordinator.

To view André's online interview visit <https://www.wccm-canada.ca/>



The Canadian Christian Meditation Community TIME AND TALENT APPEAL

The Canadian Christian Meditation Community is welcoming volunteers.

Do you have a few hours a month and special skills to help (accounting, social media, administration, other)? Please let us know and email us at info@wccm-canada.ca.

Your time and talents are important.
Please consider volunteering.

Christian Meditation Brings Freedom from Addiction

Addiction is the scourge of modern times. The list of modern addictions includes drugs, alcohol, eating, gambling, sex, video games, and the list goes on. Few have remained untouched by this issue. Christian meditation has been a big part of my recovery. I am also a retired mental health and addictions counsellor. Meditation is powerful medicine. Some have called it “God’s therapy.”



Picture addiction on a continuum or spectrum. On the one end of that continuum is severe alcoholism and hard-core drug addiction. Few people fit into this category. On the opposite milder end of that continuum is simply “habit.” In the middle somewhere is “obsession.” We’re all somewhere on that continuum.

One of my milder addictions is shopping. Maybe you can relate. I confess buying things makes me feel good. We call this “retail therapy.” This is especially true when I buy books. Some favourite topics are religion, spirituality, metaphysics, and philosophy. I’ve noticed the more books I buy, the wiser I become (note: sarcasm intended). My point is we are all somewhere on the spectrum. This may be a shocker for some. Religion can be very addictive. But that is a topic for another time.

Some milder addictions are simply habits. These are not too much to worry about. But let’s look at something we rarely think of as an addiction. Perhaps the strongest addiction is our addiction to thinking. We love to think. I don’t mean deep reflective thinking. I mean the automatic stream of thoughts that John Main called the “monkey mind.” Many people believe they are their thoughts. Thoughts are who they are. They believe thinking is reality. It is not!

Descartes’ “I think, therefore, I am” is deceptive. A more Biblical proposition is “I am, therefore, I am.” Sound familiar? We are not our thinking. The monkey mind is simply our chattering ego. All contemplative practices emphasize we are not the confusing voices we hear within us. Neither is outer reality the confusing voices of the world. Especially not the incessant, divisive noise of the media. It’s all noisy ego.

The ego is where the mind interfaces with the world. A confused world can create a confused mind. No wonder we feel confused. Our confused ego can be our worst enemy. I once heard an addict in a

healing circle say he doesn’t like to think because “it’s a dangerous neighbourhood in there.” The ego can be a dangerous place, especially if dominated by fear, anger, resentment, arrogance, or self-loathing. Perhaps this is what Jesus meant when he said (paraphrasing) “it’s not what goes into the mouth that corrupts, but what comes out of it.”

Another name for ego is the “false self.” That’s harsh. But here’s a catch. We really need our egos. We need them to get along in the world. Elsewhere, I have written, “the ego makes a lousy master but a great servant.” In its proper place, the ego is very useful. But only as a servant. However, calling it the false self gets the point across. The ego, or false self, is where addiction happens. This is where lays the danger. Addiction is ego driven. Addiction feeds the false self. Only the false self can get addicted. What’s more, even

our seemingly innocuous everyday thoughts are dangerous in that they can distract us and can put us into a state of spiritual sleep.

What can we do? What’s the cure? Spiritual practice is the cure. And the spiritual practice of daily meditation is one of the best medicines. Let me explain.

Addiction is full of false promises. The false self buys into the lies of addiction. Society reinforces addiction. It’s what our commercialized society is all about. Predatory corporate consumerism loves addicted people who are spiritually asleep. Meditation offers an alternative. Meditation groups are an alternative to consumer society. So, our small weekly groups are important. As John Main said, “Meditation builds community.” The meditation community is based on giving, not getting. We are giving ourselves and all our attention to meditation, to saying the mantra.

Rather than accumulating more, meditation promotes letting go. Letting go of everything, even our thoughts. Meditation promotes a simple life with less. John Main called this the “poverty” of the mantra. Remember the saying, “small is beautiful?” But society teaches more, bigger, faster, better. Meditation teaches being less, being smaller, being slower, and



Continues opposite

COMMUNITY CORNER

Good News from Ottawa's Oldest Hospital

Good news! Since March 9, 2023, nine of our members have been hosting meditation groups for staff, volunteers, and patients. They meditate at three worksites out of Ottawa's oldest hospital (Elisabeth Bruyère Hospital, established 1845).

Leading three in-person meetings per week are: Sue Rayner, Don Myrick, Martin Malina, and Dorothy Wood from CCMC Ottawa, along with Florence Marquis-Kawecki, Jacques Boyer, Rachelle Fortin from MCQ/Outaouais. From those attending, feedback has been positive.

Meditator Mireille Brosseau, and Bruyère's former chaplain and healthcare engagement strategist & facilitator, attended the 2022 national CCMC conference in Ottawa. It inspired Mireille to offer the gift of

meditation in her workplace. Six short months later, in September, the groups were running!

We introduce the prayer of silence hoping "... all who come to the groups weighed down by the problems of humanity, leave, giving thanks for the wonder of human life and their capacity to love and serve."

By God's grace, we continue in our efforts.

It has been heartwarming to see such active care for a community tested by the pandemic and labour shortages. Thank you, Mireille, for this, and thank you for giving me an opportunity to give back to wonderful people.

Rachelle Fortin
Ottawa

Freedom from Addiction

continued from opposite

simply "being." Being okay with who we are. We can be simple, small, selfless, and we can serve. Meditation brings us to our True Self.

Christian Meditation is about connecting to the truth. The truth of who we are and the truth that God lives in us. This theme runs through all of John Main's teachings. All that is false will eventually fade away when we practice daily meditation. This includes dissolving the false self. It's a gradual process. This allows the True Self to emerge. This is liberation. The True Self is truly free, and the True Self cannot be addicted.

Exactly how does meditation work? I will go into the how in my next article: How does Christian meditation heal the wounds that underlie addiction so we can become our True Self?

Columnist

Darrell Taylor, B.A., B. Ed., M.A., C.P.E.
Counselor & Christian Meditation Facilitator



SAVE THE DATE

The Canadian Christian Meditation Community (CCMC) invites you to the biennial National Conference/Retreat

July 5-7, 2024

Vancouver, British Columbia

From Anxiety to Peace

Keynote speaker: Fr. Laurence Freeman

Info: bcchristianmeditation@gmail.com

Canadian Christian Meditation Community National Resource Centre

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Phil Barnett, Joseph Clarkson, Jack Murta,
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Send submissions to newsletter coordinator Carolin Hwozdyk 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

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION *in the* DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



This year, Jodi Kuran, our Superintendent, hosted Paul Tratnyk from WCCM to share with principals, teachers and students the gift of Christian Meditation at Our Lady of Providence elementary school. Our principal, David Della Rosa, invited Andy Burns, the Canadian Lead for Christian Meditation in Schools, to guide us in Christian meditation.

Mr. Burns shared with teachers the roots of WCCM and how meditation is a devotional practice based on the Gospels. Mr. Burns explained how research shows health benefits realized through meditation, but that this is not the goal of Christian Meditation. As Christians, we meditate without expectation of any fruit from our practice. A practice founded on the unconditional love and devotion to Christ.

Mr. Burns worked with our school librarian, Ms. Jorge. He shared strategies and resources to implement Christian Meditation within the school. He spent the day visiting classes and teaching students how meditation is a prayer form that involves listening to our hearts. Students imagined their hearts had ears and contemplated how their heart opens to a silence that draws us to the awe, wonder and mystery of God. He taught the prayer word MA-RA-NA-THA, an ancient Aramaic word which means "Come, Lord." Aramaic is the language that Jesus spoke.

We made a resource center for educators and learners by buying books and CDs from the Canadian Christian Meditation Community and using the WCCM app. Over the daily announcements, Mr. Della Rosa encouraged students to pause for one minute every morning

to practice and enjoy meditation. Ms. Jorge invited students during lunch hour to take part in Christian Meditation. The response was incredible and our turnout was much higher than expected. Teachers also continued to practice with their students in their classrooms.

Mr. Burns visited our school for Catholic Education Week. He played guitar and taught students a song called "Goodness Inside" by Alana Levandoski. Then he led them in a guided meditation.

After meditating, Mr. Burns asked students "What did you like about meditating?" Students found it "relaxing" and that they enjoyed "calming down." Mr. Burns also asked, "What did you find hard or not like about meditating?" One student shared, "closing your eyes" and another student shared "clearing my memory."

Mr. Burns said that meditating makes us feel relaxed, but we must stay awake. We don't forget things during meditation, but we focus on the goodness inside us, which is God.

Mr. Burns continues to support our school by encouraging students to lead and practice Christian Meditation both within the school and on their own. Christian Meditation is a part of our school's strategic plan this year and in the future. Our goal is to increase student voice and leadership through Youth Faith Ambassadors and our Safe and Healthy School Team.

Maygan Jorge, Teacher Librarian/SERT
Our Lady of Providence Catholic
Elementary School, Brampton

Benedictine Annual Oblate Retreat

May 12-14, 2023



The Canadian Christian Meditation Community held its annual Benedictine Oblate Retreat at the Cistercian Monastery in Rougemont, Québec. Organized by Magda Jass and led by Polly Schofield, Polly shared writings of John Main along with wonderful personal stories of her time spent with Fr. John. In between times of meditation and talks, we were welcome to join the monks for the Divine Office sung in Gregorian chant. Our retreat coincided with the blessing of the apple blossoms. To our delight, the monks invited us to join the ceremony in the orchard.

My interest in the oblate path deepened when Polly Schofield, then our Canadian Oblate Coordinator, wrote an article in a *Meditatio* newsletter in 2015. Polly wrote, “Deeply rooted in the origins of monasticism, the essential commitment of oblature is the sharing of the tradition of silence and prayer. As Benedictine Oblates, we consecrate our lives, promising to live according to the Rule of St Benedict. The three promises are: Obedience, which is the capacity to listen; *Conversio*, which is a continuous conversion; and Stability, which is fidelity to our twice daily meditation.”

Polly agreed to be my mentor. My oblate journey with its daily structure continues to lead me further within, to a deepening silence amid many distractions. The promises are a support to being open to unknowing, to return and keep on returning with my heart and mind to the present moment and to the silent centre of my being.

In Laurence Freeman’s book *The Selfless Self*, he mentions a quote by Pope Saint Gregory the Great, describing St Benedict’s interiority, “He dwelt within himself always in the presence of his Creator and never allowing his eyes to gaze on distractions.” As I made my final oblation at the retreat, this quote resonated. As a member of the Oblate community, I hoped to deepen my spiritual interiority and continue to support the Christian Meditation Community that is such a support to me.

If you would like to learn more about the oblate path, I encourage you to contact our Canadian Oblate Coordinator Dorothy Wood at oblates@wccm-canada.ca.

JoAnn Kelly-Cullen

Retreat Day at Canmore



Members of the Canmore, Calgary and Okotoks WCCM drove to the Shrine Church of Our Lady of the Rockies in Canmore on June 9 for a day of contemplation and meditation.

Arriving for an 8:30 a.m. mass celebrated by Father Lezano, the group met afterwards in an upper church room. We heard an informative and inspiring talk about indigenous spirituality. Catherine Fisher, a member, also spoke about spiritual indigenous traditions. Our imaginations stretched to visualize how native peoples live and lived on this land. With relaxation over, we headed outdoors for exercise.

Andrea Siqueira, a group member, eased us into a practice of Tai chi/Qi gong to prepare for contemplation and meditation. As most were beginners, she kept the stretches and movements within our abilities. My body thanks you for doing that, Andrea.

Indeed, the exercises prepared us for meditation. Allowing our bodies to be in a place where our minds occupied a space of calm eased us into a meditative state. And this is exactly what followed.

We returned to the church for an hour of silent prayer and meditation. The light through the stained-glass windows illuminated the altar and the beautiful church statues. A sense of peace and tranquillity enhanced the meditative calm.

Following our hour of meditation, Fr. Lezano gave an informative talk on the

Catholic churches in Cochrane leading to the construction of The Shrine of Our Lady of the Rockies church. How amazing to learn the history of a place you often drive by, but take for granted the efforts taken to create such a place.

Our plans included a Millennium Park picnic. Fr. Lezano warned we best hurry before the afternoon wind picked up. We did not make it in time and, sure enough, the wind played havoc with our smudge ceremony led by Catherine. Umbrellas at right angles helped a bit.

The picnic was lovely with enough contributed food and sweets to share with everybody, but are there ever enough cookies and cake?

Following lunch, we walked alongside Bow River, which flows through Canmore. At day's end in a sharing circle, many said they felt an increased fellowship. Getting to know their fellow meditators and meeting face-to-face was the best part of the day. The day's experiences brought us closer together.

Allan Sitter



Stewart Creek Canyon Hike in Banff



On June 28, WCCM members from Canmore, Calgary and Okotoks, Alberta drove to Lake Minnewanka, Banff for a day of hiking, meditation and fellowship. Patricia Harasym, WCCM Regional Coordinator for Alberta and Saskatchewan, discovered the visiting Pr. Martin Malina, National Coordinator for WCCM Canada, had a free day to explore the Rocky Mountains. What better excuse was there to extend an invitation for the Alberta members to meet Martin and to take him on a hike in their beautiful backyard mountains? The members jumped on the chance to hike to Banff Park.

Fortunately, we had seasoned mountain hikers in our group. With the help of Ann and Alan, a route got chosen. Our destination was Stewart Canyon, a picturesque walk up a beautiful canyon through a lovely park-like forest.

There were many stops to take pictures and marvel at God's creation. With the constant talking, laughing and shared fellowship, we were not concerned about bears or elk surprising us or us them. Of course, that doesn't mean we did not have our bear spray with us. That is always a good practice when hiking in the Rockies. With all the comradeship, we reached our destination where a washed-out creek meets up with Stewart Creek in what seemed like an all too short time.

We took off our packs and relaxed, listening to the river babbling along the rocks as it made its way to

Lake Minnewanka. Between boulders deposited by the once fast-moving waters of Stewart Creek, we stood ready. Andrea Siqueira gently eased us into a session of mixed Tai chi/Qigong.

See Andrea's video clip of the day's highlights by visiting <https://youtu.be/ZwDiqxQmYh8>.

We all know that food tastes better when you picnic in the great outdoors. So too the art of Qigong feels, when surrounded by trees and mountains, more intuitive and alive with the soothing sounds of flowing water.

It was now time to return to Lake Minnewanka, named by the Stoney, meaning "Lake of the Spirits". The lake is an international tourist destination, getting its share of the 4 million people that visit Banff Park each year. It is an enormous lake and a large area. We found a nice place to share a delightful lunch.

Well fed by food and feasted by the glorious surroundings, we packed up in search of a patch of forest and grass to sit upon. Patricia Harasym led us in a peaceful 20-minute meditation. Surely, there was no better way to end a lovely day than quieting our minds and spirits, stilling our beings in the presence of the Almighty.

Martin, let us know when you are coming our way again. There are a lot more trails in God's creation.

Allan Sitter

See a second photo on page C12

The Canadian Christian Meditation Community

Annual Appeal

Sharing the Gift of Christian Meditation

It is the time of year for our National Appeal. This year we come to you as a new National Federal Charity. Moving from a provincial registered charity to a federal one took hard work. I thank all those involved. Your time, talents and energies allowed us to collect funds and finance initiatives, including:

- **The National Resource Centre:** Provides support to the Canadian Christian Meditation Community through mail, telephone and internet communications, maintaining a database of community memberships, managing the financial and legal affairs of the registered charity, accepting donations, and issuing tax receipts.
- **The School of Meditation:** Guides and supports those called to share the gift of meditation, be it one-on-one, as a group leader, or giving talks to newcomers. A resource team organizes and conducts Essential Teaching workshops across the country, where participants deepen their knowledge, understand more fully the experience of meditation, and gain confidence in their ability to share the gift.
- **Teaching meditation to children** through the production and distribution of multimedia materials, introductory workshops for educators, and ongoing support through our website.
- **The WCCM Newsletter** and the **Canadian Newsletter** get published four times a year. Circulated in print and electronic formats, the Canadian Newsletter includes news and events from meditation communities across the country, plus reflections by meditators on their experiences.
- **The Bonnevaux Centre for Peace:** Serves as a mission for the future for the promotion of meditation across the globe. A scholarship fund supports programs offered by the centre.

As an actuary, I am accustomed to seeing significant benefits realized through pooling money for pension or insurance schemes. Similarly, in our Canadian Christian Meditation Community, no individual is an island. Although meditation is an independent activity, we depend on one another to nourish our practice.

Meditation is a gift, passed from generation to generation and desperately needed in our time. The climate change crises and the pervasive mentality of unstoppable (yet unsustainable) growth that drives our world economies, increases the importance of our roles as stewards of meditation. To practice and pass along this gift, a wonderful practice of holy silence, whose value increases in sharing it with others or introducing it to new people. Your monetary contribution goes a long way towards this goal.

These are difficult times with many budget choices to make, but we need your support. I encourage you to support the Canadian Christian Meditation Community in the best way you can. Please make a tax-deductible contribution to our National Appeal.

May God bless you and your families. Happy Thanksgiving.

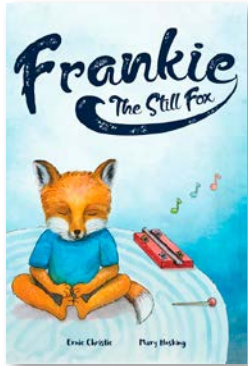
André Choquet
National Coordinator

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements for the Year Ended December 31, 2022

	2022	2021
Receipts		
Donations – Newsletter	914	1,276
Donations	18,278	33,935
Grants	2,662	2,567
Program revenues	37,008	6,000
Publications	7,519	6,327
Royalties	47	70
Bonnevaux Scholarship Fund	1,179	1,297
National Conference Surplus	6,395	0
Interest from Endowment	2,373	2,341
Total receipts	\$ 76,375	\$ 53,813
Disbursements		
Newsletter	\$ 24,778	\$ 21,893
Donations Disbursements	1,300	0
Programmes	29,648	3,752
Travel & Conferences	8,916	0
Publications Purchases	2,069	2,801
Bookstore Rent	3,720	3,720
Shipping and warehousing	1,144	1,018
Office	609	1,129
Telephone and communications	362	56
IT	1,185	1,108
Legal	2,093	2,069
Insurance	1,361	1,358
Interest and bank charges	1,310	1,280
Miscellaneous disbursements	36	56
Total disbursements	\$ 78,531	\$ 40,240
Excess of receipts (disbursements)	\$ (2,156)	\$ 13,573
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	\$151,783	\$154,242
Accounts and miscellaneous receivables	0	285
Investments – Term GIC	5,722	5,650
Pledges receivable	5,180	5,965
Prepaid expenses	275	260
Inventory	30,714	28,979
	\$193,674	\$195,381
Long-Term Investments		
Fixed Income Endowment Fund	\$ 40,710	\$ 47,465
Total assets	\$234,384	\$242,846
LIABILITIES – Current		
Accounts payable	\$ 9,110	\$ 6,070
NOTES		
The Bonnevaux Scholarship Fund donations are being held in an escrow account pending the establishment of a Canadian managed project at Bonnevaux.		
Full financial records for the past ten years can be found on the Revenue Canada website under the Charities Division.		

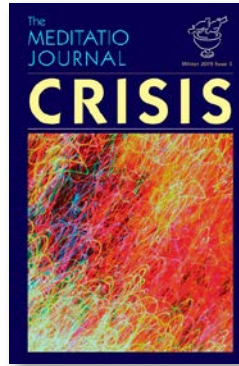
New Titles



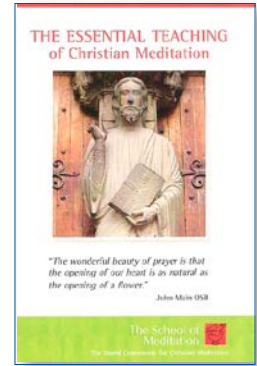
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Stewart Creek (see page C9)

Brandt Oyster River Hermitage Appeal for Board Members

Jason M. Brown, professor of ecological humanities at Simon Fraser University, and a board member for the Brandt Oyster River Hermitage Society:

The Charles Brandt Oyster River Hermitage Society is seeking board members to help us get our organization off the ground. As a society we are seeking to preserve the historic hermitage building, maintain a contemplative in-residence program, and promote the legacy of hermit-priest Fr. Charles Brandt as a unique teacher of spirituality, contemplation and ecological awareness.

We meet monthly, and are trying to solidify the legal status of the property, craft a useful website that contains information about Charles, seek charitable status, and create a robust program of public offerings for 2023-2024. The hermitage is located in Oyster River, British Columbia, but we are accepting board members invested in contemplative spirituality and ecology.

Our website is <https://charlesbrandt.ca/>. Please contact Jason Brown if you are interested in joining the board.

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