

Meditatio

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for Christian Meditation



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Silence and the energy of peace

Laurence Freeman: The first step in peace-making is to be rejoined to ourselves and to find the harmony and wholeness which characterize our own true nature. Pages 2-5



In the caves of Cappadocia, or in our daily meditation where we enter the inner room, we seek and drink from the deep well of peace that is God's spirit in us.

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Dearest friends,

A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

We all stumble in many ways. So St James says. The problem is not so much in the stumbling – that's only human and all that is human is forgivable – but in recognising and being honest about it. Only with conscious awareness and a humble heart can we hope to prevent the stumbling from turning into patterns that we eventually come stubbornly to defend and proudly justify. This is such an essential element of all spiritual growth, that it is not surprising that every tradition outlines a methodology and culture to help people deal with their stumbles

sion, especially in the intense dry heat of summer and they are not unlike a scene from a science fiction movie. They are excavated out of weird volcanic rock formations which people inhabited long before the monastic period that lasted for about a thousand years. Caves are deeply present as symbols in our psyche as places of safety and refuge – from wild beasts, bad weather or dangerous enemies. But they are also places of transformation and revelation. It was often in caves over long periods of retreat that prophets and monks allowed their

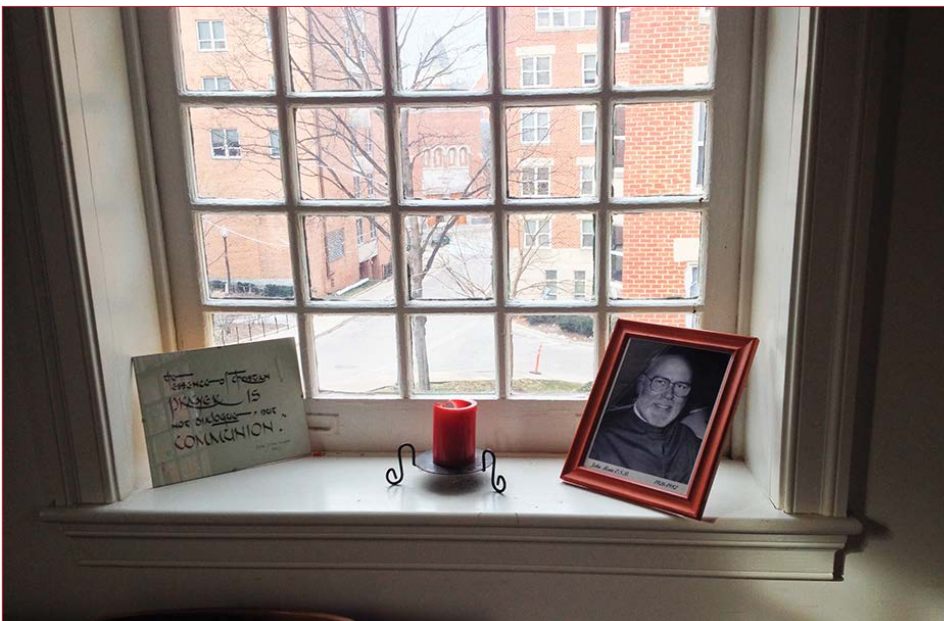
room that Jesus says is the real place of prayer – we learn that reality is not an immobile quantity, but an out-flowing of a quality of consciousness. This current bears the experience of truth that we all thirst for, not merely as a verbal formula or belief, but as a self-communication of quintessential goodness and an ecstatic celebration of love

The monks of these dwellings lived in small groups on the same model as the Egyptian desert and Celtic monasteries. At least in the early days of the movement they did not go there for security, comfort or status or even just to 'find themselves'. They were driven by the only motivation that validates any such a radical choice, to be made into personal centres of peace, which means to be lost and found, transformed and yet remain simply human. In the caves of Cappadocia or the beehive huts of Skellig, as in our daily meditation where we enter the inner room that Jesus said is the place of prayer, we seek and drink from the deep well of peace that is God's spirit in us.

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I am writing this from the John Main Centre at Georgetown University. It is not a cave but a small building, dating from 1792, standing still in the middle of the busy campus life. Meditation sessions are offered here at regular times but at any time of the day or night students, teachers, administrators or visitors can come and find that well of peace in themselves in the silence of this space. Some come regularly but there are also nearly always newcomers. Often you can guess who is returning and who is new. The regular meditator gives a sense of familiarity and of being at home.

Everywhere in the world people find that the best way of describing the experience of meditation is simply as a 'coming home'. The places where you meditate regularly will become a



John Main Centre at Georgetown University

and backsliding and especially their fixed patterns of misbehaviour. All traditions similarly agree that doing this work is the essence of peace. As we live in such violent and anxious times we benefit from seeing meditation as a 'way of peace' that begins with correcting our own imbalances but soon extends outwards into the whole network of relationships that make us the person we are.

This summer I visited the ancient cave monasteries of Cappadocia in Turkey. They make a surreal impres-

sion, especially in the intense dry heat of summer and they are not unlike a scene from a science fiction movie. They are excavated out of weird volcanic rock formations which people inhabited long before the monastic period that lasted for about a thousand years. Caves are deeply present as symbols in our psyche as places of safety and refuge – from wild beasts, bad weather or dangerous enemies. But they are also places of transformation and revelation. It was often in caves over long periods of retreat that prophets and monks allowed their

minds to be re-fashioned and then welcomed the new sense of purpose and destiny that came to them. It is as the mind is remade in this way that we discern the divine pattern emerging through the mists of illusion and the tides of distraction. As our fixed mental patterns dissolve, the template of all reality appears, the divine procession of love, the giving, receiving and returning that is present in everything, including our breathing, our relationships and the life-cycle itself. In the cave of the heart – the inner

spiritual home. I think this explains the meaning of that sense of the sacred that we feel in places like monasteries or ancient caves where people have sought and found their inner room; because a spiritual home is not home just to those who live there but becomes a home for all humanity.

I felt this soon after visiting Cappadocia when I went as a pilgrim to Konya in southern Turkey, the home and resting place of the great Sufi poet Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī. After the immense and irreparable loss of his beloved teacher, Rumi plunged in and through the grief and emerged into the infinite. Long before Leonard Cohen, he discovered that 'The wound is the place where the Light enters you.' Immersed in this light he sang, in his great poems, of the love and liberty and of the energy of peace that wells up from the great source of being that we find in ourselves. This is the universal transformation that follows on the discovery that we are indeed home to ourselves and that this home is God. 'Yesterday I was clever,' Rumi wrote, 'so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.' We change in this way not by seeking to be what we are not but by becoming who we truly are.

Meditators from all traditions sense this process at work in each other and it becomes the ground of a friendship that underlies and transcends all differences. When you come to meditation for the first time, however, this sounds excessive and you have that sceptical, reserved look visible in those who come to the Centre or a meditation group for the first time. But then, not always but often, as they hear and practice, you see a change in them. A look of discovery and relief appears, as if finding something they'd forgotten they had lost, like a piece of paper with an important telephone number in the

pocket of last winter's coat. It is the look of discovering that - if you allow them to - things fall into place quite simply and obviously.

Not far from the Cappadocian monasteries and the constant stream of pilgrims filing past Rumi's tomb, homes of deep peace and spiritual renewal, lie the devastations of Syria, the suicide bombings of Iraq, the humiliations of Gaza, the violent untruths of the

*Wherever human
friendship is denied,
enmity spreads like a stain
on human conscience*

Ukraine, the mutilated orphans and the fear and hatred passing down the generations inhabiting this region and infecting the whole human family. If a true spiritual home is home to all, then it is inversely true that the desecration of life in one place pollutes us all everywhere. Wherever human friendship is denied, enmity spreads like a stain on human conscience.

*

It is easy to condemn others from a moral high ground, watching the world's bad news on a TV screen for a few minutes before your favourite show starts. If meditation gave us that false sense of distance and superiority it would be a sham, a consumer spirituality lacking and indeed avoiding the well of being from which authentic peace, the peace that passes understanding, enters the world. Teaching meditation in a consumerist society presents many challenges to people who have been conditioned (as we nearly all have been by our education) to see spirituality as a trying out of new brands. It's easier to preach to the half-converted. You need great faith in the validity of the experience that you are helping people to discover in them-

selves. As this experience grows stronger you see how a new perception of connectedness gradually replaces the lonely individualism and isolationism of the consumer. Suspicion and instinctual competitiveness yield to an awareness of trust and collaboration. It doesn't become light all at once but as soon as the light begins to break through you can see the difference.

The natural world is full of beauty and delight. Music began when people were first entranced by the song of birds. Sunrise and sunset, when nature stands on a brink, became times of worship. Birth and death, at the same time ordinary and sacred, helped us see the human meanings of sexuality and love. But deep violent forces also dwell in nature and the animal kingdom is a constant struggle for survival. Perhaps it was with the emergence of the ego-consciousness - lacking in other creatures yet present in the early types of human beings - that what we call violence arose.

The evolved human consciousness sees the futility of violence in solving the conflicts of interest that the ego creates. It sees this as clearly as the degraded human consciousness enjoys the thrills of violence and the power rush of cruelty. The clear mind sees that violence is always misplaced energy and that a better form of life is always possible. But the ego is just one stage in the evolution of consciousness. Only if we transcend and integrate it and move to the next stage, to the experience of unity that resolves division, can we find the real meaning of peace. Until that watershed moment of transcendence peace merely flickers, peace talks fail, cease-fires collapse.

'Ignorant men,' Rumi wrote, 'are the soul's enemy. Ignorance is God's prison. Knowing is God's palace.' Whatever the reason that brings us to meditate, whatever the belief system that we use

to understand it, the fruit of the practice is this knowing. The act of knowing rather than the possession of knowledge. Knowing is always happening now and reveals the eternal nature of truth. Knowledge is always a remembering and, however valuable it is to pass on this knowledge, its ultimate purpose is to rekindle the act of knowing itself. Awareness itself, rather than merely new solutions to old problems, is the way to break the grip of old patterns and free the boundless potential of the spirit. Because they knew and taught this the great spiritual teachers share a fundamental vision that in its huge simplicity and childlike immediacy offers all traditions and cultures a common pathway to peace.

In the teaching of Jesus this knowing is called the kingdom of heaven. He describes it as a discovering, a growing, a way of relating, a seeing, rather than as it was often imagined by his followers, as another place than here, a future reward or an inaccessible privilege, a club for those who keep their membership updated. He could not have been clearer about its true nature. It cannot be observed because it does not exist in the realm of duality (here or there). It is simultaneously within us in our deepest, most mysterious interiority, our true self, and it is found in all the relationships that connect us to other selves. It is both same and other. Only children and the wise could make sense of this.

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Children often tumble accidentally into the kingdom and, like Rumi in many stories of his life and in his poetry, are filled with an irrepressible joy that unashamedly faces, embraces and transforms all the realities of suffering. Jesus was 'exalting in the Spirit' in this way when he spoke on one occasion of the fact that only the simple can understand these mysteries and then immediately afterwards of the great fact of his unitive knowing of the Father: 'the Father and I are one'. These moments

of breakthrough and epiphany are as unpredictable as they are unrepeatable. The ego in the grip of its pleasure principle and its confusion of knowing with knowledge naturally seeks to find the technique to turn them on and off at will. It may envy or denounce others who seem to have these experiences more than itself. It will scan every meditation session for such moments and evaluate the meditation accordingly.



So, trustworthy teachers of meditation, like John Main, remind people not only of the need for practice but to practice without demands or expectations. As this is impossible at first it means we have to identify these 'spiritual' desires and see and dismiss them for what they are. For people of our culture today it helps to be reminded of the distinction between the benefits and rewards of meditation. The benefits (like blood-pressure and relief of stress) can be measured and observed more readily than the fruits (love, joy and peace). But as soon as the benefits become evident from the practice it opens, through the inherent curiosity of the mind, a new level of knowing. Where do these benefits come from? How is this grace working on my nature? Every genuine spiritual path begins with such questions.

And so there is another kind of ignorance than that which Rumi called the soul's enemy and which, for the Buddha, was described in the noble truth that ignorance and desire are the cause of suffering. That destructive ignorance is often not stupid, as we might expect, but highly intelligent, apparently rational and very devious. Dark ignorance is like a gaoler or a person with whom we have a co-dependent or abusive

relationship we cannot escape from. There is however also an ignorance that is best described as an unknowing or what Keats called a 'negative capability'; the ability to see without trying to analyse or explain, to enjoy with clear wonder. It is the unknowing that we practice in meditation when we lay aside solutions to problems that arise during the time of the mantra or bright ideas that we want to grab and remember or fantasies we want to indulge. In this apparent ignorance we enter true knowing. In this apparent, wasteful loss we discover that what we lose comes round again.

It has never been easy at any time in human evolution to accept this way because the ego resists and denies it so strongly. In modern consumerism, based on the quickest possible gratification of every desire through the mir-

acles of technology and the illusions of affluence, it is more difficult than ever. Yet the very excesses and pitfalls of our culture often provide the opportunities to restore our capacity for knowing and for the peace we thirst for. To relieve stress, to seek meaning in the superficiality of affluence, to recover the health of relationship and the joy of the natural, to learn again how to work happily – all of which are so often lacking in modern life-patterns – our need for these human qualities brings us back to ancient wisdom.

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In our community's outreach, bringing meditation to the financial and business worlds, I find a widespread awareness that something is severely wrong in the way we work and run our institutions. The same awareness is stirring in many other fields such as education and medicine and a new paradigm is emerging in small pockets that are beginning to connect with each other. Many inspired leaders with real personal acquaintance of the spiritual path are questioning how a way out and forward can be found.

It is often the dark ignorance of these institutions that fuels the conflicts of the planet – think of the armaments industry and its share of global GDP. The same countries that try to broker peace agreements are perversely the main suppliers of arms. The cleverness of this ignorance even tries to convince us that aggression is a form of defence. To block the maddest forms of violence, such as ISIL today, it is of course necessary to use restraining force, as would be done in a psychiatric hospital. But in the state of ignorance these exceptions become the rule and aggressive defence becomes a whole way of life – devastating for the most vulnerable and hugely rewarding materially for a few.

Those leaders who have the intelligence and time to think sometimes debate the different approaches to change – of regulation and personal

transformation. Is it better to make new rules with strong sanctions to outwit or inhibit those who are acting violently? And financial dishonesty on the scale we have seen recently is surely a form of violence directed at the weakest in society; in terms of morality the unethical banker is not very far removed from the terrorist. But, if regulation doesn't work, can we rely on the conversion of heart that awakens individuals to a new way of seeing and acting ethically? Will those who go through such a conversion sufficiently want to remain in power and use it to apply their new knowledge? Is it morality or mysticism that will change the paradigm and open the way of peace? Modification of external behaviour or the discovery of the kingdom within?

The Dalai Lama believes and expresses
(...) true peace is not a negative state (the mere absence of conflict) but an energy of wholeness and, like all forms

presses a universal wisdom when he says that 'where ignorance is our master there is no real possibility of peace'. But he is also pragmatic in saying that the reduction of violence will have to precede a full peace. It may be utopian to expect a world without any violence but it is foolish not to believe that we can begin new policies that will progressively reduce the levels of violence. Otherwise we wallow in the despair of an unbreakable cycle of hatred.

If we take this approach – a combination of idealism and pragmatism – we can see the sense of developing a critical mass of leaders who have sufficient experience of their own personal transformation and still have the power to introduce systemic change. It may be a long shot but it justifies bringing meditation into the training of leaders and into the workplace itself. It may not be the only way. As Rumi says 'there are

a thousand ways to kneel and kiss the ground; there are a thousand ways to go home again'. But it is one way worth taking.

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The New Testament Greek for 'peace' (eirene) is related to the verb 'to join' and reflects the beautiful Hebrew word 'shalom' which means wholeness and harmony. The first step in peace-making is to be rejoined to ourselves and to find the harmony and wholeness which characterize our own true nature. No peace with others or our environment can last that is not connected to this inner, personal peace.

Of all leaders of humanity Jesus is the strongest in delivering to his disciples the ministry of reconciliation. He sees peacemaking as one of the essential elements of true happiness. Above all, he shows us that true peace is not a negative state – the mere absence of conflict – but an energy of wholeness and, like all forms of energy, it is transferrable. He says to his first disciples that they can give the blessing of peace and if it is rejected it will 'come back to them'. He breathed on them in their room of fear and gave them his peace, not as the world gives it, but his own peace. The fear that destroys peace is part of the world that he has overcome.

Because of our ignorance we cannot see or trust that. Yet, in the depth of ourselves, we can find this energy, ever-flowing, non-conditional and generous to the point of transcendence. He himself is our peace because he has made the two one and formed humanity in 'one new person'. To touch his presence is to be cleansed of fear and energized to transmit the peace that he gives, and that he is, into all the relationships of our lives.

The wonder of our meditation in Christ is not less than this.

Laurence

Laurence Freeman OSB

News

John Main Seminar 2014

Muslims and Christians, similarities and differences in words, a common ground in silence



The John Main Seminar 2014 was held in Elmhurst, a Chicago suburb, US, from the 24th to the 27th of July.

The theme, "Muslims and Christians: Listeners for the Word", was brilliantly presented by Daniel Madigan SJ from Georgetown University. More than 200 participants from thirteen countries attended the pre-seminar retreat led by Fr. Laurence and the Seminar itself. We invited a very special couple from Wisconsin, present in Chicago, to comment on the Seminar: Brian St. Clair is Christian and his wife, Aadila, is Muslim.

Interview: Aadila and Brian St. Clair

"Meditation is the only form of prayer I can think of that both remains faithful to our respective traditions"

What were the most striking parts of the Seminar for you, as a Christian?

Brian: Even though we're taught that Jesus is the Word of God, I'd never thought of the speech of God as flesh before Fr. Dan's talk. The fact that this idea came to light in the context of comparing the Christian perspective of God's speech to that of Islam and Judaism reinforced for me the importance of understanding other religious traditions. Sometimes it's only in understanding others for their own sake that we come to understand ourselves. It seems to me the same is true of religions. Some of the other striking parts of the Seminar for me were the moments when I got a chance to meet and get to know the other WCCM meditators at the Seminar.

How do you think meditation may help in terms of inter-religious dialogue?

Brian: Experiencing meditation to-

gether as a couple gives Aadila and me a common language and shared religious experience that helps us dialogue about the ways we know God. Muslim religious concepts or Christian terms won't ever bridge that gap for us because they'll always be nearer to one tradition or the other. The experience of God in meditation, since it doesn't rely on any concepts, images, or interpretations, serves as a quiet spot where we can find a common connection point. It's the only form of prayer I can think of that both remains faithful to our respective traditions and at the same time transcends tradition itself.

"Meditation makes it easier for us to understand other peoples' perspectives."

What were the most striking parts of the Seminar for you, as a Muslim?

Aadila: At one of the breakout sessions, when I mentioned that I was Muslim the attendees were really interested in my thought on Christianity and I felt that I was able to express myself openly without any fear of offending people. I really enjoyed listening to the other attendees share their thoughts on how they view Christianity and Islam.

I remember one attendee talking about how she had always felt that she couldn't feel God's presence. She knew that he existed but it was only years later when she was cradling her newborn grandson that she felt his presence. I knew exactly what she was talking about and how she felt and it reminded me that people irrespective of their religious beliefs often question their faith and their place in religion.

How do you think meditation may help in terms of inter-religious dialogue?

Aadila: I believe that when people meditate they become calmer, more rational human beings. This allows them to talk about religion from a less emotional standpoint and makes it easier for them to understand other peoples' perspectives. I find that when I meditate I am calmer and when someone says something negative about Islam I can reply in a more rational manner.

Online: You can watch all talks from the pre-Seminar retreat (led by Fr. Laurence) and from the Seminar (by fr Daniel Madigan) here:

<http://tiny.cc/talksJMS2014>

"The sense of peace is the sense of being intact, being together, being complete. It isn't just the sense that one is becalmed. It's not that; it's something much more positive." John Main

Article

Ordinarily Sacred World

By David Tacey, writer, professor and presenter of the 2015 John Main Seminar



The future sense of the religious will not perpetuate medieval otherworldliness but inculcate a new awareness of sacred embodiment. As Thomas Berry put it: 'To preserve the natural world as the primary revelation of the divine must be the basic concern of religion'.^[i] Transcendence, newly conceived as the sacred within the ordinary, will guide us to a more holistic pattern of thinking. It is as if this dimension were always there, but we did not see it. And not seeing it, we imagined it 'outside' the world in the heavens above. Nietzsche's so-called 'death of God' may now be recontextualised as the death of an otherworldly image of God. That God fell off its throne in the sky, and fell to earth. As a result of this collapse, the world itself has been filled with scintillae, soul sparks, or splinters of God.

I am not sure how 'secular' the world is. The original term secularis meant that the religious life had been 'made worldly' by history, so that elements of God have been scattered or sown in the earth. The Western death of God has given rise to a rebirth of

God. It was not a meaningless death, spelling the demise of religion, but a hopeful and significant death, pointing to a reawakening of the God presence in a new and different way. The humanly manufactured God-image, which was sponsoring a dualistic perception of the world, and separating spirit from creation, had to die so a truer image of God could be discovered.

At the same time, science has made us look with new eyes at the natural world. We look with awe and wonder at creation, and no longer take it for granted. This is happening right across the board in society, and is not only impacting on scientific communities, but on everyone. Even atheists look to creation with a sense of the numinous, not realising that the word 'numinous' is religious, from the Latin numen, meaning the power of a deity. As the real has become more complex, as science has shown the real to be mysterious, unfathomable, and not reducible to materialistic laws or causation, there is, as it were, intellectual and emotional room for the sacred. Instead of modernity wiping out the sense of the holy, as claimed by secularisation theorists, the reverse seems to be true:

The advance of science has increased the sense of awe we feel at the immense scale of the universe or the complexity of the human eye. The pragmatic and experiential elements of faith as a way of life are displacing the previous emphasis on institutions and beliefs.^[ii]

Harvey Cox argues that 'what it means to be "religious" is shifting significantly from what it meant as little

as a half century ago'.^[iii] While conservatives find the religious nowhere, artists and prophets are finding the religious everywhere. In the words of the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins: 'the world is full of the grandeur of God'. The everyday is not so everyday after all; it has been elevated to a higher plane, a level infused with a sense of meaning. Whoever thought that science would spell the end of God, or secularisation would spell the end of religion? It seems the reverse is true, and we are finding modernist expectations upturned in the postmodern world.

It was the French postmodern philosopher Luce Irigaray who first referred to the shift toward a 'horizontal transcendence',^[iv] a turn to the immanent. But naturally religious institutions are not thrilled by this new religiousness, and are not keen to track its development, because it spells the demise of certain customs and conventions. In the Catholic tradition, the ancient saying proclaimed, 'There is no salvation outside the church', but if religion has been turned inside out, if world has replaced church as the consecrated vessel of the divine, then these old ideas no longer work, no longer make sense. Conservative religious often say civilisation is losing sight of God, whereas the real problem is that they do not know how to read the signs of the times.

The world has moved on, and if we are to understand religious experience in the new context, we are going to have to move on with it and revise our understanding of what religiousness is. Religiousness is no longer synonymous with attending holy ►

Article

places on holy days, but cultivating an awareness of the presence of the holy in creation, and becoming attuned to it as a discipline of mind and behaviour. This is another way of saying that church has lost its old meaning, and if it means a consecrated dwelling where the holy is invited, we can say that the world has become the new cathedral, the dwelling place of the holy.

This was a view that I grew up with in Alice Springs, living alongside Aboriginal cultures. I have written about this experience in two books.^[v] My family attended church services on Sundays, and the rest of the week we seemed to lose our reverence for the sacred and live as if it wasn't really true, as if it wasn't present. I became sceptical of this one-moment a week religiosity, because it seemed to me that if God were present, God should impact on our lives in all times and places, not just on Sundays or in special places. On the other hand,

the Aboriginal people, who rarely or never attended churches, seemed to be innately religious, and to have a full and abiding sense of the sacred in creation. For Aboriginal people, everything is potentially sacred, and the vast expanses of rock, sand and desert are 'cathedrals of stone' in which the sacred is recognised in prayerful reverence.^[vi] Aboriginal spirituality is a tradition of transparency, in which the numinous shines forth in the world. Ironically, I was fully prepared for the new sacredness of a postmodern culture by my encounter with a pre-modern culture.

[i] Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme, *The Universe Story* (New York: HarperOne, 1994), p. 243.

[ii] Harvey Cox, *The Future of Faith* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), pp. 2-3.

[iii] Cox, p. 2.

[iv] Luce Irigaray, *Key Writings* (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 172.

[v] David Tacey, *Edge of the Sacred: Transformation in Australia* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 1995); revised international edition Zurich: Daimon Verlag, 2006; and *ReEnchantment: The New Australian Spirituality* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2000).

[vi] Max Charlesworth, *Religious Business: Australian Aboriginal Spirituality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

JOHN MAIN SEMINAR 2015

Spirituality and Religion in a Secular Age

January 15-18 – Hamilton, New Zealand

David Tacey

Pre-Seminar retreat led by Laurence Freeman and post-seminar pilgrimage

Info and registration:

www.johnmainseminar2015.com

Arts

Bere Island: Music and Silence



The inaugural Bere Island Music

and Silence Festival took place at the end of August. The program was directed by Mike Rathbone and included workshops, dance, music, meditation and talks by Laurence Freeman.

Online: You can listen to Fr. Laurence and a full report on the Festival by Mike Rathbone here: <http://tiny.cc/berefestival>

David Greenwood: Painting Silence

Until December 8th the Meditatio Centre in London is hosting "A Meditator Paints", an exhibition of the English artist and meditator David Greenwood. Many of the paintings were

inspired by retreats at Monte Oliveto and Bere Island and pilgrimages to India.



More information: meditatio@wccm.org

News

Meditation in prison in Poland Where will this take us?



By K.C., educator, Prison Service Officer, Counselor at the Detention Centre in Szczecin (Translation Philip Stoeckle)

We have been meditating for a year now, a small community, every Tuesday meeting in the common room of the A/1 Unit of the Detention Centre in Szczecin.

We form a group of several inmates, Paulina, the group leader from WCCM - Poland - and a counselor of the

A/1Unit. What was it like in the beginning? It's hard work.

At first it was a curiosity, then the minutes seemed to stretch to infinity and finally the seconds seem to have no end. But this day is a special time in the weekly calendar, from silence to silence. It is strange because in one sense silence in a prison is impossible: The rattle of bars, the clatter of hammers, the sound of the radio, the strike of door bolts, the immortal sound of a key in the lock.

But it is a silence of the heart.

So you can't say it's just a cool thing to meditate in prison? When a meeting has to be cancelled we all feel the loss.

Until recently our common room was a cell. In prison it's not easy to forget that you are locked up but this cell has become our common refuge. We no longer wander the corridors along Kaszubska Street searching for an empty room. Every Tuesday in the same place, we recreate a very unique atmosphere. We spread out mats which helps everyone feel that this is their place on the floor; lay down pillows that relieve the burdens of everyday life; we rest our spines suffering from the stress of doing time; we place

a candle on a prison stool. We believe that the flickering flame will brighten the path forward to those who have wandered off. We look forward to the opening gong because it resonates a sacred space for us in daily life.

What else creates this unforgettable Tuesday climate? Maybe the weekly search for matches, which has become a symbol of our search for light. And between sessions putting words to what is in us. How differently problems are resolved and how one talks about oneself, after a session of stillness and of being immersed in the faithful repetition of the mantra. Sometimes we ask ourselves questions that have long been hurled through the bars and then find through inner freedom that we do have the courage look for the answers.

After the first month of meditation we painted a poster to express what we felt. Paulina was horrified: the crosses, graves, the downward paths and many question marks. One year later, we painted another image of what meditation is for us. I invite you to look at http://tiny.cc/prison_poland. You may feel you are sharing in our special kind of freedom.

Meditatio Seminar on Violence in Argentina



The Community in Argentina organised a Meditatio Seminar "Contemplation in a World of Violence" at the University of Argentina Social Museum (UMSA) on 29th of August. There were five speakers: Bach. Graciela Moranchel, Dr. Jung Mo Sung, Dr. Marina Müller, Fr.

James Alison and Dr. Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. A conference on 'Violence and the Sacred: René Girard and New Light for Christian Life Today' was held, also in Buenos Aires, the previous day at which James Alison and Jung Mo Sung were the presenters.

Financial Report

DEVELOPING OUR MISSION IN 2013

Dear Friend,

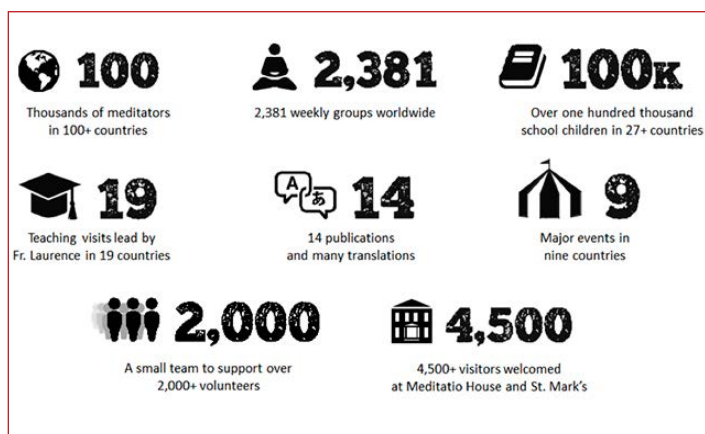
Our community freely shares the gift of meditation that has already touched our own lives. It has potential to change the world through the simple opening of the human heart.

Every day I feel so happy to be sharing this vision with so many members and

friends of our community - those who make an unquantifiable contribution with their own meditation practice, as volunteers, giving time, leading groups, teaching children, the under-privileged, the disabled, uniting the mystical and social aspects of the gospel and those who generously give of their resources so that we can continue to give

freely what we have freely received.

In 2013, the International Centre supported many thousands of meditators and over 2,300 groups with free materials to introduce and accompany their journey of meditation, including the quarterly Meditatio CD, the website and daily and weekly mailings.



In 2013, I visited over 19 countries including Myanmar where Christian meditation was introduced for the first time last August. We were able to produce 14 new publications from which 24 translations were made into 10 different languages. Key events were held such as The Way of Peace in India with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

- Our International Centre continued to support thousands of volunteers who serve our mission in over a hundred countries.

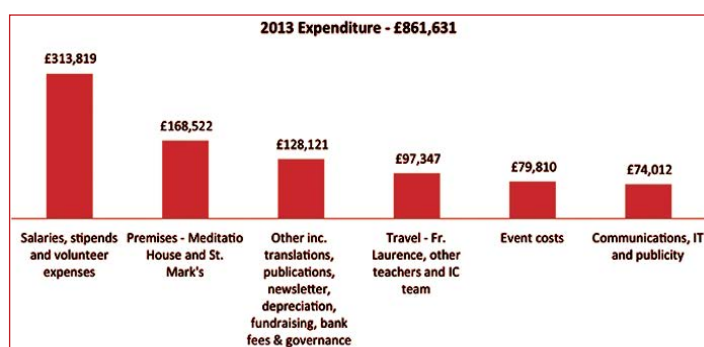
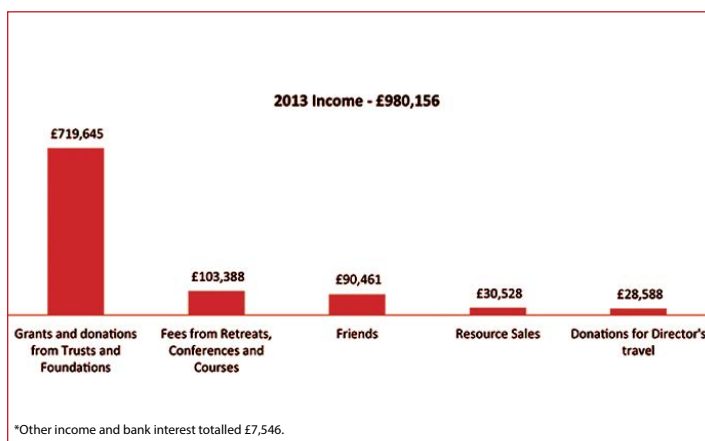
A heartfelt thank you for all your gifts which are turned into values on which no price can be placed.

With love,

Laurence

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE IN 2013

The function of the International Centre is to serve each National Community and ultimately each meditator practicing in this tradition. Between January and December 2013, we received income totaling £980,156 and expended £861,631 in furthering our mission. Income and expenditure is broken down below:



The surplus of £118,525 will help fund our mission in 2014. To download a copy of the full 2013 Trustees report, please visit <http://tiny.cc/report2013>. An outline of our plans and forecasted expenditure for 2015 will be included in the next newsletter provided by Chris Whittington, WCCM's Chief of Operations, who joined the team in May 2014. A link to a talk by Chris made at the John Main Seminar in Chicago in July is available at <http://tiny.cc/chrisWCCM>.

In peace and gratitude,

Clem Sauvé - Chair of the Trustees - 2013

Clem Sauvé

In Focus

Jack Murta, Canada



A number of years ago I seriously questioned how I could make a greater commitment to Jesus, bearing in mind my family and work responsibilities.

I had previously served 18 years as an elected member of the Canadian Parliament, including two Cabinet Minister Posts and then spent the past 16 years in Canada's business community. My searching at this time ended with an inner conversion which eventually led me to join the Catholic Church, and then through the reading of Henri Nouwen and Thomas Merton I found an attraction and enthusiasm for the contemplative life. This in turn led me to John Main, his teachings and the practice of meditation. Over

the last 10 years meditation has significantly changed all of my activities.

One of my present responsibilities is leading the yearly Canadian National Prayer Breakfast and also the weekly Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast which is held in our Canadian Parliament. Politicians from all our political parties meet weekly to discuss their faith in a secure environment. I am also leading two of the 40 plus Christian Meditation groups in the Ottawa area. One group is in a large downtown church and the other at a men's homeless shelter.

I now realize that one can share the gift of silence and stillness with followers of all faiths

Christian Meditation has been a tremendous gift for me, as I have made warm friendships in the weekly groups, retreats and workshops that I attend. But above all it has enabled me to find that quiet place, where twice a day I can be still and just sit in silence with my loving God. I now realize that one can share the gift of silence and stillness with followers of all faiths and that in the practice of meditation we ultimately enrich each other.

Meditation is a great help for the very poor in our society. I am on the board of a large homeless shelter in

Ontario called the Ottawa Mission. It is a faith based institution that offers services and programs to meet the ever changing needs of the homeless in Canada's capital. The Mission currently provides food, clothing, shelter, skilled training and addiction services for the homeless. We feed 1300 people a day, sleep 275 people at night and utilize the services of 600 volunteers each month. Meditation is beneficial for people experiencing the stress of addiction and homeless. It is a great help in controlling anxiety and frustration and helps to calm the body, mind and spirit.

I often think about John Main when he reminded us in his many talks that the practice of Christian Meditation draws us into reality itself, not only ultimate reality but the reality of everyday life around us. I feel that what we do with our lives and how well we care for others, is as much a part of our meditation experience as what we do in turning inward to stillness and silence.

Meister Eckhart, the great 13th century Dominican priest, once said that: "God is present to us everywhere, both in and out of meditation." I find that to be so true. Meditation has helped me to be aware of God's continual presence in all activities. It has become the foundation of my life. Meditation is what I continually turn to each and every day.



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Editor: Leonardo Corrêa (leonardo@wccm.org)
Graphic Design: Gerson Laureano
International Coordinator: Pauline Peters (paulinepeters2@gmail.com)
Coordinator, International Office: Jeroen Koppert (jeroen@wccm.org)

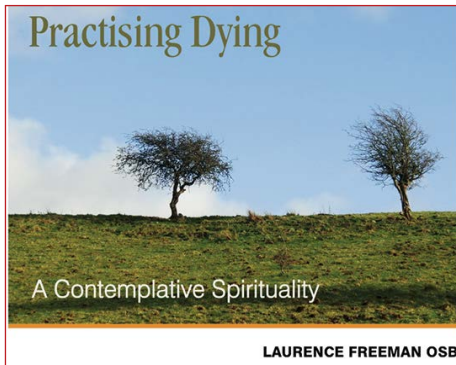
Would you like to contribute to the Meditatio Newsletter? Our next deadline is December 5th

New Resources

CDs

Practising Dying

Laurence Freeman OSB



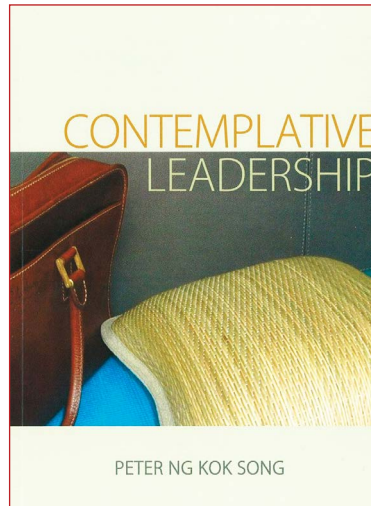
Authentic spirituality in our materialistic world, Fr Laurence says, must involve the practice of dying to our egotism. Jesus taught this in the Gospel and by his life: 'Anyone who wants to be a follower of mine, must leave self behind, take up his cross daily, and follow me.' To do that, we need a spiritual practice that we can integrate into our life and that enables our life itself to become a commitment to this ideal. Christian Meditation, he says, is a simple practice that takes us beyond our ego. We leave 'our prayer' behind and we go into the prayer of Christ which energises, and transforms us. As our focus shifts from self-fixation to other-centredness, we learn love as the meaning of life.

Where to buy:
check in www.mediomedia.com

Books

Contemplative Leadership

by Peter Ng Kok Song



This book comprises four presentations to business executives and others proposing meditation as a way of cultivating enlightened leadership. Peter Ng describes meditation as the work of paying attention. It is a practice of 'selfless attention' where the attention shifts from the ego to other-centredness. This detachment from the ego enables a clearer perception of reality and enriches work and relationships. The enlightened leader comes to view leadership as not about oneself but the common good, as the acceptance of responsibility and not the exercise of power. Peter speaks

with the authority and clarity born of personal experience. He argues for meditation as the antidote for our busy stressful lives. He gives simple, practical instructions on how to meditate, and how to persevere in the discipline.

Where to buy: www.meditatiostore.com

Price: US\$ 10.80

meditatio RADIO

Meditatio Radio brings you the enriching experience of the community created by meditation - a community of faith composed of people of different beliefs. It offers online 24 hours of teaching by teachers, artists and friends of the community including John Main OSB and Laurence Freeman OSB. There is content from retreats and conferences and from the varied events of Meditatio Outreach in fields such as medicine and mental health, business and finance, children and students and interfaith encounters. There are talks from the WCCM School of Meditation, music, news from the global community - all regularly refreshed - and scheduled meditation sessions.

Tune in to Meditatio Radio:
www.wccm.org/meditationradio

To order: Please contact your resource center or supplier for the price in your local currency

VISIT THE CHRISTIAN MEDITATION PAGE AT AMAZON: <http://astore.amazon.com/w0575-20>



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