

Meditatio

Newsletter of The
World Community
for Christian Meditation



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BONNEVAUX

With your help our new WCCM home near Poitiers, France and a global centre for peace



THE MAIN HOUSE (FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT BONNEVAUXWCCM.ORG)

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Dear Friends,

A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

We can meditate anywhere. We can think and speak about the spirit anywhere. But there's no doubt that certain places and times bring us to a higher and clearer point of practice and vision. This was true of the days I spent recently high in the Colorado Rockies. For the first day or so, just walking across the room of the hermitage suddenly makes you breathless because of the altitude. But when you go outside and gaze on the snow-capped mountains on the horizon all around as you stand in a vast valley in which the light is ever-playing new tricks of beauty, making you feel you are seeing it all for the first time, well, in another sense that takes your breath away too.

This was a monastic valley, of pure air and great vistas, the home of the Trappist monks of Snowmass. Fr Thomas Keating, founder of Contemplative Outreach had invited me there together with Fr Richard Rohr, founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation and Fr Tilden Edwards of the Shalem Institute. We came as friends; and also as people sharing a long and passionate commitment to the expansion of the contemplative dimension in Christianity and in all of modern life. Each day we began in silence, meditating together, and then allowed the Spirit who we felt was among us in a particular way in that time and place, to guide our conversation.

We hadn't come together to issue a statement or start a new organisation. And so it's a little difficult to summarise those conversations. At times we discussed the experience of contemplation itself, its nature and the stages through which the spiritual path will take us. We spoke about how we can understand and communicate this experience in a church where contemplation has largely been marginalised and often replaced with a defensive or aggressive territorialism. One thing that

contemplation does is to transcend all borders and boundaries. But we also spoke of how psychology and physics, these great inner and outer forms of modern knowledge, offer us transform-



Laurence Freeman, Thomas Keating, Richard Rohr and Tilden Edwards

ing metaphors to see contemplation with new eyes. Because another thing that contemplation does is to transform the way we think and see.

We felt that Christian contemplatives today, inclusive of age and gender, race and denomination, are called to renew the awareness that contemplation is universal – not the reserve of a few, certainly not of celibates – and that it exists, by right and nature, at the heart of Christian faith and life. It is the life and soul of the party and without it the celebration soon becomes stuffy and boring.

Before meeting we had each read Rowan Williams' address to the Roman Synod on New Forms of Evangelisation in which he reminded the hierarchies of all churches, and indeed all religions, of something undeniable and yet usually forgotten or denied. He spoke, surprisingly, of just how foundational contemplative consciousness is to Christian identity. To be contemplative underpins

the missionary and the prophetic as well as the apostolic elements of Christian life. We can't all be missionaries, we can't all be social activists, we can't all be great writers and speakers. But we

are all contemplative.

Meeting together in a small circle, snacking healthily during the conversation, laughing at jokes while trying hard to find the right words for the most subtle of thoughts, feeling free to digress and return to the point and joined at times by Br Erik, a young monk of the community, we agreed that this was our vision and mission. To work, not to restore, but to renew, the contemplative spirit and its necessary practices and disciplines, in the heart of Christianity. When something is renewed, re-seen and re-discovered an evolution takes place. Really to know something is always to know it again. To be cognisant of anything is to re-cognise. This double-take, suddenly seeing what is always there but knowing it as a fresh invention, is what progress truly means. Progress is not just adding more information to the database and improving ways of doing things – as technology and science are busy doing for us. It is

to see what has always been there but to see it with wonder, our breath taken away by its sheer presence and inherent beauty.

We felt too that this same contemplative experience of life needs to be re-connected to the life of the non-religious world. This is the world that the present generation is inheriting, often with no coherent religious frame of meaning or expression. The point is not to make the world religious. You can be contemplative without being religious. But the point is to save the world, its structures and institutions, from collapsing into emptiness, distraction, mindlessness and superficiality, which it so rapidly does with anguish when it cuts adrift from the spiritual dimension of reality. The point is not to spiritualise the world by creating ideas of other-worldliness. It is to see the world and the material realms of existence for what they truly are and what they expose to us when we have eyes to see. Teilhard de Chardin said that matter is spirit moving slowly enough for us to see.

A contemplative practice, seriously allowed to become part of our daily life, makes us humble and realistic. It shows us that humanity is totally dependent on its natural environment. To abuse it in the name of progress and growth without understanding what progress and growth mean is the depth of folly and self-destructiveness. Just to be 'developers' is selfish and nonsensical, feeding the dangerous illusion of our independence and denying the truth of our interdependence. The contemplative mind can see this and also imagine new, creative ways of making progress and growing human civilisation. A new kind of economics, education, business, medicine. A new kind of religion, free from ideological territorialism and cultural competition, nurturing the value of caring for those in need and who

cannot care for themselves and continuously reminding the world of both its potential and its limitations. A 'new kind of holiness', as Simone Weil said, which will be without precedent, a fresh spring and invention, a new revelation of the universe and of human destiny.

When one reads the news these days or sees the images of the bombardment of Aleppo we might be excused for thinking we are descending into a new kind of hell with the horrible awareness that any hell is always our own human construction. But we might also remember that the one who, in the

Christian contemplatives today, inclusive of age and gender, race and denomination, are called to renew the awareness that contemplation is universal

power of the Spirit, descends into hell frees us from hell and reveals, as Jesus did, the new kind of holiness, the new destiny and the new freedom which the power of contemplation manifests in this world and at this time.

In this contemplative vision Christianity can never be mistaken for an ideology. Jesus essentially doesn't even have a 'message' because he connects us directly to a power of life-transformation in which any ideas or words are less important than the moment of revelation and discovery, the ever-present moment. Nor, in this way of being, do we idolise institutions, hierarchies or power-systems of any kind because we know that, at best, they are only temporary instruments of a greater cause, and at worst projections of collective egoism.

In our Snowmass prayer and conver-

sations I sensed a very youthful spirit, despite our ages ranging from 93 to 65! But I have met many younger people with more closed and prematurely cautious minds. The young are designed to be more open to change just because they are so conscious of the change constantly happening in themselves, physically and mentally. This is why the younger and older generations are meant to be in conversation together, even if, often, their agendas are different and their vocabularies can be partially incomprehensible to the other. Nevertheless, in a contemplative encounter these differences are catalysts for change not for conflict. It is important to help bring young Christian contemplatives together, some will be scholars but all practitioners, and from a conversation arising from silence something of new value for our world in its present confusion and crisis may emerge.

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In 1980 a study of nineteen trees in Panama revealed 1200 types of beetles, 80% of which were previously unknown. The world is an endlessly surprising place and life ever teems beyond our capacity to measure it. We know better how many stars there are in the cosmos than the species in our own planet. This wonder in the face of the ordinary is a fruit of contemplative consciousness and it keeps us sane, safe from the perils of excessive fantasy and abstraction.

There is no worse calamity, according to Lao Tzu, than the unrestrained increase of needs. This is the tendency of the un-awakened human mind that threatens our existence as a species; because we will destroy ourselves before we destroy the planet. It is part of our myopic hubris to think that the planet could not survive without us. But just as an addict denies for a long time that

he is doing harm to himself and others, so those pursuing unrestrained growth, without defining its purpose or values, will eventually run into the Wall of complex, inevitable consequences.

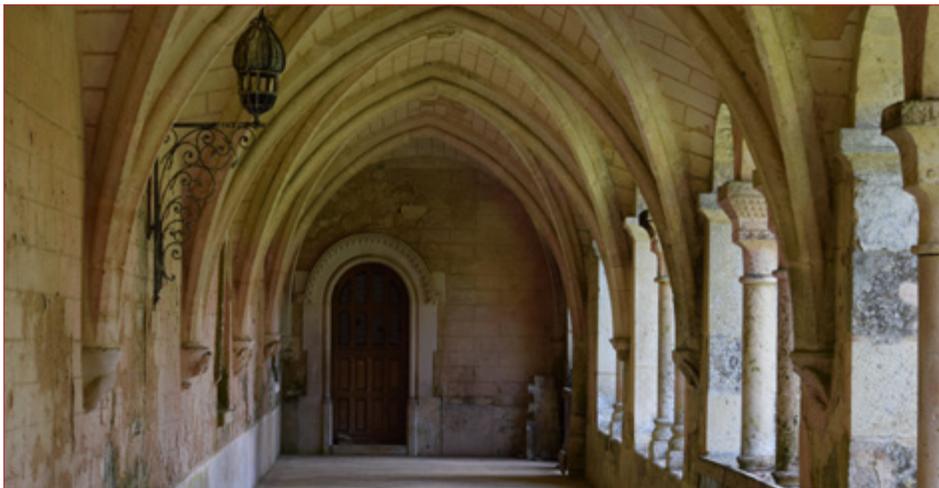
By contrast, meditation is simple. It creates community. It dissolves boundaries and the egotism that clings to differences rather than embracing the shared ground. Its true meaning is obscure to the biased left-brain mentality that has dominated our global consciousness. Yet through gradual, incremental growth, rather than through mass marketing, the radical simplicity of meditation will reverse and establish a more true direction. If it can do this – as many of us have discovered – at the personal level, why not globally? 'The

drives our present course. They seem recreational or individual experiences rather than the underlying meaning of all things.

That is why we need to make living examples of this simple truth about simplicity. So that it can be seen and shared in, not just talked about. John Main understood that meditation transforms individuals and society through the medium of community.

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Our new home at Bonnevaux (for more information visit bonnevauxwccm.org) can serve many purposes and produce many benefits because it will essentially be a stable, sustainable witness to the teaching that it is our mission to share.



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hope for the salvation of the world lies in the greatest number of wise people.' Our challenge is this: to help to develop from a traditional understanding of meditation, as a way to contemplation, an engagement with contemporary adventurousness. From stillness, to find the power to explore, to leave familiar shores and ways of doing things, to evolve.

John Main called for a 'radical simplicity'. The Cloud of Unknowing urged us to enter a 'naked awareness of self'. Jesus made 'poverty of spirit' the first Beatitude. The Buddha speaks of 'emptiness'. None of these terms make much sense to the network of values that

It will show - of course in a fragile and human way - that meditation creates community and changes lives. That it opens the heart to others who are in need. That it seeks friendship and understanding with people who hold different beliefs and have different ways of doing things. That it prepares us to see the mystery we inhabit and that dwells in us. It is not just a home for the community. But precisely because it is a home for our kind of community – a widely dispersed and culturally diverse community – it can be a centre of contemplation, peace-making and healing dialogue for all.

I have been moved and encouraged

by how many have already expressed their happiness and enthusiasm in the vision of Bonnevaux and have contributed generously to making it a reality. (We have listened carefully to questions and voices of caution that have been truly helpful and important to hear. In response, I hope we have been able to explain why we feel sure that this new step and phase for the World Community is natural and necessary)

We can buy the property because of this generosity but we need significant more contributions in order to renovate and do the necessary construction. Some have started to make one-off donations, others have pledged to monthly contributions. Both are necessary and welcome and some people have generously offered to give in both ways. My deepest wish is that, firstly, everyone in the community will contribute something, whatever they can. Many small gifts add up to large numbers. This is not only mercenary however. It is a sign that this new home - rooted in an ancient sacred place where prayer was practiced for 700 years and will soon resume again in a new form – will be felt to be a home to each meditator, each meditation group, each national community.

I don't mind asking you to give to Bonnevaux because it is a home and centre for all of us and for our shared mission. The fundraising work has already taught me better about the meaning of almsgiving as part of the Christian triad of practices (the other two are prayer and self-restraint).

The time it takes to click a 'donate' button and send a small donation is time for a good work, a small act of kindness that ripples far through time and space.

I know there are many other good causes. And if you feel called to give elsewhere I rejoice in that too. But Bonnevaux is dedicated not only to the relief of suffering, man-made and otherwise. It wants to work on the causes of suffering, to change hearts and minds to break the ancient cycles of violence

and injustice. This is why contemplation, understood and practiced more widely than ever before in human history, is so necessary now for our continued evolution.

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I have also been inspired and encouraged by individual meditators, including two married couples, oblates, clergy and young people who have asked to come and live in the gentle and beautiful valley in which Bonnevaux sits. They want to dedicate their life and gifts to realising its potential. I am sure others will come and if you are one of them who would like to discuss it, please contact us. The generosity of architects, business planners, gardeners and handymen towards this project has been a further reassurance that this will be a most fruitful and deepening work for our community. St Benedict said about new projects:

And first of all,
whatever good work you begin to do,
beg of God with most earnest prayer to perfect it. (Rule, Prol.)

We do. Please join us in that prayer.

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The great French Orthodox theologian, Oliver Clement, once wrote that 'with ideologies clashing and nihilism on the rise, the time is coming for a creative Christianity'. This work of the spirit is what we discussed at Snowmass and what every weekly meditation group, retreat, Meditatio seminar and publication is participating in. This new Christianity will be refreshed by rediscovering that contemplation belongs to its core identity. It will be able to confront evil with holiness because it's holiness arises from its own renunciation of power, nostalgia and prejudice. It will see anew that that eerie phrase, the 'will of God', does not refer to an imperial edict but to a continuous infusion of life producing mercy, justice and peace that produces spiritual growth as generously as tropical showers produce luxuriant

vegetation.

It will enlighten us with an awareness of the Eucharistic moments of every day, those encounters and insights with others in all kinds of situations, not just the religious ones, where the divine life radiates and transforms. It will



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teach that sin is a great mindlessness, not a crime deserving punishment but a wound needing the salve of wisdom and compassion. And it will show that every contemplative gaze and observation leads us further into the torrential waterfall of the Trinity where we are drenched with the discovery that the true meaning of Being is love.

All this is what the vision of Bonnevaux contains. We are a widespread, global family, always fragile. And – as I was blessed to see at our 25th anniversary National National Coordinator's meeting in June – it is also very strong and deep. I ask you to look into that depth and strength which will transmit the courage to take this new step. It is not just for our community as it is now. It is for what it will be for the next 25 years and the 25 after that... When we are all vague memories from a founding era and the World Community will be what we cannot now imagine. But Bonnevaux will help it to remain com-

mitted over these generations to the radical simplicity that grows but essentially does not change, the contemplative experience that, like Christ is 'the same yesterday, today and tomorrow'.

When I joined Father John to start a new small and risky venture in 1977

he was confident. When we were given a large new home he warned me 'this is not the last step'. In hope we realise that nothing is ever the last step. But we have to take new steps at the right time – which we feel has now come.

Father John's confidence and courage and mine was supported by meeting people who, as he said, 'share the same vision'. This is the greatest contribution. Thank you for sharing the vision above all – but also for whatever you can give materially to making Bonnevaux a loving home and centre of peace for us and the world.

With much love.

Laurence

Laurence Freeman OSB

News

National Coordinators' Conference Meditation Creates Community

The WCCM National Coordinators' Conference was held in East Sussex, UK, 29 June to 3 July. As this was the first for seven years, it was a special and energising moment in the life of the Community with National Coordinators and Contacts attending from 44 countries.



Meditation with Children

The outreach of Meditation with Children had a special place at the Conference. Even before that, most of the Coordinators attended the Seminar "Hope for the Future" on Meditation with Children (read more about that on page 9), where the keynote speaker was Dr Rowan Williams and a major report on the topic was launched. The first day of the National Conference was also dedicated to this theme, with workshops and group discussions led by Dr. Cathy Day and Ernie Christie, from Townsville, Australia.

Anniversary

The Conference was also an opportunity to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Community, remembering the formation and naming of

WCCM at the John Main Seminar in 1991 in New Harmony, USA, led by Bede Griffiths. A special video on the 25 Years was shown, which included people within the Community sharing their stories from this Seminar.

Change in the School

Kim Nataraja, Director of the School for 17 years, spoke on her path and the growing of the School and the Community during this time. She received a special gift, an icon, as a sign of our deep gratitude for all she has contributed to the Community over so many years. Kim will continue to be connected with the School and serve the Community in other ways. During the event in Sussex she also introduced Gene Bebeau, from USA, who will be the new Director of the School (read more at page 8).

Meditatio

Coordinators and leaders were able to exchange experiences in small groups involving Meditatio outreach and some presented cases to the whole group. The following are just a few examples from the groups:

-China: Augustine Xiao Xiao spoke about his work of spreading Christian Meditation in different parts of China, for audiences from children to seminarians. He also showed how they are using mobile applications to facilitate meditation sessions and communicate the teaching.

-Ukraine: National Coordinators Maria and Albert Zakharova, shared how they are nurturing the community not only in Ukraine but also in Russia.

-Mexico: Enrique Lavin spoke about their work with children, especially in the countryside, in the city of Alfhayucan. He presented a short video about the latest visit by Fr. Laurence, at the beginning of 2016.

Future: A new home for WCCM

The meeting also was an opportunity to look to the future. Laurence Freeman presented the idea of a new International Retreat Centre for WCCM. The project would be to establish a small living community, a place for retreats, events, teaching and sharing life in silence. He asked for the support of the national coordinators to spread the idea throughout the world. The general response was very positive and enthusiastic.

ONLINE: videos on the 25 years of WCCM and on the Conference's theme are available at <http://tiny.cc/NCC2016>

News

John Main Seminar 2016

Where the Light Comes in... with Jean Vanier

Seminar was hosted by the L'Arche Community in Trosly, France



The John Main Seminar 2016 was hosted by the L'Arche community in Trosly, France, from 2nd to 4th September. Jean Vanier led the seminar on the theme "Where the Light Comes in..." The participants at Trosly and those tuning into the live webcast agreed that it was a most powerful and meaningful moment. Members of both the L'Arche and WCCM Communities shared deep silence in meditation and the deep teachings on the theme from Jean Vanier and Laurence Freeman. (A pre-seminar retreat was held also in Trosly from 31st August to 2nd September).

Laurence Freeman commented that the connection with Jean Vanier and L'Arche that this week renewed was especially significant in the 25th anniversary year of the

WCCM and when it is hoping to establish a new international home for the community in France. "The level of sharing between the mission and the vision of the two communities is "very profound", he said. Jean also commented about the Seminar: "There is something very beautiful about two communities coming together. On one side there is contemplation and the other is encountering. And what unites us are two words: metanoia and silence."

More comments from participants:

"Jean Vanier is really a man ahead of his time: his ideas, his insights, his teachings, are timeless. One of these ideas is of 'meeting'. Meeting, in relation to prayer, is really related to waiting. It is all about slowing down. When you say 'let's meet',

we slow down. In fact, we stop, we sit, we take a break from all our concerns, worries and anxieties. To just be present to the person and really be attentive to the person. And Meditation is also like that. Is really an invitation to slow down, so you can stop, you can sit, you can look inside". (**Dom Pachomius San Juan, Philippines**)

"Jean has a pure heart and I feel privileged to be here. It is also nice to see the link between Jean and Laurence, because they are very close to each other. We had a meeting with people from L'Arche who would like to have meditation groups in different houses. For me that really makes sense. I think it is about Martha and Mary. By meditating I can look at others with different eyes." (**Sandrine Vinay, WCCM National Coordinator for France**)

"I saw similarities between L'Arche and WCCM and I also saw a beautiful complementarity in terms of the missions and the messages. It is important for the world to have the idea of silence, solitude, going deeper into those spaces. And also from those spaces, from those times, being able to love people that are disabled, or people in pain." (**Ronald Ivey, USA**)

ONLINE: watch or listen to the talks: http://tiny.cc/JMS2016_talks
JMS 2017 will be in the USA. More info: <http://tiny.cc/JMS2017>

*The wonderful thing about the community that is built for those who pray together is that we find people to be **with** and people who are **for** us. (John Main)*

News

The School of Meditation Review

By Kim Nataraja



Kim Nataraja at the National Coordinators Conference

Dear Friends:

Some of you have been aware of and taken part in the School Review that Laurence and I initiated a year ago.

After leading the School for the past 17 years on behalf of Fr Laurence I regretfully feel the need to step back. This decision has helped Fr Laurence and me to cast a fresh look over the organization of the School. It was therefore decided that the work of the School would be more manageable under seven separate sections, which would form the School Committee. The School Committee will function as one body that would cover all aspects of the School.

Gene Bebeau, (Member of the WCCM Guiding Board and School Council member for many years), who leads the Section on Groups, has agreed to take on the role of Director of the School for one year. The role of Section Leader will also be for one year, giving the opportunity to renew the role or step back and suggest someone else.

The seven sections are as follows:

- **Groups** (Gene Bebeau as leader with Michel Legault, Jack Murta, Kath Houston as supporting members)

- **Essential Teaching Courses** (Phil Barnett as leader with Ana Fonseca and Giovanni Felicioni as supporting members)

- **Online Courses** (Charles Posnett)

- **Publications** (Briji Waterfield as leader with support of Cecilie Dee)

- **Teachers' Exchange and Formation** (Kath Houston as leader)

- **School Website** (Lucy Beck as leader)

- **Section for Finance and Budget.** The leader is still to be announced.

The section leaders will try to find more people to join their sections to share ideas.

The School Council will continue to fulfil the role it has done so well for a number of years in its present form. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the dedicated members of the School Council. The Director of the School will chair both the School Committee meetings, which will meet quarterly, and the School Council, which will meet twice a year.

In addition to other members of the School Council there are the following members, who report from WCCM Regions: Australia (Kath Houston), Canada

(Phil Barnett), Caribbean (Sr Ruth Montrichard), Central America (Enrique Lavin), Europe and Africa (Kim Nataraja, Andrzej Ziolkowski and Jose Pype), Malaysia and Singapore (Niloufer Harben and James Loh), New Zealand and Pacific (Fr Peter Murphy), South America (Marina Muller and Gilda Monteiro), USA (Karen and Tim Pedigo, Lucy Beck and Pat King).

Since I hold the School and all of you who have supported me so faithfully over the years in my heart, I will still be attending the biannual School Council Meetings, be on the Faculty List as a teacher and will be looking after the School in Europe.

Gene Bebeau, new Director of the School of Meditation

I first met Fr Laurence at a retreat in 1993 and learned about Christian Meditation. I knew from the very beginning that Christian Meditation is what I wanted and needed to do. I accepted the role in 1998 as Regional Coordinator for the Florida region. I soon recognized how important the School of Meditation was in and for the WCCM. I became the US School Coordinator sometime around 2000.

The school programs have helped me become comfortable with sharing John Main's teaching. In 2007, I began to work as the US National Coordinator and officially served as the US National Coordinator from 2012 to 2016. I have, also, been on the Guiding Board of the WCCM since 2013.

Working with Fr Laurence and Kim on the School of Meditation projects has been a great Blessing in my life. They are both dear friends to me and our family and to the US Community.

News

Hope for the Future: Meditation in Schools

By Shirley Lancaster



Dr Rowan Williams

The seminar "Hope for the Future: Meditation in Schools" brought together religious leaders and teachers from 30 countries, to share their experience of introducing Christian meditation to children. The seminar was organised by Meditatio – the outreach of The WCCM that works to share the benefits of this prayer practice in the community. In the UK alone, over 150 primary schools have welcomed meditation into classrooms.

In his keynote address, Dr Rowan Williams said Jesus recognised children were close to the kingdom of heaven in their openness "to receive." A learned caution is needed in engaging with the world, said Dr Williams, but we are trained out of "receiving" what is already present: God's kingdom within and around us.

We have to de-clutter the mind to be open to that grace, said Dr. Williams. When children's lives are over-loaded, they need to experience a slower pace and a centre in themselves where they are not in competition. We can 'be' ourselves, at home in God's love. We cannot look at our neighbour with superiority, fear or contempt. "They are

as much at home, as much a native of the kingdom as I am," said Dr. Williams.

Education Director Dr. Cathy Day – who has introduced Christian meditation in 32 schools in Townsville, Australia – said this simple way of prayer can bring a sense of community to those of different faiths, and none. The stranger is welcomed because children develop a greater capacity for big heartedness.

Fr. Laurence Freeman said meditation was part of all the great spiritual traditions. Jesus said go into your "inner room," not babble on in prayer. He valued silence and interiority. If education is about more than creating efficient producers and consumers, children need a life skill to realise their innate capacity for wonder, self-transcendence, love and compassion, he said.

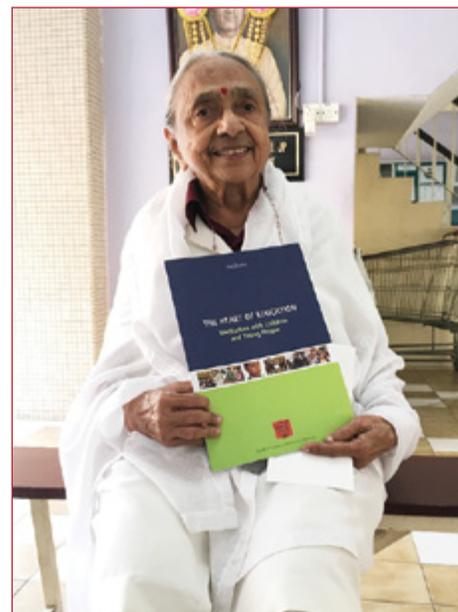
"After meditation we look out for each other more", said one child. In a video presentation, young people in Townsville said meditation helped them manage stress, feel more peaceful and know themselves better. Some said they liked spending time with God. Teachers reported more attention and cooperation in the classroom. For some, meditating with children had awakened a lost innocence and wonder in themselves.

ONLINE

Watch all the videos from this seminar: <http://tiny.cc/hopefvid>

Watch a special conversation with Dr. Rowan Williams and Laurence Freeman here:

http://tiny.cc/rowan_LF



Mother Mangalam

Hong Kong Community in Pilgrimage to Singapore and Malaysia

The WCCM Hong Kong Community celebrated 10 years in August with a Pilgrimage to Singapore and Malaysia. A group of 28 pilgrims were warmly received by fellow meditators in Singapore, Malacca, Ipoh, Penang, and Kuala Lumpur. "We cherished every moment in one another's presence whether at meals, fellowship, at Mass or meditation," said Lina Lee, National Coordinator for Hong Kong.

The group also visited the Pure Life at Kuala Lumpur where John Main first encountered meditation while working there as a diplomat. Mother Mangalam remembers meeting him and was presented with "The Heart of Education" a report on WCCM's work in teaching meditation to children in 29 countries.

News

Meditatio Seminar: A Contemplative Response to Austerity

By Kit Dollard



About a hundred activists, leaders and meditators gathered at Teesside University, Middlesbrough, on 13 July, for "A Contemplative Response to Austerity" with the Bishop of Whitby, Paul Ferguson, as chair and Fr. Laurence as keynote speaker.

Fr. Laurence gently led the attendees from Gregory the Great through the journey from meditation to contemplation. All were reminded that you cannot know what you do not

know and that meditation is not an escape but becomes 'a new way of seeing the interaction with what we see.' He talked about the importance of gazing rather than looking, producing a change of awareness, a shift in our relationship with ourselves, with each other, with our world and with God.

Bethany Eckley, Director of Research & Policy at the Church Urban Fund, presented two papers: 'Building Kingdom Communities' and 'Fullness of Life Together,' re-imagining how Christian churches might engage with communities more effectively. She said that there is no 'us' and 'them' and that relationships, not programmes, bring healing.

Canon Derek Turnham spoke about Caritas and the Catholic Social Action Network building community around

the world.

Several workshops dealt with the practical aspects of coping with austerity, ranging from healing and harmony to supporting communities and building social inclusion. Fr. Laurence introduced us to meditation as a wheel always in motion and symbolising our spiritual journey (Martha), with the different forms of prayer as spokes that lead to the hub, symbolising stillness (Mary). We lose the stillness of the centre hub at our peril.

The seminar reaffirmed the absolute centrality of relationships – and of love – in our daily lives and that contemplation facilitates this deceptively simple ethos. This allows us to address austerity with peace, patience, maturity and wisdom.

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

Indonesia: Sharing the vision of a new home for WCCM



The Community in Indonesia organised two events recently. From 6-9 September there was a Christian Meditation retreat for the priests of the Archdiocese of Makassar. It was led by Fr Siriakus O. Carm and Fr Tan Thian Sing MSF

and attended by 38 priests.

On 28 August, Indonesia's National Coordinator Mrs Kindawati shared the vision for the new international centre with her community: "I shared with all Jakarta & surrounding weekly groups our community's plans to move the international home in London to France and the idea to set up a scholarship fund to enable meditators with financial constraints to visit the new home and benefit from the programs that will be provided. Certainly, financial contributions from members

of community will be required to make this plan and idea realized. I believe I received a good response from the group members at that gathering."

MORE VIDEOS

Monte Oliveto Retreat 2016, with the theme "Change":

http://tiny.cc/MO2016_talks

Meditatio Seminar on **Spirituality for a Secular Society**, in Prague:

http://tiny.cc/MED_Prague

In Focus

Sébastien Gendron, French-speaking Canada National Coordinator



Our “hypermodern” societies look like a Formula One racetrack, everyone running so fast against one another on a closed-in circuit. The cars required are maybe the most efficient, but they also need more frequent tire changes and fuel filters to keep the pace. By the way, the side tracks that lead to spiritual pits are often concealed, or we do not master the ability to slow down properly to get in. So we keep moving forward and see so many relationship collisions, engagement crashes or psychological explosions.

I frequently see, as the National Coordinator of French-speaking Canada, mature persons finding Christian meditation as a natural outcome from a lifetime spiritual journey. They are mostly dedicated to personal prayers

and find in this practice a reconciliation path with their childhood faith. But what about young people who are running this crazy and amazing world, as worker or student, often both? And what about children growing up in a world so poor in spiritual references, that all they find are psychic or chemical distractions, instead of a real spiritual path to nourish the depths of the heart?

Silent prayer has so much to offer. For me personally, I have found that order and harmony are the result of discipline. I learned to be totally “non performative” in front of God, renouncing all my expectations with confidence. It leads me in a mindful way to listen to the signals of my body, being more able to respect and honour it properly. It improves my inner presence and my availability to serve others, entering into a deeper communion with the world around. I’m learning to react more lightly to the events out of my control by observing more objectively my soul movements, learning to love what was previously repulsive.

Meditation is a precious tool to help my own spirit collaborate with the God Spirit. It overcomes the fun-

damental separation between soul and spirit (Heb 4, 12), to realize the “human dimension of the redemption”^[1] that leads to healing and human divinisation.

The fruits are there, but how to transmit the practice to a generation who has time to chat online, train their body and mind to have fun, even catching Pokemon, but not to pray? They can come to a prayer group session (not always able to stay sitting for 20 minutes), but most of them are unable to integrate the process or beneficial outcomes into their individual spheres.

I think we have to be creative, understanding and merciful, and willing to adapt spiritual practices to their frenetic lifestyles, coaching them on a gradual path, step by step, and teaching them to become mindful and contemplative in every circumstance. Developing a taste for grace and enjoyment, for simply being is an enormous challenge for anyone who thinks their worst problem is to have nothing consumable to buy or sell. But that is our challenge and we more and more understand the vital importance of accepting it with love and patience.

[1] JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 8-10, 1979.



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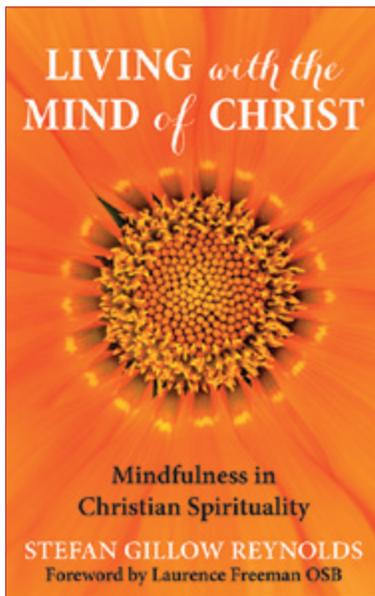
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Would you like to contribute to the Meditatio Newsletter? Our next deadline is November 20th.

Resources

Books

Living with the Mind of Christ - Mindfulness in Christian Spirituality

Stefan Reynolds

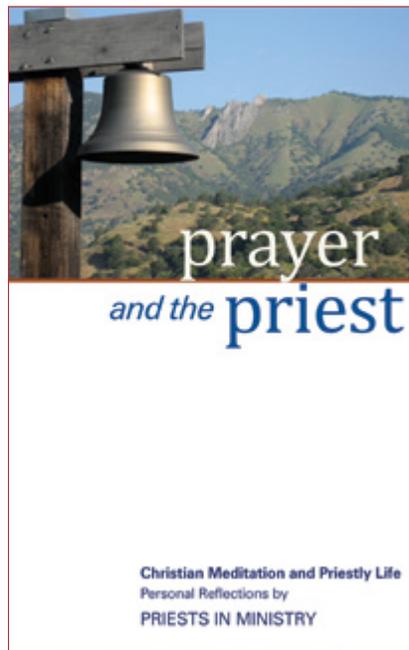


Through the teachings of Jesus, and Christian mystics such as St Augustine and Meister Eckhart, Stefan Gillow Reynolds demonstrates that the practice of Mindfulness leading to silent meditation, recommended by many therapists, is not a modern fad but has always had a place within contemplative Christianity.

ONLINE:

* For more information about the book visit: <http://tiny.cc/LMChristBk>

Prayer and the Priest Christian Meditation and Priestly Life



Priests, those training for ministry, and lay people concerned for their pastors and churches will find this book a source of hope, inspiration, and practical wisdom. This book contains articles from "The Prayer of the Priest" published in 2005 together with several new articles by priests in ministry.

Expected Publication Date: November 7, 2016

Meditatio Calendar

The theme for the 2017 Calendar is *Innocence*

A new design and larger format
Photography by Laurence Freeman
and words by John Main
Pre-order the Calendar 2017 here:
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