

Meditatio

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for Christian Meditation



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Reforming humanity

Laurence Freeman reflects how meditation restores the wisdom we have lost in the link between asceticism and love



One of the springs at Bonnevaux where an ancient presence resides

Bonnevaux



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John Main Seminar 2020

Photo: Enrique Carrasco, SJ



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Dearest friends,

A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

There is a memorable scene in the movie 'The Two Popes' which describes the crisis of the Catholic Church through the conflicting personalities of Pope Benedict and his successor Pope Francis. Despite deep differences of opinion and temperament, they discover a unique kind of friendship, a commonality of concern for the wounded church and a way of collaborating with their contrasting gifts for its healing. The scene I have in mind happens at a back-door to the Vatican, where Benedict is saying goodbye to the future Francis having told him he intends to resign and so open the way for a new and radically different leader. They are both old men. Impetuously the hot-blooded Argentinian takes the stiff German intellectual in his arms and teaches him to tango while the Swiss guards look on in amused astonishment.

Real change occurs, not with solemn pomposity, clinging to all our old kinds of self-importance, but in a spontaneous rush of abandon where joy recklessly sweeps us over the watershed moment. We hardly dared believe we could survive. But we did and everything we knew has changed.

For me, these lines from WH Auden capture something of the relief and freedom of such unexpected, undeserved redemption:

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

How can we approach this new decade with this freedom of the spirit and hope and yet be rooted in the sharpest realism? Today there is a lot we should be intellectually pessimistic about - because otherwise we drift in denial and false hopes. But there

is also a source of optimism found only through true, that is to say ever-surprising, faith born and reborn through doubt and struggle.

At a time when so many are rootless and untrusting of all belief, can we find a new innocence, a way both



The Bonnevaux Chapel (Photo: Sean O'Malley)

to believe and to belong? It is an important question. (A young visitor told me recently he had grown up in a comfortable home that was also a 'spiritual orphanage'.) If we don't listen to the question we may drift into the cynicism and isolation that underlies much of the bitterness and self-destructiveness of our time. W.B. Yeats, the poet on whose death Auden wrote those lines above, saw our cultural crisis originating in the desolation of civilisation after the First World War: 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world...the best lack all conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity'. In this dangerous, chaotic period of human evolution, can we re-centre ourselves, reuniting conviction and intensity, to reform not just the church, but humanity?

This is the time of the year, after the excessive consumption of the

holidays, when gym membership surges. Good resolutions abound. We are preoccupied with competing life-style choices. How can we make ourselves healthier and happier? These manufactured choices create products which embed us in even more

consumption, which is a large part of the problem they are trying to solve.

A healthy lifestyle may - or not - include working out, diet and career changes. But it must include the spiritual dimension. By this I mean that aspect of human experience, which is open to the transcendent while remaining rooted in the material world and the body. Spiritual experience is betrayed if it becomes a consumer product, a tool or life-style ingredient. If we truly recognise the spiritual realm, our life in all aspects is transformed. We do not 'construct' an authentic lifestyle as we choose a haircut or a new car. We find it. It finds us. Finding happens when we risk. The greater the risk, the greater the authenticity. If we are not prepared to lose our life (this is the risk), we may mistakenly seek refuge in the lives and social patterns of others. Fleeting it may feel like a good fit, but we do not find our own life, our true self. Faith is another word for this existential risking of ourselves, in obedience

to the call to wholeness, to transcendence and self-knowledge, that is at the core of all human identity.

Christian lifestyle, then, is not a brand. It is all-demanding and all-fulfilling. In risking ourselves we find the kind of life we can and are meant to follow, the kind we are best suited for even if it is not the easiest. Opting for this, we can handle the inevitable doubts and failures that follow every choice. But we also find that everything we need to complete the process is already given, often creeping up from behind us and tapping us on the shoulder. When we turn around we find what we are looking for. And what we need. On this path we find the teachers we need. We meet fellow-pilgrims, and discover not just new friends in abundance but new forms of friendship we had not previously even imagined. Not least, we discover the work we are meant to do.

The younger generation today often seems better able to grasp these aspects of the Christian life than their parents. They can see inspirational vision in the gospel revelation, but are less interested in orthodoxy or belief than in orthopraxy, right action that harmonises with faith. They connect to a vision of human wholeness and meaning in an incarnational transcendence that brings God and humanity not only into relationship but into union. There are glimpses of this in the early church communities, the monastic movement and in the array of uniquely holy people who illustrate this – human beings who became fully their unique selves, saints like St Benedict or St Francis, Mother Theresa, Simone Weil or John Main.

There is no single brand of Christianity. It is not an ideology. It allows truth to emerge. It does not compete: it completes. But, with all the institu-

tional baggage and social upheaval to contend with, how can the spiritual tides of the Holy Spirit be released? Not by a church that conforms to the corporate model and wastes its energies on the trivia of religious politics. The spiritual search can so quickly descend into complaint and bickering. Ramana said 'People come to the ashram looking for enlightenment. Within two weeks they are preoccupied with ashram politics.'

What Bonnevaux has been teaching me these past few months is that the way forward is a new style of collaboration between the generations. It is not about 'reaching out to young people' or 'getting the message over to them' as it is often described. Lis-



Gathering at Bonnevaux after the Camino, in August 2019 (Photo Enos Mantoani)

tening to the young people who come here, I sense it is about a partnership that has nothing to do with the stereotypes of the generations peddled in the consumer culture. Bridging the generations is essential if there is to be continuity, continuity across the river of time delivering stability with radical change.

Collaboration between experience and innocence generates different streams of wisdom – the wisdom of the young (the theme of this year's Monte Oliveto retreat) complement-

ing the wisdom of the elders. The world needs both, one specialising in risk, the other in forgiveness and recovery. Our world is horrendously deficient in all wisdom. The major religions should be wisdom channels, rising from the unbounded dimension of interiority, speaking from silence and yet pouring into our mundane, daily world of measurements and limitations.

At Bonnevaux we have a number of springs. One I always feel especially present to is at the end of the valley, beyond what we call the Easter Tree. It bubbles up through a tiny aperture in the ground; it is visible only as a mi-

nor disturbance, bringing small particles of earth with it as it breaks into the visible world. It is continuous and it is the source of a flowing stream. An ancient presence resides there with residual signs of human construction around it because it must have attracted people there, as wisdom itself does, beyond memory.

Religions where the spring of wisdom has been blocked become mere structures of dogma and ritual, competing with each other or secretly thinking of each other as enemies.

Jesus spoke prophetically – and paid a high price for doing so – against such religion. Yet he did not reject ritual or the belief systems of religion in themselves: he wouldn't have said 'I am spiritual not religious'. We need living symbols and intellectual clarity to guide us to the cliff-edge of silence. At that frontier silence absorbs them. But Jesus did call us to 'worship in spirit and in truth' as a higher goal, as he put it, than 'this mountain or that mountain'. The meditator, practising in any religious tradition, inevitably comes to understand this truth and strives to balance the contemplative with the external forms.. At Bonnevaux, for example, we have simplified the divine office which is the frame in which we meditate during the day – except for the first meditation of the day which stands by itself beginning and ending only with the sound of the bowl. At the other sessions we have chant and short scripture readings, from biblical and sister traditions, to highlight that meditation is within the contemplative tradition. John Main said we enter this tradition every time we sit to meditate.

Bonhoeffer said that today we need to focus intently on prayer and righteous action. The collapsing model of institutional Christianity is an opportunity to make this a transformative re-focusing. The collapsing and the transformation are undeniable and unpredictable. But they are not instantaneous and so we have the time to select wisely what we need to save and what we need to let go of. Some things are essential to continuity. But nostalgic attachments to old religious forms are not the same as the core eternal. In our period of Christian history we are learning to sift the wheat from the chaff so that a new and potent expression of

Christian unity can emerge. The old denominational labels in which so much religious ego is still invested are coming to seem outdated, even small-minded, beside the panorama of the universal Christ which is already appearing as the next stage of our evolution.

Christ influences the course of history: not by supernatural interference with the laws of the cosmos but by the unaggressive intervention



of his presence through the sources of wisdom. Wherever there is a living wisdom stream Christ is active. It enters our world of time and space especially through the example and the deep, silent passion of people of faith and good will. These are the true teachers of wisdom, most of them hidden. They do not look for acclaim, for security or status or even for certainty. They live the secret of servant-leadership which is the only way to exercise power in a way that does no evil. They embody discipleship as the most intimate and complete of human relationships and through self-knowledge see how we are chosen before we can choose. They learn to handle uncertainty with humour, confidence and joy. Even in suffering they are not wholly separated from the eternal fun of the spirit. And when they risk themselves in total commitment they find the unique set of skills

and talents allowing them to flourish beyond the limitations of their ego.

Not everyone has the same degree of talent, but each person has the genius of uniqueness and an unlimited capacity for selflessness. This is uncovered not in the self-cultivation of a lifestyle but by hearing the call that unites us uniquely to the whole. By

accepting our calling we find our authentic style of being in the world and of working with others for the greater good. We can hardly be ourselves outside the community of seekers we call the body of Christ. 'He comes to us hidden and salvation consists in our recognising him'. For this recognition we need to feel the connection between love and ascesis.

What we often call love can be the hungry, craving of our loneliness for comfort and possession. When it is disappointed – by whoever we projected it onto – our self-centred 'love' can quickly turn to anger and despair. To navigate beyond this cycle we need ascesis, the personal discipline of exercising our capacity for attention. Eventually this capacity becomes ego-transforming love. Paying attention to the real, not to our illusionary version of reality, illustrates why truth sets us free, equally to love

and to be loved.

The connection between meditation, (the essential ascesis of the Christian life) and love (the source and goal of wisdom) is like a cord that draws a curtain in a darkened room and allows the divinising light of a new holiness to flood in. The new holiness for our time is the recognition of God in all the conditions of our age, without nostalgia and tuned with all we have learned about human nature and the laws of the universe. It is a universal not parochial holiness. It doesn't depend on human approval but on the mutual recognition that occurs between ourselves and God in the contemplative state. Its offspring is the ecumenism of all faiths.

Based on the pattern of history, we can guess that the renewal of Christian life will be achieved when a critical mass of disciples has learned how to navigate the perfect storm of our present crisis. The crisis is our oppor-

ceitfulness of the gospel of prosperity that blasphemes against the Holy One.

What allows us to commit to the way of truth and renew the gift of self? How do we start any good work and prevent the ego from hijacking it?

By discovering the true nature of love. We cannot find this without going into the desert of solitude, renouncing possessiveness and triumphing over the demon of loneliness. Over time this is the work of contemplation leading us through failure into humility. Meditation leads us directly into the wisdom of the twin process of transcendence and incarnation. If it were less than this wouldn't everyone meditate just for the benefits they get out of it. It is discovering how much we can gain that cannot be possessed, how much

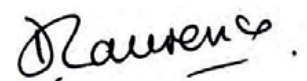
truth that sets us free from illusion we need to see ourselves in others and others in ourselves. Jesus insists there is nothing to fear in this. Rumi saw it too when he wrote 'In the ruin of heartbreak you find the diamond of divine passion that can resurrect the dead'.

If the different generations of the human family can join hands, collaborating in this deepest and most human of all types of work, restoring the meaning of good work, a revolution will happen. The inner-outer revolution that Jesus initiated will be taken to its next stage. To highlight this we have called our new weekly WCCM Podcast 'Contemplative Revolution' because it is not less.

John Main said that the greatest need for our time is for men and women of deep prayer. Meditation creates the community in which young and old can relearn the meaning of pure prayer. In mutual support we can begin and complete all stages of a journey of personal transformation that leads to the transformation of the world. By degrees and at different speeds, to be sure - but for sure.

May our daily practice this New Year 2020 provide us with daily insights into what wisdom is doing all around us and for us. In our meditation groups and in all the ways we share the gift, may we grow a little wiser, for the sake of others, as we learn through love to embrace the grace of discipleship frees us from ourselves so that we can be ourselves.

With much love



Laurence Freeman OSB



Bonnevaux Community Christmas

tunity for breakthrough. Seeing this allows us a glimpse into the process of reform unfolding within the collapse of the old structures. It builds confidence to deal with the massing powers of darkness because we see not only their capacity for havoc but their intrinsic superficiality and falseness: the brazen denial of truth, the eye for eye, tooth for tooth politics that undermines justice, the de-

we can shed and be freed from that makes the pilgrimage challenging. Meditation restores the wisdom we have lost of the link between ascesis - training in the discipline of selfless attention - and love.

This is the lost chord in the music of humanity we have continuously to recover. Quite simply and directly, learning to meditate teaches that to find we need to lose. To know the

Bonnevaux

Visit www.bonnevauxwccm.org

2019 in Review

The first phase of community life in the Abbaye

From the very beginning Bonnevaux started as a project of a place where the WCCM vision could be incarnated: a physical home for the "Monastery without Walls". Also a Centre of Peace and for peace in the world. In 2019 this vision became more visible with the opening of the Abbaye and the first events and retreats.

New life at the Abbaye



Paschal Vigil

March and April were dynamic times: the Meditatio House Community in London moved to Bonnevaux. Just before the Holy Week Retreat, the

core community - who were living in a provisory way in what they named "the farmhouse" - moved into the Abbaye. Bonnevaux hosted for the first time the Easter retreat which in the past few years had been held on Bere Island. A group of about 20 people, took part in the retreat, which comprised of talks by Fr Laurence, yoga led by Giovanni Felicioni and all the Easter liturgical rituals which were conducted in a special way - the Stations of the Cross around the lake and the Vigil procession from the "Easter Tree" to the Chapel.

Bonnevaux and the Young

As a place to plant the roots for the future of the Community, Bonnevaux also concentrates on the special care of young people. A group representing 15 countries took part in the first retreat for Young Adults during the summer, with Fr Laurence speaking on the theme "Living Differently". It was a time of silence, meditation, community life, work, sharing and friendship. After the retreat, a smaller group of 11 people participated in a five-day walk on the French part of the Camino to Compostela. The same retreat and a similar walk are also planned for July and August in 2020.

Activities taking shape

The second semester was a time when Bonnevaux started to hold events, retreats and receive visitors, in a more consistent way. Even without the ideal structure to accommodate people the retreats took place with some people staying at the Abbaye and others in nearby accommodation. There was a workshop on Watercolour and Contemplation (led by Tilde Carsen), Learning to Meditate Retreat, an Essential Teaching Weekend (led by the French Community), an Advent Retreat, a Yoga Retreat, a pilgrimage and a WCCM Hong Kong group retreat. Different meetings were also held and there were visits from small groups and individuals. Many of the newcomers really felt that Bonnevaux was a peaceful and healing place.

Blessing Day

The day to celebrate the blessing of Phase 1 of the renovations was a moment to gather meditators from far away, neighbours, friends and core community. It was a collective act, as Fr Laurence emphasized: "A blessing is not only something that comes externally but comes from within. I think we are all here to bless this place of prayer, this place of hospitality, this place of healing." The ceremony was conducted by the Archbishop of Poitiers, Mgr Pascal Wintzer and also the Abbot of Ligugé Christophe Bettwy. The Monastery of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, mother house of Fr Laurence, was represented by Dom Ugo de' Sangro. During the day, the visitors were of-



ferred tours around Abbaye. Another important moment was the planting of roses in the garden at the back of Bonnevaux. Dom Ugo planted a French rose and Peter Ng (National Coordinator of Singapore) planted an English rose in memory of his beloved wife Patricia.

Bonnevaux

Work in Progress

Core Community & Renovation Project

Bonnevaux is more than a retreat centre, it is home for WCCM and for the core community living in the Spirit of work, meditation and hospitality. This group has also evolved over the year, maturing, finding its way in the mission of service. Many volunteers have shared in the life and work of the community. The core community takes responsibility for different areas: Fr Laurence (Director), Giovanni Felicioni (Associate Director), Catherine Charrière (Programme & Abbaye Manager), Sébastien Brissette (Special Projects Manager), David Simpson (Estate Manager), Henriette Hol-

laar (Liturgy), Mary Katherine Allman (Guests).

Renovation Project

Good news in 2019 was that the design for Bonnevaux by DP Architects was awarded Gold at the London Design Awards. The Abbaye has been completed and the Conference Centre will open in January. The next goal is finishing the work on the Retreat Centre. It should be ready in the second half of 2020. For more information visit the website: bonnevauxwccm.org



The Conference Centre

The 2020 Programme

These are some of the upcoming events at Bonnevaux (visit bonnevauxwccm.org for more):

The Tightrope of Moderation - Lent Retreat - 24 Feb-1 Mar: Lent is a sacred season giving us the opportunity to find and hold the joy of balance - good for us and good for the world. Led by Laurence Freeman and Giovanni Felicioni.

Heaven in a Grain of Sand: The Universal and the Particular

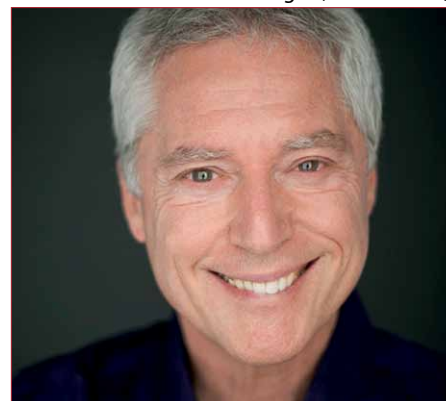
20-22 March: During this week the renowned Buddhist teacher, Alan Wallace, will be a Bonnevaux Teacher-in-Residence. With Eva Natanya and Laurence Freeman, both Christian teachers, Alan Wallace will lead conversations on the way a dialogue between both mystical traditions can lead to the great unity to which our world aspires.

Leaving Fear Behind - Holy Week Retreat 5-12 April - Led by

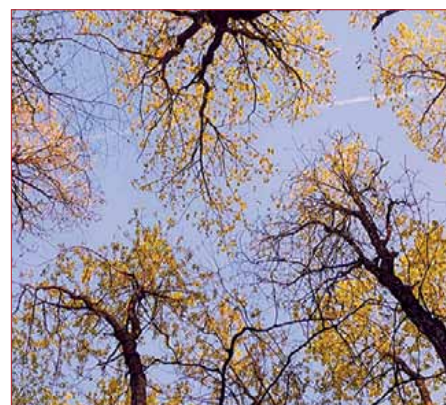
Laurence Freeman: Through talks and discussion, meditation together and the ancient rituals of Holy Week, the mysteries of death and resurrection, the life of Christ, come into the greater intimacies of our own lives.

Meditatio Seminar on Meditation & Ecology - 21-24 May: This unique event is organised by WCCM France at Bonnevaux and is open to everyone concerned for our world. It will highlight the emergency the planet faces through an experience of natural beauty, meditation, and solidarity. Contemplation will clearly be not an escape from the truth but a way of clarifying and sustaining the right kind of active response appropriate to each of us.

Photo: Axel Brintzinger (CC BY-SA 4.0)



Alan Wallace



News

John Main Seminar 2020 in Mexico will reflect on the Indigenous Wisdom and the Future of Humanity



Photo: Enrique Carrasco SJ

The John Main Seminar 2020 will be held in Mexico City (22-25 October) with the theme "One Heart, One Hope - Indigenous Wisdom and the Future of Humanity". Fr Laurence Freeman, as always, will lead the pre-seminar retreat from October 19 through 22. The seminar will explore the wisdom and spirituality of indigenous cultures toward advancing common understanding and building a common ground for the future. Experienced speakers from around the world will share spiritual insights and customs practiced and sustained by small groups still present but often overlooked in our world. These groups embody vibrantly and with courage their

own wisdom, unique to them but tremendously relevant to the rest of the world. Workshops will also be offered during the seminar.

Fr Alex Zatyryka SJ, will be the keynote speaker. He holds a doctorate of theology and also an MS degree in agricultural economics. This will be his focus for the Seminar:

Native peoples live immersed in the reality that Divine love leads us to be one "without division and without confusion." They have grasped this

fundamental truth of the human condition, exercising it fully and they are deeply concerned about transmitting it to each new generation. It is as if they live the paradox of "we am" or "I are" in its truest and fullest form. This echoes the Trinitarian mystery, of the God who speaks in the singular and in the plural at the same time (Gen 1: 26). In our reflections we will try to delve into this perspective that helps us deepen the mystery of the Christian God as a community of love.

Other speakers include:

Vanessa Eldridge (Ngāti Kahūngunu and Rongomaiwahine): from New Zealand. She manages Day Services at Mary Potter Hospice in Wellington;

Fr Pedro Arriaga Alarcón SJ: from Mexico, he devoted most of his life to defend the rights of the poorest people;

Puleng Matsaneng: from South Africa, a member of the Jesuit Institute. Researcher of Ignatian Spirituality in an African context;

Ana María LLamazares: from Argentina, Anthropologist (UBA);

Rev Ron Berezan: from Canada, is a permaculture and organic farming teacher;

Ivan Rosytskye: from Canada, is an artist and a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation;

Tau Huirama, Tainui: from New Zealand, is a Maori cultural coach;

Fr Enrique Carrasco SJ: from Mexico, Jesuit Priest and photographer;

Fr Laurence Freeman OSB: Benedictine monk and director of The WCCM.

For more information visit: www.johnmainseminar.org

Laurence Freeman visit to South Africa



In September Fr Laurence visited South Africa for ten days and took part in twelve events, with over 800 participants. He gave several public talks and also addressed several specific audiences including teachers and business leaders. According to Paul Faller, WCCM South Africa Coordinator, Fr Laurence also visited with three bishops: Stephen Brislin (Cape Town), Cardinal Wilfrid Napier (Durban) and

Auxiliary Bishop Duncan Tsoke (Johannesburg). All recognised the value of meditation. He also visited three schools. At Holy Family College, Durban & Loreto Convent School (Pretoria) he met with staff. He meditated with students from Holy Family College and St Henry's Marist College, both in Durban. Fr Laurence also addressed a forum of principals from the Pretoria Catholic schools.

News

Catherine Scott, WCCM Head of Operations

Catherine Scott started in November as the new WCCM Head of Operations. She has a long history of working with Catholic development organisations, including 23 years in various roles with the Catholic Institute for International Relations/Progressio, and more than 20 years serving on CAFOD's Asia and International Programmes Committees. She is a former board member of the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign and the Ai Kameli Trust, and more recently a volunteer manager with the Papal Char-

ity, Missio (England and Wales). She travelled widely with CIIR/Progressio, particularly in SE Asia and Africa, supporting the organisations advocacy and skillshare programmes.

She's the mum of Natalie, a 21 year-old student at London's University of the Arts. Catherine belongs to three choirs and relaxes through swimming. She's part of a small, close-knit extended family and cares for her 82 year old mum. Catherine will be supporting Laurence Freeman in managing both office operations and staff.



Leadership changes in the communities in France and the UK



Pascale (left) and Sandrine

In November WCCM France organised a meeting with group leaders at Bonnevaux. The Community confirmed the change over to a new National Coordinator: Pascale Cal-

lec takes over from Sandrine Vinay. Sandrine: *"I feel very lucky to have been be part of the team with such beautiful people. I have tried to infuse the sense of an international community, and I am happy to have been part of the initial team of Bonnevaux"*. Pascale: *"I just hope to follow the Spirit, thanks to meditation and the community of love that it builds. I hope to serve and continue to work in a collaborative atmosphere, to organize the Meditatio Ecologie, implement new developments in the School, strengthen the network of groups and create stronger links with Bonnevaux."*

Transition Period in the UK

Richard Broughton retired as UK Coordinator in the end of 2019. The Community will have an Action Group providing leadership until a new Coordinator is pointed.

Richard: *"I'm stepping back at a time when the UK Community is lively. New meditation groups are forming and new people are coming forward to take on roles. Personally, I've found my faith to have been deepened and my perspectives widened by my time of service; I've met and worked with many remarkable people, and for that I'm truly grateful."*

Meditation in Schools in East Timor

The Community in East Timor is developing the work of teaching meditation in schools. The WCCM contact person in East Timor, Salvador J Ximenes Soares introduced Christian Meditation to teachers, students and staff of schools run by Cristal Foundation. Salvador is happy to announce that after the latest series of meetings, the Foundation announced the decision to officially incorporate meditation into the classroom beginning in 2020, as well as form meditation groups for teachers.



News

“Division ‘diabolical’ as it destroys our core unity in God” says Laurence Freeman at the Australian National Conference

By Roland Ashby



Unity is at the heart of the teaching of Jesus, and it is this knowledge of unity the world craves for, said Laurence Freeman in Melbourne in October at the national conference of WCCM Australia: “the most important thing we have to remember in the challenges of this time is the unity that we share – the great mystery of humanity – and that despite our racial, cultural and religious diversity there is a core unity, and that is at the heart of the teaching of Jesus and of his aspiration for humanity”.

This is expressed, he said, in Jesus’ farewell discourse, in which he prays that “they may all be one as you Father are in me and I in you”. But knowing we are one, is not just theological or intellectual knowledge, it’s essentially contemplative. “We can only know this [unity or oneness] in contemplative knowledge or consciousness which transcends the dualism of the ego, and which [enables us to] know from within this experience of unity. We can’t know it from the outside. Knowing it means we have to enter into a silence in which the dualistic mind is, as it were, left behind or integrated.” Contemplative knowl-

edge is not dogma, nor does it arise from analytical or speculative thinking, “but from the experience of oneness itself, which is very simply the experience we allow ourselves to taste... in meditation.”

“[Meditation] is a simple wisdom that can be practised by every person, that awakens in us this knowledge of unity, and it’s out of that experiential knowledge that community comes.” It’s this contemplative consciousness, this knowledge of unity, that the world “craves for... and needs most urgently... we’re all well aware of the problems that we face at this point in human evolution... how un-unified we are, how far away we are collectively from this truth of our human nature, that Jesus reveals... that we are essentially one. Despite appearances he affirms that this is our true nature, so don’t give up on it.”

Fr Laurence said it is very challenging to believe at this time in the oneness of human nature, “and the possibility that human beings can love, forgive, can be just, can refrain from violence.” “It is very hard to believe in that divine nature and potential of humanity, when we see how we behave and the failures of the leaders that we frighteningly sometime seem to deserve... and [when] so many of our structures that we felt secure in, politically, religiously and economically, are dissolving and collapsing around us.” This is why we need a contemplative consciousness “and why we both need to respect our Indig-

enous traditions - because they remind us of how ancient, deep and essential this contemplative wisdom is - and also to see as Christians [this wisdom] as the heart and soul of our own tradition”.

Division destroys unity because, “as the word suggests, it is diabolical, it splits” he said. “The intention to divide and conquer, the political game that unscrupulous people play... cannot be of God... because God is one.” “God is not fragmented into a pantheon of little gods competing with each other which are projections of our own imagination and desires and fears. But the three great sister religions, for all their differences and conflicts, have understood... and grow out of the same insight into human and divine nature, that God is one.”

For Fr Laurence, the deep unity of the human being “comes from God within us - Christ in us, St Paul says”, and that “this oneness within ourselves, within our nature... is the only way we can heal the wounds of violence and division.” Meditation is the work of discovering this unity within us and among us, is the work of “being, and becoming fully human, discovering the glory of God in us”. Following the talk he was asked “how, in this era of ‘alternative facts’, can Christians embody unity with those who believe the alternatives?”. His reply: “we have to speak out, to speak the truth in love... [but] without anger... and without demonising them or polarising the situation more.”

In Focus

Edward O'Connor, New Zealand

Photo: Enos Mantoani



I've been practicing Christian meditation for about 14 months now. It has completely transformed my life. I followed a Buddhist practice for a couple of years before returning to Christianity and remain strongly influenced by eastern traditions. On paper, Christian meditation is no different to other iterations: you sit down, close your eyes, and hone your attention on something other than your thoughts. This is not an easy thing to do. When I look at the WCCM logo I see that right hand (inner) dove dipping into the same pool of water that is available to everyone, regardless of your religion. It is the universality of meditation that makes it so important in our fragmented times. You cannot argue during meditation for the

same reason you cannot argue underwater. Trying to separate different forms of meditation is like trying to wall off different sections of the ocean; you're going to waste a lot of time and potentially injure yourself in the process.

Dying is what we fear the most, but in my experience it's rebirth that causes all the pain. Coming back to Christianity has been a painful experience for me. It started with a profound, unexpected, and undeniably Christian experience in the middle of a Buddhist retreat. This led to a drastic realignment of how I perceived myself and my experience of the world. I thought that I was in control of my life and I suddenly knew this to be an illusion. I struggled with this for some time and may still be floundering had I not stumbled across the School of Meditation website and started a regular Christian meditation practice.

I should make a correction: it hasn't been Christian meditation that has changed my life, but meditating within a Christian context. This is why the left hand (outer) dove is just as important as the right; it's the one that symbolises your orientation

to the world and other people. I see now that my Buddhism was not actually Buddhism at all. It was a way I could have a spiritual practice while keeping genuine spirituality at arm's length. My inner dove was dipping into the pool while the outer dove was focused on controlling reality to match my personal preferences. I was orientated towards getting what I wanted and furthering my own agenda. I had weaponised meditation as a way to 'mindfully' live a self-centred existence.

My Christian meditation journey has been focused on developing a relationship between my inner and outer dove. My daily practice brings myself in line with the present moment and asks what is required of me right now? This has been a gradual process of letting go, and I feel like I've only just begun. Starting a Christian meditation practice has coincided with me leaving my job, moving city, completing a Masters of Writing, and travelling to Bonnevaux. I'd never have done any of these things had I not trusted in God to guide me down the path, and I'd never have trusted God had I not been meditating.



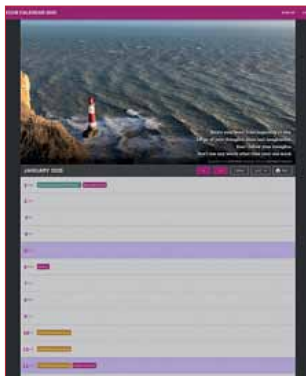
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Would you like to contribute to the Meditatio Newsletter? Our next deadline is 10 March .

Resources

Calendar 2020



The WCCM calendar with quotes by John Main and photos by Laurence Freeman now is online and you can add your own private events. Visit now: <http://wccmcalendar.org>

Audio & CDs

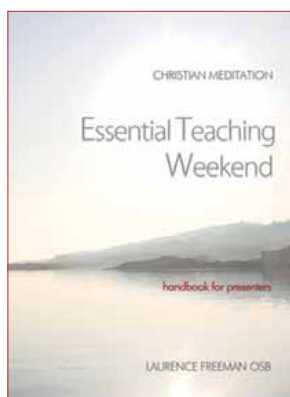


The latest Meditatio CD Series. Listen to or download the tracks: <http://tiny.cc/Med2019D>
Download the transcript: <http://tiny.cc/grcaw>

Changes in the Meditatio Talks Series in 2020

The format for the quarterly Meditatio Talks will change in 2020. From June the talks will no longer be sent on CDs. We will provide simple ways you can access the audio files for personal and group use: via the website and via our WCCM app. You will be able to click on a link and play the talks, or download the talks in advance for use in places without internet. We will provide clear instructions on how to access and use the talks very soon.

Books



This handbook is a step-by-step guide for conducting an Essential Teaching Weekend (ETW). The book offers all the materials necessary for

running the programme including templates which can be adapted to suit particular circumstances. The guidelines methodically cover every aspect of the work from preparation to final presentation. The guidelines are clear and precise yet allow enough flexibility and spontaneity to make presenting the weekend personally enriching.

Christian Meditation: Essential Teaching Weekend
Handbook for Presenters
by Laurence Freeman
More info: <https://tinyurl.com/ethbook>

The School of Meditation: new resources page

theschoolofmeditation.org/resources/
The resources section on the School of Meditation website is now divided into three parts: Meditation, Teaching and Contemplatives in Action, where you will find a selection to support the journey of meditation.

The Meditatio Centre Programme 2020

The Meditatio Centre London launched the 2020 Programme. You can download it and book for events online: <https://tinyurl.com/MedCLondp20>

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



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David's Place of prayer and contemplation

By Judi and Paul Taylor

We have just finished our annual David's Place Retreat and we all know it's been a great one.

One participant told us her favorite part was walking the labyrinth another said she loved the way the monks showed so much respect and by the end of the retreat they felt like such good friends. Another said he felt quite confronted when he first got to the retreat and learnt he was going to live in such close proximity to fellow street people but by the end of the retreat it had become a non-issue for him.

For the last 8 years we have been having these retreats at the Benedictine Monastery at Arcadia

that is in semi rural bush land north west of Sydney. Nothing could be further from the conditions that most of the retreatants normally live in.

"It was a Community that was formed ... with the express purpose of creating a place where Jesus would like to have hung out."

You see, they all live in the hectic and noisy inner city and most of these people have lived precariously for many years. They have all, also, been part of the David's Place Community for many years. It was a Community

that was formed 20 years ago with the express purpose of creating a place where Jesus would like to have hung out.

Although most at David's Place live with great vulnerability it is also a place that welcomes those who live comfortably. Sue Buckingham, its founder, has a strong belief that you can gauge the spiritual health of a city by the way the comfortable and the not so comfortable relate to each other. David's Place is a place of prayer and honest sharing, it is a place where the lives of its members are celebrated and most of all it is a place of great love. So that's how we all knew that this year's retreat had

continued over page





been such a good one because we all left knowing that we knew each other better and somehow we kind of liked each other more. It doesn't always happen that way.

When we started having these retreats at Arcadia we called upon the help of the NSW Oblate Community for help with the practicalities like bed linen, meals, preparing rooms and cleaning up. We also recognised this would be a good opportunity to introduce the practice of Christian Meditation and so we did and as a result Christian Meditation has become part of our prayer meetings that happen every Tuesday night back in King's Cross. On these Tuesday nights we gather at 5pm in a demountable room behind St Canice's Church Kings Cross. We first meditate for about 15-20 minutes and then we share the moment in the day that has just passed that we feel

the most gratitude for. We share the Church's reading for the day and talk about how this reading has touched us. We finish with prayers for people and situations we are concerned about. There are several other meetings during the week and all

"...it has become a place of respect and acceptance of difference."

of these have a contemplative spirit but not necessarily with the practice of meditation and so those who choose to come on Tuesday nights are very open to the this practice as a means of further deepening their relationship Jesus and each other.

So Christian Meditation seems to have become embedded into the

very fabric of David's Place and we all sense there has been a subtle change in the Tuesday night meetings, they are not so combative as they once were but it has become a place of respect and acceptance of difference. Last year we took away a small group who were interested in deepening their practice of Christian Meditation and spent a few days together at our retreat centre on Dangar Island. It was a beautiful time and several people on the island joined us and provided meals as well.

It really is special being part of all this and we would invite you to have a look at our website (www.davidsplace.com.au) and in particular to watch the small video we have made that shows a typical Tuesday night meeting. If you want to be part of DAVID'S PLACE or help start a community like it please feel free to contact us.

How to Meditate

Open to all ways of wisdom but drawing directly from the early Christian teaching John Main summarised the practice in this simple way:

Sit down. Sit still with your back straight. Close your eyes lightly. Then interiorly, silently begin to recite a single word – a prayer word or mantra. We recommend the ancient Christian prayer-word *Maranatha*. Say it as four equal syllables. Breathe normally and give your full attention to the word as you say it, silently, gently, faithfully and above all – simply. The essence of meditation is simplicity. Stay with the same word during the whole meditation and from day to day. Don't visualise but listen to the word as you say it. Let go of all thoughts (even good thoughts), images and other words. Don't fight your distractions but let them go by saying your word faithfully, gently and attentively and returning to it immediately that you realise you have stopped saying or it or when your attention is wandering.

Meditate each morning and evening for between 20 and 30 minutes.

My experience at Bonnevaux

The Young Meditators Retreat

By Emma Larsen

It felt as though the trapdoor had been pulled from beneath me.

Everything I had known about God, spirituality and religion seemed to be disintegrating before me. I so desperately wanted to hold on, but couldn't grasp anything. In a last-ditch effort to retain anything from my old way of knowing I googled 'Spiritual Directors Sydney.' I had heard the term years ago and I seemed to recall it now, when I needed something, something different.

It was through my spiritual direction sessions that I was introduced to meditation and the World Community for Christian Meditation. I have to admit, I wasn't convinced right away. I always knew meditation was beneficial for slowing down and centering yourself, but wasn't sure how that would lead me to encounter God.

Each time I meditated I would often leave frustrated, unsure and questioning its value. I was still searching for more. My spiritual director told me about Bonnevaux and the up and coming Young Meditators Retreat. It sounded like the perfect opportunity to practice meditation consistently with a community to support me. Everything fell into place and I jumped on a plane headed for France.

We embraced the rhythms of the residents living in community at Bonnevaux. The flow of everyday followed a similar pattern starting at 7am, with silence/quiet until dinner:

- Morning prayers and meditation
- Breakfast
- Yoga
- Work (I helped in the garden)
- Talk from Father Lawrence
- Meditation
- Lunch
- Work
- Creative space (writing, drawing)

- Spiritual direction and free time
- Evening prayers and meditation
- Dinner
- Evening talk/compline

It was busier than I expected it to be but every element of the retreat helped me grow in ways I could've never imagined. The regular communal meditations and talks from Father Lawrence helped me see that

at my portraits I was disappointed. You would never know it was me, in fact it kind of just looked like a mess. As I reflected on my portrait I thought that's like life, all these different messy parts, joined together to form a whole. Not perfect, but authentic and beautiful. I wrote the following poem in reflection on these sessions and some of my learnings from the retreat, and I was even brave enough



Emma sharing her poem (right).

Self Portrait

*It seems like a drawing
gone wrong,
A jumbled mess of shapes
and shadows.
Inherited features,
Parents
Culture
Religion
Once in perfect alignment.
Now drawn together
in an unconventional way.
The way of me.
In all its
Wild
Messy
Beauty.*

meditation wasn't about how well I was doing or what I was getting out of it, but about learning to sit with the feelings, be present and allow everything else to fall away. It is the practice of attention.

The creative spaces were particularly challenging for me. We were taken on a journey of letting go of the need to do things "right" – extremely difficult for perfectionist me! I decided to trust the process and follow the instructions. Some of the workshops included choosing a random object and drawing its contours, without looking at the page! We did a similar activity but instead drawing another person. After each drawing activity we had the opportunity to reflect through journaling. On the final day we were instructed to lie on our backs, paper and pen on the floor beside us, we had to draw ourselves. When I looked

to share it with the whole community at the end of the retreat.

As I've continued with meditation back home I've valued the chance to just stop, breathe and be. I've seen my attention improve, not only when meditating but in my everyday life. I'm less inclined to multi task, I (mostly) manage to give my full attention to the person in front of me, I'm more attentive to my own inner voice and the voice of the Divine. And I enjoy more of the little things, like birds chirping or the sun on my skin. My time at Bonnevaux not only encouraged my meditation practice but brought to the surface things I didn't know I was struggling with. I left the retreat feeling more confident in who I was, my new-found spiritual practice and my changing worldview.

I'm so thankful to WCCM Australia for supporting me financially to attend the Young Meditators Retreat.

Good Work done at National Conference 2019

By Mirella Pace

Good Work depends on teamwork. The goodness of the work produces benefits – the benefits of companionship and joy filled delight.

Our National Conference has been fruits of Good Work. Good Work from so many people.

To Fr Laurence Freeman (pictured right) our eternal gratitude for his inspirational input and leadership.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to: all members of WCCM Australia Victorian Committee under the leadership of Mary Hartwig and past Coordinator Clara Rizzi; the National Executive; Joan McKeegan; Jan Wylie; Anna Loughlin and Roland Ashby. Also thanks to my mentors and guides: Pauline Peters; Ruth Fowler; Penny Sturrock; and Kath Houston.

My sincere appreciation to the four amazing women and their helpers who coordinated: Registrations –

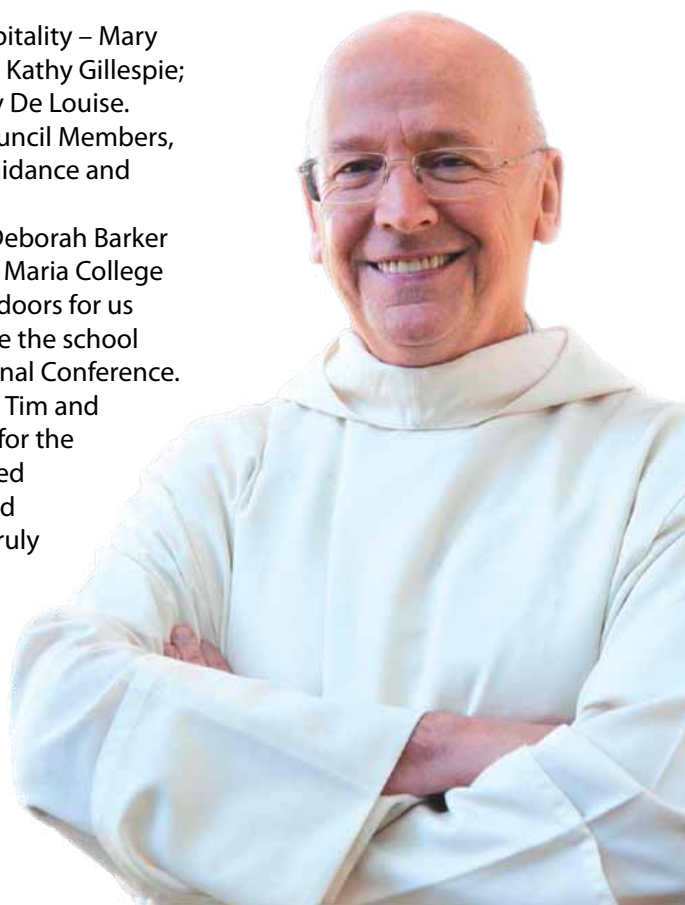
Joan McKeegan; Hospitality – Mary De Bono; Bookshop – Kathy Gillespie; and Transport – Trudy De Louise.

To the National Council Members, thank you for your guidance and support.

A huge thanks to Deborah Barker the Principal of Santa Maria College – for opening up the doors for us and allowing us to use the school facilities for our National Conference. Also to Eamon Lynch, Tim and Kevin – many thanks for the caring way you assisted us with hospitality and attention to details. Truly Benedictine traits.

To all volunteers that have assisted us in any way, big or small, my deep gratitude.

I thank you all for your participation in this good work.



Members of WCCM Australia at the Conference

WCCM Australia at the National ARRCC Conference

Having recently joined the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) organisation it was good for WCCM Australia to be given an opportunity to offer meditation to participants at the ARRCC National Conference in Canberra in early November.

On the Saturday morning, before the Conference began, around 40 people came together in a pavilion room at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture where the conference was held, to meditate. Linda Chapman, who led the meditation, spoke briefly to locate the place of meditation in climate action. She referred to John Main's words about distraction being the "wish to possess."

"In an acquisitive global culture this wish to possess may be at the heart of our destructive effect on the natural world. The practice of meditation simplifies our desires and enables us to be contemplative in our action", said Linda before leading the group into 20 minutes of meditation.

By Janice Wylie

On Thursday 10th October we held a Fundraising Dinner for Bonnevaux.

It was a wonderful evening with 96 attending mainly from the local community. Several Melbourne groups organised a table enjoying the evening together with very delicious food and lively conversation.

Fr Laurence Freeman shared with us his vision for Bonnevaux along with a power point presentation showing the latest progress with the building works.

We held a Silent Auction and had a small Giving Tree on each table.

My thanks to all who donated at the dinner and to groups and individuals from the wider national community for your generosity to Help Complete the Vision.

Great response to Bonnevaux vision

If you haven't had an opportunity to date to give to Bonnevaux here are the details:

NAB

A/C Name: Australian Christian Meditation Community

BSB: 083-166 A/C No.: 868170813

Or if you wish to use your credit card go to our website – wccmaustralia.org.au – and click on the Bonnevaux page in the menu bar.



April Blackwell's reception as a novice oblate



L-R: National Oblate Coordinator Gloria Duffy, making final oblation Mirella Pace and Jude Hope (Vic), Joy Hayes (Tasmania), Agnes And and Rosemary Raymond (SA) with Father Laurence Freeman

New Oblates commit to spiritual life discipline

By Gloria Duffy

On 12 October 2019 following the National Conference, five experienced meditators made their Final Oblation as oblates of the World Community for Christian Meditation in addition to another becoming a novice oblate.

So what does this signify? Oblation means an offering and in this instance it was a public offering of oneself to God. One can further generalise about oblation by enumerating the principles and practices that have evolved over time and in different cultures. It is a lineage that has ignited a dynamic process of contemporary expressions – a new monasticism that is occurring across a variety of faith traditions and secular communities.

Of course, there are other ways of expressing one's commitment to a spiritual life and one's relationship with God. Nonetheless, Benedictine

monasticism has a structure capable of clarifying one's beliefs, values and practices that are diametrically opposite to aimlessly living without a clear plan or methods to achieve a deeper relationship with God. Oblates aim to enhance all aspects of their life through the disciplines of contemplative meditation, spiritual reading (*Lectio Divina*), praying part of the Divine Office at least once a day, the study and application of the Rule of St Benedict to the circumstances of their ordinary life and relationships.

For Benedict, everyday acts are as important as devotional rituals. With this understanding these proven monastic practices are incorporated into the life of the oblates without the need to leave one's family, work, or broader community. Effectively they become part of a 'monastery without walls'.

This Intentional formation not only gives personal expression to the Gospel values but in being part of a

global and inclusive contemplative family, works to bridge the religious and secular divides in one's local and global environment. In general, monastics, as stated above, have always understood daily life is a spiritual practice that can effect a transformative process personally and in community. Therefore, where there is a geographical proximity of oblates they meet several times a year to share their reflection and experiences of the above in small physical communities.

John Main considered the oblate community as an extension of the more established institutional monastic tradition as noted by Fr Laurence in *Community of Love*.

John Main's vision was to introduce a new form of monasticism, open not only to monks and nuns, but to lay people as well. He believed that Benedictine Oblates had a vitally important place in new monasticism arising in the Church today.

Vale Jill Black, Christian Meditation Pioneer

By Paul Harris

Jill Black, a resident of the Barossa valley in the 1990s, and for many years the South Australian Christian Meditation coordinator, died 7 November, 2019, at the age of 88 at her home on the Indonesian island of Bali. She is survived by four children, Briony, Penny, Richard, David, nine grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

Born in 1931, her father sent her to a finishing school in Switzerland at a very young age, where she became fluent in the French language, learned to ski, and performed the lead role in the school's annual play. On her return home to South Australia she entered nursing at Adelaide Children's Hospital, and additionally completed a University Arts degree. In 2009 at the age of 78 Jill completed a graduate Diploma in Jungian Studies at the University of Western Sydney. She also mastered the game of bridge, joining the South Australian team, and playing in tournaments in various interstate Australian locations.

But a major happening in Jill's life came in 1990 when Jill was introduced to Christian Meditation. One day a Mercy Sister placed a copy of one of John Main's books into the hands of Jill and urged her to read it. Jill subsequently wrote what happened next. Says Jill: "I took the book home and put it on my bedside table, and then avoided it for many weeks. I was always aware of the fact that it was there, but physically unable to open it. Looking back I knew intuitively how much it would change my life. When I did begin to read it, I was amazed. There were the

answers to all my questions, the very things I was asking God about. I now not only knew I wanted to meditate, but I now knew how to do it. Herein lies John Main's influence and genius. He speaks in an authentic voice, so much so that his listeners are left in no doubt that he speaks from a genuine experience of God."

Jill also wrote as a contributor to the book: "Christian Meditation by Those Who Practice It", about her day-to-day experience of the



ACMC 1993 – Back: John Little (Victoria), Friend of Ann Moir-Bussy (ACT), Kath Johnson (Vic), Vesta Gamalatge (WA), Pauline Thomas, now Grace (Vic), Ruth Fowler (Vic). Front: Ray O'Loughlin (SA), Jill Black (SA), Gabrielle Harris (Qld), Helen Barnard (Vic) and Richard Cogswell (NSW).

practice. She says: "My introduction to the teaching of John Main certainly did change my life. Among other things I have experienced pure joy, the sort that surprised C.S. Lewis, I now knew that I had a chance to grow a little closer to God with every passing day, provided that I am faithful to the twice-daily meditation periods".

Jill summed up her experience of Christian Meditation by pointing out that she experienced many times over the years aridity, and a feeling of helplessness in her daily practice of the contemplative way of prayer. However Jill writes; "I had to learn to live with the feeling of helplessness and to trust God. And I had to learn to trust God in the darkness when he seemed to be no longer present. And I had to say yes to God every

day. Not my will, but yours! This letting go has developed through Christian Meditation. It has changed my life. It is the transformation".

Jill who lived in the wine growing Barossa valley, north of Adelaide, became active in the Australian Christian Meditation Community as the SA Coordinator in the 1990's. Her activities included the sponsorship of talks, retreats, the establishment of weekly groups, and the invitation to a variety of speakers on Christian Meditation, from Australia, the UK and Canada. In addition one of her last endeavours, as SA Coordinator was to organize a speaking tour in various countries, for the Jesuit priest, William Johnston, professor of religious studies at the Institute of Oriental Religions at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan. Johnston was very supportive of Christian Meditation through his books and speaking engagements on contemplative prayer.

To sum up the death of my long time friend Jill, I am reminded of one of those beautiful Irish words of hope and love for the deceased.

Jill: "May the road to God's kingdom rise to meet you; may the window of God's grace be with you: may the sun of God's love shine warmly on you: and the rain of his mercy fall softly on you: and until we meet again, may the Lord hold you in the hollow of his hand".

Jill's daughter Briony has announced that a memorial service/ afternoon tea, in Jill's honour, will be held in Adelaide in the New Year. Briony can be contacted at wunny@iinet by those who would like to attend and celebrate Jill's life.

(Paul Harris is a former Canadian coordinator of Christian Meditation, gave three speaking tours of Australia in the 1990's, and is the author of eight books on Christian Meditation).

Vale Vesta Gamalatge

By Paul Harris

Vesta Gamalatge, Christian Meditation Coordinator in Western Australia for 21 years(1987-2008), died in Perth, 8 December, 2019.

She was predeceased by her husband, Sam who died six months previously in Perth on 8 June. They are survived by three children, Fran, Marianne and Michelle, 12 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren.

Vesta, Sam, and children originally came to Australia in 1961 from Sri Lanka at a time of great violence and upheaval in that country. In Sri Lanka, Vesta attended the University of Colombo and became an accredited music teacher for 27 years, and in addition a graduate teacher in Geography, History and English. Vesta and Sam subsequently lived in Melbourne for 23 years before moving to Perth in 1986. Involved immediately with Christian Meditation groups already existing in Perth, Vesta became the Christian Meditation Coordinator for Western Australia from 1987 to 2008.

In 2006 Vesta authored a 267 page book *Silent Seeding: The Story of Christian Meditation in Western Australia*. In this book she relates the marvelous experience of being able to make a four week trip to Canada in 1987 with her husband Sam, and a meditation friend Caroline Edwards, to visit the Benedictine Monastery in Montreal, and to be welcomed by the Director, Laurence Freeman.

In referring to this trip to Canada, Laurence Freeman, in the book *Silent Seeding*, says: "I first met Sam and Vesta when they were sent by the then Archbishop of Perth to spend a month at our monastery in Canada, which was dedicated to the teaching of meditation in the Christian tradition. They entered into the

daily Benedictine rhythm of prayer and work, and we met frequently to discuss how they could bring the seed of contemplation to their local church when they returned... The story of how the Christian Meditation community formed in this remote part of the world is no less than the story of individual human lives opening to the depth of their personal vocation."



Sam and Vesta Gamalatge.

"I have become more aware of the incredible depth and beauty of Fr John [Main]'s teaching. His teaching is not a method of prayer but a way of life lived in the Spirit of the Gospel."

In the book *Christian Meditation By Those Who Practice It*, published in 1993, Vesta summed up her approach to Christian Meditation when she wrote:

As I meditate with groups and alone, I pray that the spirit of love,

joy and peace will continue to work, gifting and gracing many more with this transcending experience of meditation that is so life changing. In my limited attempts to spread the message, I have become more aware of the incredible depth and beauty of Fr John's teaching. His teaching is not a method of prayer but a way of life lived in the Spirit of the Gospel. It embraces the gifts of faith, love, compassion and commitment to patient perseverance. But, as they say, meditation is simple but not always easy.

As part of their efforts to encourage and strengthen meditation groups, Vesta and Sam invited a great number of speakers to Western Australia. In addition to Laurence Freeman, a few of these speakers included: Bede Griffiths, the English, Benedictine monk, from India, and supporter of Christian Meditation, Fr William Johnston SJ, the Jesuit spiritual writer then living in Japan, Fr Gerry Pierser, CSCR, based in the Philippines, and a teacher of Christian Meditation, and Richard Rohr, American Franciscan spiritual writer, and Founder of the Centre for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

In summing up the beautiful life of Vesta perhaps it is best to quote from her book *Silent Seeding* which also includes 70 photographs of Australian meditators.

Says Vesta:

*So "keep on keeping on"
In this School of Faith
we are all beginners
trusting in the Spirit
to lead and guide
to inspire and direct
to teach
and so form spiritual cells
Communicating
The Experience of God's Holy Presence
We are the New Contemplatives.*



www.wccmaustralia.org.au

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