

# Meditatio

Newsletter of The  
World Community  
for Christian Meditation



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## In Pursuit of Health and Wholeness

How meditation enlarges the meaning of health and opens the way for contemplative medicine in the future. Pages 6 and 7



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A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

When, at the beginning of this year, we started the course on Meditation and Leadership at the Georgetown McDonough School of Business I must admit I had my doubts. What was the real motivation of these second year MBA students? It is an intense and competitive programme and they were on the brink of re-entering their careers to discover whether their financial and time gamble would pay dividends. The course had filled quickly and there was even a waiting list. But, I wondered, did a course on meditation just sound attractively fluffy?

After opening the first class with meditation, as we would continue to do, I told the students I expected them to meditate twice a day for twenty minutes morning and evening for the next six weeks. They stared back at me non-committedly. I explained that, within the overall theme of leadership, I would give them a proper understanding of meditation: not as if it had been invented at Harvard in 1960 but in its historical, religious and social context as one of the great universal treasures of human wisdom with great potential in our time for rescuing us from our huge mistakes and offering humanity a way to a new unity and simplicity. But, I said, this is a course that, like meditation itself, could suit people of any belief or no belief.

We would then examine the modern research on meditation – which is not as rigorously scientific as some claim but nevertheless widely accepted to show its physical and psychological benefits. Then I would ask them to notice the effect of their new practice on their inner and outer lives. Finally, we would consider the ethical and social impact on their work and profession of being a meditating leader.

My first aim, I explained, was to help them develop a personal daily

practice. Their final grade would not be based on their 'meditation success' but on their papers, class participation and on how their journals and daily meditation log-counter showed they were making a serious effort to learn. As anyone who has ever taught meditation knows, the essential knowledge being communicated already exists within the students. All teaching is, like 'education' itself, about leading that potential knowledge out into the open. With meditation especially, it is about becoming more aware through one's personal experience. Teaching meditation in an educational institution, we were to discover, also throws

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light on the educational theory and practice of the school itself. The teacher learns more about what he is teaching as the students reflect back from their own experience. The message delivered is thus, hopefully, both reinforced and verified.

The students were young and ambitious. They were seeking greater success by developing their leadership potential (the latest theory we worked on identifies six types of leader). Taking time out to study, however, can also be an unexpected opportunity for re-evaluating life. For some it made them wonder what it is all for. And, with meditation in the equation, in the conventions of the career race allowed by an unforgiving business ethos, it could be the last opportunity to decide for oneself what one really wants

to do and what race to run in. The self-knowledge of meditation could be dangerous.

Leadership in business today is associated with stress, loss of personal balance, and often the disruption of family and friendships. The destruction of part of our humanity is often seen as the price of success – a strange kind of success where one gains the whole world (one hopes) but at the cost of one's true self. Dr Faustus sold his soul for knowledge and worldly power and then paid for it with his eternal life. Business success today is often a Faustian bargain, an ultimately bad deal. At the top of the corporate or political hierarchy huge financial rewards or status come at the price of a damaged humanity and the loss of ordinary happiness. Professional success often equates with personal ruin.

We make our own worlds. And yet, it could all be very different: this was the root message of the meditation and leadership course. A full and meaningful life need not be reduced to a 'successful career' that becomes exposed too late as a poisoned well from which the rewards are merely further stress, isolation and the corruption of personal values. Instead, it can mean an exploration of the mystery of one's own self as a being in relationship, working in an interdependent universe. In this world personal achievements take on a wider and deeper meaning because they are enhanced and magnified by the spirit of service. Personal values can be respected and resonate with timeless values.

The spirit of service is a like a magnifying lens that increases the magnitude of personal success, way beyond the smallness of the ego, into an enrichment of the lives and well being of others. The difference – and meditation makes the difference – is con-

sciousness. We live and work in conscious fields in which we each play our part in a spirit of service. This attractive sounding ideal is often mouthed but it is tested in reality by the size of the gap in the distribution of rewards. Relationship is subtle but it cannot be faked.

Motivation makes the difference. Usually this is taken to mean merely self-motivation as a boost to success. "Repeat to yourself daily 'I am a champion'" is the advice of one motivation website. But motivation means more. It is not boosting a weak and insecure ego but deepening personal commitment by understanding why one is doing what one is doing. The self-knowledge and clarity – let's call it humility – of the leader makes the difference. The originating quality of consciousness determines the quality of the work and above all the influence of the rippling field of relationships that extend from the boardroom to the marketplace.

I challenged the students to meditate 'seriously' – as was John Main when he learned from his teacher. Serious means twice daily. They learned meditation not only as a tool for self-improvement or relaxation but as a personal, transformative discipline that would change the way they lived. Tools eventually wear out, lose their edge and are discarded. Disciplines are sustainable. The students quickly saw that they were being challenged and engaged with it with increasing commitment. Their daily meditation-log counted their percentage of daily meditation. There were a handful of hundred per centers, some under forty percent, but the average was a notable seventy percent. One accountant in the class questioned the integrity of the self-reporting. But (maybe in my willingness to be deceived) my personal meetings with the students made

me trust them.

Meeting this challenge, as best they could, redefined failure for them. Clearly they all wanted to meditate and they appreciated the challenge, the supports offered and the friendship of their fellow class members. What is 'failure' in this field of experience? If you fall below forty percent but understand why – because, for example, you

ing in a new subtle awareness, failure became less depressing and another way of learning. Some of the students were preparing to get married. Perhaps this helped them see meditation as a not dissimilar life-challenge, another kind of discipline. Just as love and relationship challenge us to be faithful and cannot be reduced to the success-failure model, so meditation comes to



*Jane Mooney, 2nd year MBA Student at the McDonough School of Business*

have long been addicted to distraction without knowing it and wake up with your smart phone in your hand because it is the last thing you check as you fall asleep – is this a waste of effort? Or if you notice that you are offering members of your project teams a ride home at night, something you never thought of doing before, is this kindness a measurable commodity? Elementary school teachers report that meditation in class makes the children nicer to each other. It seems to work at the MBA level too.

At first the feeling of failure hurt them. But as they felt themselves grow-

be seen as a demanding discipline, but one whose reward is liberation from the compulsion to see everything in terms of competing and succeeding. Some of these shared what they were learning with their future life-partners and they began to meditate together.

Some fell in love with meditation at first sight. They launched into it with a sense of discovery and enthusiasm that all new meditators understand. One recovered his religious tradition in which he had learned to meditate long ago. Others struggled with the humility of failure but learned through class work to see failure in a new light

as a step out of the compulsiveness of the ego into wisdom and freedom. All remarked that the new awareness that flowed from their discipline – whatever their performance score – could be felt in their capacity for attention on studies and personal relationships ('I found myself actually listening to a totally talkative old aunt at a family reunion last weekend'). They discovered and openly shared how the first and essential fruit of their new discipline was simply awareness itself.

One student saw the difference first by becoming aware of the interesting and beautiful things he walked past every morning on his way to school. "For more than a year I was so pre-occupied with my problems and plans I never noticed where I was". The discipline involved in learning this new awareness was sometimes compared with changing to a healthier diet or doing regular exercise. It takes time, they said, to build a good habit but it's the best way to push bad habits away.

Without this consciousness that we are illuminated beings, we grope for meaning in the dark light of the ego. As awareness grows, the light in which one is striving becomes brighter. It is always perceived to be a beneficial and benevolent light. Awareness itself is good. To become aware of one's addictions, such as the addiction to distraction is success indeed and the beginning of freedom. Growth in this awareness is a strong experience but hard to describe. Yet it can be recognized in others and, of course, it changes the way we see others. Thus, as we all felt through the six weeks, meditation creates community without expending unnecessary energy and expense on communication tools, meetings, executive retreats in luxury spas and, of course, more meetings

I wonder if there might one day be organized resistance to meditation if it became more an accepted part

of corporate life. If it worked it would initiate a downsizing of activities – the superfluous meetings, emails, regulations and protocols that nobody takes seriously. The compulsion to publish competitively in academia reflects this same trend in institutions to undermine their own purpose. As in the Soviet Union where waste and redundancy of information had to be defended publicly though no one believed in it, modern business bears a huge, unnecessary burden of surplus activity that the new awareness generated by meditation would expose and question. This is not to talk of mystical rapture but simply enlightened common sense. Meditating with others is especially an efficient and productive way of becoming friendly and of build-

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ing that most important element of all relationships, professional and personal: trust.

In learning about the history of meditation the students acquired the foundational understanding necessary for establishing an informed personal practice. We looked at other methods of meditation but the mantra and the twice-daily practice were recommended and, with one or two exceptions, accepted by the students. The reason for this recommendation was simply to focus. We cannot learn attention by being distracted. Better to dig in one well than scrape at a lot of different holes. Nevertheless, it was understood that there is more than one way to this goal of awareness and to an enlightened form of leadership exercised free of egotism.

Some people seek, with a variety of techniques, to enhance mindfulness in daily life and they find the practices make a big difference. It can be rewarding but also difficult to sustain on one's own. Our approach was to patiently learn the simple discipline of meditation in a supportive environment that is always there for the person learning at each of the different stages involved. Mindfulness is then discovered as a natural by-product of the discipline of meditation. As it opens up awareness beyond the immediate goals of the ego, the meditation reveals a horizon of altruism and other-centredness. In moving towards this horizon one discovers the power, not only of self-management but also of self-transcendence. Happiness, as the most ancient human wisdom testifies, is found in becoming concerned for others.

I drew a distinction between pre-meditation techniques of mental calming and physical relaxation and the discipline of meditation that becomes a transformative part of one's life. If the accelerating sense of the need for such awareness is to be sustained in modern life – and it is not to become another media-fed fashion - we need to understand and incorporate this distinction. "I am so happy to have found a discipline" one young woman said to me. Maybe 'discipline' is not such a frightening word any more.

More frightening to many people is the taint of religion.

For those who meditate as a spiritual path and understand it as a very pure way of prayer, it is not hard to see the physical and psychological benefits of meditation in terms of the spiritual fruits. Stress reduction is seen as the beginning of discovering the peace that passes understanding. Clarity in problem solving is seen as the gift of discernment arising from purity of heart. Improved relationships and

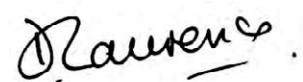
care for oneself are linked to a greater capacity for giving and receiving love. Improved attention to people and work is the fruit of patience. Reduced dependence on alcohol or 'relaxing'

would prefer to return to a theocratic society and the secular age represents many advantages. Yet secularism is often misrepresented as the exclusion or segregation of religion. Healthy secu-

than an unemployed monk who has nothing better to do than nothing. One of these mentors described the benefits he found in meditation and added that it had a spiritual dimension for him too. As a Catholic, he had first learned to meditate in the East and had then been pleased to discover it existed in his own tradition. A student asked him how he saw meditation in a religious sense. Jose Maria's reply was "as an Argentinean, football is an important part of my religion. On the football field the players wear their particular team or country's jersey. But they are all playing the same game. Similarly we may meditate wearing a religious or non-religious jersey but we can all meditate together. This does not undervalue the importance of the jersey but it recognizes the unifying power of the game.

The immense problems of modern life call for wisdom, spiritual discipline, a new simplicity. To recognize this in our institutions of finance, business, education and health – not to say religion, too – we need enlightened leaders. They will champion the new way of seeing and doing that is so urgently needed. But it takes courage to change the ways things are seen and done. Sunk costs, like old sins, are the most resistant.

The students left the course with encouraging signs of wanting to continue learning what they had begun. I had tried to impress upon them it didn't depend on the class or the teacher but on himself or herself because – as meditators have known for a long time – 'experience is the teacher'.



Laurence Freeman OSB



George Megre, 2nd year MBA Student at the McDonough School of Business

stimulants comes because we unearth the spring of joy within ourselves. Moderation in things we use to excess happens because we develop self-discipline and, with it, the most important knowledge of all, self-knowledge. This is the foundation of the highest knowledge, the knowledge of God through participation in the divine life.

Self-knowledge is the basis of filtering and evaluating all other kinds of information and acquired expertise. Without self-knowledge anything we learn or acquire risks being corrupted. It can turn us into one of the foolish experts who make life more stressed and complex than necessary and who have plagued the world since the beginning of institutions.

Religion is seen today as a personal choice and has been privatized in modern culture. No sane person

larism is in fact about choice and freedom in religion as in other things such as lifestyle, sexuality and aesthetics. In the course, meditation was not misrepresented as having no religious and spiritual context. It was also shown in a scientific light and people were free to relate the practice to whatever belief system they had. (Everyone has some belief and value system.) Meditation is compatible with any belief system that respects universal values – such as tolerance, acceptance of others and concern for the greater good.

In fact, therefore, meditation promotes integration and supports diversity in the workplace as in society at large. In several classes I invited a successful businessperson who meditates to speak to the students about why they meditate. I reckoned they would take these role models more seriously

## "Healing is when you integrate all things within your body, your mind and the essence of who you are."

*An interview with Dr Barry White, National Coordinator, Ireland*



### **How can meditation help patients and doctors?**

Barry White: We have a problem in healthcare. We face challenges in delivering it to patients. Because healthcare is not deemed to be safe enough. It is not deemed to be compassionate enough. It is deemed to be too expensive. This impacts the key measures of health care: quality, patient experience and costs.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a stage of complete physical, psychological and social well-being and not just absence of any infirmity. The problem with this is that in our experience of life – and ancient wisdom tells us – is not achievable. So, even when things are going well we suffer from boredom.

We will always experience some level of imperfection in our social, psychological and physical well-being. If we believe that we can achieve this stage, which is the WHO stage, this reflects society's understanding of what health is. But this is an illusion, because it can't be achieved.

### **What are the consequences of this illusion?**

The problem is that this cycle of hope is followed by disappointments that lead to a very challenging space for both patients and doctors. From the patient side it can lead them to behavioural problems where they don't look after themselves, spiritually, psychologically or physically. They think that when things don't work, they are unhealthy, and then they go to the doctor. If the doctor can't deliver the solution they become disappointed.

Within the healthcare, most of the diseases are caused by behaviour: diet, people not eating properly, not exercising, being overweight, smoking and drinking alcohol and stress. This drives most of the chronic diseases which are consuming the budgets of all healthcare systems. On top of that are the psychosomatic illnesses. People are seeking something, they develop the symptoms and they go to hospital for further tests, which consumes resources.

The point is: we have two definitions of health. We have a definition from the WHO (potentially an illusion). The other definition may well be that we accept the condition we are in which is one of suffering, illness, death and we fix the things that can be fixed: physical, psychological or social factors. But ultimately we accept those things we can't fix. We reach a point of healing. Healing is when you integrate all things within your body, your mind and the essence of who you are.

### **What do you mean by 'contemplative medicine' and the relationship between 'self-healing' and medicine?**

Contemplative medicine is a paradigm,

a hope. To get out of this cycle where we are. Instead of saying "meditation and the contemplative wisdom are the only way" or "contemporary health care is the only way" what if we fused both together? We would have a mindful patient and doctor, who are at peace, who can see clearly, who are not obsessed by fear or greed and who feel a sense of wonder with others and with the environment that they are working on. That person would be very effective in using and leveraging contemporary medicine. It would improve the quality of care and compassion of care but it would also potentially be more cost-effective.

This is the best definition I have ever heard of health:

"Believe in miracle/And cures and healing wells. Call the miracle self healing: The utter self-revealing, Double take of feeling." (From Cure at Troy by Seamus Heane)

"Utter self-revealing" is from your inner self, is totally honest. The "double-take of feeling" means you are not changing the nature of the illness, you are changing how you deal with it. People with cancer for example, even if it is terminal, can be healed because they are "double-taking the feeling", they are re-accessing how they feel. They are getting to a point where the cancer is still there but they feel differently about it. Because they integrate it into the essence of whom they are. If we can accept that and integrate that into who we are, then we are healed.

That does not mean if I get sick I will neglect to take medicine. It certainly allows me in use the great benefits of contemporary medicine. We should be very grateful for that progress. But in the process of contemporary medicine we have lost something: the contemplative wisdom of the past.

## "This is not about survival, but in giving meaning to the grace of my life"

*Roberto Corrêa, psychologist and Christian Meditation group leader, Porto Alegre, Brazil*



I started to meditate in 2010. At the beginning of 2013 I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. My reaction was that of somebody who was expecting that "visit", but maybe at a later time. I went for radical surgery, removing my prostate. After that the Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test pointed out that I still had cancer. I did radiotherapy and now a special diet.

I am carrying on, with the same spirit, as if I was without any illness. When I think

about my meditation, I realize that spirituality is the axis that sustains me and gives me strength for this journey. This is not about "knowing", but about a relationship with a spiritual dimension that, for me, is Christ. This is because of my tradition and belief. What would it be like if I could not count on Him? He is really personal, many times a clear manifestation, giving consolation, and clarifying things. In other times, that manifestation happens through physical persons, like my wife Vivian and family. I only can see this because of meditation.

I have developed a gradual surrender of my life. This is not like abandonment or giving up. It is a kind of investment not in the power of ego (that I can easily notice in myself). I have talked to my patients (I am a psychologist) that the ego is not "the lord" but a servant. Lord, only Christ.

Faith is the dimension that keeps me meditating. It keeps my hope, my confidence, in a fight that is not about survival. It is about a reassurance of the meaning of the grace of life that I have received, through my parents, from the Lord of life. As a professional I notice myself being more sensitive with those who seek help without pushing them with techniques (ego), but trying to be present, be "sign of God".

I am still confident in a victory, with a lot of effort, and this is not about freedom from cancer. I think I was chosen to help others to know more about health. Meditation and health - I heard Fr. Laurence linking both terms with the prefix MED: meaning care, attention. I am grateful for all that have been presence of God in my journey. I hope I may keep walking this road.

## A simple pathway to healing

*Peter Smith, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of New South Wales, Sydney, and member of WCCM Australia*

Over the last century, the "medical model" of healthcare, whereby illness is regarded as having an identifiable cause which can be treated and cured, has served us well. It has also led to the growth of a complex, expensive, technology-based healthcare system with a very strong focus on cure. However, many of the health problems of today, such as those related to mental health and ageing, are not amenable to a curative approach. The frustration engendered by this and the increasing complexity of the health system results in a stressed health workforce and a perplexed population.

This high level of stress in the workforce also leads to system problems. These include impaired safety and quality of care, perceptions of lack of concern for patients and colleagues, poor commu-

nication and workplace harassment and bullying. This situation poses the questions - Can we offer a pathway to healing whether the individual can be "cured" or not? Can we relieve individual stress and improve the functionality of our healthcare system?

Integration of meditation into the health system offers such a pathway to healing in the broadest sense of the word to individuals, healthcare professionals and the system. Meditation can improve health and wellbeing. For example, it can improve the status of those with mood disorders such as anxiety and depression as well as having physiological effects such as lowering blood pressure. It also leads to an enhancement of self knowledge and acceptance, essential steps in any pathway to genuine healing, both

for those suffering and those attempting to help them. This enhanced results in a greater awareness of our environment, that is, enhanced situational awareness. It also leads to a greater awareness of and connectivity to other people. This opens the door to development of a deepening of compassion.

Health system failures today are usually not the result of technical incompetence but relate to lack of situational awareness (such as wrong side surgery), poor communication or poor interpersonal relationships with colleagues or patients. The adoption of the practice of meditation within healthcare leading to improved wellbeing and enhanced situational awareness and compassion, will lead to improved functionality at individual and systems levels.

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*"A whole man, who rejoices in life, in the gift of his own life, is the man who can enjoy himself as a unity" (John Main)*

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## Interview

### *Fr. Daniel Madigan, speaker of the John Main Seminar 2014*



***What would you like to see happen through the JMS you are leading and what is your main theme?***

About ten years ago I did a series of public seminars in different cities in Australia along with a Muslim professor. After about a month of traveling together on and off, hearing each other speak to various audiences and respond to their questions, we were having a farewell lunch. It dawned on me then at table that what made me feel a real bond of brotherhood with Abdullah was that (when we were at our best) we were both listening attentively for what God had to say. As I began to teach more and more Muslim students in Rome, I found a very similar experience. We often think of ourselves as people who have heard the Word, but God's Word is never exhausted, so we have always to be listeners for the Word. In meditative silence, in prayer and in recitation, we try to resonate with God's speech, so that it may shape and transform us.

I chose "Muslims and Christians: Listeners for the Word" as title of the seminar because it includes the commonality and the difference. Yes, we are both straining to hear and resonate with the Word of God and yet we are also deeply

divided about where and how God has spoken the Word in a defining way, in a way that is so clear and so true that we measure against it all other claims to have heard God speaking. Too often this plays out as a fruitless game of "Our book's better than your book. Our prophet's better than your prophet." Yet for Christians, God's Word to us is not primarily a matter of prophets and books, but is rather a Word-made-flesh, a Word spoken in body-language.

I would like to share with the participants the understanding of our Christian faith that I have come to through the experience of friendship with Muslims and study of the Islamic tradition. The Muslim critique of Christian faith challenges us profoundly, yet when taken seriously can generate new insight into what is particular about the Good News--what is Good and New about the Good News. Now that Muslims are our neighbors, fellow-citizens, co-workers, and family members, we all need to be able to understand our faith in relationship to theirs in a way that is not defensive or aggressive, that appreciates those "rays of truth" and "seeds of the Word" that Vatican II said we see in other people of faith.

***Can meditation help Muslims and Christians to listen to each other and to the Word together better?***

I don't know whether that's the case or not. I would hope that whatever helps Christians to resonate with the Word that is Christ will make us more compassionate, and it will attune us to the resonances of the same Word -- God's self-revealing Word -- in other people. We will become attuned to how others are resonating with that same Word we have seen in Jesus: whether in their standing courageously against injustice, in their patient forgiving, in their overflowing generosity, in their humble

service, or in their trusting obedience to God. Those are the characteristics of the Word-made-flesh, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). If other people are living that way, we can know that they are "hearing" in their very bones the Word we experience in Jesus.

***What attracted you personally to the Muslim tradition?***

I did not get into these studies because of any attraction: I was somewhat unexpectedly asked to undertake them by my Superior-General. I had been assigned to China and at the last minute the request came from Rome that I undertake Islamic studies. My engagement with Muslims and Islam over the last 30 years has broadened my world enormously. We are, after all, speaking about having some sense of familiarity and solidarity with about one fifth of the human race. I have the repeated experience of feeling at home with Muslims, at a time when much of the world views them as irreducibly different, to be feared and suspected. This has meant feeling at home with immigrants and asylum seekers, with students and academic colleagues in various parts of the world, and not least with taxi-drivers in almost any city you care to mention! Particularly given our current world situation, to count Muslims among your close friends and to have studied the Islamic tradition with care and attention is to live in a much more expansive world than that to which many in the West now feel themselves fearfully confined. I count that a great blessing.

**John Main Seminar 2014**

**July 24-27 - Elmhurst College**

**Elmhurst, IL, a suburb of Chicago**

**Muslims and Christians: Listeners for the Word**

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## News

### Retreat in Manresa



During three days early this year, January 2-5, the Cave of Saint Ignatius was the site of a retreat on contemplative prayer, guided by Javier Melloni, SJ and Laurence Freeman, OSB.

More than 60 people attended the retreat.

The topic was "the Cave of the Heart" in the contemplative tradition, from the Cave of Subiaco for Saint Benedict, through the Cave of Manresa for Saint Ignatius, to the cave of the heart for Henri Le Saux and Ramana Maharshi.

The days were scheduled with four times of quiet meditation and , two walking meditations, as well as two daily talks, by Laurence Freeman and Javier Melloni. Marco Schorlemmer, coordinator of the WCCM in Catalunya and Spain, also gave a daily talk on contemplative prayer and the WCCM.

Javier Melloni: "it was a time of encounter in silence and also through the words of Laurence Freeman, direct successor of John Main. We have lived and shared during these three days both the Benedictine contemplative tradition (following the lineage of John Cassian and John Main) and the Ignatian one (following the lineage of Franz Jalics). It has certainly been a time of grace, in which we have been reciprocally enriched." ( from <http://covamanresa.blogspot.com.es/>)

### TV Programme on Christian Meditation in Trinidad



The Community in Trinidad y Tobago, led by Sister Ruth Montrichard, started a program at Trinit TV in January called "Christian Meditation - The Prayer of the Heart."

Sr. Ruth said, "I think the whole idea was an inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Trinity TV used to broadcast limited hours, but then decided to broadcast 24 hours. We asked ourselves: Why not Christian Meditation?"

According to Sr. Ruth, the response has been good with several people calling in to get more information and to join groups. The first episodes of the program are available on our YouTube Channel, at [wccm.org](http://wccm.org).

### Talks in Florida



Fr Laurence spoke at Camillus House, Miami, a centre for vulnerable people in February. The photo is from the event called "Street Wise: Meditation Where You Are".

### New National Coordinator for Argentina



The Community in Argentina has a new National Coordinator: Enrique Pavan (the first in the photo, from right to left, standing) took over from Magdalena Puebla (the first from left to right, sitting). WCCM is very grateful for Magdalena's dedication. She has been a dedicated and committed leader using her gifts to introduce many to Christian Meditation. Magdalena also translated ten books into Spanish and worked as a translator of Fr. Laurence's talks in Argentina.

### Live webcasts from Meditatio Centre



The Meditatio Centre, in London, prepared a series of talks by Laurence Freeman that will be webcast live over the next several months. The overall series is titled "The Eight Big Problems of Life" and the first talk, Gluttony and Greed and their Remedy was given on March 5th (photo). Please register for the next talks by visiting the Meditatio website at [www.wccmmeditatio.org](http://www.wccmmeditatio.org).

## Bishop Michael Putney (1946-2014)



Bishop Michael Putney of Townsville, Australia, Patron and friend of WCCM and pioneer of the teaching of Christian meditation in schools, died peacefully on the morning of 28th March.

Fr Laurence writes: "Please keep

Bishop Michael Putney in your heart as he now leaves this realm of existence and expands beyond it into the boundlessness of God. Michael has been a good friend and advisor to our community and me for many years. He influenced thousands of young lives around the world by introducing meditation into the schools of his diocese and gave a model that inspired schools in many places far from Townsville.

He was the best example of a man

who saw and loved the potential of the church and gave his life to help realize it. Seeing him in his diocese made me understand how a person can be married to a place and a community and how this union of faith and love gives a glimpse of how Christ is married to the earth and to humanity and how he simply is his own body. When I went to visit Michael in his last illness I expected a sad time. In fact I experienced the joy of his vocation – celebrating a school's centenary way out in the desert, going to a football match with him and concelebrating Sunday mass with him in his cathedral. He was full of life. Now he is fully alive because in this third week of Lent Easter has come early for him".

## Retreat at Camaldoli, Italy



The Italian National Retreat was held at the Monastery of Camaldoli, March 14-16. Laurence Freeman OSB spoke on the theme "The Word is Alive and Active".

Jennifer Greenleaves, from WCCM Italy shared:

"It was a very relaxed and effective retreat, with more than 90 participants. Laurence spoke marvellously

on how meditation fitted into the history of the Church and gave us a particularly effective picture of Martha (and Mary) to show how stress undermines our activities. There were many people new to meditation and they seemed to absorb his words gratefully".

## School Retreat at Orval Abbey, Belgium

The international School Retreat was held at Orval Abbey, Belgium, March 7-14, led by Laurence Freeman OSB, with 43 meditators from 10 European countries. The School Retreat is a week long intensive suitable for people who have been meditating for some time. It is a time of silence and stillness with a daily flow of meditation, a short teaching and regular meetings with one of the retreat leaders. The central theme was about spir-

itual knowledge.

Jose Pype, National Coordinator for Belgium and North European Coordinator, said:

*"The silent meditation was really the central part of the retreat. On the last evening there was a possibility to share in small groups. What I heard as most significance was that people were amazed, also group leaders who led already longtime a group, how transforming such a retreat is. The silence was complete and people did have the opportunity to visit every day an assistant for a short interview. The interview helped the retreatants to clarify and discern through sharing what the Spirit is saying.*

*We have had exceptional weather during this early spring days. Blue sky and sun, symbols of pure attention. What you experience during such a retreat is inexplicable with words, you must do it."*

## In Focus

*Betty Carmody, Australia (Betty is an oblate, leads two meditation groups and has decided to leave a legacy to support the work of WCCM – but while she's still with us.)*



I began to meditate in the Christian tradition about 9 years ago. My first experience was in a small home group with a few others whose presence inspired me. The experience remains in my consciousness and colours everything I do. I soon felt a real change of focus, a turning inward and learning to know myself in God. This led to a desire to share meditation with others who were seeking a deepening of their prayer life. So, I started a group in my home and another in a local Uniting Church, where I now am a member. Leading these groups also helped me to stay faithful to the discipline. It wasn't always easy but the spiritual rewards were discernible.

As my experience with the wider community increased, it expanded my horizon and I could see glimpses of what was happening through WCCM all over the world. I joined the ACMC Sydney committee and was involved in leading courses to introduce meditation. I was experiencing the reality of being part of a 'Community of Love'; as described by Father John Main.

Each morning, when I open my computer, I find 'Daily Wisdom' - a gem to

start my day. WCCM weekly teachings and readings encourage and enrich me, as do Advent and Lenten lessons during those two special times of our year. As an Oblate, I read the Rule of St Benedict each day and I am amazed that the wisdom and guidance given over fifteen hundred years ago is as relevant today in helping me to live well.

The impact of a bequest usually comes after the person making this has passed on. Why am I choosing to make my bequest now?

As I read the newsletters, I decided that I wanted to share in the extended outreach of the community, in its life-changing work in so many fields, in its vision for humanity. I am inspired by the work being done by Father Laurence visiting poor areas in so many parts of our world, to places of continual violence, his leading seminars, retreats, visiting prisons, schools and hospitals. I am inspired too, by the community's website as it offers resources to extend meditation to the world. And I realise this all comes at a cost!

At my advanced age, I find myself slowing down and am limited physically. It is comforting to know that my practice of meditation is the help I can give to the world, no matter what limitations I may experience in my body. I can also give financially.

It was an easy matter for me to bequeath to WCCM when making my will some years ago. Then, about 4 years ago, I followed an inner prompting to revisit the way I had left my will. I want-

ed to begin now! The idea grew in me. It was a step of faith. Doubts were dispelled as it proved to be manageable. I had already decided on the amount I wanted to give, so I then began giving smaller regular donations, and the balance will be bequeathed after I die.

It gives me sheer joy to be able to say 'thank you' in this tangible way, and to have the satisfaction of knowing that I can have a practical part to play in the furtherance of the WCCM's work. My hope is that in sharing my experience, many others will consider not only remembering WCCM in their will, but experience the blessings that comes from beginning now!

Many worthy causes have my attention and need support. For practical purposes I need to prioritise.

I believe the WCCM's mission is all encompassing. It is addressing the grassroots of all that needs to change. The daily practice of meditation as contemplative prayer transforms us; has a ripple effect in our relationships, our homes, communities and in our world. For me and many others, it opens the scriptures showing a deeper meaning to the life and teachings of Jesus.

**If you would like to know more about the various ways to leave a lasting legacy and help further the mission of WCCM in your country or throughout the world, please contact Rachel Sharpe at the WCCM's international office – [rachel.sharpe@wccm.org](mailto:rachel.sharpe@wccm.org) or +44 (0) 7834 626426.**



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

## New Resources

### Videos

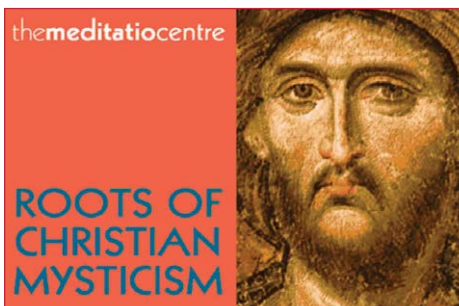
#### *Meditation with Children: Meditatio Seminar in the US*



Dr Cathy Day and Ernie Christie, Directors of Education in Townsville, Australia gave a series of seminars in several cities in the United States and Canada in 2013. They have introduced the daily practice of Christian Meditation in each of the 30 schools they are responsible for. This collection contains 6 videos.

More information: [www.meditatiostore.com](http://www.meditatiostore.com)  
Price: US \$30,00

#### *Roots of Christian Mysticism - Session 6 Return to the Heart*



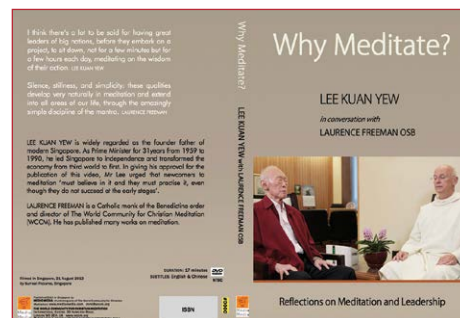
This video is a look at the Victorines

– Hugo and Richard of St Victor – and their context as the last flowering of pre-scholastic spirituality. Br Patrick Moore is a De La Salle Brother and a Scholar in Residence at Sarum College. He is a tutor on the MA course in Christian Spirituality.

More information: [www.meditatiostore.com](http://www.meditatiostore.com)  
Price: US \$5,00

### DVDs

#### *Why Meditate? Lee Kuan Yew in Conversation with Laurence Freeman OSB*



Lee Kuan Yew is widely regarded as the founder father of modern Singapore. As Prime Minister for 31 years from 1959 to 1990, he led Singapore to independence and transformed the economy from the third world to the first. In giving his approval for the publication of this video, Mr Lee urged that newcomers to meditation 'must believe in it and they must practise it, even though they do not suc-

ceed at the early stages.'

Price: US\$14.95

More information: [www.mediomedia.com](http://www.mediomedia.com)

### CDs

#### *Aspects of Love*



Talks by Laurence Freeman, given in Montreal on the three aspects of love: love of self, love of others, love of God. A re-issue of one of his most popular CD retreat sets.  
Price: US\$19.95

More information: [www.mediomedia.com](http://www.mediomedia.com)

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