



World Community for  
Christian Meditation  
(South Africa)



Newsletter 2

December 2014

## WELCOME

Welcome to the SECOND newsletter of the World Community for Christian Meditation (South Africa) (WCCM-SA).

In this edition, we remind you of the new WEBSITE [www.wccm.org.za](http://www.wccm.org.za) and bring you news of current and future events.



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## THE NEW WEBSITE

[www.wccm.org.za](http://www.wccm.org.za)

- Home
- Meditation Groups
- How to Meditate
- News/Newsletters
- New/Events
- Links



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### THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

(In meditation) we do not try to think of God, talk to God or imagine God. We stay in that awesome silence open to the eternal silence of God. We discover in meditation, through practice and taught daily by experience, that this is the natural ambience for all of us. We are created for this and our being flourishes and expands in that eternal silence.

John Main

## THE EIGHT BIG PROBLEMS OF LIFE: LAURENCE FREEMAN

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of November at 6:30 pm London time, Fr. Laurence will give the 4<sup>th</sup> talk of the series **The Eight Big Problems of Life**.

The first three talks can be watched here: <http://www.wccm.org/content/talk-acedia-and-anger-meditatio-centre-london>.

In this series of talks Fr Laurence has drawn on the wisdom of the early desert teachers who combined deep spiritual wisdom with sharp psychological insight.

The seven deadly sins originated from the desert fathers as the 8 principle faults (problems) by the desert fathers - describing the negative mind-sets that we have and are all aware of. Understanding these raises firstly our self-awareness and then our self-knowledge. (***“It is better to have self-knowledge than the power to perform miracles”- Desert Fathers***). This provides insight and wisdom and an understanding that we can only deal with this by the grace of God and the help of others.

The 4<sup>th</sup> talk, Vanity and Pride took place on 26<sup>th</sup> November.

***Do not miss these inspiring and life changing insights!***

For a synopsis of the first three talks, see page 3

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2015

### INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR: TEACHING MEDITATION TO CHILDREN

The Catholic Institute of Education brings to South Africa two leaders in the field of teaching meditation to children.

**Dr Cathy Day and Ernie Christie** have earned international acclaim for their pioneering work of introducing meditation to children and teachers in countries as diverse as Australia, the USA & Canada, Poland and Singapore. They will present seminars based on their experience of implementing Christian meditation in 31 schools in Townsville, Australia.

*The seminar will take place in various centres between 21 September and 4 October 2015. See alongside. Further details in the next newsletter.*



|                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Durban</b>       | Monday 21 September    |
| <b>Pretoria</b>     | Wednesday 23 September |
| <b>Johannesburg</b> | Friday 25 September    |
|                     | Saturday 26 September  |
| <b>Bloemfontein</b> | Monday 28 September    |
| <b>Johannesburg</b> | Tuesday 29 September   |
| <b>Cape Town</b>    | Wednesday 30 September |
|                     | Thursday 1 October     |

### 2015 RETREAT AT GOOD SHEPHERD RETREAT CENTRE

The annual retreat takes place during the weekend of **23-25 October 2015** at the Good Shepherd Retreat Centre near Hartbeespoort Dam. Should you wish to attend please book at least two months in advance as space is limited.

Contact Alta Theron ([altatheron2@gmail.com](mailto:altatheron2@gmail.com) or 082 262 2153) for more information.

## 1st talk: Gluttony and Greed and their remedy:



Greed is a compulsive state of mind and is about the desire without limits in the imagination of the individual for something that isn't there yet. Gluttony is the child of greed: it's about the satisfaction of the desire. What do you do once you have got the things that you were obsessed with?

The habit of over consuming – gluttony – is a major impediment in our journey to God. It is about eating or drinking too soon, too much, too eagerly, too picky, too wildly and spending too much on food and drink. The humiliating consequence of over eating and drinking is addiction. Gluttony affects by contagion one's relationships, work, and sexuality. The desert fathers' spiritual approach to gluttony is **fasting**. Fasting helps to control your mind and to improve your overall spiritual health. The skilful means that can pull us from gluttony is **exercise and discipline**. The practice of moderation and self-control helps us to have a better knowledge of ourselves and ultimately of God. Ultimately, the practise of **meditation** is a life giving exercise to deal with the problems of life.

## 2nd talk: Lust and Sadness and how to avoid them:

As the desert fathers undertook the journey into stillness, they experienced struggles and used the elders as mentors and used their advice as a roadmap to overcome these challenges. The eight problems grew out of the struggles and they recognised that these should be understood. They understood the combinations of the problems not only as sins but they also understood that they were dysfunctions or wounds that created patterns that we have to understand and not condemn. Through understanding of our own problems we come to self-knowledge.

Lust is closely linked to gluttony and anger. The relation lies in the fact that when we are denied this desire – we become angry. If we become obsessed with a way of satisfying our desire, and we do not get it, we are likely to experience rage. Lust is a form of luxuriousness – luxury is more than what you need, it's more than what is healthy to want. Luxury is destructive to the environment and to relationships and is a sign of imbalance. It is not the appetite or desire itself that is

wrong but the lack of moderation can turn a good desire into something dangerous and destructive. We may then see this as a substitute for health and happiness and then it turns lust into an addiction. This single issue then explodes and dominates us and it corrupts our humanity and throws us into chaos. We should turn our attention away from the illusion of lust and concentrate on what is real – our remembrance of God. The act of attention and pure prayer or meditation turns us back to reality and our capacity to be healed and our capacity for love. The good to which we return our attention in meditation is more powerful than the evil.

Sadness is related to a loss of hope. The prodigal son is used as example where he experiences sadness after his explosion into lust.

## 3rd talk: Acedia and Anger and how to turn them

Anger is a normal emotion or response to events which matter to us, for example on the sports field. The desert fathers were concerned about the fixed patterns and the misdirected energy that the state of mind could bring about. The problem is – how do we handle and manage it? There are remedies for this state of mind like taking deep breaths, a brisk walk or exercise, avoiding drugs or alcohol or talking about it. Our attitude to our own anger creates the problem and lets the anger become out of control. Anger does not make us feel very good, make us feel guilty and has the potential to lead to depression or passive aggression if it is directed inwards. Dysfunctional anger can destroy relationships and increases our self-criticism. It makes us feel more self-rejected and self-hated. The anger then gets expressed outwards – for example, in racism. A feeling of rejection, not being loved or traumatic loss – are all the patterns that lie behind anger and depression.

Acedia is the reverse of anger. It is a feeling of sadness, discouragement or giving up that results in a low level of energy and is related to depression.

The cure for outward projections of internalised anger or feelings of sadness and discouragement can be the withdrawal of the projection – by not blaming others outside ourselves. The most direct way of doing this is to leave the whole self behind, following the call of Jesus. Meditation can become a new pattern to liberate yourself from the negative forces and then your true self can appear.