



World Community for Christian Meditation (South Africa)



Newsletter 7

November 2017

WELCOME

Welcome to the SEVENTH newsletter of the World Community for Christian Meditation (South Africa) (WCCM-SA). In this edition, we report on developments concerning coming events in 2018 and 2019.



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INTRODUCTION

In this letter we offer a reflection for Advent in preparation for Christmas and the start of a New Year. We report on this year's retreat and give you a glimpse into major events planned for 2018 and 2019.

My hope is that they will inspire and energise us to bring meditation more widely to the people of South Africa.

Paul Faller



Advent is about learning to wait. It is about not having to know exactly what is coming tomorrow, only that whatever it is, it is of the essence of sanctification for us. Every piece of it, some hard, some uplifting, is sign of the work of God alive in us. We are becoming as we go. We learn in Advent to stay in the present, knowing that only the present well-lived can possibly lead us to the fullness of life.

Advent relieves us of our commitment to the frenetic in a fast-paced world. It slows us down. It makes us think. It makes us look beyond today to the "great tomorrow" of life. Without Advent, moved only by the race to nowhere that exhausts the world around us, we could be so frantic with trying to consume and control this life that we fail to develop within ourselves a taste for the spirit that does not die and will not slip through our fingers like melted snow.

Joan Chittister

CHRISTMAS – A TIME OF REFLECTION



The Magi (He Qi © 2014 All rights Reserved)

Christmas was never celebrated in the New Testament. By A.D. 336, the church had decided that all believers should celebrate the birthday of the Lord Jesus, the Son of righteousness on December 25. Christmas is thus celebrated in the western world on the 25 December. It is not a Biblical feast, but it points to a feast that must still take place. In Revelations 7: 9-17 we read of this festival which takes place in heaven where all believers will take part in it.

In the Old Testament there were a number of feasts. The three important ones were Passover, the Feast of the First Fruits and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Passover was celebrated with the Exodus from Egypt. The Feast of the First Fruits was celebrated 50 days after Passover. At the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:32 and Deut 16:13) they gave thanks to the Lord for the harvest and in remembrance of how they lived in huts as slaves in Egypt. The last feast points to the temporality of this life.

The first two feasts were fulfilled in Christ. He was crucified on Passover and fifty days later sent His Holy Spirit with the feast of the First Fruits, Pentecost. The Feast of Tabernacles will go in to fulfilment with the second coming. God remains faithful. He will come back. That is why our Christmas celebration should look forward, expecting the return of our Lord and Saviour.

In John 7:37 Jesus points towards the Feast of Tabernacles when He applies the outpouring of water on the steps of the Temple to Himself. *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."* The Jews shouted *Hosanna Rabba* save us now! In the New Jerusalem we shout, (Rev 7:10) "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Rev 7:17 confirms that this spring of life is with the Lamb and we will have access to it. Celebrate Christmas, but remember there is a perfect celebration waiting somewhere in the future.

In our daily meditation we are reminded that the feast that is waiting in the future is also a reality in us, here and now. *...streams of living water will flow from within him.* During the festive season, may you experience the peace and joy of Christ our Lord.

Revelation 7:9-17 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen."

BONNEVAUX

A Contemplative and Meditation Retreat Centre for the World Community for Christian Meditation



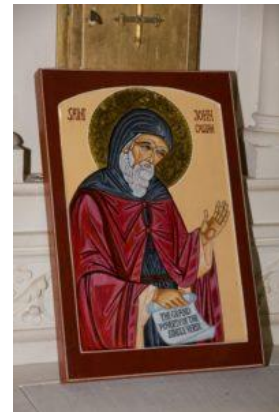
Contemplative centres through history have always served as places of peace and reconciliation. A thousand years ago a Benedictine monastery was built in Bonnevaux, near Poitiers in France. On these ancient foundations we would like to develop a contemplative centre for the 21st century.

Bonnevaux will contribute to the peace-building and mutual understanding so much needed in our world now. As a meditation centre with its roots deep in the Christian tradition and yet open to all in an inclusive spirit, it will show the potential of meditation for people of all ages, beliefs and backgrounds to unify minds and heal divided hearts. With its focus on a simple and universal teaching Bonnevaux will deepen the contemplative dimension of Christian life and also bring the fruits of meditation to people of other religious or secular beliefs.

Bonnevaux is a beautiful site. It is an ideal space with a spirit of deep peace and beauty for a contemplative retreat centre attuned to the needs of our time. It will provide a home for The World Community for Christian Meditation and bring together meditators from around the globe in friendship. There will be a resident core community who will manage the centre and welcome participants for retreats and courses. A programme of retreats, courses and events will be offered here to continue the work and mission of our community.

Please share this good news with your friends and colleagues and visit the website for more details www.bonnevauxwccm.org.

The 21st of November was a memorable day for our Community at Bonnevaux, in France and globally. With the Archbishop of Poitiers, the Prior of the monastery of Liguge, Sandrine Vinay (French National Coordinator) the icon of John Cassian 'written' for Bonnevaux by Odile van der Hoff was blessed and installed in the small chapel. Meditators from France, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, the UK and Ireland were present and messages came from worldwide, read by Jose Pype, national coordinator from Belgium.



If meditation groups would like to support the development of Bonnevaux, one way of doing this would be to take collections at group meetings and deposit into WCCM (SA) account. We would then collect these contributions and forward them to Bonnevaux.



Donations can be made to:

First National Bank
Account name: World Community for Christian Meditation SA
Account number: 62170978252
Branch code: 251145

2017 RETREAT AT GOOD SHEPHERD RETREAT CENTRE

Our annual Retreat was held on 27-29 October at the Good Shepherd Retreat Centre near Hartbeespoort Dam. We were 12 members who experienced the presence of God in silence, nature, the reading of an icon and Lectio Divina (2 Cor 5:11-21). The theme this year focussed on reconciliation.

On Friday evening, to set the stage, we watched the movie *The Railway Man*. Based on the autobiography, it tells the extraordinary, true story of Eric Lomax (Colin Firth), a British Army officer who is tormented as a prisoner of war at a Japanese labour camp during World War II. Decades later, Lomax and the beautiful love of his life, Patti (Nicole Kidman), discover that the Japanese interpreter responsible for much of his treatment is still alive. They set out to confront him, and his haunting past, in this powerful and inspiring tale of heroism, humanity and the redeeming power of love. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksrkKXoEjBM>

We tried to make the reading of the text also a practical exercise by looking at real life examples where we are asked to forgive others. We departed on Sunday after lunch with a new commitment to participate in the the ministry of reconciliation.

We invite you to join us next year on our retreat 19 - 21 October 2018.

NATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL 2018

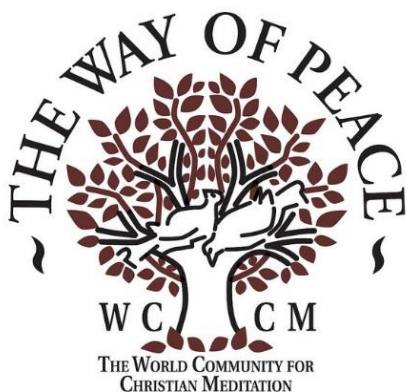


Spiritfest is the Grahamstown Churches' initiative in the National Arts Festival which runs next year from 28 June to 8 July 2018.

Like us on Facebook: @spiritfest.grahamstown Follow us on Instagram: spiritfest_naf

Christian Meditation

WCCM (SA) in collaboration with the Christian Spirituality Centre based in Cape Town will be offering a meditation experience at the National Arts Festival in July 2018



When you can find a truth that Hindus and Christians, Buddhists and Taoists and Sufis in Islam all agree on, then you have probably found something that is profoundly important: something that tells you about universal truth and ultimate meaning, something that touches the very core of the human condition (Ken Wilber).

Explore the tradition that comes to us through the centuries from the Desert Fathers and Mothers.

MONDAY 2 – FRIDAY 6 JULY (16:00-17:00)

VENUE (TBA)

Each session will have an individual flavour but cover the same ground.

VISIT OF LAURENCE FREEMAN SEPTEMBER 2019



We are planning a visit of Laurence Freeman, leader of WCCM internationally, for September 2019. He has already agreed to come to South Africa and our task now is to form partnerships with other organisations which might show interest in the visit.

To date we already have the Jesuit Institute of South Africa and the Christian Spirituality Centre based in Cape Town interested in working together with us to make the series of events over a 10-day period fruitful.

We will keep you updated in future newsletters. We appeal to members of WCCM locally to contact us so that meditators in your area will have an opportunity to meet Laurence and hear him speak.

RESOURCES

Meditation Chimes



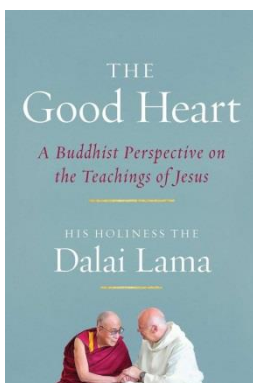
Produce good vibrations with a gentle tap of the wooden mallet on the single 15 cm metallophone. This solo tone rod emits a powerful tone that lasts for 20 seconds or more. It consists of one polished solid aluminium rod on a meranti holder with felt base. Handcrafted in Johannesburg. Available at R150 + plus postage

Contact Paul at paulf@cie.org.za

DVD “Set Pools of Silence in a Thirsty Land”

Just produced by the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra, Australia, this DVD features Fr Laurence and Archbishop Christopher Prowse discussing a range of topics including The Importance and History of Christian Meditation, Ecumenical Dimensions, How do we Meditate, and Meditation with Children. The Meditation with Children section takes us through meditation in a classroom situation and includes some moving reflections by some very young students. This very important resource can be obtained through the following link.

<http://cgatholic.org.au/2017/05/set-pools-silence-thirsty-land/>



“The Good Heart” by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Fr Laurence recently spoke about this book and how it “brings many people home”. Throughout the book the Dalai Lama considers such well-known gospel passages as the Sermon on the Mount, the healing of the sick and the Resurrection. He offers fresh perspectives on these familiar Christian sources of faith, and also considers such topics as transformation, meditation, ritual, and the ideas of reward and punishment.

The Introduction by Laurence freeman is available on the web at

<http://www.wisdompubs.org/sites/default/files/preview/Good-Heart-Preview.pdf>.