



World Community for Christian Meditation (South Africa)



Newsletter 19 ————— February 2024

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WELCOME

Welcome to the NINETEENTH newsletter of the World Community for Christian Meditation (South Africa) (WCCM-SA). While this mouthpiece of the community has been silent for some time, we trust that news of events both local and international have come to you through other media. In this letter we report on significant events in 2023 and look ahead to what is available during the current year.

REFLECTION



Woman with a Pink (Rembrandt)

The capacity for silence – a deep, creative awareness of one's inner truth – is what distinguishes us as human. All of us, however ordinary or flawed, have at heart a seemingly boundless longing for fulfilment, and it is their consciousness of this that makes Rembrandt's portraits so beautiful. The *Woman with a Pink* is lost in the depths of her private reflections. Her dark background is symbolically unimportant, lending expression to the soft brightness that plays upon her face. Visibly silent, she is explicitly encountering the mystery of being human. She does not contemplate the carnation (the 'pink'), usually an emblem of love, but looks within, in silence, quiet and engrossed. (Sr Wendy Beckett, *The Art of Lent*).

NEWS REPORT– Cape Town

St Michaels Cape Town Christian Meditation Groups

REPORT FROM JOY CARKEEK



I facilitate two small groups of meditators who are parishioners at St Michael's.

The first group has been meeting at my home for the past eighteen months. The group consists of younger women who are either catechists or mothers of children attending catechism. Their interest grew from their practice of meditation over the past ten years with the 120 children who form part of our Good Shepherd Catechism program. This way of Christian meditation was introduced to us in 2005 by visitors from Townsville,

Australia. They shared their experience of promoting meditation among children in Catholic schools there.

We meet weekly for about an hour. A short talk, taken from the website of the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM), is followed by a period of meditation. Some choose to stay on for a further 45 minutes of silence to do contemplative handwork while listening to music from Taizé or other sacred music.



The second group meets in the church every Saturday morning from 8.00 to 8.45a.m. Again, a short WCCM podcast is followed by meditation. One Saturday a month we stay on for a further half-hour to share our experiences of meditation with its challenges and fruits.

Last year we had silent retreats on two Saturday mornings – during Lent and Advent – from 9 to 12 a.m., hosting 20 to 25 parishioners. They were open to all parishioners. We followed much the same program as we do each week. Our next retreat will be on Saturday 23rd March 2024 to prepare for Holy Week.

LOCAL EVENTS 2024 – Cape Town

FORTHCOMING EVENT



THE WAY OF PEACE

A SILENT RETREAT IN PREPARATION FOR HOLY WEEK

An invitation to all to experience our rich Catholic tradition of Christian Meditation and Contemplation.

“Be still and know that I am God.” [Psalm 47]

“Come away with me to a quiet place and rest awhile.” [Mark 6:31]

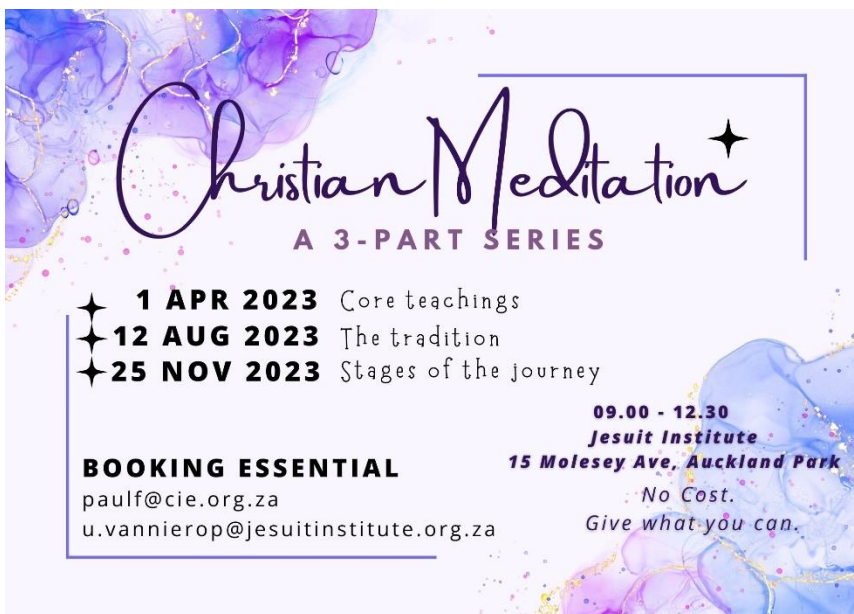
SATURDAY 23RD MARCH 8.45a.m. to 12 noon - The Ruffle Room and Side Chapel in St Michael’s Church.

For further information, and to register, please contact Joy Carkeek

What’s App 083 675 8515 OR joycarkeek@gmail.com

NEWS REPORT- Johannesburg

Essential Teaching ‘Weekend’ 2023



A regular feature of national meditation communities is the Essential Teaching Weekend Workshop. The Essential Teaching Workshop (ETW) helps you understand your own experience of Christian meditation in the light of a greater tradition as well as through the experience of others with whom you share the journey. Because of logistic and financial constraints we

have not been able to offer such a workshop on a national or even regional basis. Instead, during 2023, we divided the main elements of such a workshop into three Saturday mornings as indicated on the flyer shown here.

LOCAL EVENTS 2024 - Johannesburg

Weekly Online Meditation Sessions

We extend the following invitation to any interested person.

Join other meditators for a weekly meditation session (30 minutes) at the following days and times: at 20:00 (SAST)

- * **Tuesdays at 06:00 (6 am SAST)**
- * **Wednesdays at 20:00 (8 pm SAST)**

To receive a link to these sessions held on Zoom, simply reply by email to Paul Faller (paulf@cie.org.za)

Christian Meditation – A Quarterly Meeting



Christian Meditation
2024

- ✦ **16 MAR 2024 A way of silent prayer**
Leave the distractions of the world and enter stillness through
- ✦ **11 MAY 2024 Meditation and children**
Children are natural meditators. They enjoy just being with God.
- ✦ **17 AUG 2024 Into Great Silence**
A call to retreat through film
- ✦ **2 NOV 2024 Persisting with the journey**
Challenges of meditation

09.00 - 12.30
BOOKING ESSENTIAL
paulf@cie.org.za
u.vannierop@jesuitinstitute.org.za
No Cost. Give what you can. All welcome.



JESUIT INSTITUTE
SOUTH AFRICA

*Jesuit Institute
15 Molesey Ave,
Auckland Park*

National Arts Festival 2023

National Arts Festival 2023

Meditation sessions from 09:30 – 10:30 were provided daily from Monday 26 to Friday 30 June in St Patrick’s Catholic Church as part of the Spiritfest programme – a spiritual path within the National Arts Festival which takes place at this time annually in Grahamstown/Makhanda in the Eastern Cape.

The five sessions introduced meditators to a selection of mystics in chronological order as illustrated alongside.



National Arts Festival 2024






We will be back in Grahamstown/Makhanda for this year’s National Arts Festival to offer daily meditation sessions and to introduce Christian meditation to newcomers to the practice.

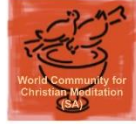
The National Arts Festival will take place from Thursday 20 June to Sunday 30 June 2024.

Meditation sessions will be held daily in St Patrick’s Catholic Church, 47 Hill Street, from **09:30 – 10:30** from **Monday 24 to Friday 28 June**. The sessions will include a reflective introduction on a theme to be announced in our May newsletter. So, if in Grahamstown/Makhanda for the festival, do pop in to centre yourself for the day ahead.

Meditate with the Mystics

	MONDAY Julian of Norwich (1342-1430)
	TUESDAY Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)
	WEDNESDAY Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941)
	THURSDAY Thomas Merton (1915-1968)
	FRIDAY John Main (1926-1982)

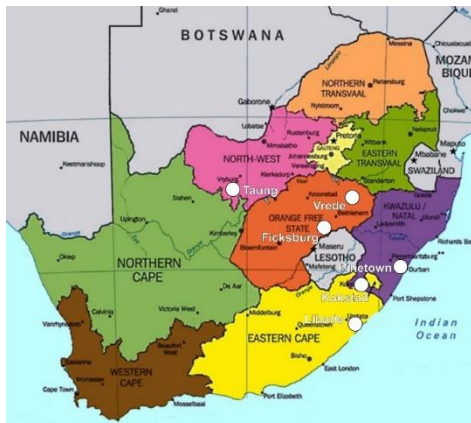


World Community for
Christian Meditation
(WCCM)

St Patrick’s Church, Hill St
26-30 June
Daily 09:30 - 10:30

Five Guides along the Way

Meditation in Schools



As promised in our previous newsletter we post some highlights from the research conducted in six schools from Eastern Cape, Free State, Kwazulu-Natal and North West provinces (in towns marked on the map alongside). participated in the research phase of the pilot project reported on in our previous newsletter. From an analysis of feedback from 50 teachers and over 500 learners of all ages, we have gleaned the following, focusing on the experience of learners in meditation.

Learners' Experience of Meditation

Meditation was a positive experience, expressed by the large majority in terms such as 'relaxing', 'calming', 'peaceful', and 'quiet' when asked to describe their experience. This made the practice enjoyable for them. Only two of the 500+ learners expressed some negativity with the following comments:

- "I don't really like to meditate. I prefer to just write my thoughts down and not sit in silence."
- "From my side I don't enjoy meditation, because I think things that make me cry."

Other comments showing the learners' appreciation were recorded in response to the last question, "Anything else you'd like to say?" Here is an organised selection of the most significant comments. Some were expressed by an individual; others repeated many times.

MEDITATION

- It's great to meditate; meditation is the best.
- Meditation is difficult but I'm learning
- Meditation is very important in our lives.

PERSONAL IMPACT

- Meditation made a big epic change in my life.
- Meditation has really improved my quality of life.
- Meditation gives a positive start to your day.
- Meditation is good because it gives peace to your mind.
- Meditation helps you find yourself.
- Meditation helps me sleep well with no nightmares.
- Through meditation I can overcome anything; it helps to build confidence.
- Meditation helps you to handle your problems and struggles.
- Meditation is good for people with anger issues.
- As a person on the autistic spectrum I find that meditation helps to clear my mind.
- Meditation is the best pill when you are feeling sad or lost.
- Meditation encourages people who are hopeless.
- Meditation helps us to look at our behaviour in order to change.
- Meditation helps people who have stress.

PERSONAL PRACTICE

- I always meditate at home or on holiday.
- I would like to meditate with my family.
- Meditation is the best thing that I ever do in my life.
- I want my friends to meditate.
- Meditation is my favourite prayer.
- I found nothing difficult because I went through it several times at home.
- It has become my sanctuary.

ADVICE

- When stressed or angry just meditate.
- Make sure you meditate everyday alone.
- Meditate when you feel lonely.
- Meditate when you have problems.
- It is wonderful and you will enjoy it.
- Everyone should take time to meditate.
- It's good to just stop and take a break to connect with God.
- Meditation should be an everyday thing.
- I would recommend meditation to anyone.
- When you feel a heavy burden on your shoulders try to meditate.
- Meditation can be the solution for world peace.

THE SCHOOL

- Every school needs to do meditation.
- I am grateful the school is giving us this chance to connect with God.
- Meditation should be implemented in the school.
- We must meditate every day.
- Meditation should be part of the school timetable.
- I wish everyone would meditate.
- If we keep meditation, everyone will do better in their school work.
- I would like to thank my teacher who taught me how to meditate because I've been through a lot and I'm grateful.

The comments listed above already give an indication of what the practice of meditation has taught the learners. Here we provide a summary of responses to the question - What do you learn from meditation?

BODY

- Meditation teaches us to relax and be calm, not only in the meditation period but continuing beyond.

MIND

- Meditation clears the mind and enables one to think more positively.

EMOTIONS

- Meditation helps one to deal with anger.
- Meditation reduces stress, anxiety, frustration and depression
- Meditation helps one to deal with problems, enabling one to approach them more peacefully, not overthinking them, and even letting them go.
- Meditation increases self-confidence.

RELATIONSHIPS

Meditation helps to improve the quality of relationships in a number of ways.

- being understanding and tolerant of others
- being open to others
- loving and caring for others
- having increased patience with others
- respecting others
- being kind to others
- being ready to forgive and to ask forgiveness

TEACHING & LEARNING

Meditation also benefits life in the classroom as it encourages behaviour change.

- It teaches self-control and enables one to be quiet when necessary.
- It enables listening and paying attention.
- It encourages truthfulness and perseverance.
- It facilitates focus and ability to concentrate on the work at hand.
- It clarifies the mind.

SPIRITUALITY

Meditation brings one to recognise an interior, spiritual life. It taught learners:

- To acknowledge an 'inner self' (as they described it)
- That there are different ways to pray – in this instance, silent prayer;
- That it brings them closer to God;
- That it is a prayer of the heart;
- That God is there for everyone.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Online Talk Series - Behodling Divine Beauty

And God saw that it was very good



In 2024 the theme for our online series will explore Beauty, Goodness and the Act of Creation in all senses, including art, theology and social justice. The sessions have proven popular with many as a way of unifying the year by developing very different aspects of an essential central theme which touches all parts of our personal experience and the challenges of our world at this time.

As we struggle with ecological as well as political and economic emergencies, a deeper understanding of beauty, goodness, and creativity may release both the joy and wisdom we need to stay centred and draw on the most life-giving and positive powers of our shared humanity. The solutions to our global problems and their means are already within our reach. What we conspicuously lack is the common mind to make them effective and to change the disastrous course humanity is on.

For more information and the schedule of dates and speakers go to [Beholding Divine Beauty | WCCM](#)

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 Tulbagh In the Western Cape. Available at R165 + plus postage

Contact Paul at paulf@cie.org.za or fallerpaul582@gmail.com

Meditatio Talk Series

For many years and four times a year a Meditatio CD has been sent to each registered Christian Meditation group around the world. To keep up with the times, these Meditatio CDs are being offered as audio files that can be simply downloaded and used at weekly groups. Go to:

https://meditiotalks.wccm.org/?mc_cid=7ba082098b&mc_eid=7581bdb71e

Donations

Over the past few years we have sent regular communication via the website, through newsletters or via a Mailchimp email service. As WCCM(SA) receives no financial support it is difficult to keep this communication going. The annual costs are as follows:

- Website hosting (annual fee) R1200
- Mailchimp email (monthly fee) R250-300 (approximately R3000-3500 annually)

Considering this, we appeal to meditators to support this work by making one-off or regular contributions, however large or small. The banking details are:

The World Community for Christian Meditation
Nedbank current account 1171190328

