



WCCM

Newsletter of The World Community for Christian Meditation

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The Language of the Body

WHAT IS THE SACRED LANGUAGE OF CHRISTIANITY? LAURENCE FREEMAN EXPLORES THE MEANING OF THE RESURRECTION



The Easter Tree in Bonnevaux (Photo by Laurence Freeman)

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Dear Friends

A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

The Easter vigil began for us by lighting the fire near what we call the Easter tree at the end of the Bonnevaux valley. It was such an intense fire I couldn't get close enough to it to light the Paschal candle. The next morning the vigil ended with us standing, a little chilly, watching the sun push up like a giant orange above the treeline. With many sharing the Holy Week ceremonies online, each part of this three-day initiation reminded me how powerfully we can be united locally and globally across continents and in each other's now. My understanding of the Resurrection was again mysteriously deepened and I again saw that we celebrate it not because we understand everything but in order to understand it a little more.

Understanding anything is less about getting more information than being vulnerably open to what we don't know. Letting go of preconceptions and prejudices, of fixed ideas and opinions is the precondition of all learning. Our minds, however, can so quickly close and become defensive. Learning challenges us because it changes us. We fear change and so it takes real courage and an open mind to learn.

When older people complain it's too late for them to learn – for example, a new phone - they may be revealing more about how they see themselves than about the new challenge scaring them. True, all our brain cells aren't being replaced but the ones remaining are still good for learning into the fourth age. I met a hundred-year-old nun who once announced to her community that she wanted to learn to drive and asked her nervous-looking sisters to teach her. Lifelong learning (with realistic goals) is part of the new era of longevity that we have entered. The alternative is premature senility with retirement equating a long twilight of meaninglessness. Not every older person has the means to em-

bark on new pathways of learning but if they do, then like the young, they bring benefits to those who can't.

Meditation is a continuous learning process that can be started at any age. Because we will never complete it, it teaches us how to become a perpetual disciple, a true learner. It teaches us how to learn anything better, how to let go of pessimistic habits and judgments about ourselves and instead be open to greater depth of field in every area of experience.

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If we celebrate Easter in fresh faith every year, we learn more about the Resurrection and the human mystery

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it illuminates. We emerge from the three days thinking, not only 'what a great thing God did in raising His Son from the dead', but 'I thank you, Lord, for the wonder of my own being'. Science often seems better at awakening a sense of wonder – the beginning of learning– than religion. Religion can approach even the most sacred mysteries with minds closed up by formulas and explanations. Through childlike, first-hand learning, contemplatives crack these open exposing the living mystery. Science, too, can be reductionist and dogmatic. But when a new discovery is made (as is happening now in physics) a wave of humility and wonder is released: 'we've found a new bit of the puzzle but there's even more to learn about the world and even what matter itself is'.

Incarnation. Word made Flesh, Death and Resurrection. The risen body. The sending of the Holy Spirit. These terms are not answers we must believe. They are among the best terms yet invented to lead us into discovering what they point at. They are not passwords into a restricted website but words throwing us open to a reality that is new and open to all. A commonplace in mystical teaching is that silence is the deepest, completest way of understanding reality. Deep prayer of the heart teaches the deepest truths we can learn.

There is nothing so much like God in the whole universe as silence.
(Meister Eckhart)

Silence gives answers. *(Rumi)*

The silence of revelation fills us with wonder; the silence of absence teaches us fidelity. The Word is in both. *(John Main)*

The thought-free experience of the Self is silence. It is eloquence, the best language. *(Ramana Maharshi)*

Silence still works even while speech and other pathways of communication are in operation. It is tangible in any act of communicating through the quality of attention. The real presence of silence in all communication bestows authenticity and authority. Where it is absent, communication falters and smells false. Eventually, it even breaks down or becomes deliberate deception. This is painfully visible today in our noise-polluted world – physically and mentally. Even the basic distinction between truth and falsehood seems often to degenerate in political life into vitriolic attacks between the contestants. It is also an additional cause of anguish in the present health crisis. Whose opinion do we trust during the pandemic, do the wilder theories have any merit, where is the authority needed before trust can be bestowed?

When we use words ever louder to hide the absence of silence in communication they become an additional layer of inauthenticity, separation and distrust. We just want to say, 'shut up!' Communication becomes cloudier, noisier and busier. So, the primacy and purity of silence affirmed by the mystical tradition can be seen to improve the social relationships that are made by our speaking, writing, listening and reading. If meditation creates community it also sustains it. It sounds naïve but I think the day will come when all business meetings will routinely begin with a period of silence because people have realised how much better the results are when they do. Silence purifies language.

At his talk in the Bonnevaux Speakers Series, the philosopher Charles Taylor spoke of the urgency of reviving democracy by fostering conversation among people who don't like each other and whose attempts at communicating often end by hurling insults or threats. But how can we even begin to encourage redemptive dialogue? Charles described the promise of bringing together small, local, low-key, face-to-face groups. I also thought how these groups could be sisters to the weekly meditation groups that form such a vital aspect of our WCCM community. Silence and talk are distinct but they could learn to dance together.

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This is not abstract stuff. Whenever human beings become abstract, they are distracted from the truth. Then we call the individual women and children killed in military conflict 'collateral damage', an abstraction insulating us from criminality and tragedy. When we speak of those who 'belong here' and of others say they 'don't belong', or claim that some have rights and others don't – this is the language of populist politics – the abstraction distracts us from and denies

the equally precious value of each person. It dehumanises people on all sides of the argument.

All of this has a place in the meaning of the Resurrection. The death of Jesus was justified by a great cruel abstrac-

puzzled. We know the sacred language of Hindus, Jews and Muslims. But the Christian sacred language? Greek? Aramaic? Latin? When these answers fail, people start to become more abstract: Love? The Church? The Eucharist?



The Washing of the Feet on Holy Thursday at Bonnevaux

tion: 'it's better for one man to die for the people'. This is how inhumanity is justified and locks us into ancestral patterns of oppression and injustice. The Resurrection explodes this hypocrisy of abstraction and dehumanisation by revealing the complete embodiment of the human at the peak of its evolution. The risen body of Jesus is not a sign of divine privilege but an insight about our destiny. Seeing the risen Jesus – what does 'seeing' mean? – is tasting the first fruits of the human harvest. But why insist on the bodily resurrection? It seems absurd. (Wittgenstein said it could not be understood by reason but only by love.) How does the body change its form? Why is the body so important, and why more important in Christian faith to human meaning than in any other tradition?

When you ask people 'what is the sacred language of Christianity?', they are

The sacred language of Christianity cannot adequately be put into words. It is not essentially verbal although it is an essentially oral, embodied, and interpersonal transmission. Its language is the whole mystery of the human body. Not the idealised bodies of Michelangelo but your body and mine, as they are as I write and you read this. The gospel is only sketched in words, amazing words, but it is fully written in flesh, in 'body language', because God was translated perfectly into flesh when the Word was embodied in Mary's womb. In the Christian revelation, God didn't send us a written message. God incarnated in a body that grew from infancy to maturity, felt tired, hungry, knew desire, pleasure and pain, wept and died. Like us: he lived and died – and rose - in an embodied state.

In the apocryphal Acts of John Jesus is described dancing in a circle after the Last Supper with his disciples (having

drunk at least three of the ritual glasses of wine). He summons them all to join him because 'if you do not dance you will not know what we know'. I remembered this scene on Easter Sunday evening. We were in Bonnevaux sitting in front of the cloister finishing a BBQ. When someone brought a speaker and linked it to their phone music filled the air. The first piece was the irresistible dance music of Zorba the Greek. Before long, people were dancing, though some (as Mt 28:17 says) 'doubted'. They thought perhaps they would look silly, so started to take the dishes indoors. But they let themselves be pulled into the dance. Jesus's teaching is not dogmatic but choreographic. The Kingdom is a dance that anyone can join and that everyone is needed to complete.

If you layer conditions and qualifications onto this call to fullness of life you discredit it. This is what institutional Christianity has done over time especially with respect to the body. If the language of Christian faith is the body, how can you communicate that faith by layering fear, repression and guilt onto those aspects of the body especially connected with pleasure and happiness? The body is not only made to suffer and die. As institutional Christianity re-forms, incarnational Christianity is once again being recognised. The active agent in recognising this incarnational form is contemplation. As in the meditation journey from head to heart, the first great discovery is the sheer wonder of our embodied state.

Our body is an encyclopaedia comprising every kind of knowledge because human beings are a microcosm of the universe. The body knows more than we do; and it never lies. Formed from the material energies of the universe, the body has potential, far beyond its material form, to be boundlessly extensive to the edges of the universe. We can take the gospel to the whole world as Jesus said. In Mk 16:15 Jesus says 'preach the gospel to all creation'. This incarnational,

universal evangelism is not a membership recruitment drive. Nor do we have to preach to trees or distant galaxies.

It is about awakening in the Mind of Christ. 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ '(1Cor 2:15). The word we translate as 'preach' does not mean to try to convert or coerce from



Easter morning sunrise at Bonnevaux

a pulpit but to 'herald' or publish news about an event. We do it from within the dance, overcoming our fear of inclusion and union and losing self-consciousness: the dance then speaks for itself. By shedding its fear, even hatred, of the body, incarnational Christianity generates a more authentic evangelism through a contemplative way of communicating. Its words resonate with the boundlessly embodied experience of faith witnessed by the Resurrection.

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Those following Dr. Barry White's current WCCM talks on Health are learning a richer understanding about what health means and so how they are embodied. With good scientific reasoning Barry puts meditation at the centre of his model of health and this approach allows the meaning of health to expand into wholeness and even beyond wholeness into holiness. The 'sacred' language of Christianity is the body, in all its evolutionary forms, because the body itself is both the road and the vehicle of the human per-

son. The Resurrection stories use language as it has never been used before showing how we evolve through death into new and unlimited forms of embodiment.

The ego's survival depends on the physical body. When it dies so does the chain of self-consciousness. Death is a terrible dark tunnel - worse perhaps for those at the bedside than for the person

dying into their new bodily form. Scientific studies of near-death experiences (NDE) are still controversial and the defenders of current models of medical orthodoxy are sceptical as it is their role to be so. Yet academic research about the universal elements of NDE is advanced and recognises a permanent life-transforming effect on the subjects they study. People who have undergone such experiences report across cultures and beliefs a new experience of time and thought-awareness, insight, peace and joy, universal oneness and the sense of coming to a border, a point of no return (which obviously in their case they did not cross). The loss of blood or oxygen should technically induce extreme panic. Yet those who return report the profoundest peace they have ever known.

I raise this only to suggest that, if the Resurrection of Jesus is an event we can relate to here and now, it is because we already have intimations or glimpses of what it shows us about the goal of the human journey. The New Testament

speaks of the disciples' Resurrection experience as a complete personal transformation expanded in community. At the core, is a recognition by the disciples of the risen Jesus after they have overcome misrecognition, fear and doubt and, of course, feeling themselves recognised and addressed by him. This re-energises and energises all those who 'see and believe', sending them back to their daily lives with new commitment, purpose and freedom. They feel something new – not yet everything – of the life Jesus is now living in and through them. They feel embodied and grounded yet filled with a spontaneous liberty of spirit that cuts away whatever chains still hold them back from the dance. After a while, like meditators who feel the transforming effects in their lives, they begin to speak about what they have found.

John Main said that the great fault of the church is to underestimate the power of the gospel by reducing it to morality and social conformity. This is how the mystical tradition has long challenged institutional Christianity. Science today often reminds us, better than the church does, about the wonder of reality. Electrodes touching the brain during surgery frequently restore a past experience to the patient in full vivid detail and all the immediacy of the original event. A concert is 'remembered' with every note played, laughter erupts at a long-forgotten funny event, an insignificant object from childhood re-presents with total recall. This remembering is not the replaying of a video recording observed 'now' in opposition to 'then'. It is inexpressibly real, as present as in the 'past' and the individual is wholly present with it. Is not this the meaning of 'anamnesis', the making-present in the Eucharist or of Christ who is 'the same yesterday, today and forever' (Heb 13:8). The risen Jesus is equally present across all dimensions of time and in all places. 'Split the wood and I am there. Lift the stone and I am there (Gospel Thomas 77). Recognising him, like waking up

from sleep or falling in love happens by stages. It makes us present to all that he is present to.

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My point is that these are credible wonders even if they are out of our comfort zone of the stream of familiar reality. They show our capacity for an expanded life and consciousness linked to and present in the body, even here and now. The body is the field of experience and is itself transformed. It becomes both strange and familiar: 'whether in the body or out of the body I cannot say' as St Paul described his mystical experi-

*In Christ, in that little
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ence (2Cor 12:9). The embodied self that each of us manifests is a microcosm of the cosmos and of an eternal reality that extends through all its time zones. Microscopic pictures of the interior organs look amazingly like photos of galaxies and star clusters. The body is a 'nano cosmos' (a nano is one billionth of a metre) and a wondrous beauty unites the cosmic and microcosmic.

The little space within the heart is as great as this vast universe. The heavens and the earth are there; all that now is and all that is not: the whole universe is in Him and He dwells within our heart. (*Chandogya Upanishad*).

In Christ all the fullness of the Godhead dwells embodied. In him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible; and in him all things hold together. (*Colossians 1*)

In Christ, in that little space in the heart, we are in all and all is in us. Space

and time are no longer what our separated ego consciousness is used to because in that embodied unity we are included in the whole of all life experience. We haven't reached the borderline point of no return yet. Yet how we live now is deeply enhanced by a growing awareness of this reality.

Recently and ecstatically, physicists reported the discovery of a new, fifth force in the universe. If verified, it will change how we see everything and help us develop new powers. It was a welcome bulletin, lifting us to a greater panorama in this time of Covid. Why should there be competition between science and faith? The news of the fifth force, small by comparison with the story of the Resurrection, is like it a part of the evolutionary learning process of the journey of humanity

If we forget the body as the sacred language of Christianity, we won't be able to speak authoritatively about the discoveries our faith reveals. If we saw the wonder and beauty of the body rather than its moral dangers, the programming of the institutional church would change allowing it to dance out into the world. An incarnational Christianity perceives the barely describable signs, vivid hints and glimpses of Christ's risen body, penetrating and forming us even as he forms in us.

Great mystery is revealed in small things. The contemplative mind finds infinite riches in a small room and our emptiness attracts his fullness. Remembering that contemplation brings incarnation to fulfilment helps us be present to how the Word that spoke creation emerged from the infinite, silent depths of being. The silence of a self-emptying love that has come towards us and awaits our arrival – this is what is announced in the Resurrection.

With much love,

Lawrence

Special

Lessons from Pandemic Times

THE WORLD IS BEGINNING THE SECOND YEAR OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS. WE ARE STILL IN PANDEMIC TIMES. UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE IS INCREASING. WHAT HAS OUR MEDITATION PRACTICE TAUGHT US THROUGH THESE CHALLENGES? WHAT GRACE MAY BE PRESENT IN IT ALL? WE INVITED MEDITATORS FROM OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO REFLECT ON THAT.

Recovering the depth and mystery of our being

BY GIOVANNI GIAMBALVO, ITALY

In this time of pandemic the precariousness of our lives has been slammed in our face in all its crudeness and inexorability. Perhaps we have never felt so clearly the truth of Giuseppe Ungaretti's words: "we, like leaves in autumn on the trees". Fear of the virus, with its potential and awful consequences, like worry for our nearest and dearest, buzzes in the depths of our minds, and serves only to inflate our egos. We tend to pull deeper into ourselves, away from all contact, hoping this will protect us.

More than ever meditation helps us to come to terms with our fears, first of all, fear of death.

In meditation we rediscover the 'value' of our precariousness which, instead of paralyzing us by playing the game of our ego, becomes a spring that spurs us to recover the depth and mystery of our being in the 'here and now'. We see that our journey can only be a journey of sharing.

In meditation we experience a silence in which we are not alone: a silence full of faith that prepares us for an inner listening, an encounter, a communion, a gradual expansion of our being as it opens itself to the Other. This is the help as well as the challenge, at a personal and communitarian level, that we gain from meditation.



People are already finding better ways of living

BY KERRY JAMES, AUSTRALIA



What have I learned by meditating during the pandemic? Interiority and silence reinforced by St Paul's declaration that nothing: (i.e. no loss through pestilence, illness, or even death), can separate us from the love of God. Many must repair mental health after COVID-19, and rebuild trust, confidence, and hope, as well as household economies damaged through loss of livelihoods. This can involve altering pre-existing thought patterns and accepting risk because COVID-19 is here to stay, albeit in gentler forms, and other plagues will come.

Meditation reveals God as pure love, the ultimate creator, which can instil new positive attitudes and action. People are already

finding better ways of living that entail them being kinder: to each other, to previously alien communities, and to the environment, even amidst their present privations.

Meditation breaks down defensiveness, encourages generosity and helps us become more open to seeing all creation forming one extended household or estate on our planet. It can provide greater clarity of thought enabling us to present gentler, more loving, ideas in nonviolent ways to national leaders, who hold the power to advance them. Instead of going backwards and reinstating the old competitive ways in which the strong win always at the expense of the weak, we find a better way.

Special

Inspired by Julian of Norwich

BY PAUL HARRIS, CANADA

My own practice of Christian Meditation during the current COVID-19 pandemic has relied immensely on the beautiful life of Julian of Norwich (1342- 1429), who came close to dying of the Black Plague in England, and received the last rites of the Church. The plague in England and Europe killed 50 million people, 60 percent of the population, and is regarded as the greatest catastrophe in recorded history. Julian continued to receive spiritual revelations during her illness concerning the contemplative direction of her spiritual practice.

During her viral illness of the pandemic, God revealed to Julian his compassionate warmth, closeness, tenderness, and love. One of Julian's revelations is when the Lord says to her: "But all things shall be well, and

all manner of things shall be well". Her revelations from God encompass a wide range of topics, and portray an unquenchable optimism regarding God's power to bring good out of evil.

In one of her revelations Julian says: "For in the human soul is God's true dwelling", and adds, "utterly at home He lives in us forever". Again Julian says: "God is the still point at my centre." John Main picked up on this saying of Julian's, and in one of his talks says: "Meditation is a daily pilgrimage to ones own centre".

Once in a time of prayer, Julian heard these words of the Lord: "I am the foundation of your praying". These words were a great consolation to her in the practice of inner prayer. Is it any wonder that John Main asked to hear readings of Julian in the last days of his life?



Staying awake during the night of uncertainty and fear

BY RICARDO MAFFEO, ARGENTINA

I got the virus in early March, 2020, and was isolated for one month. Meditation, lectio, and other forms of prayer were "the narrow gate" that got me through those days of uncertainty and fear. Once recovered, other challenges emerged, especially at work. I learned that the pandemic is like a desert at night, where meditation and lectio supply the oil to keep the lamps burning, as Jesus teaches in Matthew 25.

In a post-Covid world, I suppose the main challenge will be the temptation to "get back to normal", to remain distracted; to continue denying our vulner-

ability and the urgent need for change the world has. Fr Laurence recalled during a webinar last May that the book of Wisdom says the hope of the healing of the world lies in the greatest number of wise people. By following this path of meditation, of pure prayer, we are contributing to that level of wisdom. The virgins in the Gospel of Matthew who brought oil for their lamps, were precisely called wise by Jesus. In order to face the post pandemic challenges, we will need to grow in wisdom, to stay awake, to be prepared with our lamps shining.



Special

Going deeper in understanding myself, others and faith

BY LUCINDA REDFERN, UK



For me, meditation has been a perfect antidote to the body consciousness that the pandemic has provoked. It has served to remind me of and become more closely acquainted with the universal and eternal which the mainstream media has neglected to do. It has also allowed me the space to go deeper both in my understanding of myself, others and faith.

I think one of the main post-Covid challenges will be re-humanising our social connections. We must learn to not see other humans as a threat to our

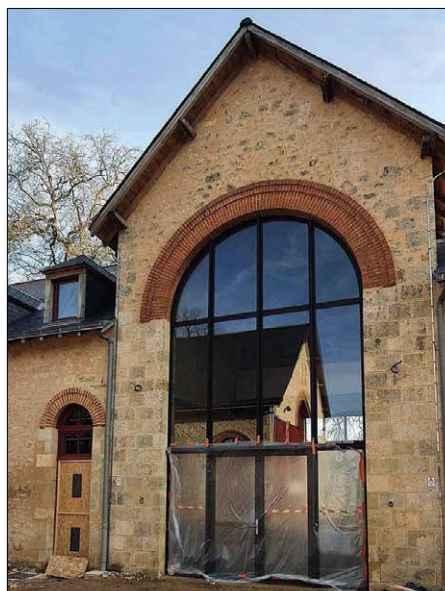
existence, but as our neighbours. Meditation helps cultivate the humility and compassion that I think will be necessary in this process. Perhaps more personally, the pandemic has eroded my sense of trust in institutions. Public debate seems to have been stifled throughout the past year and as a naturally curious and questioning person, this has been deeply disturbing at times. Meditation helps me at least strive for the equilibrium and peace of mind that allows me to find oases of trust and positivity in everyday interactions.

Bonnevaux

Visit www.bonnevauxwccm.org

Guesthouse scheduled to host first in-person retreats beginning in September

Bonnevaux is still unable to host in-person events and retreats, because of the pandemic. The resident Community keeps the routine of meditation, silence and work. The renovation work at the Guesthouse (The Stables) is in final stage and the first in-person retreats are likely to start from mid September.



Meditatio Seminar

New Visions for Today's Leaders

23-26 September

Kloster Fischingen, Switzerland



This three-day in-person retreat in a peaceful setting will allow participants to experience a slower pace and explore a nurturing approach to life. They will be led towards this transformative insight through periods of meditation, talks, small group encounters, moments of silence, and guided experience in the realm of perception. It will include talks by: Bertrand Bouhour, Angelene Chan, Laurence Freeman, Philipp Hildebrand, Peter Ng Kok Song, Melanie Schultz van Haegen and Jenny Scott. More information: <http://wccm.org/newslinks/>

Employment opportunities
Positions we are seeking to fill for Bonnevaux and WCCM International:

- * Bonnevaux Center Manager
- * Assistant Programme Manager
- * Grants Manager

Learn more visiting:
<https://wccm.org/opportunities/>

News

“Meditation can help young people to find meaning in life”

A CONVERSATION WITH THE NEW COORDINATOR FOR MEDITATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Taynã Malaspina, from Brazil is starting the role of WCCM Coordinator for Meditation and Young People. She is launching the program “Contemplative and Purposeful Life”, dedicated to two groups: 18 to 28 year olds and 29 to 40 year olds. The main goal is to help them to develop their meditation path and also build a life project.

Taynã is 36 years old, an oblate, and in her experience as a university teacher and coach, she has supported hundreds of people in the construction of their life projects. She is married to Marco, and has two daughters, Clara and Maria Olivia.



INTERVIEW; TAYNÃ MALASPINA:
What is the importance of meditation for young people?

Taynã - We see young people today as very anxious, anguished and we live in a time of crisis of meaning. We never had a technological development so powerful, and economic development as well. But we can see that was not followed by a feeling of well-being. We live in a time of a certain cult of happiness, the Instagram-Happiness, where families, relationships seem so perfect. But everybody knows it is not the case. And meditation, for young people, may give them something bigger than happiness - in a sense of giving a purpose and meaning in life. In psychology we see that, when the goal is happiness, it is self-nullifying, we will get frustrated. Meditation allows us to be who we really are. We are capable of meeting with our uniqueness, with our essence. So we stop to act in autopilot mode, or in a way we think we should be accepted by others. And young people face a lot of the process of shaping their identity.

I think meditation brings us to the centre. In a moment where everyone, but especially young people, are very distracted in the face of too many stimuli. Young people are really lost, with so

many references, everything is wider, there are too many places to go... and meditation brings us to the centre. And it is in this centre that the balance, lost in our modern time, is recovered.

In this pandemic stage, where people were forced to stay with themselves, they started to be in touch with things that were far away before. I think meditation helps us to organize this inner world.

Can you speak about your projects in this new role?

Taynã - This is something that has been sprouting in my heart, and I think in Laurence's heart and the Community in general for a while: to bring the Christian tradition of meditation closer to young people. We just started some concrete actions, and the idea is to make possible to young people to taste a contemplative way - and it does not matter if the person comes from a religious background or not. We want also to propose a reflection about our current lifestyle and approach young people with a proposal of a contemplative path.

We have two specific projects to start. I will leave an invitation here:

1) A series of monthly talks led by Fr. Laurence Freeman, especially for

those who don't know Laurence it is a big opportunity. He was a mentor for me and inspired me in this journey.

2) Online Course - it will be an eight-hour course, you can undertake it in your own time and at your own pace. It will be recorded and later we will have meditation meetings. We will speak about our current context, the contemplative life and how to begin a journey in that way. The last part is about you building your life project.

The young people will start a journey, taste a meditation practice and also build a life project, answering two basic questions: what do I want from life? And what does life expect from me? These two questions can only be answered from a level of depth that meditation can provide to us.

Watch the interview with Taynã and learn more about the series of talks for young people here: <https://wccm.org/newslinks/>

News

Research on John Main & Christian Meditation

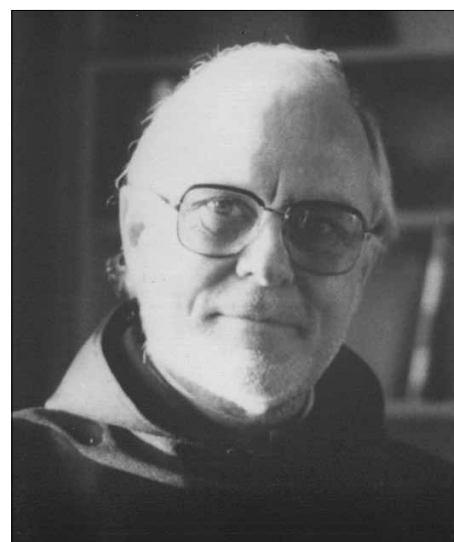
YOUNGER SCHOLARS FROM EUROPE AND THE US ARE PURSUING ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON JOHN MAIN AND HIS INFLUENCE ON OUR TIMES

John Main & Swami Satyananda

BY NICHOLAS SCRIMENTI, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, US

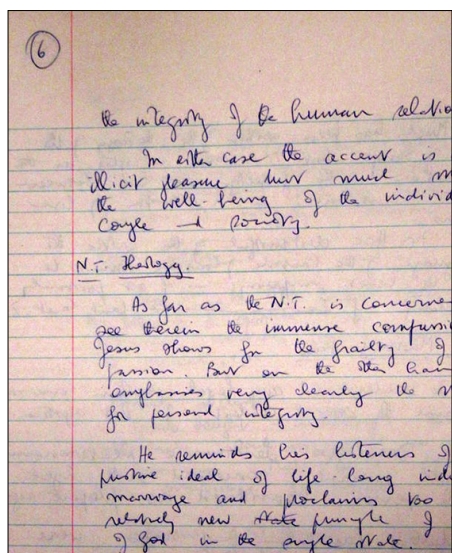
I am working on a project that attempts to historicize and recontextualize John Main's meeting with Swami Satyananda in colonial Malaya in 1955. I argue that their meeting must be understood within the religio-political context of Malaya during the British colonial period and the efforts on behalf of English-educated Hindu reformers to institutionalize a sense of Hindu identity compatible with the perceived values of modernity. Swami Satyananda's connections to Ramana Maharshi and Jawaharlal Nehru have been noted in biographies of John Main, but his connection to earlier Hindu reform movements dating back to the early

19th century are equally important to understand if we are to appreciate the precise form of Hindu religiosity John Main encountered during his storied stint in Malaya as part of the British Colonial Service. By diving more deeply into this context, I hope to chart a new genealogy that suggests that John Main is, in fact, more indebted to Swami Satyananda than we previously may have thought. I also hope to raise some difficult questions about power and the role of colonialism in their relationship, investigating how the colonial origins of this particular form of meditation practice may inform aspects of John Main's later theology.



Redeem us from shallowness: an interpretation of John Main's spiritual teaching

BY SICCO CLAUS, THE NETHERLANDS



John Main's personal notes

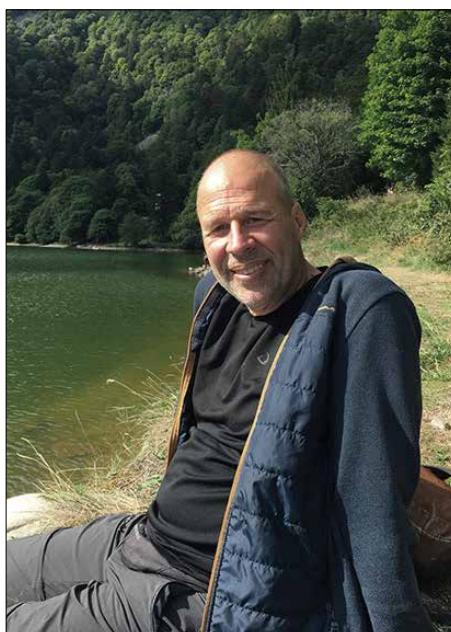
This project summarises and evaluates John Main's spirituality in the widest sense of the term (1926-1982). The first part of this study describes and assesses his spiritual theology in the context of the history of spirituality and theology. So far unexamined aspects of this theology, such as his anthropology or his sacramental theology and views on the Church, will be included. It also analyses Main's views on spiritual practices, in particular, meditation, against this historical background. Finally it reconstructs his views on spiritual development. Previously unexamined texts and artifacts from the archives of the library at Georgetown University will be incorporated in this reconstruction. The second part

of this study assesses Main's spirituality against the background of what Charles Taylor sees as central characteristics of the late modern spiritual condition. It asks how it relates to these elements, where they overlap, and how tensions and differences in view with this condition can be understood. Finally, it tries to answer what Main's spirituality contributes to the understanding of our spiritual predicament. The project approaches its finalization, presumably within a year or so.

NEXT ISSUE:
We will highlight others researchers focused on John Main and Christian Meditation

In Focus

Geert Van Malderen, Belgium



became my natural habitat. It is still a joy to me that as a young person I was able to experience a full week of silence at Taizé. When I heard Brother Roger speak of prayer as a flame in the heart, I recognized the truth of his statement. I was clearly looking for God, and God was looking for me.

*Fortunately,
John Main was clear
about how you can leave
yourself behind:
say your mantra*

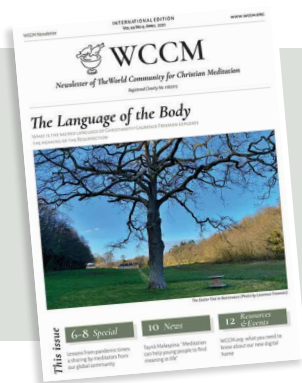
Many difficult years later, I rediscovered meditation as an adult when a friend introduced me to José Pype, the coordinator of WCCM Belgium. José kindly introduced me to the practice of christian meditation. At that time, I was looking for the simplest form of prayer that could touch my heart, and I had found it. I knew immediately that I would continue to meditate in the WCCM way for the rest of my life, but I didn't know how meditation would completely change my life.

Another decisive period in my pilgrimage occurred about five years

ago. Although I was already involved in the work of WCCM Belgium and led a meditation group, I still did not completely understand how to leave myself behind through meditation. Finally, I read the book 'Silence and Stillness in Every Season.' John Main was clear about how to leave oneself behind: say your mantra. For the first time, it became clear to me how my ego had been selectively filtering my perception. With this new understanding and the simplicity of my daily practice, a radical change began to occur. Meditation began to transform me: the limiting images about myself, about others, about God... they lost their power. I now see that only the pure experience of meditation gives me fullness of life. It gives me back my childlike innocence in an unexpected way.

When my heart opened up, expanded, and became spacious, my life changed quickly. I was more and more attracted towards the larger WCCM community, and I become an oblate of WCCM and of Bonnevaux. This year, I hope to move permanently to Bonnevaux. I trust that there, I will be able share the koan 'meditation is the self knowledge of God' with many others.

I couldn't possibly have known what meditation would eventually mean to me when, as a 17-year-old, I first came into contact with the practice of silence at Taizé. There, with thousands of other young people, I experienced 10 minutes of silence three times a day. At first, each meditation period seemed to last for hours. After a few days, they passed all too quickly, and silence became as natural to me as it had been when, as a child, I had spent many solitary hours in a city park that



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Editor: Leonardo Corrêa (leonardo@wccm.org)
Graphic Design: Gerson Laureano
Would you like to contribute to the Meditatio Newsletter? Our next deadline is 10 June.

Resources & Events

WCCM.org: what you need to know about our new digital home



The WCCM's new digital home is launched! When you visit www.wccm.org you will notice a new, clean and simple design, a reorganization of our diverse content and many new features. The new website celebrates the 30th anniversary of the founding of the WCCM. These are some new features:

Supporting Member

This is an opportunity for any meditator to support the WCCM with a recurring monthly donation. All Supporting Members receive unlimited access to our growing library of online courses, recorded retreats and seminars, all of which can be accessed through our new My WCCM platform.

My WCCM

My WCCM (my.wccm.org) is for everyone, not exclusively for Supporting Members. It is a new free platform where users can interact, access free and paid offerings, join groups, learn about events, and receive updates from the WCCM.

Donations

There are various options to support the WCCM: by making a one-time donation of any amount, by becoming a Supporting Member or by leaving a legacy.

Other sections

You will also find on the new website: the essential teaching, outreach initiatives, news, resources for all stages of the meditation jour-

ney, information on where to find a group; a link to easily join our regular live sessions; and the offerings' page listing online courses, seminars, retreats, and other events.

Please visit www.wccm.org and let us know your comments and suggestions via comms@wccm.org.

Online events

Series in Progress:

- * Health Series: next sessions on nutrition, work & movement and the mind
- * Speaker Series: next sessions with Rupert Sheldrake and Liz Watson
- * Talks for Younger Adults with Laurence Freeman
- * National Communities online retreats led by Laurence Freeman

05-09 MAY

Basic Christianity: An Induction into the Life of Jesus the Forgiving Victim - led by James Alison

12-15 MAY

Who Am I? Dancing With Your Shadow, led by Kim Nataraja

22-25 JUNE

Edith Stein, Etty Hillesum and Simone Weil: A Spirituality for Living through a Time of Crisis, led by Stefan Reynolds

MORE INFO & REGISTRATION:

visit <http://wccm.org/events>

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Isobel Marchment WCCM group leader, Mittagong (NSW) turns 100

by Judi and Paul Taylor

*"If I grow blind to beauty
And see earth's loveliness
Without the inner vision
That knows her holiness
See naught but outward shaping
Nor feel the exquisite pain
Of overwhelming beauty-
Lord grant me sight again"*

(Author unknown,
Isobel shared with Janet 2002)

We are honored to be asked to draw together a reflection on Isobel's life as we celebrate her 100th birthday on 17th February. Wonderfully we have her own words to speak for her, a talk she gave in 2007 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of John Main's death (wonderfully transcribed by Penny), and a recording of a conversation as part of the 2016 Meditatio seminar on Ageing, the link is below.

Isobel's journey with The WCCM goes back nearly 30 years to when she was discerning whether to return to the UK after nursing her dearest friend Frances through terminal cancer, when Colin Douglas brought Christian Meditation from St James Anglican Church King Street Sydney to the Southern Highlands. She felt instinctively this was what she had been looking for, for many years, and after a little while somewhat reluctantly started a group at Mittagong, which she runs still and is now, she says, perhaps the most valuable event in her week. Chris asks is Isobel the oldest WCCM group



Isobel with
Fr Laurence
Freeman

"Meditation is the only real thing in my life now. I wouldn't be without it for anything..."

leader worldwide? She has over the years been a valued member of the NSW Committee and has attended retreats nationally and in Italy at her beloved Monte Oliveto and Fara Sabina, and participated in John Main Seminars in different parts of the world, and very much enjoyed being part of the international community and her special friendship with Fr Laurence Freeman OSB and with Giovanni Felicioni. Isobel is a

lover of poetry and during many conversations quotes some lines that well express her sense of things.

We have loved so many aspects of our friendship with Isobel, she embodies the paradox of our lives as meditators, the contradiction and complexity of surrender where we "let go, and let God" and at the same time, do all we can to simplify our lives, care about the things that matter and assist those in need. She says she is a 'plodder', a 'bad meditator' who still has distractions after all these years, and ends each time of meditation with "Merci" in gratitude – "meditation is the only real thing in my life now. I wouldn't be without it for anything..."

Continued over page

...“As with my own times of meditation, the group and its members are encounters with what is REAL – not smooth flowing, untroubled but no pretence, no masks. There exists trust and love. People have come and gone but a solid core remains, I feel we are one cell in the community of love.

“Often I feel inadequate – no further along the road than when I began meditating. The distractions are always there – the ego always wriggling on in new and devious ways.

“But I look forward to the morning and evening times of meditation and whenever I sit down I feel I’ve somehow turned off the busy world temporarily and there is silence and peace... And of course, before long the distractions start! I know Fr Laurence is always saying, ‘Don’t evaluate your meditation for success or failure.’ And I am always encouraged too, by Fr Gerry Pierese quoting T.S. Eliot, ‘For us there is only the trying – the rest is not our business.’

“So what has the practice of meditation meant to me? More than I can put into words. To live the ‘here and now’ and not the ‘there and then’, to live in the present moment. And even if the road does seem to wind uphill most of the way now and you never know what’s round the next corner, I’ve found so much to enjoy and be grateful for. I’m very glad God is the God of Surprises. At the moment, I don’t fear what the future may bring – I simply go on praying as I have throughout most of my life that in the end I may become the person God breathed me into existence to be – the unique bit of the jigsaw fitting into the whole picture.

“I’ve always loved the 17th Century poet George Herbert and quote from his poem, *The Pearl*:



Isobel converses with Judi Taylor before the Meditatio seminar on Ageing. See link details below.

“I don’t fear what the future may bring – I simply go on praying as I have throughout most of my life that in the end I may become the person God breathed me into existence to be.”

*“Through the labyrinths,
not my grovelling wit,
But Thy silk twist,
let down from heaven to me
Doth both conduct and teach me –
How by it to climb to Thee”*

“So I press on, accepting gladly the gift of my life, trying to ‘let go and let God’. Always remembering John Main’s words:

*“Breathe in the love of God
Breathe out your life into his hands
Live in that love”*

“And I trust the faithful repetition of the mantra to gradually still my persistent thoughts and at the last, lead me home to God.”

Isobel has been a great friend to many in the Community... Chris comments on her faithfulness to the weekly group she runs in her home, her generosity with her chosen charities and tireless recruiting of people to meditate... May and John Wong give thanks for how they just clicked a long time ago and how she has been a friend and inspiration since... Betty loves their phone conversations ranging over so many aspects of the Community and its wondrous growth so broadly. We give thanks for Isobel’s life and our shared journeying.

*Life is eternal; and love is immortal;
and death is only a horizon;
and a horizon is nothing save the
limit of our sight.*
(Rossiter Worthington Raymond,
shared with Judi 2015)

Here is the link to Isobel’s conversation with Judi in anticipation of the Meditatio seminar on Ageing. We had developed a cluster of words which we shared with Isobel (and Sister Marie Berise SM, Betty Carmody and Lawrie Mooney OSA) and asked for a response to those which resonated ...

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/qr1h7r4ynzyez04/Isobel%20and%20Judi%2019%20September%202016.mp4?dl=0>

Oh, What a Gift!

(more than simply Christian Meditation; a pointer within Galatians 5:22-23)

by John Coleman
meditator, WA community

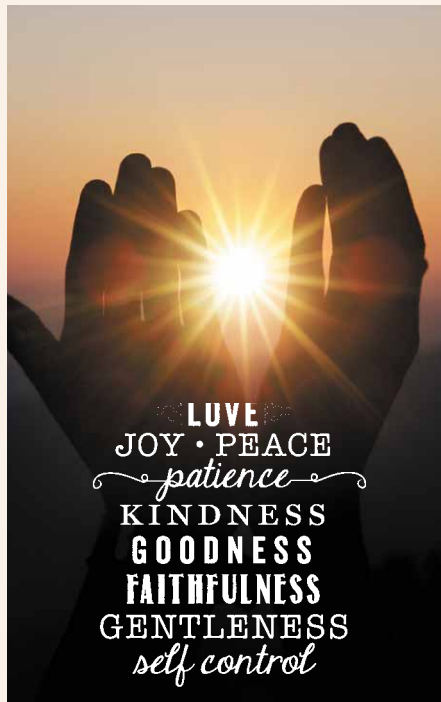
This is the season of gifts and gift-giving. Yes, this passage was carved during the Christmas period.

However, we know that gift-giving can be all year round; in the words we speak to another, in those conscious acts of kindness or in our patient expression when hearing 'that story re-told'! A gift also may be reflected to us when we stop and ponder, in nature, at a random pile of 'weeds'. Weeds? Actually, the weeds, together, can reflect a sheer beauty if we can but see. Perhaps our challenge is to 'but see'. Yes, these and many are the gifts we may receive as we persevere to be present and faithful to our meditation.

Be it John Main, the Desert Fathers and Mothers, Thomas Keating, Simone Weil, Julian of Norwich, Thomas Merton or countless other guides each pointed to the *illuminous night star* of meditation. The silent simple light which radiates before us drawing our inner being in that hungry desire for the 'more' that can enrich and more fruitfully satisfy our everyday life. In the stillness and silence of meditation, in a pondering and wondering our deeper spirit is invited into a newer self-awareness of how we might 'live' a richer life.

And whilst John Main reminded us not to look or seek for outcomes from our meditation – truly 'the Other' offers us searching beings a concrete 'outcome' by which we may be inspired through that *illuminous night star... the fruit of the Spirit* (Galatians 5:22-23). Meditation, indeed, Christian Meditation (when pursued in simplicity and truth) will be reflected, present and growing in our lives through *the fruit of the Spirit*.

*Love, Peace, Joy, Kindness,
Patience, Trustfulness, Self-Control,*



Gentleness and Goodness.

The 'singer' walked onto my stage of life, played her part to perfection then simply disappeared. What she left behind was a gift that has continued to resonate through forty years. As we travelled on a simple bus ride through the majestic tall timbers on the edge of the

“Christian Meditation is a gift re-offered to us through the wisdom of John Main.”

Great Australian Divide, in Victoria (Australia), sitting in the front seat dressed in a wide-brimmed hat and a flowing colorful floral dress she sang. What a stunning voice. And her response to the compliment, "everyone tells me I have a lovely voice, but you used the word *gift*." It was through this brief encounter that the word gentleness struck me; there seemed no gentleness in her endeavour to then share with me about the person of Jesus. Negative as that may sound it was the gift that inspired the seeking of 'gentleness',

its relationship to the Spirit and the unfolding of the nine *fruit of the Spirit* sitting in simple print within Paul's letter to the Galatians. A goldmine for life if we can but truly apprehend and appreciate.

May I invite each of us to take another look at the nine fruit listed above. Paul states that these will reveal their presence in those who sincerely search for 'the Spirit within'. The nine fruit will manifest themselves in our lives. These virtues are clear evidence that the 'Spirit' *IS* present and working in our lives. It is the Spirit who will harness our self-awareness and self-knowledge as we endeavour to reflect kindness in our speech and actions, self-control when we desire to 'add our unnecessary bit to an unnecessary piece of conversation', or trustfulness when we can hold that with which we have been entrusted.

A manifestation of the nine *fruit of the Spirit* will become present in our lives, says Laurence Freeman OSB and many other wisdom writers, if we but strive to sit quietly on a regular basis, give attention to the 'within' in our lives and endeavour to live simply and humbly before the great 'I AM'; through meditation.

This gift awaits each of us. Take the time to seek, desire and to sit quietly.

Meditation, fortunately, is continuing to come to the fore during our age as many hunger for more than consumerism, self-centeredness or a desire for power urged on by an errant 'ego-self'. Indeed, Christian Meditation is a gift re-offered to us through the wisdom of John Main. It awaits each of us. The *fruit of the Spirit* become a joy when a peacefulness begins to settle within.

So, in which *fruit of the Spirit* have you already grown? Which *fruit of the Spirit* is somewhat of an Achilles heel at this point of your journey? Return to the daily practice – meditation is our gift.

by Naomi Downie

One of the highlights of the Young Meditator's calendar from NSW, has been the annual Weekend Retreat.

In past years we filled Mittagong Hermitage with good wine and deep conversations around the table. The stars outside were unforgettable.

Since then we have been invited each year to Dangar Island to **Paul** and **Judi Taylor's** house overlooking the sparkling Hawkesbury River. A smaller intimate group arrives by ferry, bringing our own food and sharing the cooking and dining. The island feels like it has its own time zone. Truly a magic place to walk, meditate and listen.

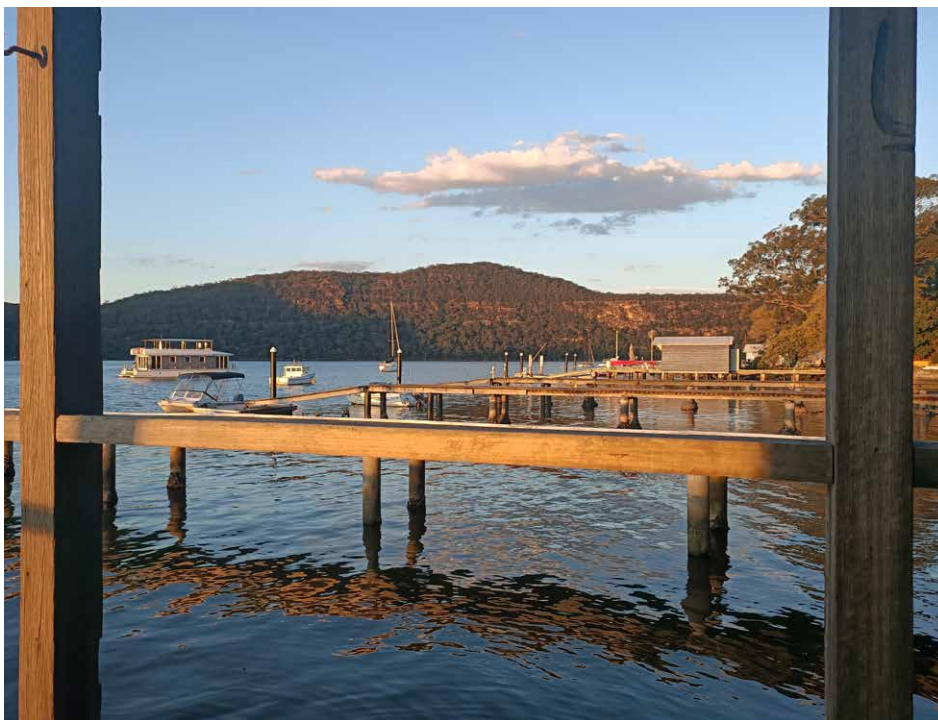
Meditaion 2020

2020, was a solitary meditation retreat for myself. COVID restrictions had lessened after the first wave but most felt unsure even to travel to the area. I continued and stayed in the boat shed which provided a cool spot to reflect, draw, read and journal. I joined an online *Lectio Divina* and online meditation group also hosted by the Taylors.

Walking the pier at midnight under the wide private expanse of sky, I wished to dance in the warm glow of the moon. I painted the experience and one of our Perth meditators bought the work. (See right) .

One Day Gentleness Retreat

The One Day retreat on Gentleness was a great success. **Lillian Leigh**, our NSW coordinator for the past three years, hosted the retreat – her last before she resigned. It was courageous to hold it online and we did not know how it would feel. Using the Zoom platform we met in the morning then did a contemplative walk separately, but together in spirit, then broke for lunch and re-met in the afternoon. Lillian hosted with assistance from **Maximo** and **Andrew McAllister** leading the reflection on gentleness in leadership. The image of Jesus walking through the violent crowd with grace forging a path of peace, like the mantra in our mind, was a takeaway hope. We recently



View from Boat Shed, Dangar Island. Photo: N Downie

witnessed on television US President Trump using tear gas to walk through a peaceful protesting crowd. The contrast was striking!

During the contemplative walking, I saw my environment afresh and felt my online meditation group with me. Despite being online, that day was intimate and lifting in its atmosphere.

YCM-online group

The YCM-online group has met each month for two years now – including

during the pandemic lockdown.

This group was an initiative of **Donna Mulhearn** (National Youth Corodinator). I took it on as a project I felt strongly about. We have grown to around 38 people on the email list but around 9 to 12 attend each session. Young people from around Australia and some from overseas gather together to say 'the little word'. It proved a comfort to many during lockdown and we went from once-a-month to twice. It was a great support



*'Dancing under Moon'.
Oil painting,
Naomi Downie, 2020*

Group Update: 2020



Prayer Walk. 2020, Balmain NSW. Photo: N Downie

during isolation. We alternated the leaders to give everyone the opportunity to facilitate the silence and choose the readings. I enjoyed mentoring this process, seeing it as a chance for people to develop the skills to share mantra meditation with their own communities. The fruit of the YCM-online group has been **Sarah Bishop** commencing an early morning meditation online session and **Gemma** who started a group in Scotland! A standout session for me was that run

by a Uniting Church Deacon from Adelaide on guided meditation – about reducing anxiety and preparing a safe place before intentional silence.

Value-added group

We see ourselves as an 'extra' group, so please stay in your weekly groups then come along to ours for extra strength. The ages range from 20 to 60 plus. We focus on community and sharing fellowship and spiritual direction.

Roots of Christian Mysticism Course

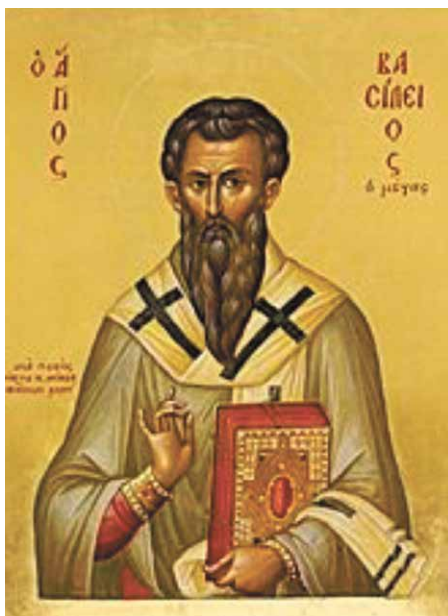
The Roots of Christian Mysticism Course hosted by **Donna Mulhearn**, was very popular with over 30 young people attending twice a month to encounter the Christian mystics. For me St Basil starting a monastic community with his sister on the grounds of his family estate and contributing to the Nicene Creed was a stand out. We hope to continue the course this year with part two.

People news

A special shout out to our talented **Sarah Bishop** who had an exhibition in Maitland and had recycled found objects used to reflect moments in time like the work about Pentecost (pictured right).

Lillian Leigh's contribution was much appreciated over the years and during her resignation speech she suggested it brought an opportunity for change. With this in mind, **Sarah Bishop, Clare Wall, Emma Larson** and myself, accepted the role of the NSW Co-ordinator Team. We are very much still finding our feet with how this is going to work but aim to increase our social media presence and continue to bring day and weekend retreats, online meditation and information about the wider World Community for Christian Meditation.

Peace with each step in 2021.



Christian Mystic, St Basil



'Penetcost'
mixed media,
Sarah Bishop, 2020

Dadirri is our greatest gift to Australia, says

WCCM Australia wishes to congratulate Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM on being named 2021 Senior Australian of the year.

Some from our community have had the privilege to spend time with Miriam-Rose in the Daly River area in the Northern Territory and a few years ago Miriam-Rose joined Father Laurence Freeman in Sydney talking together about *dadirri* and our meditation tradition.

Below is a recent article from Roland Ashby's *Living Water* blog site.



Dr Miriam-Rose
Ungunmerr-
Baumann AM.

by Roland Ashby

Congratulations to Indigenous elder, artist and educator Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM for being named the 2021 Senior Australian of the Year. Apart from her artwork, and work in education, she is perhaps best known for her reflections on *dadirri* – “inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness”. The following reflection on *dadirri*, which is a speech she gave in 2002 when she was Principal of a Catholic primary school in Daly River in the Northern Territory, also seeks to integrate *dadirri* with her faith as a Christian:

What I want to talk about is a special quality of my people. I believe it is the most important. It is our most unique gift. It is perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our fellow Australians. In our language this quality is called *dadirri*. It is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness.

Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call “contemplation”.

When I experience *dadirri*, I am made whole again. I can sit on the riverbank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need of words. A big part of *dadirri*

is listening. Through the years, we have listened to our stories. They are told and sung, over and over, as the seasons go by. Today we still gather around the campfires and together we hear the sacred stories.

As we grow older, we ourselves become the storytellers. We pass on to the young ones all they must know. The stories and songs sink quietly into our minds and we hold them deep inside. In the ceremonies we celebrate the awareness of our lives as sacred.

The contemplative way of *dadirri* spreads over our whole life. It renews us and brings us peace. It makes us feel whole again...

In our Aboriginal way, we learnt to listen from our earliest days. We could not live good and useful lives unless we listened. This was the normal way for us to learn – not by asking questions. We learnt by watching and listening, waiting and then acting. Our people have passed on this way of listening for over 40,000 years ...

There is no need to reflect too much and to do a lot of thinking. It is just being aware.

My people are not threatened by silence. They are completely at home in it. They have lived for thousands of years with Nature's quietness. My people today, recognise and experience in this quietness, the great Life-Giving Spirit, the Father of us all. It is easy for me to experience God's presence. When I am out hunting, when I am in the bush, among the

trees, on a hill or by a billabong; these are the times when I can simply be in God's presence. My people have been so aware of Nature. It is natural that we will feel close to the Creator.

Dr Stanner, the anthropologist who did much of his work among the Daly River tribes, wrote this: “Aboriginal religion was probably one of the least material-minded, and most life-minded of any of which we have knowledge”...

And now I would like to talk about the other part of *dadirri* which is the quiet stillness and the waiting. Our Aboriginal culture has taught us to be still and to wait. We do not try to hurry things up. We let them follow their natural course – like the seasons. We watch the moon in each of its phases. We wait for the rain to fill our rivers and water the thirsty earth ... When twilight comes, we prepare for the night. At dawn we rise with the sun.

We watch the bush foods and wait for them to ripen before we gather them. We wait for our young people as they grow, stage by stage, through their initiation ceremonies. When a relation dies, we wait a long time with the sorrow. We own our grief and allow it to heal slowly.

We wait for the right time for our ceremonies and our meetings. The right people must be present. Everything must be done in the proper way. Careful preparations must be made. We don't mind waiting, because we want things to

Indigenous elder, Senior Australian of the Year

be done with care. Sometimes many hours will be spent on painting the body before an important ceremony.

We don't like to hurry. There is nothing more important than what we are attending to. There is nothing more urgent that we must hurry away for.

We wait on God, too. His time is the right time. We wait for him to make his Word clear to us. We don't worry. We know that in time and in the spirit of *dadirri* (that deep listening and quiet stillness) his way will be clear.

We are River people. We cannot hurry the river. We have to move with its current and understand its ways.

We hope that the people of Australia will wait. Not so much waiting for us – to catch up – but waiting with us, as we find our pace in this world.

There is much pain and struggle as we wait. The Holy Father understood this patient struggle when he said to us:

“If you stay closely united, you are like a tree, standing in the middle of a bushfire sweeping through the timber. The leaves are scorched and the tough bark is scarred and burnt; but inside the tree the sap is still flowing, and under the ground the roots are still strong. Like that tree, you have endured the flames, and

you still have the power to be reborn”.

My people are used to the struggle, and the long waiting. We still wait for the white people to understand us better. We ourselves had to spend many years learning about the white man's ways. Some of the learning was forced; but in many cases people tried hard over a long time, to learn the new ways.

We have learned to speak the white man's language. We have listened to what he had to say. This learning and listening should go both ways. We would like people in Australia to take time to listen to us. We are hoping people will come closer. We keep on longing for the things that we have always hoped for – respect and understanding ...

To be still brings peace – and it brings understanding. When we are really still in the bush, we concentrate. We are aware of the anthills and the turtles and the water lilies. Our culture is different. We are asking our fellow Australians to take time to know us; to be still and to listen to us ...

Life is very hard for many of my people. Good and bad things came with the years of contact – and with the years following. People often absorbed the bad things and not the good. It was easier to do the

bad things than to try a bit harder to achieve what we really hoped for ...

I would like to conclude ... by saying again that there are deep springs within each of us. Within this deep spring, which is the very Spirit of God, is a sound. The sound of Deep calling to Deep. The sound is the word of God – Jesus.

Today, I am beginning to hear the Gospel at the very level of my identity. I am beginning to feel the great need we have of Jesus – to protect and strengthen our identity; and to make us whole and new again.

“The time for re-birth is now,” said the Holy Father to us. Jesus comes to fulfil, not to destroy.

If our culture is alive and strong and respected, it will grow. It will not die.

And our spirit will not die.

And I believe that the spirit of *dadirri* that we have to offer will blossom and grow, not just within ourselves, but in our whole nation.

This tribute to Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann AM first appeared on the blog *Living Water*. You can view it, along with supplementary material on how to experience *dadirri* at www.thelivingwater.com.au

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 it or when your attention is wandering.

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



www.wccmaustralia.org.au

Our People at WCCM Australia

National Coordinator	Jan Wylie 0418 655 291 janwylie@tpg.com.au
National Secretary	Joan McKeegan
National Coordinators for Younger Christian Meditators	
National Coordinator	Donna Mulhearn
School of Meditation	Kath Houston
Meditation with Children and Young People	Penny Sturrock
Oblates of WCCM	Gloria Duffy
Friends	Judi and Paul Taylor
Bookshop	Joe Panetta
Newsletter Editor	Vikki McDonough editoracmc@gmail.com
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Direct Deposit – EFT Direct Deposit to NAB Account Name: APMC (Australian Christian Meditation Community. BSB 083-166 A/C 835586812

Cheque (please make cheque payable to 'APMC')

Money Order

Credit Card Visa MasterCard Amount \$

Name on card (please print)

Card number

Expiry date /

Your Signature

CONTACT DETAILS

Title

Full name

Address and postcode

Phone

Email

Privacy Policy: Your contact details will only be used by the Australian Christian Meditation Community (APMC) for News and Events information by Newsletter and State Coordinators