

Meditatio

Newsletter of The
World Community
for Christian Meditation



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Feast of Peace and Unity

Blessing of Phase 1 of renovation of Bonnevaux was an illustration of the vision of life at the WCCM new home



Mgr Pascal Wintzer blessing Bonnevaux (top) and the music concert with the choir

New Podcast **Contemplative Revolution**



CONTEMPLATIVE REVOLUTION

WCCM PODCAST

There is a new way for you to listen to talks, interviews and dialogue from the WCCM collection. It is called **Contemplative Revolution**, a weekly podcast. You can download and listen to the programs using different audio apps. Visit and subscribe to this podcast here: <http://podcast.wccm.org>

This issue

9 News

Laurence Freeman visits Korea for the first time

10 News

Updates on WCCM developments in the Caribbean and South Africa

12 Resources

New pocket books and The Roots of Christian Mysticism online course

Dear Friends,

A letter from Laurence Freeman, OSB

If you look at one of the photos of the beautiful blessing of Bonnevaux last month you will see the large group of community, friends and neighbours packed into the long cloister. They were listening to one of our principal speakers of the day speaking about the vision of this new centre of peace that is to become no less a centre for peace. Those in the front row are looking up at a single point immediately above the speaker's head. Not in inspiration, though, as much as in fear. The speaker had been placed immediately under a nest of swallows in the vaulted ceiling where some newly fledged arrivals were being cared for by their parents. They were showing activity during the talk and those of us in the front began to fear that the birds above the speaker might decide to drop down a message or two of their own.

They did not. And so this part of the benediction of Bonnevaux passed smoothly to the next. But if the embarrassing event had happened what would have been lost? Would it have spoiled everything or just shown us that the best prepared plans remain vulnerable to the unexpected? It helped us in that moment, however, to remember what blessing means. Blessing does not come down from above as much as it is transmitted from one to another by our genuine presence to each other and our collective faith in the project. We are blessed through our friendship and hope to realise what Bonnevaux can become. The best benedictions are horizontal. If a message from the bird-nest had fallen it would not have spoiled the blessing. But we would have been reminded of how the human entwines with the natural world and our well-made plans with the randomness of the universe. We would have smiled because it would have

told us that mistakes, failure and accidents are all eventually part of the single great blessing that is life.

Shortly before the blessing of the first phase of our renovation of Bonnevaux, the Guiding Board had decided on 'Contemplative Christianity' as the WCCM theme for the coming year. We felt that this to be an important reminder, not just for the Church but for the world. Christianity fulfils



its mission in a world of many faiths to unite people in the universal truth. Part of this truth is that love, peace, joy and forgiveness are not just dreams or occasional lucky moments in life. They are essential elements of human nature that Christ taught by word and example. It means that, however peaceless and divided we may be, individually or collectively, our true nature can 'become God', as the early Christian teachers daringly said. We can always rise from our self-made ruins. Like Bonnevaux, we too can be renovated.

Before I was me
I was God in God
And can be again
If I die to my me

(The Cherubic Pilgrim, Angelus Silenius, transl. Anrew Harvey)

To help understand the need for a universal understanding of contemplation, we have launched a new WCCM podcast – called "Contemplative Revolution". We have called it this because contemplative Christianity is unachievable unless it is held in the gentle grip of the continuous revolution of the gospel's wisdom and values. The podcast offers regularly updated teachings from the many gifted

teachers with whom our community is blessed. I urge you to sign up for it because it will help stimulate and enrich the hope and vision in you that we need to share with the world.

Revolutions come and go. They seek the highest goals of human perfection and then begin to splutter, lose height and crash. Most political revolutions in history reverted to the very forms they once rejected. It is a sadly frequent outcome of idealism that we are all familiar with at a personal level, in relationships or in our commitment. How many of us have not seen ourselves fall short of the generous selflessness of our initial enthusiasm? We gave ourselves without counting the cost. Then little by little..... compromise, excuses, complaints, the demand for reward or

recognition.

Revolutions – in individuals or societies – have complex causes. They happen when the existing order of things begins to dismantle in several places simultaneously. Fear and uncertainty begin to spread. In society those in power become alienated from each other and people see the calibre of leadership declining. In ourselves, the values and disciplines that give life harmony and meaning loosen. Injustice, imbalance and deception multiply. Feelings of resentment and shock ensue similar to what a child feels when it is treated badly. Conditions ripen for the coming of false prophets. Voices of protest form narratives and slogans that crowds can understand. Disappointment and a sense of betrayal scratch out a feeling of emptiness in the fear of a coming precipice.

Karl Marx had a vision comparable to that of Jesus: to realise the essence of Man in a classless society. It inspired the Communist revolution. France and China entered their revolutions with high ideals. But quickly, the large vision contracts to short-term advantages and the silencing of dissent. The dive upwards into higher consciousness falters and, feeling that we are losing our breath, we head downwards to the surface again. All revolutions fail, including the gospel's *metanoia* (the conversion of consciousness itself), if we don't learn to breathe underwater. This means that learning that we are more than our thoughts, even our best ideas. Nor are we limited by what we imagine. Not only can we survive the stilling of thought and the silencing of mental chatter; but we soar in all directions, losing nothing that we have lost. But to break into the contemplative clear sky, we have to have the realisation of dying to self-consciousness and be-

ing reborn. The life we find when we have lost our life is life indeed. Or, as a koan puts it: the dragon roars in a dead tree.

Passing through the paradox-portal of reality, we discover that contradictions co-exist. We are set free from the exclusively dualistic mind and from the compulsive search for happiness in pleasure alone. We learn that joy and sorrow (as we label them) are equally, sometimes simultaneously, revelatory. Everything teaches. Nothing is wasted. Seeing this impacts everything, as a revolution or an earthquake does, including our meditation practice. We no longer bargain with meditation, threaten to leave if we don't get what we want, panic when nothing happens or try to fill the desert with fantasy oases. The motivation of our meditation changes. A wisdom not just our own is born, almost shyly, of interior renunciation. It now seems so obvious. By learning to let go of all the stages – the dream, the failure and the intermittent reward – the poverty we dreaded now carries a peace beyond our understanding.

The life we find when we have lost our life is life indeed

An entirely new class of experience unfolds. We may have tasted it briefly before but it is unfamiliar. If we have a language and belief system to help, they can help to find meaning in this contemplative experience. If not – and many who learn to meditate today are suspicious of all belief – the experience itself will suffice. A contemplative Christianity can teach the way to this experience and offer an understanding of it but patiently and with self-restraint.

Our sense of global emergency

is triggered by our lifestyle. Speed, stress, addiction, virtual reality and the sense of alienation block out the contemplative experience. Without it, life, reduced to merely materialistic dimension, bleeds meaning. In contrast, John Keats wrote that life is a 'perpetual allegory'. But how many today are educated to understand this, to see how different dimensions reflect each other, bringing us deeper into the mystery of all existence? I think he means that life is eternally new as it unfolds to us its limitless connections. Beauty, for example, is the revelation of the whole in a part. We cannot help but love the beautiful. But love for one part expands to include each of its neighbours. To love one thing leads to loving everything. With love, meaning grows, not through an ideology or by defining ourselves against others but through boundless felt connections.

Everything is meaningful in relationship to something else. To have entered upon a path of contemplative experience is to be going beyond whatever we arrive at. It is to know the peace of 'being on the way' rather than the pressure of trying to get somewhere faster by competing with others.

The Greek word for this is *epektasis*. Gregory of Nyssa called it unceasing evolution in eternal happiness. St Paul used it too to describe the 'always something more', 'always going beyond', aspect of a life that can breathe inside the spiritual dimension. The contemplative scientist understands it. As does the self-transcending artist or the parent who puts the needs of their family before their own career. It describes life as uncontainable and self-renewing. Religious leaders often find it hard to understand when meaning becomes enshrined in beliefs, ritual and structure and

separated from real experience. The more one talks about what one has not experienced, the more unreal and unconvincing it sounds.

A contemplative Christianity has to learn to confess its own large areas of sinfulness before pointing out splinters in others' eyes. This is not self-laceration but the humility present in every teaching of Jesus and in his risen presence. Without this humility – what quicker way to humility is there than a daily fidelity to a contemplative practice? – the risk of the anti-Christ grows.

It is strange that the notion of the Anti-Christ appears so early in the life of the Church, in the first letter of John (2:22). An angel of darkness dresses up as an angel of light. Negation disguises itself as truth. The wolf sneaks up in sheep's clothing. This is the shadow of Christianity itself that crucifies Christ, in the ways we are tempted by power, corruption and hubris: anti-semitism, the Crusades including the Children's Crusade, the Inquisition, wars of religion, cover-up of clerical abuse.

Christianity, of course, is not the only religion in which dark forces can take over. Every religion today needs to be simplified, purified, restored to its contemplative core. Each one must take responsibility for this. In the meantime, religions do better not to criticise each other but to renew themselves.

A good way to renew a contemplative Christianity is to start a community. Seeds of new community are always trying to be born in spiritual traditions. What is new has power to inspire. In the World Community the weekly meditation group has long been a way in which meditators have seen the community that meditation creates and taken the risk to share it with new people. Meditation groups can become too cosy. It is easier to receive than to give. But at some point these two aspects of grace call to be reconciled.

Contemplative Christians know what grace means: to follow the teacher and go where we know not where, to share what we have received, to give what we think we don't have. This demands the opening of the eye of the heart. At the blessing of Bonnevaux one of our most generous donors to the project said that, when he first considered it, he felt, 'this is more than we can handle'. Or rather, he said, this is what his head told him. His heart said otherwise. Bonnevaux, he said, is first understood from the heart.

Every religion today needs to be simplified, purified, restored to its contemplative core

Community, like a family or a good workplace or village, is a manifestation of love. The heart, which speaks the language of love, has reasons that reason cannot compute. Each day in community we engage, in every encounter, with a part of the universe's infinite web of relationships. At times we glimpse this big picture within the life of the community life, if it is trying to be a community of love. But, at other times, we think how much easier it would be to live alone. Even in community (or family or work), you can stop expanding in the web of love because your ego decides to seek a safe, separate identity. This occupies a space where you can criticise others and protect yourself. The ego forever seeks separateness (its ancient habit). The self, however, courageously seeks solitude as the means of true, loving relationship. If I cannot be myself as I am I cannot accept you as you are.

Egotism rejects grace. It refuses the gifts that flow unpredictably and unconditionally from the universe into our wounded lives. It fears grace and pollutes it by trying to control it on the ego's terms. Often it even interprets grace as a threat and demonises it. But whenever the firewall of

egotism is breached, even in part, by contemplative experience, grace begins to work wonders.

But grace is not just a feel good factor in the spiritual life like a period of meditation in which distractions fade and peace rides high. It is not what Bonhoeffer called 'cheap grace', which he called the 'mortal enemy of our church', the kind of grace that we give to ourselves. Grace at low cost once shaped a certain kind of Christianity. The conditions and institutions that allowed it to flourish are disappearing. A time of radical disruption has begun without easy answers and big demands for renunciation. It is the first days of Contemplative Christianity. One aspect of the contemplative mind is the ability to live peacefully without certainty.

As always, what matters is not changing external realities but learning how to deal wisely with them. The heart of Christian faith reminds us of this from the beginning – how Jesus accepted his destiny and transformed the deepest dark to light. It is how James, 'the brother of the Lord', understood the meaning of suffering:

My Christian brothers and sisters, you should be happy when you have all kinds of tests. You know these prove your faith. It helps you not to give up. Learn well how to wait so you will be strong and complete and in need of nothing.

Like Simone Weil he sees meaning in suffering. She thought that the 'greatness of Christian faith is not that it seeks a supernatural remedy for suffering but a spiritual use for it.'

Sustaining this insight requires a considerable depth of peace, which is the fruit of prayer, fellowship and being responsibly engaged with the day-to-day tests of life. Then the peace at the heart of the contemplative revolution becomes our own contribution to the turbulent social revolution we are passing through. When the future seems disturbing we

need this interior depth to deal with the immediate issues of life without losing sight of the guiding principles needed for the long journey ahead. Community is the daily school of balancing the short and the long-term vision. One of the greatest masters of this wisdom in the Christian tradition is St Benedict.

For Benedict the rhythm of daily life holds the secret of remaining tuned into reality ('obedient'), steady ('stable') and continuously growing ('conversion of life'). Respecting the synergy of body, mind and spirit is the meaning of the daily management of time and tasks. Time to read, time to work, time to pray. It is as simple as that. Contemporary lifestyles show, however, that we feel it to be elusive and unsustainable. Yet, like a daily meditator in any walk of life, Benedict understood that the best way to achieve a natural, healthy rhythm of life, interiorly and externally, is to prioritise the times of prayer. It is when we see, as John Main said, that the 'times of meditation are the most important times of your day', that the contemplative revolution has swept us up into itself and we become this new kind of revolutionary and force for peaceful change. We become what Christians should always be, practitioners rather than preachers

Contemplation is a life-choice that doesn't provide answers. But nor does it demand blind allegiance to an ideology, as does the major alternative today, fundamentalism, with its false and divisive simplicities. Instead, it requires a sustained vulnerability of mind and heart, permitting us to be penetrated by a new expression of reality. It requires a detached approach to institutions and structures and an interior discipline supported by the love and forgiveness of your fellow-pilgrims.

Contemplation is the antidote to fundamentalism in all its forms. Woven into daily life, a contemplative practice sets off an alarm bell when the tendency is triggered to run from

reality into the false consolations of fundamentalism. The dangerous one is to absolutise 'us and them'. When states shut their hearts to a refugee crisis, when leaders play the race card to enflame the prejudiced. When religious people invoke God to exclude gay or divorced people from their fellowship. In these reactions, we reject the amazing contemplative gift that transforms humanity through seeing ourselves in others and others in ourselves. This gift is the vision of God.

Other-centred attention is the faculty that opens access to the web of reality, in which everything is connected, and which we call God. The



worldwide web of the internet is astounding but only a miniscule reflection of the great communion revealed by the contemplative vision of reality. In this great communion, if we are awake and present, we are taught by the simplest things: a walk by yourself around the lake, an evening with community and guests, the rhythm of meditation and prayer during the waking hours of each day.

In the year 2000 a million actual suicides were recorded and there were twenty million attempts. For these - and for many others harming themselves in our global culture - life became, as it did for Hamlet as he considered the same option, 'weary, stale, flat and unprofitable'. At the core of this mental state is a desper-

ate monotony and boredom such as every addiction eventually produces. The cure is not to increase the dosage or multiply the ways of self-distractation. It is to find a therapeutic repetition that is energised by the rhythm of life. It is this inter-weaving that renews the blessed immediacy of our relationship to reality.

We are told to pursue happiness and fulfilment. But we can only pursue them by waiting for them. It is in stillness that the most real contact happens. Only contact with the great communion 'delivers us from evil'. By breaking the cycle of fear (it doesn't matter whether the swallows drop

their message on the speaker), of desire and anger and by dissolving the fixed patterns of our self-defeat, we are sent back to live, not fight life. We find the meaning of good work. The inevitable disappointments, fears and sorrows of life dissolve into a new hope and joy.

And, in each moment of defeat, it summons up the certainty of a second chance, the liberation from the law of karma by a love that can neither leave us nor punish us: because it is a perpetual beginning.

With much love, Laurence Freeman

Laurence Freeman OSB

Bonnevaux

Blessing

A day to treasure in our hearts

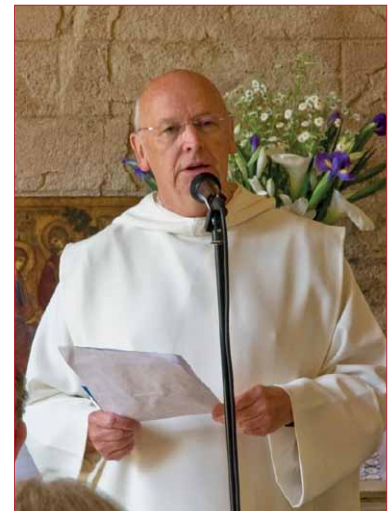
The blessing of Phase 1 of Renovation brought together a group representing different aspects of the WCCM



Part of the ceremony was held in the Abbaye's cloister

An illustration of the vision of life at Bonnevaux. This is how we can synthesize the gathering for the Blessing of Phase 1 of renovation, on the 15 June. The historic day had participants from a local and global level. The Archbishop of Poitiers, Mgr Pascal Wintzer did the official blessing. The group included the Abbot of Ligugé Dom Christophe Bettwy, WCCM members of Poitiers, the French Community, coordinators and members of other national communities. Friends from local Zen Soto and Tibetan Buddhists groups were also present, as well as neighbours and friends.

Laurence Freeman:
"We are all here to bless"



It is a very special moment in the life of our Community and for the Bonnevaux Community. A blessing is not only something that comes externally, it comes from within. I think we are all here to bless this place of prayer, this place of hospitality, this place of healing. Your presence here is an integral part of this blessing. It gives us all great pleasure to see the diversity of our friends and guests today. We have religious monks, priests, lay people, we have many forms of Christian faith and we are delighted we can welcome friends from other faiths with us today. Bonnevaux is committed to the service of peace and there is no peace without unity. The power of unity is that people who are very different from each other can live together in friendship. People of different beliefs, but sharing a deep common faith in humanity.

A chance to get to know Bonnevaux

The day provided an opportunity for people from far away or nearby to see different aspects of Bonnevaux: the renovated Abbaye, the work in progress, the natural environment. The House and Garden tours were led in English and French to include everyone present.



Bonnevaux

Monseigneur Pascal Wintzer: Blessing of the Abbaye "We need access to silence"



It is easier to talk about meditation than it is to meditate. In the turmoil of ordinary life, we need silence. In times of war, in times of quiet and in our daily life, we need times of silence. In a violent world, the inner silence will bring us to peace, we need to have access to silence and to peace.

A message from Monte Oliveto

Dom Ugo de' Sangro represented the mother house of Fr Laurence, Monte Oliveto Maggiore. He read a message sent by the Abbot Dom Diego Rosa: *I hope to come soon to visit Bonnevaux. I am very pleased that this former Abbaye is starting again as a Centre of Christian Meditation and peace, as a Centre for France, for Europe, the entire world and a Centre for the renewal of the contemplative life in the church. (...) I feel very close to Bonnevaux and the whole Olivetan congregation feels an affinity to this foundation. We hope it can live and bear many fruits.*



Abbot of Ligugé Christophe Bettwy blessing the icon of the Trinity

Fr Laurence gave a short introduction to meditation followed by a few minutes of practice. Then it was the moment for Mgr Pascal Wintzer to lead the blessing throughout the internal and external parts of the Abbaye. The Abbot of Ligugé Christophe Bettwy led the blessing and the installation of the icon of the Trinity in the small prayer chapel in-

side the Abbaye. This was followed by the installation of the blessed sacrament also in the prayer chapel. Then Mgr Wintzer continued the blessing to the external parts of the Abbaye and all the guests gathered at the back of the building, in front of the image of Our Lady of Bonnevaux - Queen of Peace - this image was blessed by the Archbishop.

Support & Gratitude



The Mayor of Marçay, Sandra Girard, has been a voice of support to Bonnevaux since the beginning. She thanked the Community for a project that respects the history and nature of the place and once more emphasized she will keep supporting Bonnevaux as much as possible. Thanks and gratitude were also expressed to the renovation team at the end of Phase 1: Bernard Ruel (Architect from France), Kailas Moorthy (representing DP Architects) and Wolfgang Hasne (Project Manager).

Bonnevaux

Peter Ng: "This rose is not only about Patricia but about all members of our Community who made Bonnevaux possible"



Photo: Peter NG planting an English rose in memory of Patricia Ng

Another symbolic and moving moment of the day was the planting of the roses. Dom Ugo did the planting of a French rose and Peter Ng (National Coordinator of Singapore) planted an English rose in memory of his wife Patricia Ng:

My family is very honoured that the Community at Bonnevaux asked me to plant this rose in memory of my late wife Patricia Ng. We are planting this rose not only in memory of her but also in memory of all members of

our Community, over the last 50 years, who have passed on but have laid the foundation of Bonnevaux today. I think Patricia would like me to say that this is not only about Patricia, but about all members of our Community throughout the world, who have contributed to the growth of our Community and made Bonnevaux possible today.

Music Concert and Salve Regina

A music concert in the Abbaye's entry hall, organized by the resident community, gave the final special touch for this day of blessing, after which everyone went again outside to sing "Salve Regina" in front of the image of Our Lady.

ONLINE: Watch videos on the Blessing: <http://tiny.cc/BnvxBless>

Angelene Chan (DP Architects CEO) on Bonnevaux: "It is truly a project of love"

First impression

When we first saw Bonnevaux, when I came upon the land, I found that it was truly magical. It had everything that we wanted: a beautiful chapel, an abbey (what was an abbey on the 12th Century), all the surrounding buildings and the land, the rolling plans, the hills, the lakes, the stream. Although there was a lot of restoration work that we had to do, we all felt that it was something that we could achieve and we should achieve, because the whole place, as I said, is magical and has everything that we wanted.

Why did I get involved?

My office is all the way in Singapore; it is a long way. But when I saw the place and I knew what the place was going to be for, I could see it is almost like creating heaven on earth. So I asked myself: "How could I not be involved?" It is so beautiful, and it is especially for people who will come from all over the world to meditate. A place of retreat, of restoration. For me, I felt deeply that I had to be involved.

A unique project

This project is unique because I don't think we have ever worked in a

building from the 12 century, that was an abbey, and restoring it over the years to what was originally built for. It is a project of passion, of love - I think maybe because a lot of this is done through voluntary work, and you can see that everyone involved in it is truly passionate. It is not a commercial project, and there is a bond out of the belief that this will be a place that everyone will enjoy, everyone needs, and that everyone will grow to love.

ONLINE: watch the full video with Angelene: <http://tiny.cc/AngBvx>

To know more on Bonnevaux visit www.bonnevauxwccm.org

News

Laurence Freeman visits Korea for the first time

By Sr. Enosh Cho, OSB

Father Laurence Freeman visited Korea from May 13th to 24th. He was invited by the Korean Benedictine Association to introduce Christian Meditation to the Korean Benedictines and Oblates. In particular, the conference of the Korean Benedictines, held at the Tutzing Daegu Priory on May 16th and 17th, was very meaningful in that Christian Meditation was officially introduced in Korea for the first time. Learning and practicing Christian Meditation together, Benedictine monks and sisters who attended the conference were able to discover or recover the essential aspects of the monasticism - silence, simplicity, and stillness - and to rekindle our desire to devote ourselves to the journey to the purity of heart and inner growth.

Through the conferences given to the Oblates of Waegwan Abbey and Olivetan monasteries of Gosung and Yangju, Father Laurence quenched the spiritual thirst of many faithful. The talks for the Tutzing and Olivetan Benedictine sisters' communities awakened us to re-opened our eyes to the precious gift of Chris-



Fr Laurence with kindergarten children

tian Meditation which is deeply rooted in the monastic tradition and the wisdom of desert Fathers. Father Laurence also had a chance to meet with children in a kindergarten run by Olivetan Sisters. He introduced meditation to the children and had a time of prayer with them. We were pleased to see that even six-year-old children could easily get into meditation.

Father Laurence's visit to Korea was an experience for which will always be grateful – a time that the

seeds of pure prayer were sowed into the contemplative soil which already cultivated in the heart and nature of Korean people. Father Laurence recommended that we have a somewhat longer time of silence after reading the Scripture during the Divine Office and we have been following it in our community. This little change keeps reminding us of the most important things for our monastic lives - centered on Christ and the poverty of the heart!



Guiding Board meeting announces the WCCM Theme 2019-2020: Contemplative Christianity

The Guiding Board meeting this year was held near Bonnevaux shortly before the Easter Retreat. One of the key decisions of the Board was selecting the Community's theme of reflection and teaching for the coming year as "**Contemplative Christianity**". National Communities are encouraged to use this to focus and unify their annual programmes. ONLINE: watch GB members reflecting on the theme: <http://tiny.cc/thm1920>

News

WCCM Mission to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, West Indies

By Sr. Ruth Montrichard

At the request of Bishop Gerard County CSSp, himself a meditator, a team from WCCM Caribbean visited St. Vincent for a week in June with funding provided from the "Emerging Communities fund" of WCCM.

At the beginning of the visit the team met with the Bishop and a newly appointed team for Christian Meditation in the diocese and mapped out the programme which included:

- * Giving talks at six parish Masses on Saturday and Sunday
- * Revisiting one primary and three secondary schools where the practice of Christian Meditation continues
- * Visiting and reintroducing Christian Meditation in the male prison
- * Introducing Christian Meditation to teenaged girls in a home for abused teens
- * Giving talks to the priests, deacons and their wives at the Pastoral



Centre

- * Giving three Radio Interviews.

The Bishop highly praised the team who conducted the sessions with a great deal of confidence. They had previously attended Essential Teaching Weekends, John Main Seminars, and Retreats with the help of funding from the USA and Australia. Attending these events in no small way prepared them for the task, and helped set up a team model that could be replicated in

the other Islands of the Caribbean.

The visit inspired the Bishop to encourage each parish to host a meditation group, the schools to continue their practice on a daily basis, and those in the Prison Ministry to be faithful to the practice.

Additionally, the Bishop has asked Fr. Laurence Freeman to address the Caribbean Bishops at their annual meeting in 2020. This will surely anchor Christian Meditation firmly in the Caribbean.

Project to bring meditation to rural schools in South Africa is in progress

In South Africa WCCM is working in partnership with The Catholic Institute of Education (CIE) to bring Christian Meditation to rural schools. On 30 April, a three-hour workshop was held at Mthatha and 44 teachers from 8 schools attended. Two of these schools are in the town itself and the remainder are rural, at various distances from Mthatha. A group of six teachers travelled 150 km from Cofimvaba to be at the workshop, and a principal from a deep rural school some 100 km away in Maclear also attended.

This was the second workshop as part of this ongoing project in South Africa.

A third workshop took place in Polokwane in the north of the country on 24 May. 11 schools attended, sending one or two representatives of their teaching staffs. Some travelled between 200-300 kilometres (return trip) to be at the workshop which began mid-morning and ended with a late lunch at 14:00.

Follow-up visits to interested schools in areas already visited are planned for the second semester.



In Focus

Maciej Zurawski, Scotland



As I will explain, it all started with a fire. I started meditation about 19 years ago at an eight-day silent retreat, the so-called Spiritual Exercises. We meditated several hours per day in a beautiful natural setting. It was a time when all illusions of the ego would painfully fall apart, one by one, and I could go deeper and deeper and discover the astonishing spiritual reality within. It was like discovering a new continent – a promised land.

It certainly helped having a spiritual director to interpret all movements of the spirit and the endless stream of images that were generated in my mind during the medi-

tation. It seems that these images captured all of human experience, from heaven to hell, from darkness to light, from despair to hope.

In hindsight, I came to realize that if we are afraid to face our darkness, and instead embrace the distractions that the world is trying to offer us constantly, we never really discover our inner treasure, our vocation, or God’s redemptive light resting within us.

I also experienced that every moment God is still creating me, and that meditation brings me in touch with an inner, deeply hidden, life-giving well. I made a commitment to always stay in touch with that inner well of life, since I had decided that there is nothing more important. This retreat was a sudden, life-changing experience, and I have been meditating every day since then, both in good times and in bad times. At the retreat we meditated in silence, but together, exactly as we do in WCCM. I find that meditating in a group is still an extraordinary experience, and the Spirit often leads us in unexpected directions – the Spirit is fully of serendipity and surprises.

Sometime people tell me that

they don’t have time to meditate. On the other hand, people sometime underestimate my age by about 15-19 years or so. Can time stand still? One translation of the Golden Sequence, the prayer to the Holy Spirit, reads “Free us from the tyranny of time”.

The secular world is by its nature anti-meditative. It wants us to live by illusion, addiction and disease. The discipline of meditation, on the other hand, leads us to truth, freedom and holistic health.

Now back to the fire. During that retreat when everything started, I experienced for the very first time the presence of the Holy Spirit in a physical way like a fire going through my body, purifying and bringing to life, but not burning. Meditation is as much about the body as about the spirit, and that experience has been with me, even though we do not seek any experience at all in meditation, but rather simplicity. I have been helping to lead a WCCM meditation group in Edinburgh for many years. In my work as a software developer, I have also been developing mobile apps for religion, spirituality and healing.

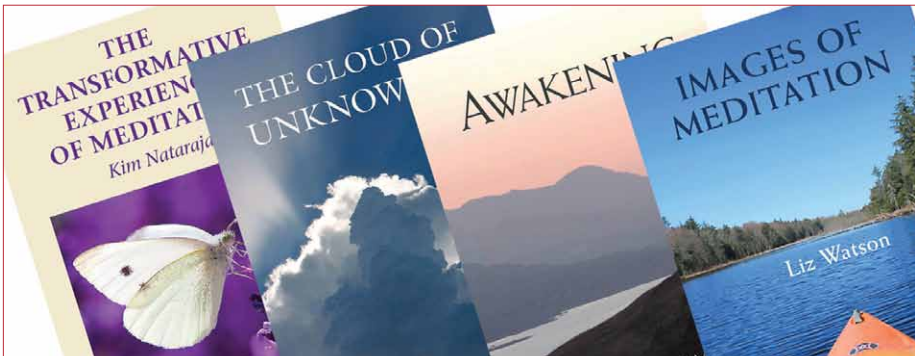


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Would you like to contribute to the Meditatio Newsletter? Our next deadline is 10 September.

Resources & Events

New Pocket Book Series



The Transformative Experience of Meditation

By Kim Nataraja

In leaving thoughts and images behind and applying attention to the word we transcend the ego and enter the Presence of God.

The Cloud of Unknowing

By Graeme Watson

The teaching of the 14th century spiritual classic is presented here in a lively and contemporary way.

Awakening

By John Main

Prayer is a self-transcending process which enables us to know ourselves as the presence of the living Christ in our world.

Images of Meditation

By Liz Watson

Seeing the hidden teaching in ordinary things - bikes, flowers, clouds - to enhance our practice of meditation.

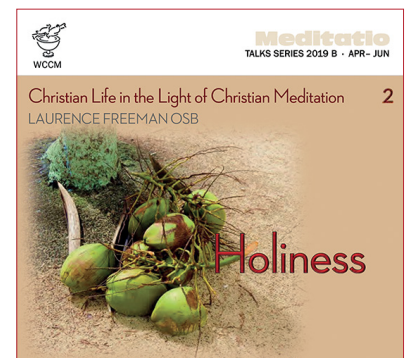
Order now at Medio Media: <http://tiny.cc/bklt2019>

Pilgrimages in 2020

29 Jan – 15 Feb: Christian Ashrams and St. Thomas Churches. More info: <http://tiny.cc/indiap2020>

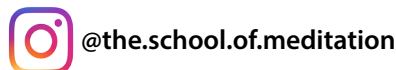
7 – 15 Feb: A Contemplative Journey to the Holy Land led by Laurence Freeman. More info: <http://tiny.cc/HolyLand2020>

Meditatio Series



The latest Meditatio CD Series. Listen to or download the tracks: <http://tiny.cc/Med2019B>
Order a copy of the CD: <http://tiny.cc/2019BHoliness>

The Roots of Christian Mysticism online course



The Roots of Christian Mysticism - our online course - is now complete. All three terms are now available! The course explores the mystical tradition from Jesus to John Main and is not to be missed. The online course is now also available for groups to use - at discounted rates. Many people have asked for this feature - groups can meet to study and reflect together on the mystics.

For more information contact the administrator Tina:

E: tina@theschoolofmeditation.org

T: +442072782070

Please sign up and encourage others to do so as well.

To order: contact the resource centre nearest to you. Our centres are listed below



VISIT WCCM's ONLINE BOOKSTORE: <https://mediomedia.com/>

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orders@goodnewsbooks.co.uk
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USA
www.contemplative-life.org
email: contemplativewisdom2@gmail.com
Tel: +1-520-882-0290

CANADA
www.wccm-canada.ca
christianmeditation@wccm-canada.ca
Tel: +1-514-485-7928

ASIA
email: mmi@wccm.org
Tel: +65 6469 7671

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www.christiansupplies.co.nz
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The Sacred Space for Healing *St Peter's Mintaro, South Australia*

By Jean Johns

On 2 April 2019, a Christian Meditation group was launched at the Sacred Space of Healing and Quiet (Healing) Garden, at St Peter's Church, Mintaro, SA, a healing ministry for survivors of church abuse, under the auspices of the Anglican Diocese of Willochra.

This is just one of the many services offered through the Sacred Space for Healing to address the need for spiritual healing of survivors of church abuse.

Let me share a short description of the genesis of this unique ministry authored by Joe Johns.¹

St Peter's Mintaro, A Re-Purposed Ministry

The need for the church of God to reach out to those wounded by the very individuals mandated to care



Healing Stations: Prayer Bench, Fire Pit for Burning of Letter to God and Heritage St Peter's Church housing the prayer space.

for them the most has reached its apex in the aftermath of the Royal Commission.

One of the most devastating consequences of the harm done to them by ministers of religion is the belief of many victims that it was God

himself who harmed them. At the center of spiritual healing for survivors, the link between the perpetrator of the trauma and our Loving God must be broken.

continued over page



The World Community
for Christian Meditation
Australia

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE
MELBOURNE
11 & 12 Oct 2019**

Laurence Freeman OSB

"Being Unity in a Divided World"

As the world seems to fracture and resort to violence as a way to resolve problems, the contemplative dimension of the church – and all religions – has never been more urgently needed. Community and solitude both nurture this dimension that offers the best hope we have to survive and flourish. The mystical tradition illuminates the discoveries of science and gives depth to the idea of progress. How does the 'ordinary meditator' – as we all are – serve this saving and healing work?

Registration form for this event is available at www.wccmaustralia.org.au
Enquiries: Mirella Pace 0408 470 114, mirellapace49@gmail.com





Cross for survivors to release the names of the people who harm them and surrender to Christ.

The avenues of spiritual healing for victims of clergy abuse are scarce in Australia. There is a clear need for a dedicated Sacred Space for victims / survivors of church abuse, to be used for personal and communal prayer. To address this critical spiritual need, Bishop John Stead, shepherd of the Anglican Diocese of Willochra has embraced a new ministry initiative to provide a sacred space dedicated to spiritual healing.

On 19 Mar 2019, a dedication service and blessing was held to open this new ministry at St Peter's Mintaro, South Australia.

The vision of St Peter's Mintaro is to transform the grounds and the church into a sacred space that will promote spiritual healing for those harmed by ministers of religion here in Australia. It is hoped that St Peter's will be both an ecumenical and an interfaith venture. St Peter's sacred space will offer a menu of options for its visitors. Upon arrival, visitors will be welcomed and given a pamphlet that describes the ministry of St Peter's with a description of what forms of ministry are on offer. Visitors can choose to engage any, all or none of the options offered.

The Role of Christian Meditation in Sacred Space for Healing

While St Peter's will not be a place for formal worship, it offers communal prayer in the form of Christian Meditation. Having experienced the healing power of silence and meditation myself, I am convinced that this form of prayer contributes to the very core of spiritual healing Sacred Space is consecrated for. In the resource manual, *Sharing the Gift*, Biblical Support for Christian Meditation from a Presbyterian point of view, the author refers to Psalm 46 as the "second word" of Christian Meditation as that taught by John Main. He writes,

"The psalmist describes a natural world whose foundations are shaking and trembling and a political world in turmoil where "nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter," but it is a world in which God's rule will triumph, 'for the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.' In order to know this, is to experience the presence and power of God, while everything appears to be falling apart around us, the psalmist declares the word of the Lord, 'Be still and know that I am God.'" (p.19)

"Christian Meditation can offer survivors a safe refuge and a blessed assurance in this practice."

The unimaginable horrors experienced by and the crumbling worlds of survivors, and the tottering of institutions as a result of the abuse inflicted upon our brothers and sisters in Christ need to be restored and healed. Christian Meditation can offer survivors a safe refuge and a blessed assurance in this practice. It may lead them to "...realizing the indwelling presence of God, realizing what has already been achieved... (*Sharing the Gift*, p. 11) The practice of Christian meditation can lead to the opening up of oneself to a reconciled relationship to oneself, to others, and ultimately to God. It may lead them to finding the path back to their own truth of being

loved by God; the most transformative power of all. As one survivor shared with me, I cannot see how the fullness of healing can occur without God, without a faith in God.

In addition to offering this form of prayer to survivors, Christian Meditation is offered to the locals in the mid-North community of Clare, Sevenhill and Mintaro. Support of local meditators encourages the hidden work of healing prayer for survivors. We want this healing space to be shrouded and steeped in prayerful presence. Meditators can assist in this unique ministry of healing. Through Christian meditation in this Sacred Space, meditators not only contribute to the healing work of survivors, they open themselves up to the healing touch of God in their own lives.

* * * * *

If you are in the area, please join us in meditation on Tuesdays, 11am-12pm at St Peter's, Hill Street, Mintaro, South Australia. Most importantly, please hold us in your prayers, as we slowly permeate this sacred space with God's gentle, loving and healing presence.²



Prayer Space

1. Read the full article, on *The Willochran*, March 2019 edition, www.diowillochra.org.au/the-willochran/
2. Another link about Sacred Space for healing can be found at: www.abc.net.au and search Clare Valley's Sacred Space garden helps to heal the wounds of abuse.



The World Community
for Christian Meditation
Australia

A Week in Melbourne with **Laurence Freeman OSB**

7th - 12th October 2019



Dear Friends

It is with great joy that I invite you all to Melbourne for a week of special events with Fr Laurence Freeman OSB. You are welcome to attend any of those events open to you, culminating with the National Conference on Friday night 11th October and all-day Saturday 12th October 2019.

The program reflects the work of outreach by WCCM Australia, such as teaching Christian meditation to children and young people and for those in the broader secular community who may be seeking a contemplative practice. Whether you are new to meditation or have been practising for some time this beautiful contemplative prayer of silence, stillness and simplicity as taught by John Main OSB, you will find much to enrich your journey and practice.

I highly recommend this week to you all and encourage those of you from other states to consider coming to Melbourne at this time. Please pass on this invitation to others. Please contact me for any further information.

Mirella Pace

National Coordinator, WCCCM Australia • 0408 470 114 • mirellapace49@gmail.com

Monday 7 October

Christian Meditation with Children and Young People: A Lifelong Gift

Open to Principals, Teachers, Chaplains, Parents, catechists, family Coordinators.

Time: 9am-3.30pm • Cost: \$120

Place: Amora Hotel, 649 Bridge Rd, Richmond

Contact: Ruth Fowler: rafowler4@gmail.com

Tuesday 8 October

'Do not let your hearts be troubled: teachings from contemplative Christianity for the secular age'

Open to all.

Contact: Tom Hardman: tomhenryhardman@gmail.com

Time: 9.30am-5pm

Cost: Early bird \$65; Full fee \$85; Concession \$65

Place: Rosina Auditorium, Abbotsford Convent

Registration:

<http://thecontemplary.org/events/fr-laurence-freeman>

Wednesday 9 October

"Sparks of Beauty"

Public event open to all.

The Archbishops Office for Evangelization

Venue: St Mary of the Cross Chapel, Australian Catholic University Melbourne, 8 Brunswick Street

Time: 6.30pm Refreshments for 7pm Start until 8:45pm

Contact: Tel: (03) 9926 5761

Email: evangelisation@cam.org.au



Bonnevaux Centre for Peace

Help us to complete the Vision

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Friday 11 – Saturday 12 October

Being Unity in a Divided World

Open to all.

Santa Maria College Polding Centre

50 Separation St, Northcote

Full Cost \$85 Fri & Sat • Friday only 7-9pm Cost \$30

• Saturday only 9.30am-3.30pm Cost \$60

Registrations: wccmaustralia.booking@gmail.com

Thursday 10 October

An Evening with Laurence Freeman OSB

A fundraising dinner for Bonnevaux our Centre for Peace in France.

Open to all. (See advert page 18.)

Time: 6:30pm to 10.00pm • Cost: \$75

Veneto Club, 191 Bulleen Rd, Bulleen

Contact: Jan Wylie – janwylie@tpg.com.au

See advert page 18.

Our Pilgrimage into Meditation

by Gabby Nelson

I sent emails and asked the Queensland meditators how they first found out about Christian Meditation and what place it holds in their lives. The response was marvellous – this is obviously a topic, which touched people’s hearts. I have selected some common themes and a few stories to share.

Many people were aware that they were searching for something but unsure of quite what that something was. For quite a number of churchgoers, often that ‘something’ was in the church newsletter, either as an invitation to attend a Christian Meditation information session or the notice of the CM group’s meeting time. Frequently, someone was told about meditation by a friend, family member, spiritual counsellor or health professional. The message for us as meditators is to keep advertising our groups and gatherings and to keep mentioning meditation to the people we know. ‘God works in mysterious ways’ and we can’t predict when we may help someone discover meditation.

Daphne’s Story

Daphne was in a second-hand bookstore. She selected one book, as she pulled it out, it dislodged another book which fell on the floor. That other book was John Main’s *Moment of Christ*. She started to flick through it and realized that this was what she had been searching for. She took it home, read it and started meditating that day and introduced her husband to the practice. Soon after, she saw a Quiet Day advertised in her church newsletter and they went along to it. They were surprised and delighted to find that it was Christian Meditation based on John Main’s teachings. They joined a group that day.

Marie’s Story

Marie was invited to join a group after her husband died suddenly 20 years ago. ‘I took to it at once, loved the silence, the teaching and my

fellow meditators. Over the years I have experienced gentle healing and growth in my walk with Jesus. I still have much to learn but I think I have become a kinder and more loving person, hopefully a true witness to the love and kindness of our Lord God to all who seek Him’.

The Spirit is waiting

W. wrote: ‘All these years a Christian and I had never experienced such a powerful Presence of the Holy Spirit – in the reading and also in the quietness and stillness where no words are necessary because the Spirit is waiting to fill our hearts and spirits as we wait quietly.’

“The message for us as meditators is to keep advertising our groups and gatherings and to keep mentioning meditation to the people we know.”

Most of us are slower to realize that we have found our way home.

Joe’s Story

Joe attended a seminar at a Catholic school and met Fr Laurence who introduced him to Christian Meditation. A few years later, he met Fr Laurence again and told him, ‘I have discovered that Christian Meditation is not for me.’

‘Why not?’ Fr Laurence asked with a quizzical smile.

‘Well, you see, I have found out that I am not successful at meditation at all!’

Fr Laurence laughed loudly. ‘That is the very point of meditation. You don’t have to be successful. You just have to continue the journey. You are on the way!’

‘Thirty-five years later’, Joe writes, ‘I am still on the way’.

Open the door

I went to a Christian Meditation information session run by Pauline Peters and thought what she was

describing could be what I had been seeking. But when we started meditating, it was soooo difficult. After about two minutes, I was thinking, ‘Surely we’ll finish soon’. I peeked at Pauline and thought, ‘How embarrassing for her, she must have gone to sleep. No one could sit still and silent for that long’. After a few more minutes, I was certain she needed CPR! As we left the session, we were asked to put our names on a list – I thought I might try meditation again at some later date, so I put my name on the list. The next morning, the priest rang and asked me to lead a meditation group. My response was, ‘Don’t be daft. I don’t know anything about it’. He, the wise man, said, ‘That’s not important – all you need to do is turn up and open the door’. Having the role of leader gave me the push I needed to do the meditation every morning at least.

Gabrielle’s Story

Gabrielle was about to retire, and she realized, from observing others, that she needed to reclaim the essence of herself. From a young age she had been in a caring role, became a nurse, single parent of young children etc, so always had a role to play. Now it was time to reclaim ‘Gabrielle’. A friend ran a Christian meditation group and she decided to give it a go. ‘Now, 18 years later, meditation is integral to my life’.

Along with discovering their own depths, many meditators knew they wanted to deepen their own spirituality and by joining a meditation group, found the support of other like-minded people to be a great blessing.

Ruth writes...

... that she cherishes her group as her home group and the members as her valued spiritual companions. Some are now very dear friends. The same is true for many other people who agree that meditation creates community.

Margaret...

...has had a heart condition for years,

and both her cardiologists have told her they are amazed that she is still alive. 'I mentioned my meditation practice to my palliative care doctor one day and he said, 'That's exactly why you are still here!' She says that she is very aware of the enormous help the practice has provided. 'I rely on it completely, particularly in bad times. I feel I would never have managed without it. I fall back on my meditation times like an anchor, supporting me no matter how I feel, and am forever grateful to our website as I can listen to any of the talks and retreats at any time. I particularly love Fr Laurence's Holy Week retreat. Never miss it!'

Carol...

...expressed her feeling and belief in this haiku:

*Turn inwards. He speaks,
the Teacher within. Listen!
Open your heart's ears!*

* * * * *

In some cases, people arrived at Christian Meditation after trying various secular practices.

Toni...

...had studied meditation particularly for its health benefits. 'To later find such a rich history and practice in the Christian tradition was a wonderful discovery!'

Dianne...

...had loved her group experience of relaxing while listening to calming music or readings from such spiritual teachers as Deepak Chopra when she was in Perth. When the family moved to Brisbane, she was looking for another group and chanced upon the Christian Meditation website and found a local group. When she attended the group, she found the practice very different and challenging, and the silence to be uncomfortable and daunting, and she wondered whether to stay. 'I decided to persevere and so glad I did. After a while, I found myself relaxing into the silence and peace. I love the simplicity of listening to the wisdom [of the CD teachings] and then settling down into the silence. I've found it easier meditating with others as we all have the same goal, and a feeling of peace

permeates the atmosphere. When any questions arise, which seem to be mainly about distractions, there is always a wise word to guide us along.'



Amy's reflection on Meditation and Motherhood

He's completely dependent on me... has he had enough milk?... was that nap long enough?... is he okay?... he is just incredible... he is so innocent so pure... how do people get so confused?... I hope I don't hurt him in his life, families can get so complicated... would he just go to sleep already?

"I'm noticing God at the centre of my being and the love that flows from him is growing in our home."

I have so many things to do... what should I cook for dinner?... I got the washing on the line today, how funny that seems like an achievement now... MA RA NA THA...

Giving birth to a child, birthed a new part of myself, which perhaps had been dormant. There were things from my previous life that dramatically changed in that instant.

Other things that clawed at me to retain, but simply did not work with the new life and had to be let go, and other things that naturally fell away. These were from the simple routines of life of making favourite food, enjoying some form of exercise, pursuing hobbies, to stopping full time work and all that that might mean. The process was beautiful and arduous at the same time. My child interrupted my pattern of living so profoundly that I could not hide behind old routines and roles... he stripped me of everything and gave me space to realise that and look at life as it was now. My entire being became devoted to his life, and in his life my behaviour mirrored his. I noticed some unstable traits of insecurity and how different parts of my life had concealed these from me, but now with them removed, what they had been concealing stared at me.

Most profoundly, I noticed my distractedness, but I perhaps did not have a word for it until joining the meditation group. Just as my son's attention can waver with the slightest change in stimuli, and the parent attempts to guide him back... my mind darted off on all sorts of tangents, and the word brings it back. In the beginning the mind was judged harshly for losing focus and marched back to the word, now the mind is gently guided back by the word. More love is felt.

I also started to notice that just as I was there to provide love to my son, there were times he simply would not accept it, and how the moment he did, peace would reign. I noticed that the struggles in my life were my difficulties accepting love too. God's love is all around us ready to embrace if we are ready to recognise and receive it.

I joined the Whitsunday Meditation Group roughly one year ago. My son was perhaps just over a year when I started. He had become the centre of my being, my focus of life and although this is natural and good, I could feel an imbalance within me. Since beginning meditation, harmony is being restored. I'm noticing God at the centre of my being and the love that flows from him is growing in our

home. The changes are subtle, but profound.

Thank you to the meditation community, I am so grateful to be part of this and hope to encourage you all to keep going.

David's reflection:

Christian Meditation:

A bloke's experience

I'm told some people are born contemplative – but not me (I wish). I was very masculine: out there, active, driven, fast and furious. I ran like a Sherman tank: get results, get real, get serious. There was no inwardness, no awareness, no understanding of anything else. So, when I joined a meditation group (therapy), I found

something quite different: something softer, quieter, warmer, slower.

“But there were moments when it all came together, nothing weird or religious but just feeling more grounded.”

I wasn't changed overnight. Many times during meditation I thought I should be doing something more practical with my precious time – I felt I was doing nothing (true enough).

I found 'maranatha' quite beyond me (I couldn't 'let go') – besides, what did it mean? It was only much later someone told me it didn't have to mean anything, that wasn't the point. But there were moments when it all came together, nothing weird or religious but just feeling more grounded, a sense that this was how it could be.

The message I took from this was that I NEEDED to do this every day. If/when I didn't make time for this space, I lost it. Even though I have come to depend on it, I struggle to do it daily (twice daily is out of the question). It is a work in progress. Every day I have to begin again, over and over and over.



Bonnevaux Centre for Peace

Help us to complete the Vision

A Fundraising Dinner for Bonnevaux

Our New International Centre for Peace

The World Community for Christian Meditation Australia
invites you, your family and friends

To join the community in Melbourne to hear Laurence Freeman OSB
Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation share his vision for Bonnevaux

Opportunities to donate at the dinner:

- bid on items at an auction,
- choose household pieces to be used in the accommodation and kitchen areas at Bonnevaux from a Giving Tree
- give an amount you nominate

If you are unable to join us for the dinner but wish to donate go to: www.wccmaustralia.org.au
– then to the **Bonnevaux page** where there is an opportunity to donate. Please also email Jan Wylie – janwylie@tpg.com.au – your name and the amount donated.

The Dinner:

Date: **Thursday 10 October 2019**
Time: 6.30 - 10pm
Venue: Veneto Club, The Rialto Room,
191 Bulleen Road, Bulleen Victoria
Cost: \$75 per head – includes your meal and soft drink. The bar will be open to purchase alcohol.

Bookings and payment by Saturday 28 September.

Details on our website:

www.wccmaustralia.org.au

Gift for Life

Stillness, Silence, Simplicity and Children

by Sandy Andrews

WCCM Australia SA Meditation Group Leader

When we think of stillness, silence and simplicity, it is hard to link these three words with a class full of school children. And yet, children and young people have a lot to teach us!

Children can be still, be silent and enjoy the simplicity of meditation as has been proved in many schools. The World Community for Christian Meditation Australia has been working hard to introduce children to Christian Meditation over many years. The work has been fruitful, and many school children and school teachers have reported the benefits in all areas of school life.

In SA we have a group of people interested in helping to take Christian Meditation into more schools and churches in SA. We have begun the journey with *Gift for Life* training led by Mirella Pace (National Coordinator WCCM Australia) and Penny Sturrock (National Coordinator for Meditation with Children and Young People), along with teachers from various Christian schools around the state. In May the group met to take the next step in our journey to make us ready to share the *Gift for Life* if called upon to do so. This included making sure we have police checks and mandatory reporting training up to date. Next month many of us will attend the Gift for Life Training – *Christian Meditation – Revolution or Renaissance?* again led by Mirella and Penny. We were all reminded that our own practice

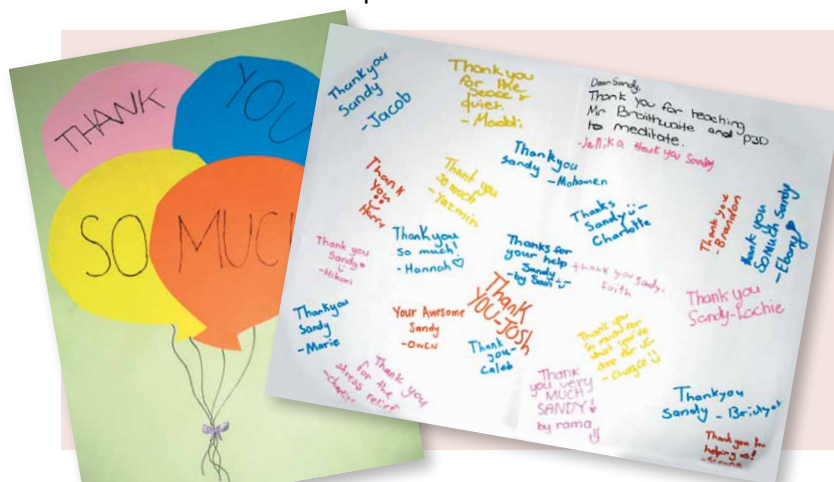


Dianne, Rosie, Josie, Judith, Lynda at the Meditation with children and young people meeting.

and experience is our main resource. We will be talking to teachers and encouraging them to introduce regular daily meditation practice to their own students.

I am a volunteer at a local state primary school, listening to reading and working one to one with some students for 2 hours each week. Through my connection with the school, I asked if I could talk to teachers about meditation, and this has resulted in me leading a weekly meditation group with some of the teachers for half an hour. I call it *Good Heart Meditation* as it has to be secular, and emphasize how we can connect to our good, compassionate heart in the silence which benefits ourselves as well as others. I also remind them there is no such thing as a “good” or “bad” meditation – there is just meditation and we just have to turn up. Also, we are all beginners every time we sit to meditate. One of the teachers introduced his year 6/7 class to meditation last term. They practice

every day for a few minutes. They were soon demanding their meditation time, and some children who found it hard, are now finding it easier after regular practice. I was given a beautiful card from all the students thanking me for “teaching our teacher and our class to meditate.” One said “Thank you for the stress relief”, another “thank you for the peace and quiet”. It was unexpected and very humbling. The teacher said “Thanks for giving up your time to provide my students and I with another strategy and option for managing our wellbeing. My students demand that we have meditation each morning and I have seen a positive impact across the class following.” With all the bullying, distractedness, stress and frantic pace of our schools, wouldn’t it be wonderful if more children in more schools could start simply, silently and in stillness, to connect to each other and Holy Mystery. That is our hope for the future. We only have to plant a little seed in a small way.



As Christ walks with us into the schools, ministering through our presence, and all, I would like to emphasize how important our role will be by being interpersonally and simply present to each young soul as they truly experience the wonder of who they are confirmed by our loving calm attention and the gaze of Christ’s light shining on them through us by faith in the preparation and practice.

Rosemary Raymond.



www.wccmaustralia.org.au

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National Secretary

Joan McKeegan

National Coordinators for Younger Christian Meditators

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Kath Houston

Meditation with Children and Young People

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