



The World Community  
for Christian Meditation

April, 2014



## Dear Friends in Australia,

A big thank you from Fr. Laurence and our small team for the recent gift and most importantly the love and support which your ongoing generosity represents. Thanks to a US Family Foundation which is supporting the WCCM, this and each Friends donation we receive in 2014, will be matched.



After we have meditated, I feel calm and happy. We do lots of good work after that.”

Children at an orphanage in Taunggyi, Myanmar being taught how to meditate

Every cent and the ‘match’ (which effectively doubles it), will be invested in our international mission and directly help to change lives, from those challenged by physical poverty, living in the most disadvantaged parts of the world, to the materially affluent – who may experience an equal measure of suffering from other forms of poverty.

I’d like to update you on Laurence’s recent travels, the people he’s met and experiences he’s had so you can appreciate how each donation allows us to gradually further the worldwide mission of WCCM.

**During the past few months, Laurence has spent much of his time teaching meditation to students.**

These have included primary children in a US school, business students at Georgetown University, trainees at the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland, and orphans and young clergy in Myanmar. The people, settings and messages may be different but the outcome remains the same – meditation is a universal gift which touches all those whose lives we touch and can transform our way of living together. And, by helping to influence this next generation of young adults during their education,

we hope our message will have a powerful ripple effect – as they become compassionate leaders at home, in community and the institutions where they work.

**A wonderful example of this ‘ripple effect’ is the Meditation with Children programme.**

Thanks to Ernie Christie and Cathy Day from Australia, a series of Meditation seminars in 2010 saw the launch of this programme in the UK. Two volunteers who attended a seminar decided to develop the programme locally and, today, almost 2,000 teachers and 30,000 children begin their day with a peaceful mind. The programme is operationally self-sufficient; thanks to the donations we receive from each new school, which will allow us to invest income from other sources into secondary programme development and expanding the programme into other countries. According to one primary child – ‘after we have meditated, I feel calm and happy. We do lots of good work after that’. This is a wonderful example of how the generosity of the Australian community – with their time, talents and financial resources – have helped to achieve vast social impact abroad and at home, where the programme is also flourishing.

Laurence has recently returned from the US and Ireland and, before he headed to Bere Island for the Easter Retreat, I spent some time with him to find out more about his experiences and the students he was with.



MBA students in the US understanding how meditation can help them become more compassionate leaders

After a short Christmas break in Ireland, Laurence arrived in Washington DC in early January to teach a six-week module 'Leading from Within' to 40 MBA students who were in the second year of their studies at Georgetown University. The course was extremely popular – it quickly became oversubscribed and had a waiting list. Laurence was interested to know what the students' motivations would be and soon discovered they were sincere, serious and responded well to the challenge of incorporating twice daily meditation into their routine. After a very short time, many students commented that the spirit of attention was growing stronger in their personal relationships and their studies – with several saying they were sharing the practice with their partner and friends.

Further into the course, students also felt that they were less insecure and aggressive during team work, able to listen better, remain calm in the face of stress or opposition, able to experience greater job satisfaction when they were back in their work environment and see the social benefits associated with their job. A strong bond of friendship and affection developed amongst the group and many said that this was the best experience of their business school education.

Best wishes,

Rachel Sharpe  
Director of Development

Most of students are employed in finance, banking and consultancy – many of the areas in the corporate world that will benefit from more conscious and compassionate leadership.

Certain members of the class said that they would like to continue working with the WCCM and help us develop our outreach into the business world. This will focus on introducing executive leadership courses in other universities and organisations throughout the world. We will also support them as they introduce meditation groups into the own places of work. Laurence recently returned to Georgetown for a post-course retreat to help students deepen their personal practice.

Shortly after returning from the US, Laurence continued teaching a course at the Royal College of Physicians in Dublin to medical practitioners.

Like the business students, the class quickly established a deep connection to the practice. With burnout among healthcare professionals becoming a growing problem, the students seriously considered the implications for a new paradigm of healthcare – known as 'contemplative medicine'. The course is co-lead by Dr. Barry White, the former National Director of the Irish Health Service and now the WCCM National Coordinator in Ireland.

Many of the practitioners who are attending the course have said that they are finding the meaning of their healing vocation is being restored. They are dealing more effectively with the stress and disappointments involved with modern medicine and feel a greater sense of partnership with their patients in the quest to restore them to health – even when there is no 'cure'.

Thanks so much for your ongoing support of our international mission. Without your prayer and generosity, much of this life-changing work, within the Christian community and to the wider world, would not be possible.

Fr. Laurence has asked me to pass on the following message: *"All of us on the Holy Week retreat on Bere Island – including the five Aussies here – send you our love and wishes for a holy Easter filled with the light of Christ. In him there is no distance or separation. With love, Laurence"*.