

### What is Meditation?

Meditation is a universal spiritual wisdom and a practice that we find at the core of all the great religious traditions, leading from the mind to the heart. It is a way of simplicity, silence and stillness. It can be practised by anyone from wherever you are on your life's journey. It is only necessary to be clear about the practice and then to begin – and keep on beginning. In Christianity this tradition became marginalised and even forgotten or suspect. But in recent times a great recovery of the contemplative dimension of Christian faith has been happening. Central to this now is the rediscovery of a practice of meditation in the Christian tradition that comes to us from the early Christian monks - the Desert Fathers and Mothers and allows us to put into practice the teaching of Jesus on prayer in a radical and simple way. English Benedictine monk John Main has a major role in this contemporary renewal of the contemplative tradition. His teaching of this ancient tradition of prayer is rooted in the Gospels and the early Christian monastic tradition of the Desert.



### 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 or it or when your attention is wandering.*

Meditate twice a day every day for between 20 and 30 minutes. This daily practice may take you sometime to develop. Be patient. When you give up start again. You will find that a weekly meditation group and a connection with a community may help you develop this discipline and allow the benefits and fruits of meditation to pervade your mind and every aspect of your life in ways that will teach and delight you. John Main said that 'meditation verifies the truths of your faith in your own experience'.

### Australian Christian Meditation Community

The ACMC is part of the *World Community for Christian Meditation* (WCCM), an ecumenical community led by Fr Laurence Freeman OSB. The **Mission Statement** of the Community was agreed at the John Main Seminar at New Harmony Indiana in 1991 and forms part of the WCCM Constitution accepted by all national communities:

*To communicate and nurture meditation as passed on through the teaching of John Main in the Christian tradition and in the spirit of serving the unity of all.*

The ACMC does this through a National Council and Executive, 440 groups around Australia, annual programs of events by State and National committees, a borrowing library, quarterly Newsletters to some 3000 meditators, international CDs to group leaders, websites and schools initiatives. There is no membership fee to belong to the Community but an annual donation is gratefully received.

**ACMC (Victoria)**, is led by a Committee comprising: Stephen Holgate (Coordinator); Trish Martin (Deputy Coordinator); Phil Collins (Treasurer); Maureen Jenkins (Secretary); Czesia Chwasta; Eileen Dunnicliff; Pat Leung; Jamie Miller; Mirella Pace; Mark Griffiths; Barbara Rossal-Wynne.



### Useful contacts

- **ACMC (Vic) Coordinator:** [chrmedvic@gmail.com](mailto:chrmedvic@gmail.com)
- **ACMC Newsletter**, published four times a year email to subscribe [acmcnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:acmcnewsletter@gmail.com)
- **ACMC website** for information on events, contacts & groups in Australia: [www.christianmeditationaustralia.org](http://www.christianmeditationaustralia.org)
- **International website** for news, teaching on meditation, history, video clips etc: [www.wccm.org](http://www.wccm.org)
- **Bookshop:** to purchase books & CDs: Joe Panetta [jpanetta@energy.com.au](mailto:jpanetta@energy.com.au)
- **National Library:** to borrow items: Barbara Rossal-Wynne [b\\_rossal@bigpond.net.au](mailto:b_rossal@bigpond.net.au)
- **Teaching meditation in schools:** Ruth Fowler [rafowler@optusnet.com.au](mailto:rafowler@optusnet.com.au)



# Australian Christian Meditation Community (Vic) 2011 Program



### About the ACMC

- ecumenical community
- promoting an ancient practice of stillness & silence
- rooted in the teaching of Jesus on prayer
- leading to a personal encounter with the sacred
- loosening the grip of anxieties & addictions
- living more fully in the presence of divine love



# Australian Christian Meditation Community (Vic) 2011 Program

## Community Day

- **Date:** Saturday 19 March 10am-4pm
- **Venue:** St Peter's Hall, cnr Albert & Gisborne Sts., E. Melb.
- **Details:** Donation \$10. Bring lunch to share. Tea/coffee provided.
- **Presenter:** Ruth Fowler is former co-founder of the ACMC. She is currently WCCM Co-ordinator—Teaching Christian Meditation in Schools, introducing teachers in Australia & New Zealand to the practice of Christian Meditation so they may introduce it to students.
- **Theme:** *Exploring the teachings of John Main OSB.*



## Silent Retreat

- **Dates:** Friday 8 (7pm reg.) to Sunday 10 April (4pm).
- **Venue:** Pallotti College, Millgrove.
- **Retreat Leader:** Melbourne born, Fr Gerald O'Collins, SJ, AC, took his PhD at the University of Cambridge and taught theology at the Gregorian University (Rome) 1973-2006. He has published hundreds of articles in popular and professional journals, and authored or co-authored 57 books. The latest include: *Jesus Our Priest* (OUP); *Philip Pullman's Jesus* (Darton, Longman & Todd); and *Jesus: A Portrait* (Darton, Longman and Todd)."
- **Theme:** *Praying the Easter Mystery.*
- **Further details and applications:** to be advised.



## Community Day

- **Date:** Saturday 21 May 10am-4pm
- **Venue:** St Peter's Hall, cnr Albert & Gisborne Sts., E. Melb.
- **Details:** Donation \$10. Bring lunch to share. Tea/coffee provided.
- **Presenter:** Fr John Dupuche is Parish Priest of Ricketts Point & Coordinator of the School of Prayer in the Catholic Archbishop's Office of Evangelisation. He has published *Jesus, the Mantra of God* which develops the knowledge & practice of the mantra in the light of Hindu thought.
- **Theme:** *Surprised by the Spirit.*

## Meditation & Mindfulness Day

- **Date:** Saturday 25 June 10am-4pm
- **Venue:** St Peter's Hall, cnr Albert & Gisborne Sts., E. Melb.
- **Details:** BYO lunch. Tea/coffee provided. Donation: \$10
- **Presenter:** Evelyn Reinehr is a long-term member of the ACMC and was Victorian Co-ordinator 2005/6. She is a trained Spiritual Director (graduate - Heart of Life and Jesuit Arrupe program) and an Oblate of the WCCM.
- **Theme:** *If you hear God's voice today, do not harden your hearts (Ps. 95:8)*



## Community Day & AGM

- **Date:** Saturday 20 August 10am-4pm
- **Venue:** St Peter's Hall, cnr Albert & Gisborne Sts., E. Melb.
- **Details:** Donation \$10. Bring lunch to share. Tea/coffee provided.
- **Presenter:** Christina Fox has offered spiritual direction for twenty-five years & previously taught at La Trobe University & the United Faculty of Theology. She currently teaches in the Certificate in Guiding Meditation (ACU). Christina was a member of the Cheltenham Retreat House staff (1997-2001) & since then at the Living Well Centre, where she & Fr. John Stewart (Director) teach a program for the formation & supervision of spiritual directors.
- **Theme:** *The greening of the heart: an exploration with George Herbert.*



## Silent Retreat

- **Dates:** Friday 11 (7pm reg) – Sunday 13 Nov (4pm)
- **Venue:** Pallotti College, Millgrove.
- **Retreat Leader:** Fr. Aloysius Rego was born in Burma & migrated to Australia with his family as a youth. He joined the Discalced Carmelite Friars in 1983 and was ordained a priest in 1989. Since then he has taught theology at the Yarra Theological Union (Melbourne) and has also worked in retreat ministry. He is currently the Prior at the Carmelite Retreat Centre, Varroville (NSW).
- **Theme:** *Prayer and friendship with God.*
- **Further details and applications:** to be advised.

## Meditation & Mindfulness Day

- **Date:** Saturday 3 December 10am-4pm
- **Venue:** St. Peter's Hall, cnr Albert & Gisborne Sts., E. Melb.
- **Details:** BYO lunch. Tea/coffee provided. Donation: \$10
- **Presenter:** Deborah Guess is an Anglican layperson & past ACMC (Vic) Coordinator who is completing postgraduate research on ecological theology & the Incarnation.
- **Theme:** *Emmanuel: preparing for the Christ-child.*

### About our programs

**Community Days** are congenial gatherings for new and experienced meditators featuring periods of meditation, two presentations on meditation or complementary themes and opportunities for conversation. Bring a plate of lunch to share!

**Meditation & Mindfulness Days** offer a silent retreat-style experience featuring two short talks, three periods of meditation and time for silent reflection or reading. BYO lunch.

**Silent Retreats** are live-in retreats, for new or experienced meditators and include periods of silent meditation, prayer, personal reflection & key presentations by a Retreat Leader.

### Venue

The venue for Community Days and M&M Days is St. Peter's Church Hall, cnr Albert & Gisborne Sts., East Melbourne. Melway map 2F ref K1. Easy train & tram access.

### Further information

Coordinator ACMC (Vic): [chrmedvic@gmail.com](mailto:chrmedvic@gmail.com)

### Other events and activities

**Essential Teaching Weekend:** The ETW is the WCCM's special program supporting Meditation Group Leaders. It will be led by Diane Craig. Expressions of interest & further information contact: Stephen Holgate: [chrmedvic@gmail.com](mailto:chrmedvic@gmail.com)

**Book Reading Discussion Group:** A new six session initiative led by Ruth Fowler exploring themes from *Jesus The Teacher Within* by Laurence Freeman. Further details coming soon via email!

"With so much mental activity [today], we forget that the essence of prayer is silence, stillness and awe in the presence of God". John Main OSB: *Monastery Without Walls*.