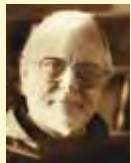


What is Meditation?

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. Its Mission Statement (1991) 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, online bookshop, 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.

Useful contacts

ACMC (Vic) Coordinator:

Stephen Holgate – chrmedvic@gmail.com

ACMC Quarterly Newsletter:

leon.milroy@gmail.com

Websites:

Australia: www.christianmeditationaustralia.org

International: www.wccm.org

Bookshop:

Joe Panetta – jpanetta@energy.com.au

National Library:

b_rossal@bigpond.net.au

Teaching Meditation in Schools:

Ruth Fowler – rafowler@optusnet.com.au

About our programs

Community Days – are congenial gatherings for new and experienced meditators featuring meditation, presentations and opportunities for conversation. Bring a plate of lunch to share!

Meditation and Mindfulness Days – offer a silent retreat-style experience featuring meditation, short presentations and time for silent reflection or reading. BYO lunch.

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



Australian Christian Meditation Community

2012 Victorian Program

About the ACMC

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

St Patrick's Community Day

Special focus on Celtic spirituality and harp music!

- **Date:** **Saturday 17 March**, 10am-4pm
- **Venue:** St Peter's Hall, cnr Albert and Gisborne Sts, East Melbourne
- **Details:** Donation \$20. Bring lunch to share.
- **Presenters:** **Gwen Masters** is a Minister of the Uniting Church with an MA in Celtic Christianity. She is passionate about enhancing the place and role of lay people within the church. **Cath Connelly's** harp music is deeply grounded in the Celtic tradition. Her performances invite audiences to engage in quiet reflection and a deeper sense of being.
- **Theme:** *Let Christ paint his own image in you: becoming Christ-like (Columbanus, Irish monk d.615, Sermon 11). John Cassian (365-435AD) is a key figure in the recovery of Christian Meditation today. His writings on the Scriptures, contemplation and holy mysteries also became the basis for many Celtic monastic rules. Gwen will explore the journey towards "becoming Christ-like", its impact then and today.*

Contemplative Book Discussion Group

Join this engaging discussion group, exploring *Monastery Without Walls*, the spiritual letters of John Main OSB.

- **Contact:** Ruth Fowler, rafowler@optusnet.com.au – Ph 9484 1328
- **Dates:** **Saturdays 12, 26 May; 9, 23 June**, 10am-3pm.
- **Venue:** Living Well Centre, St George's Anglican Church, Glenferrie Rd, Malvern
- **Cost:** \$50

Meditation and Mindfulness Day

- **Date:** **Saturday 28 April**, 10am-4pm
- **Venue:** St Peter's Hall, cnr Albert and Gisborne Sts, East Melbourne
- **Details:** BYO lunch. Tea/coffee provided. Donation: \$20
- **Theme:** *Tai Chi – From Movement to Meditation*
- **Presenter:** **Jo Russell** – "Tai chi has been part of my everyday life for nearly twenty years. It helps me to slow down, to focus on my body and my breath, so that when I sit I settle more easily into the mantra and the stillness of meditation."

National Silent Retreat

- **Dates:** **Tuesday 3 to Sunday 8 July**
- **Venue:** Newman College, University of Melbourne. This is a fully residential silent retreat.
- **Retreat Leader:** **Fr. Laurence Freeman OSB** is the spiritual guide and Director of the WCCM, a contemporary contemplative community. His spiritual teacher was John Main OSB with whom he studied and whom he helped in the establishment of the first Christian Meditation Centre in London. Fr. Laurence is the author of many books and articles and encourages the recovery of the contemplative wisdom in the Church and society at large.
- **Theme:** *Stages – the way up is the way down*
- **For full details and application see brochure:** www.christianmeditationaustralia.com or email: chrmedevent@gmail.com – ph 0437 514 148

"Listening to the Word and awakening in the full consciousness of God to the point of our creation is the task and very meaning of our lives. It is the way of our meditation."

'Monastery Without Walls' p.116 by John Main OSB

Community Day

- **Date:** **Saturday 4 August**, 10am-4pm
- **Venue:** St Peter's Hall, cnr Albert and Gisborne Sts, East Melbourne
- **Details:** Donation \$20. Bring lunch to share.
- **Presenter:** The Reverend **Trisha Bouma** has a BTheol and Master of Ministry, practices Spiritual Direction with Pilgrim Pathways, is Associate Deacon Christ Church South Yarra and a long standing meditator with ACMC and WCCM. "Hand in Hand with God" explores the call to unity within ourselves, with others and with the Divine.
- **Theme:** *Hand in Hand with God*

Introduction to Christian Meditation

- **Date:** **Saturday 15 September**, 10am-3pm
- **Venue:** St Peter's Hall, cnr Albert and Gisborne Sts, East Melbourne
- **Theme:** This day welcomes newcomers and offers practical steps to meditation; insights into the tradition from the teachings of Jesus to WCCM founder John Main; and guidance on how meditation can be helpful in one's personal life.

Essential Teaching Weekend

The ETW is part of the WCCM School of Meditation. It is a residential experience that includes the place of meditation in the contemplative tradition and the essential aspects of the practice. Many people who do this weekend feel more connected and want to participate in the work of the community. Note: Places are limited and bookings are required.

- **Contact:** Diane Craig, djcraig@students.latrobe.edu.au – Ph 5348 4108
- **Date:** **9-11 November**
- **Venue:** Community of the Holy Name, Cheltenham
- **Cost:** Details upon application.

Silent Retreat

- **Dates:** **Friday 19** (7pm reg) – **Sunday 21 Oct** (4pm)
- **Venue:** Pallotti College, Millgrove
- **Retreat Leader:** **Ruth Fowler** is former co-founder of the ACMC. She is currently ACMC Co-ordinator – Teaching Christian Meditation in Schools, introducing teachers in Australia and New Zealand to the practice of Christian Meditation so they may introduce it to students.
- **Theme:** *The retreat aims to deepen our understanding of the teaching of John Main and Laurence Freeman on the practice of Christian Meditation in the journey of faith.*
- **Further** details and applications to be advised later in the year.

Meditation and Mindfulness Day

- **Date:** **Saturday 24 November**, 10am-4pm
- **Venue:** St. Peter's Hall, cnr Albert and Gisborne Sts, East Melbourne
- **Details:** BYO lunch. Tea/coffee provided. Donation: \$20.
- **Presenter:** **Diane Craig** has been committed to a daily practice of meditation for over 15 years and has been a long-term member of the ACMC. She is part of the national team that leads the Essential Teaching Weekends.
- **Theme:** *Advent: a time to reflect deeply on the notion of the silence of God. Diane will draw on John Main's Way of Unknowing. When the Word was spoken it became the revelation of a mystery that had been shrouded in silence from the beginning of time. Our personal call to know God is of the same order.*