The World Community for Christian Meditation

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Friday Lent, Week 5

There is no instant mysticism, John Main said. But, then he went on, there is the infinite love of God welling up in our hearts and that is more than enough.

This puts very well both what we have to let go of – our impatience and the demands or expectations that we carry into our meditation each time. And also it says what we who truly seek will surely discover in our own experience if we truly do the work of letting go.

Most of us start off well on this journey, ready for absolute renunciation in the time of meditation. But then we slow down wanting to put some more clauses in the contract that we think we signed too hastily. But, the more demands and expectations we have the harder it is to meditate. After many mistakes it dawns on us that renouncing in order to get something in return isn't real renunciation. This doesn't mean we can't make some real progress even when we still have mixed motives and flawed practice. If it meant that we'd all be pessimistic perfectionists. But instant gratification it isn't. The 'atom of time' that the Cloud says the work takes, however, is the present moment.

Because of this, our disappointments and let downs, our periodic waning of enthusiasm and our false starts and relapses are all immensely useful and positive. The times we are sure we're going to do well and we botch it are windows of opportunity for discovering better what we are actually seeking. Happily accepted and put to work, the energy of disappointment becomes transformed into renewed commitment. The hope for instant results dissolves into the daydream it is. And then the full experience of love's meaning at the core of our being surges forward and carries us away. Turning defeat into progress is not a passing trick of the motivational speaker.

Learning to meditate is the simple effect of enduring the debunking of our illusions and adapting to a wholly new way of seeing.

Laurence Freeman OSB

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