The World Community for Christian Meditation

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April 24 Readings

From Fr Laurence Freeman, OSB: "How Long?" from Light Within:

The Inner Path of Meditation, New York: Continuum, 2000, pp. 22-23.

Why is the question, "How long will it take?" so important and how can it be so discouraging? Partly because it is such an unclear question. It is a question that we need to ask, but after all what does it mean? How long will what take? What is it that meditation is trying to make happen? What is the goal? What is the destination? Meditation will certainly lead us into an ever-deeper encounter with our own reality, and because of that it will give our life a more stable dimension of peace, liberty of spirit and joyfulness of heart.

And we will begin to feel those new dimensions opening up within and in our lives, often from quite unexpected sources, in unexplored relationships, at unpredicted moments, at unmarked points. These new spiritual dimensions exert a perceptible influence upon our relationships and work, our way of responding to the decisions and challenges of each day. What happens is that a whole set of forces, interconnected in the unity of our spirit, is released in our centre and radiates outwards to our lives.

But it is not even this that is the fundamental goal. It isn't this we are asking about when we say, "When will it happen?" All these real and necessary dimensions, all these inter-dependent forces are signs and symbols of one unified force, the one unified reality. This is the power of the reality of the Spirit of God who dwells in our heart, in the final depth of our spirit, the Spirit of all creation which is also the ultimate goal and meaning of our life. "How long will it take? When will it happen?" When we understand that "it" is this Spirit in our hearts that we are talking about and trying somehow to express, we will approach these questions quite differently. Because we then know that "it" is the Spirit which is both the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega. It is the beginning and the end of our meditation, of the whole journey of our meditation taken from the day we begin until the last day of our life. It is this Spirit which initiates and completes our being. As we come to understand that as the answer, we come to understand our questions. "How long does it take?" It takes no time because that Spirit is eternal and all time is contained in that Spirit. "When will it happen?" It has already happened. The Spirit has already been breathed into our hearts.

Meditate for Thirty Minutes. Remember: Sit down. Sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly, begin to say a single word. We recommend the prayer phrase "Maranatha." Recite it as four syllables of equal length. Listen to it as you say it, gently, but continuously. Do not think or imagine anything spiritual or otherwise. Thoughts and images will likely come, but let them pass. Just keep returning your attention ? with humility and simplicity to saying your word in faith, from the beginning to the end of your meditation.

After Meditation

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

John 20: 19-22

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