



# The World Community for Christian Meditation

Published on *The World Community for Christian Meditation* (<http://www.wccm.org>)

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## April 3 Readings



An excerpt from John Main, OSB, "Focus on the Real," in **THE**

**HEART OF CREATION (Norwich: Canterbury, 2007), pp. 83-84.**

One of the things that we must clearly understand is that meditation, this pursuit of wisdom and love, must take place in an entirely ordinary, natural way. Meditation must be built into the ordinary fabric of everyday life. We must learn to see the whole of life shot through with the divine, in harmony with the divine. We must understand that it is our destiny to enter this divine harmony, to be in harmony with God. It is not a question of trying to fit a bit of spirituality into our lives.

The spiritual quest, the permanent spiritual invitation is getting our lives, ourselves, into permanent focus with ultimate truth, ultimate goodness. Not in any self-important or exploitive way, but in a very simple, childlike way.

It is by being still, by paying attention and by becoming mindful of the one who loves us. To be fit for the great tasks in life we must learn to be faithful in humble tasks. Meditation is a very simple and very humble pilgrimage that prepares us for this focusing of our lives on the divine center. Our lives are nourished by the spiritual sap, the energy rising from the root of all being. The invitation that each of us has received is to find out who we are, . . . to go beyond the limitations of our separate selves and to be united with the one who is all in all. In that going beyond ourselves, we find ourselves. And we find our unlimited capacity for development, for liberty, for love.

We must be careful of the superlatives! We must be careful of our own enthusiasm because if we use too many superlatives we can forget the humility of the task, the ordinariness of the way. The ordinariness is simply that every morning of our lives and every evening of our lives, we settle down to recollect ourselves. We become mindful, we turn ourselves in the direction of the divine centre and focus ourselves. We do so by the simple expedient of saying our word. We banish all the images that can build a wall between ourselves and reality, by breaking through all the symbols. We allow the pure, brilliant light of reality, the clear light of God's Spirit, "shining," as St Paul puts it, in our hearts, to become the supreme reality. This task is not too hard for us. We will not have to travel over the sea to find it. We do not have to

ask others to do it for us. This reality is very near us. It is in our hearts, if only we will take the trouble to seek first the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom that it in 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**, from Mary Oliver, "Six Recognitions of the Lord" in THIRST (Boston: Beacon, 2006), pp. 26-27.

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I lounge on the grass, that's all. So simple. Then I lie back until I am inside the cloud that is just above me but very high, and shaped like a fish. Or, perhaps, not. Then I enter the place of not-thinking, not-remembering, not-wanting. When the blue jay cries out his riddle, in his carping voice, I return. But I go back, the threshold is always near. Over and back, over and back. Then I rise. Maybe I rub my face as though I have been asleep. But I have not been asleep. I have been, as I say, inside the cloud, or, perhaps, the lily floating on the water. Then I go back to town, to my own house, my own life, which has now become brighter and simpler, somewhere I have never been before.

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