



The World Community for Christian Meditation

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January 16 Readings



From Fr Laurence Freeman, OSB: *Dearest Friends*, January 1997

WCCM International Newsletter.

To allow [the] pattern of daily meditation to take hold amid all the other patterns of our lives, not just imaginatively but actually, is a challenge to the best of us; to the best in us. It is a mundane introduction to the cosmic law of sacrifice. There is an Indian story which tells how Vishnu came every day to offer worship to Shiva by offering a thousand lotuses at her feet. One day, after a few thousand years of such worship, he discovered as he lay the lotuses down that there were only 999 that day. (Such things happen occasionally). Without delay he plucked out one of his eyes, beautiful, shaped like a lotus and completed the offering with it by placing it among the 999.

Worship is another way of understanding the self-renunciation which is the dynamic at the heart of meditation and of all love. It offers us a different way of looking at sacrifice. Not as a loss of something precious, something dragged from us as we kick and scream. . .but as a precious opportunity to enter even greater bliss and fulfillment. To accept and to give in such moments is a gift of praise, which collects our whole being and unifies and simplifies us in the sudden alchemy of love.

This is the multi-dimensional work of meditation and it is why we must be so simple in our saying the mantra if all these dimensions are to be harmonized and develop together. It is not only a sacrifice of time. . . . The sacrifice includes our thoughts and imagination, the hundred-and-one conversations at all levels of our mind. As it was for Vishnu, it is an offering of our whole way of seeing and knowing, a temporary, partial blindness which is an act of faith in another and greater way of seeing and knowing.

The mantra introduces . . . into [the] experience of prayer a spontaneous act of praise which involves our whole being. Not just telling God . . . how omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent "he" is. But accepting the invitation inherent in our very existence to become as God is: by grace, by adoption, by love. In this cooperation of grace and nature our being is made whole. Christ the healer is most at work uniting depth and surface, inner and outer, in the pure gift of praise, which is ours and his as we listen to the mantra.

As Fr John taught, our meditation becomes most purely prayer not just in the work of saying the mantra in the face of distraction, but in the ease of listening to it.

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 D.H. Lawrence, "PAX," noted in David Steindl-Rast, OSB, *GRATEFULNESS: THE HEART OF PRAYER* (New York: Paulist, 1984), p. 185.

All that matters is to be at one with the living God

To be a creature in the house of the God of Life.

Like a cat asleep on a chair

at peace, in peace

and at one with the master of the house, with the

mistress

at home, at home in the house of the living,

sleeping on the hearth, and yawning before the fire.

Sleeping on the hearth of the living world,

yawning at home before the fire of life

feeling the presence of the living God

like a great reassurance

a deep calm in the heart

a presence

as of a master sitting at the board

in his own and greater being,

in the house of life.

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