



The World Community for Christian Meditation

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January 23 Readings



John Main OSB, "The Wholeness of God," *MOMENT OF CHRIST* (New

York: Continuum, 1998), pp. 83-85.

We have to learn, and it is absolutely necessary that we do learn it, that only one thing is necessary, because only one thing *is*. All of us must therefore address our own lack of discipline. We must bring our restless wandering minds to stillness. It is one of the first great lessons in humility we learn, when we realize that we come to wisdom and stillness, and we pass beyond distraction, only through the gift of God. . . . [A]ll we have to do is to dispose ourselves, and this we do by becoming silent, to the infinity of God. We learn to be silent by being content to say our mantra in humble fidelity.

It is as though the mystery of God is a wonderful multi-faceted diamond. When we talk or think about God it is as though we are responding to one or another facet, but when we are silent—which is to say, in his presence—we respond to the mystery which we call God as a *whole*. . . . The wonder of it is that it is the whole of us that responds to the entirety of the mystery of God. It is not just our intellect, not just our emotions, not just the "religious" side of us or the "secular" side of us. Everything that we are responds to everything that he is. . . . That is what the experience of Christian prayer is. [. . . .]

People often ask, "What is the experience of prayer like?" By that they mean, "What happens? What is it like?" It is like silence. And what happens? In the silence—peace. In the silence—presence. And deeper silence. The way into that silence requires great patience, great fidelity and it requires. . . . that we learn to say our mantra. As John Cassian said, the mantra contains all the human mind can express and all the human heart can feel. That one little word conveys and leads us into the silence which is the silence of creative energy. How long this takes is of no concern to us. "To the Lord a thousand years are as a day." The only thing that matters is that we are on the way.

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 THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING (London: Penguin, 1878), pp. 198-199.

. . . [I]t is good in due time to give up your intellectual exercises, and to learn to taste something of the love of God in your own spiritual experience. . . . You will without ceasing relax in the naked awareness of your self, ever giving your self up to God as the most precious offering you can make. But make quite sure. . . . that it is *naked*, lest you be deceived. . . . Your faculties must lay aside for a while the natural pleasure they have in knowledge. . . . It is quite certain one cannot taste or experience God spiritually except by grace, Therefore I beg you to seek experience rather than knowledge: knowledge can often lead one astray through pride, whereas humble, loving experience does not lie.

Knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies. (Cor 8:1). In knowledge is trouble, in experience rest.

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