



# The World Community for Christian Meditation

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## June 5 Readings



An excerpt from *Dearest Friends,* A Letter from Laurence Freeman

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Today the pace, uncertainty and huge interconnectedness of the global tipping points—from food, soil and water to biodiversity and financial systems—confront us with the need for what Simone Weil called *“a new holiness”* as necessary to the world today as *“a plague-stricken town needs doctors.”*

She believed that *“it is almost equivalent to a new revelation of the universe and of human destiny. It is the exposure of a large portion of truth and beauty hitherto concealed under a thick layer of dust.”*

Her use of the word *holiness* might turn off many today. Yet it shows how the old familiar words of our religious vocabulary—covered in dust for a long time—can be rehabilitated, recharged with their original power to break up the ice floes of our minds and open new ways of perception. Her *“new holiness”* is the integration of an explicit insight into policies and actions—the universality and inclusiveness of the world and all its inhabitants. It is new and yet it has been around a long time trying fully to break through: There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:28).

This characteristically Pauline insight throws the social and the mystical into the same pot. Like Jesus himself, it undermines every power structure by which the distinctions between people are elevated to an absolute level—the caste, class, religious, economic or cultural systems in which we live locally. It confronts the safe environments of the local with the disturbing, heady vistas of the global where horizons collapse inwards. As they fall, the universal emerges—always more as a way of perception than an object of perception. [. . .]

To meet the risen, cosmic Christ is to be *“in Christ,”* As is made clear from the resurrection stories, he cannot be grasped as an object or merely looked at. As soon as we try to do this he disappears. He needs to be seen and we can only see him from that level of consciousness that the phrase *“in Christ”* tries to describe. It is easier to describe the effects

of this experience than how it happens. So, Paul who knew the experience first-hand and was, by his own account, transformed by it, tells us that: "if anyone is in Christ the new creation has come. The old has gone and the new is here." (2 Cor 5:17)

The resurrection sends us back to this world in a new way with renewed vision and understanding. The new creation is a way of living in the world, freed from the old compulsions, from addiction to violence as a way of resolving conflict and from the repeated patterns of oppression and exploitation that have culminated in our present crisis.

The challenge to a contemporary Christian is that identifying our crisis with the Christian mystery does not mean that we solve the problem by baptizing everyone. [? .] The meaning of mission has changed for the modern Christian because of the ways the world has changed and the way it is heading. Whoever takes their part in resolving a crisis emerges from it changed. Christian identity also evolves?is enriched and elevated in fact?when we risk our faith in a real encounter with the problems of the world. To stand above the fray, judging from a position of superiority is to end with a fortress mentality, a fundamentalism and exclusivism which eventually destroys faith because it erodes compassion. To believe in a new creation rather than another creation, however, means that we can help to tip the collective crisis towards hope and positive change rather than into despair and catastrophe.

**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 Swami Abhishiktananda: Essential Writings, ed. Shirley Du Bouley (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006), pp. 172-173.

The church?s mission is as much in the desert as in the marketplace. In himself the Lord is everywhere. There is no being, no situation that cannot be the marvelous revelation of his Being. We fail to be recollected while working because we have constructed for ourselves an idea of God and imagine that we can find God only by means of this idea that we have made of him. So we have to think of him in one particular manner. [. . .] But when God is truly realized as the Transcendent, his universal Immanence is simply overwhelming, for there is nothing that does not proclaim his presence. There is no [person], no occupation, in which the eternal "My [Child]" does not make itself heard. How can we be remote from [the Lord]?

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