The World Community for Christian Meditation

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May 22 Readings

An excerpt from Laurence Freeman OSB, ?Dearest Friends,? The World Community for Christian Meditation International Newsletter, Winter 2000.

As many Christians today find their leaders regressing into a rigid sectarianism, they are learning to find in their ancient contemplative wisdom a truer expression of the teachings of Jesus.; It is not those who mouth ?Lord, Lord: who ?please the Father,? but those who ?do the Father?s will.?

For many today a doctrine is worthy of belief, even as it tries to express the ineffable, not just because it claims to be true but because it helps sustain us in believing [that there is more than mere] consumerism. But no belief today worthy of acceptance can be held with certainty?except the certainty of faith that is joined with hope and love.

The certainty of the fundamentalist must be sacrificed and radical doubt must be allowed to question us all. Our experience with the death of certainty is also the death of desire?the egotistical desire to be right, to be safe, to be better than others. Such death is our sharing in the cross. The rebirth of desire that follows is the transformed desire that springs from a pure heart in the vision of God. This ?desire for God? is not like any other desire we have known. Yet ?happy is the person whose desire for God has become like a lover?s passion for his beloved,? St John Climacus declared. It does not exhaust itself or lead us to exploit others in order to fulfill it. It is both desire and freedom from desire as it was experienced before. [. . . .]

Meditation is purification of the heart and the death of desire. As there is a birth for every death, there is also the regeneration of desire as desire for God. This can never be desire for an object of ego-satisfaction. But it is of course a desire for our own happiness: we can never desire to be unhappy. Desire for God. . .is desire for our happiness by obedience to the law of . . .love. [This law] states that the only kind of desire that will make us truly and permanently happy is the desire for the happiness of others.

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 Simone Weil, ?Last Thoughts,? WAITING ON GOD (London: Fount, 1977), p. 46.

Our love should stretch as widely across all space, and should be as equally distributed in every portion of it, as is the very light of the sun. Christ has bidden us to attain to the perfection of our heavenly Father by imitating his indiscriminate bestowal of light.
[. . .] We have to be catholic, that is to say not bound by so much as a thread to any created thing, unless it be to creation in its totality. . . .We are living in times, which have no precedent, and in our present situation universality, which could formerly be implicit, has to be fully explicit. It has to permeate our language and the whole of our way of life. Today it is not nearly enough merely to be a saint, but we must have the saintliness demanded by the present moment, a new saintliness, itself also without precedent.

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