



CHRISTIAN MEDITATION NEWSLETTER

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JOHN MAIN SEMINAR 2006 MARGARET RIZZA: THE FIRE OF SILENCE: MUSIC AND MYSTICS

Penang, Malaysia; August 10-13

The John Main Seminar in 2006 will be held for the first time in Asia. Margaret Rizza, who is known around the world for her distinctive contemplative music, is not only a composer but a gifted and acclaimed teacher of scripture and the contemplative tradition. She has been leading a Christian meditation group at her home in Britain for many years. We are very blessed to have such a gifted speaker and musician to lead this exploration of the 'harmonies of the soul'. The Seminar will be preceded by a 3 day silent retreat led by Laurence Freeman. (The Seminar will be held in a Penang coastal hotel with air conditioning and ensuite rooms.)

For further information visit www.wccm.org or contact Patricia Por, the Seminar coordinator, at ppor@pc.jaring.my



THE WAY OF PEACE 2005: NORTHERN IRELAND

The Way of Peace is an outreach of the meditators of the Community into the realm of peace-building and social justice. Its aim is to be an example of how the contemplative consciousness manifest in practical compassion and sensitive concern for others in need: Martha and Mary as the two sisters, the halves of the human soul, who serve Christ in others in different forms of work but form the same experience of love. The World Community's 2005 Way of Peace was again conducted with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in collaboration with *Mediation Northern Ireland*. It took the form of a three day visit to Northern Ireland during which The Dalai Lama and Fr Laurence held a number of different events accompanied by Pauline Peters (Chair of the Guiding Board), other members of the Board and meditators from other parts of the world together with three students from the new John Main Center for Meditation and Inter-Religious Dialogue at

Georgetown University. We celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Corrymeela Community, met with civic leaders and the leadership of the main political parties and closed the visit with a Meditation Service at Belfast Church of Ireland Cathedral. The students posted daily reports which can be read with photos and audio files, including an interview with the Dalai Lama on the Georgetown Center website: www.georgetown.edu/centers/meditation



2006 WCCM Calendar

Each month of the 2006 WCCM Calendar, designed by Anne Dillon, contains photography by Laurence Freeman from his global travels. A few remain as presales have been strong. US\$9.95 + shipping.

Order from Anne at:

Anned15@aol.com

or by phone: +1 610 949 9770)

A LETTER FROM LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB

DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION



Dearest friends,

It was a very wonderful wedding. The service was meticulously prepared and apart from a near stumble of a minister of communion down the altar steps, everything went to plan. The radiant couple exchanged their carefully prepared vows before God, their family and friends as if they were just composing them, between tears and laughter. It was a perfect ceremony balancing planning and presentness.

Later at the reception there was a procession into dinner led by the family and just before the bride and groom came the bride's sister and her female partner who helped lead the dancing. It was as natural and simple as everything else on that happy occasion where the community of family, friends and church pledge their support and share their blessing on the new union. As I watched the bride's sister share her love in the same community without fear or unease I remembered the anxiety and fear the family had gone through a few years ago before she came out. She had become very withdrawn and depressed and her parents felt unable to help her.

Then she and her sister asked for a family meeting. They sat in the living room and she gave her parents a letter to read explaining that she was lesbian. As her father described it to me it was the greatest relief of his life that she had trusted them to know what her struggle was. Her parents embraced her immediately and assured her that their love for her was total and unconditional – for her as a whole person. They are a devout and loving Catholic family.

Before the wedding, it seems, the sister had asked if perhaps, for propriety's sake, she should bring a young man to the wedding and lead the dancing with him. But the rest of the family dismissed the idea as a falsehood that would impair the whole of that special and sacred day for them. So, what everyone knew and privately accepted anyway was publicly acknowledged and everyone, aunts and uncles and acquaintances, so it turned out, was glad to be able to celebrate without repression or fear. Would the churches and the world be so truthful and so loving.

In such ways is Christ, the truth that dissolves divisions, invited to the marriage feast of life.

*“In such ways
is Christ invited
to the marriage
feast of life.”*

THE WAY OF PEACE

It may seem a leap from this to the Community's three-day 2005 Way of Peace event with the Dalai Lama in Belfast last month but, for me anyway, they had similar lessons.

There is no liberating truth in a morality that invokes denial and repression or scapegoating at the personal level while articulating noble sentiments of universal love and justice in the public arena. Wherever truth is betrayed the power that can restrain anger from turning into violence is also lost. Repression leads to anger and anger boils over eventually into violence. The consequence of this in the

religious realm is the victory of the world over religion. ‘The corruption of the best is the worst’. For this reason religion has the frightening capacity to become cruel and even demonic as well as to enlighten and console. When so much energy is diverted to keeping the truth covered or denied life loses its freshness and freedom. Religion becomes judgmental and repressive. Depression is often the internalization of anger and negative projection often begins the demonization of the enemy: together they gather like

dark storm clouds over the landscape of life. This is not how we are meant to be - or how we need to be.

The Community's return to Belfast began when the Dalai Lama told me of his feeling that with the decommissioning of arms by the IRA there was the chance of a new breakthrough in the peace process. Did I agree? Could we together contribute again as in 2000? Would another Way of Peace visit be helpful? I consulted our friends in Northern Ireland and found a warmly positive response to the idea. And so, thanks to the devoted efforts of “Mediation Northern Ireland” and its director, Brendan McAllister, Philomena McQuillan the WCCM co-coordinator in N. Ireland, Inge Relp and many others, a remarkable and we hope enduringly influential event came to be.

VIOLENCE RESIDES IN MOTIVATION

As usual, the reality is not all that the media describe. It is true that in N Ireland there is a general feeling that the chapter of violence that has bloodied the lives of people for many decades is drawing to a close. But there is the abiding fear of a general regression because the waning of violence

has not been replaced with an opening of minds and hearts. The war of words and the refusal to listen are still entrenched realities in daily civic life. Physical violence may have subsided but the essence of violence resides not only in the material force used as in motivation. The embedded divisions of the centuries wall one side from the other and even create pockets of hatred among those on the same side. There is certainly new hope but also fear and confusion of a new kind. For such a small place its complexities are byzantine. The Dalai Lama did not pretend to have mastered them or even to be able to understand how Catholic and Protestant differences – so much smaller he pointed out, patting me on the hand, than those between Christians and Buddhists – could be used to perpetuate and label such hatred. His message was as simple as the one he brought there memorably five years ago: be rational, find your common ground and common interest, and don't give up.

It was not only his words that made the difference. There was the authority of his half-century of unwavering commitment to non-violence as he has seen the systematic destruction of the religion and culture of his homeland. His non-violent attitude is not just a political policy but also a lived state of mind. Daily he works on his feelings of anger and pain towards the occupiers of his country. Rising at 3.30 each morning to begin several hours of meditation and prayer his application to achieving consistency between thought, word and deed, what we call virtue, is second nature. And this inner authority of personal practice, in fact, is what makes the real difference.

I noticed it as one after another, the leaders of the main political parties came to talk with him in private session. Adapting to the differences of personality and mood in each meeting, he would explain why he had come – to make some small potential contribution not to preach or interfere. There was nothing he could gain from coming to N Ireland but he came just because it pained him so much to see his religious brothers and sisters in such division. And the power of this compassion was a force felt by everyone who meets him. It is the Dalai Lama's secret, the surprisingly humble source of his authority.

A PROPHET IN OUR TIME

The politicians were, in another sense of the word than they are used to, disarmed by his transparency of motive and the clarity of his ideas and words. More used to constant self-guardedness and second-guessing they were entranced by a leader who was free to be himself, to shift gears spontaneously but mindfully from the abstract to the personal to the humorous as the moment and the mood took him. He moves people deeply and leaves permanent impressions but one would look long before one found manipulation or deception.

Interested in changing the world, he is drawn more to the moving of hearts than to the intricacies of politics. This is an approach that engages much deeper structures of the mind. The effects of this approach are different from those associated with the usual machinations of politics; and it requires clearer ways of perception to see the changing patterns they produce in human affairs compared with the more aggressive interventions that grab the headlines. It may only be in retrospect that the world will realise what a true prophet of compassion and non-violence he has been. And as usual with the prophets of peace who disturb the status quo of the common mind more powerfully than even violence does, history will see the ways in which the world failed to take full advantage of the opportunity he presented. Perhaps it is only with the insight of the Christian scriptures that we can understand the meaning of his central marginality: the acclaimed spiritual teacher whom politicians and often other religious leaders are wary of, the Nobel Laureate and citizen of the world who has to travel on the documents of a refugee.

As a monk I admire him too for being one of the very few teachers I have met whom it is sufficient to be with in order to learn from them. Behind this is the simple power of authentic practice: the daily doing of the work of being that produces a conscious energy that pervades and instrumentalises all their actions without their necessarily being aware of it themselves. This is why the Dalai Lama often reminds me of the teachings of the Christian desert.

“The Dalai Lama reminds me of the teachers of the Christian desert.”

THE SEESAW OF ENLIGHTENMENT

For the teachers of the Desert spiritual enlightenment, like the Resurrection itself, was a way of living not merely a dogma or a series of momentous peak experiences. The degree of enlightenment is the intensity of the light of truth and love in the life of each person. It is this that determines who they include or exclude in a wedding procession and equally how they pronounce sensitively with compassion and wisdom, on those moral questions that so deeply affect the self-identity and feelings of others. Light is light. But it has degrees of strength. The desert fathers and mothers knew that its intensity is in proportion to the fine balance that has to be continuously held between detachment and commitment. Keeping this balance is the art of the spiritual; life and we all swing at times to extremes. But the lesson of the seesaw is dynamic equilibrium. When either side dominates the balance and exchange of energy is lost. The swing stops before balance is attained. And the balance of justice is lost.

On one side is detachment. If this predominates there is aloofness, the pride of being separate, and the cold hubris of the 'detached observer' whose blindness is not to see that he is still part of that which he is observing. The individual or sectarian ego has found security, so it feels, but this false

sense of power easily leads to attitudes and actions that abuse the integrity or rights of the other. For many in N. Ireland the seesaw of politics has shifted its forces with the side that was accused of being the oppressor now seeing itself as the victim. Only in deep inner balance can there be the win-win outcome that allows courtesy and respect to survive the rough and tumble of competition. Detachment by itself leads on to deeper isolation and division. This extremism is manifest in the religious personality that can conceive of human relationship with God only in exclusive ways, an I-Thou relationship with God that excludes or ignores every other kind of relationship or covenant.

The complementary force is commitment. No purposeful action can be begun or pursued with it. We wouldn't set ourselves to meditate daily or see beyond the immediate pleasures and pains of every day without it. But unbalanced it becomes naked force or will power. It becomes attachment to one's own ideas, history or perspective and an incapacity even to wish to see reality the way others see it. It leads ultimately to the pseudo-heroism of the suicide-bomber or the religious bigot. Like unbalanced detachment it too leads to a different form of the same misery that results from the tyranny of the ego.

Either one of these necessary drives alone creates suffering for oneself and for others. Holding them in equilibrium constant mindfulness, alertness and spiritual intelligence are necessary. Even their balance however will involve pain: the suffering of Christ that continues until the end of time. Temptation, as the desert teachers said continues to the end of life. We can never say we have arrived at a final form of the truth which is in realm beyond form. It's a lifelong work. But the cost of detachment balances out the cost of commitment and the outcome is the power of compassion.

NON-ATTACHMENT AND COMMITMENT

For the meditator saying the mantra is the continuous work of this mindfulness. It is the equal, simultaneous practice of commitment and detachment. And this simultaneity is what makes it possible for us to be free, engaged, spontaneous and mindful all at the same time.

There is complete detachment in the saying of the mantra when the meditator is detached also from the fruits and benefits of saying it. She is not meditating just for what she gets out of it or demanding a pay-off to justify the investment of time and faith. Paradoxically it is this very detachment that increases the fruitfulness of the practice. It teaches us a positively attractive meaning of detachment. One then comes to see detachment not as an emotionally cold, merely stoic attitude but as a free, open

frame of mind in which the benefits one gains can be shared with others as they arise and even before one may be aware they have arisen. Even the sharing of self becomes unself-conscious. The meditator, to paraphrase a desert father saying, is one who sees himself in others and others in himself but without watching himself as he does so. A fundamental shift of perception from self-centredness to other-centredness occurs. With detachment the benefits and fruits of spiritual practice and so, by extension, all the good things of life are experienced as gifts rather than rights or possessions. As we realise the nature of what we are receiving as gift – a spiritual gratuitousness – we become capable of being givers, ultimately without counting the cost.

Detachment also helps the meditator to avoid mental lethargy which is the inevitable result of praying self-indulgently. What John Cassian called the *pax pernicioosa* is the gradual, corrosive effect of seeking a certain kind of desired experience and trying to hang on to it when it comes. Detachment does not mean that such experiences or states of true peace do not come our way.

Peace flows like a river all the better when we do not set up blocks of possessiveness or self-consciousness. In fact the more detached one is the closer one comes to that poverty of spirit which is the condition in which the full kingdom experience can manifest. Not attaching to something does not mean rejecting it.

The reverse of rejection is commitment. All human growth and personal development depends on this central characteristic of any person to be able to engage and to be faithful, to persevere. Without the complementary virtue of detachment commitment could become fanaticism, a rigidity that prevents one from adapting to circumstances. So, the desert wisdom figures often repeated that discretion is the mother of all virtue. But commitment is still one of the bottom lines. Faith heals and integrates the divided self and the broken heart and faithful commitment creates the time dimension in which the broad perspectives of wisdom appear.

MEDITATION

Meditation is detachment and commitment, both in practice and in balance. Under the influence of a daily rhythm of meditation life gradually ceases to swing so wildly from extreme to extreme; or it becomes unstuck if it has become jammed into a blinkered perception or tunnel vision.

Meditation changes our life because it teaches and trains us in the deep core of our being a fundamental truth. Once learned this truth becomes the default attitude we take towards everything that happens in or to us. Spiritual practice means the time for working at and in this truth of poverty of

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spirit which we then come to understand is the state of mind in which we grow and live the teaching and see how life exemplifies the teaching process of the Spirit. We are committed to the path whatever the path may present us with around the next corner. Instead of doubt and confusion or false certainties there is a deep-seated conviction that we can not be tested beyond our strength, that out of hitherto unknown inner resources we can find the surprising strength to endure and grow through the darkest night. This commitment grants us the detachment necessary to handle what comes, to get through the desert periods, to keep things in perspective. This is what I mean by 'practical wisdom'. It is the gift of the spirit received through our detached commitment to the practice. It brings with it an intuitive sense of pattern and connectedness that bears up under any rational investigation but is an insight that thinking alone could not produce.

THREE RENUNCIATIONS

Cassian says there are three renunciations that open the doors of the self to this wisdom. First the renunciation of – or detachment from – material wealth. Without this elementary freedom the mind is dulled and perpetually agitated. In our culture where society has been taken over by the 'economy', where competition has (for the first time in history) become unfettered by any social constraints, the young can hardly imagine what this kind of freedom means. Yet they are painfully aware of the effects of the loss of this freedom in both their inner and outer lives. Detaching from the consumer mentality is the first step on the spiritual path for modern people and often the most difficult. This first step has been cloned and faked in so many ways and spirituality is often degraded into mere self-help or forms of cultural narcissism. Faced with the danger of spiritual materialism we do well to remember Cassian's remarks that, after all, the first renunciation is only letting go of what does not belong to us anyway – material things we cannot really claim secure ownership of. Materially, the apostles only left behind some 'worthless torn nets' he says about this step.

When we are not detached from money, money becomes fantasy – the "root of all evil". But detached from things, status, security the fantasy objects of wealth we see that they can never really be 'mine' at all. Then fair distribution of wealth and generosity with our material possessions becomes a logical, natural consequence. If it is not mine why not spread it around? Cassian says it is then that the next detachment – from our attachment to vices which we *can* say are really ours! – can happen. Our habits of self-centredness and the patterns of mind that support them require the force of detachment before they can be loosened

and begin to change. Into the space thus created the third renunciation of the desert wisdom then appears. This is meditation itself, the letting go of attachment to everything knowable in the visible realm which includes all fields of perception, material and mental. Now we begin to taste the great bliss of poverty of spirit and the boundless freedom and courage that it bestows. We wonder why we took so long to let go. And we commit ourselves more deeply to the ongoing work because we can better understand that there is no final arrival, only more loving departures and setting forth.

THE UNSEEN GUIDE

In time, Cassian says, we enter upon the fourth stage of the journey, into the promised land. We realise that the beginnings and the ends of the journey are all in the gift of the Spirit but that the work in between requires our own dedicated integration of detachment and commitment, letting go and keeping on. The 'unseen guide of the human mind', Cassian says is our constant companion no less felt because not seen.

The Dalai Lama has other ways of understanding and explaining this process and the presence of the 'unseen guide' although there are many parallels and overlaps between a Christian and Buddhist interpretation. But what matters above all else is the level of reality and authenticity of the experience of detachment and commitment itself, rather than the differences of interpretation. Spiritual authenticity

bestows the personal authority that was palpable in N. Ireland just as it can be in our daily lives through the third renunciation we practice by meditating. An authority of compassion which places gentleness above force, insight above condemnation and healing above division. It is this authority of love that became embodied in the birth of Jesus not only in Bethlehem but in the human heart of every person of good will, day by day and moment by moment.

With much love and our kindest wishes for a Christmas as filled with peace as it is with joy,

Laurence

NEWS FROM THE WORLD COMMUNITY

The following is a small representation of the life of the Community. For weekly news and more information visit the Community web page: www.wccm.org



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY MEDITATION CENTER

In partnership with Georgetown University in Washington DC, a renowned Jesuit institution, the World Community has started the John Main Center for Meditation and Inter-religious Dialogue. Two houses have been allocated: one for four students committed to the vision of the center, the other the residence of the Director and the place of meditation and common events. Fr Laurence has been in residence as the Director this past semester. Sarah Bachelard, a recently ordained Anglican priest, will be coming for the next semester as new associate Director. There is twice daily meditation, a Friday evening Shabbat service, a Saturday contemplative Eucharist, a Sunday speaker and brunch and a monthly Inter-Religious event on campus. The Buddhist scholar Alan Wallace (*"Beyond Idolatry: The meeting of Science and religion"*) and the Georgetown Jewish Chaplain, Rabbi Harold White (*"Does God have Favourites?"*), were among the speakers this term. Visit : www.georgetown.edu/centers/meditation

WEEKLY READINGS AND UPDATE : ONLINE

This service to our Community and beyond has been going for several years and helps many to sustain and deepen their daily practice. Some new features have recently been developed. The (free) Weekly Reading and Update offers: weekly readings by either John Main or Laurence Freeman, weekly audio teachings by Laurence Freeman, Notices of upcoming events, Announcements of new bookstore offerings (with discounts for email subscribers). To subscribe go to the online bookstore web site www.mediomedia.org, click on Register for the free Christian Meditation Weekly Reading. You may know someone who would like to receive the Weekly Readings and Update. Just send us their email address and they will be told their name has been added and asked to confirm. (Subscribers can easily click "unsubscribe" if they wish and WCCM email addresses are not passed to others). You can also help others to receive the gift of meditation by writing reviews of the books and tapes featured in the bookstore.

Visit www.mediomedia.org to find the title and click on review.

MEDITATIO: TALKS ON THE WEB

The Meditatio (quarterly CD's for groups) team led by Dault Manecksha and Jane Grafton has been distributing the latest in the series of "Meditatio Talks" CD's to National Coordinators around the world. Visitors to our Web site may also listen to the talks online or download them to their MP3 players. Go directly to www.wccm.org/item.asp?recordid=meditatiolisten&pagestyle=default or choose "Listen... | Podcasts" in the normal left-hand menu item at www.wccm.org.

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION RETREAT, IXTAPA MEXICO 17-20 FEBRUARY

Fr Laurence will lead a retreat – "The Art of Meditation" – in Ixtapa, a beautiful coastal town. It will be held and coordinated at a hotel managed by Lucia Gayon a meditator of long-standing. Retreatants can combine the retreat with a holiday before or after. The retreat will offer an introduction to meditation for beginners as well as the opportunity to deepen their practice for those already on the way. For further information contact Lucia at: pax@meditacioncristiana.com. The Latin-American Spanish website is : www.meditacioncristiana.com

AUSTRALIA

Father Ted Kennedy: The Aboriginal people's priest. On 24 May 2005, I attended the funeral of Father Ted Kennedy, an Australian Catholic priest. Ted has left behind him a legacy of commitment to dispossessed Australian Aboriginal people, and a theology of the poor and the alienated which has not only radically changed what it means to be Church for those who joined him, but continues to inspire the community he left behind. Read the complete article on WCCM.org's Peace and Justice Web pages or directly at: <http://wccm.org/item.asp>.

(Joëlle Battestini: jbattestini@ausnet.com.au)

UNITED KINGDOM

MEDITATION RETREAT CENTRE, COCKFOSTERS, LONDON

Guests worldwide are now being welcomed at the new Christian Meditation Retreat Centre at Fr Laurence's Monastery of Christ the King, London. Details of the retreat program and bookings for private visits can be made Desley@wccm.org or uk@wccm.org or by telephone: +44 20 8449 1319

PAUL HARRIS VISITS UK MEDITATION GROUPS

Paul Harris, former director of the Christian Meditation Centre in England (1988-89), made his seventh return visit to England and Scotland in September/October to visit old meditation friends and give two weeks of conferences and visits to various meditation groups. John Cotling, director of the Manchester Centre, organized his first talk where Paul spoke on "Frequently Asked Questions about Christian Meditation". He also spoke in Dundee and Tayport in Scotland and had a special visit with ailing Scottish coordinator Peter Broadhurst. Other talks followed in Cumbria. Paul, a dedicated hiker, managed to get in some hiking in the Lake District, home to many Christian meditation groups. Paul also visited with David

and Sheila Wood, former coordinators in the Lake District who have been responsible for much of the growth of groups in that area. (PaulTurnerHarris@aol.com)

SINGAPORE SCHOOL



The Singapore Christian Meditation Community conducted its second School for group leaders and teachers in September for 50 meditators from Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. The teaching was presented by Kim Nataraja (Director,

School for Meditators, WCCM) and Peter Ng (Singapore Coordinator and WCCM Guiding Board member). Participants left with a deeper understanding of the history, tradition, core teachings and practice of Christian Meditation as taught by John Main as well as practical tips on how to lead a meditation group. Some of the participants were already group leaders and there were also a number of aspiring group leaders. All expressed greater confidence in the ability to share the core teachings with a target audience of their choice. A consequence of the high degree of interaction was a deep sense of friendship and community. All left with a greater sense of belonging and awareness of their connectedness to the Christian Meditation community worldwide.

Leonard Ong (leonardong@gic.com.sg) Daulet Manecksha (daulet@pacific.net.sg)

GERMANY

We will have a 'School Meditation Week-End' with Kim Nataraja in Würzburg, Germany from 23rd to 25th of June 2006. Our annual German 'Meditation Weekend' with Fr. Laurence in Würzburg will be from 28th – 30th April 2006. After the German publication of Fr. Laurence's 'Jesus: The Teacher Within' discussions about the book have been held in several towns. Some magazine articles about the book have been published and it brings growing responses from people interested in meditation and the Community.

Please visit our homepage: www.wccm.de.

Mariya Plotzki (hm.plotzki@gmx.de)

NEWS FROM FIJI

'Jesus: The Teacher Within' was the theme for this year's final Christian meditation retreat days in September in Suva and Nadi. The days concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist during which, in both places, new members were inducted onto the Fiji Christian Meditation Community Board. The Board met for the first time on 2nd October and the new members brought their fresh ideas to flavour the experience of the older members. The retreats were well attended and it was especially heartening to have the presence of the three children who had come with their mother and who, we are told, attend the weekly meditation group in the coastal rural area where they live. We hope that a recent initiative by some Board members to introduce meditation to the teachers of a large parish school in Suva will bear fruit so that the teachers will pass on this treasure to their pupils.

MEDITATION IN HONDURAS

The seeds of meditation are at last beginning to sprout in Honduras. During a recent weekend workshop on the New Testament at the El Tabor Spirituality Centre in Valle de Angeles, outside Tegucigalpa, Father Louis Poirier introduced this way of silent prayer to a group of fourteen. Father Luis (as he is known here) is French-Canadian and meditated long ago in Montreal with Father Laurence. He is the first person I have met in Honduras who practices meditation with a mantra. Now a group is a real possibility and there are plans to include some weekend workshops on meditation in El Tabor's programme for next year.

Margaret Rendon (maggied2004@yahoo.com)

NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand meditation Community is establishing a council to serve the growth of more than 40 groups in the country, most of which have been established in the last six years. The majority are in the Auckland region, but now other centres are developing groups. National co-ordinator, Peter Murphy, did a national tour of the centres in mid-October and was heartened by the enthusiasm he found throughout the country. Representatives from around the country plan to meet at the end of this year to share the responsibility for the mission of the community.

Peter Murphy (petermurphy54@hotmail.com)

TEACHINGS WORLDWIDE

Dennis McAuliffe spoke on the spiritual sense of Dante at the Italian National Conference in Assisi in October. Fr. Laurence led retreats in Philadelphia and San Antonio. Sheelah Hidden spoke to Florida meditators on "The Contemplative Message of Forgiveness and Reconciliation" and at the John Main Center at Georgetown on the thought of Rene Girard. Glenda Meakin and others led a retreat in Ontario, Canada exploring the links between body and spirit in the prayer of the heart.

WCCM OBLATE COMMUNITY OBLATES CONGRESS 2005 – ROME

The First World Congress for Benedictine Oblates was held at the Salesianum in Rome in September. Over 300 oblates attended from 36 countries. I was honoured to represent our WCCM Oblate Community at this event. I also accepted the role of National Lay Coordinator for Australia and New Zealand for all Benedictine groups. This gave me a great insight into the workings of the various groups in this part of the world.

Trish Panton (pantonamd@ozemail.com.au)

DESLEY DEIKE

Shortly after retiring as the UK national Coordinator and while preparing to take over as the Director of the Meditation Retreat Centre at Cockfosters Desley was diagnosed with serious cancer. Her treatment has just begun and, Desley, we all hold you in our heart with much love as you face this challenge. Fr. Laurence asked her how she was doing before the pain she was suffering was under control. He was impressed by her answer: "I can't pray but the mantra is always there".



New Items Available from Medio Media

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION



"If Christianity is a relationship more than a religion, then personal prayer is absolutely foundational for that Christian life." – Rev. Michael E. Putney

The Prayer of the Priest

Christian Meditation for Priestly Ministry

Fr. William Eckert

with contributions by 19 priests from four continents.

Foreword: Bishop Michael Putney and Bishop Richard Chartres
Serving both as an introduction for priests new to meditation, as well as encouragement for those more seasoned, these personal voices offer a heartfelt sharing by the clergy on how the practice of meditation has influenced their lives and their vocations. "I was aware that my meditation practice gave me a deep well upon which to draw." "The Desert Fathers [and other teachers] became my spiritual mentors because they talked of the spiritual life in a way that seemed to cut through the baffle-gab of a tired old religion, and the bleatings of a thousand preachers."

Fr. William Eckert shares the tradition of Christian meditation as taught by Fr. John Main and continued by Fr. Laurence Freeman in this newly revised edition of "The Prayer of the Priest." *Easier to read, contains biographies of all of the priests and testimonials from their living experience.*

Book 200 pp #7109 £8.50 • \$12.95



Love and Desire

Laurence Freeman, OSB

"We don't desire happiness enough." With these words of St. Augustine, Fr. Laurence begins our journey through the pitfalls of life – searching for truth, happiness and love. Desiring everything, we neglect to understand the difference between our needs and

desires so that we can love in the true sense of *agape*.

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WORDS BY JOHN MAIN....

A life of prayer is essential for everyone who wants to be awake. Prayer is an entirely natural part of our life. Contemplation is what we are created for. Modern life has encapsulated us in so many illusions that keep us at one remove from reality that today we have to take a decisive step into the freedom that bursts all bonds. This is why our dedication to the particular times of meditation, every morning and every evening, is so grounding and necessary. (The Letters of John Main)

THE WORLD COMMUNITY DEPENDS ON DONATIONS. PLEASE REMEMBER THE COMMUNITY WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR WILL. FOR INFORMATION OR ADVICE CONTACT THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE IN LONDON OR YOUR NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR.



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