



CHRISTIAN MEDITATION NEWSLETTER

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
St. Mark's
Myddelton Square
London EC1R 1XX
Tel.: +44 20 7278 2070
mail@wccm.org
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The World Community for Christian Meditation

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ADDICTION *and Grace*

Geneva, Switzerland
November 24-26, 2006

This weekend workshop will be held at Le Cénacle, a retreat house with hotel rooms, located in a lovely park, secluded but close to the center of Geneva. It will explore three main themes led by experienced presenters in the fields: today's state-of-the-art knowledge concerning the spiritual, emotional and physical nature of addiction, which confirms to a large extent AA's founders' intuitions as well as those of C.G.Jung; the 12-step recovery program, as expressed in the AA Big Book, as a road to recovery from addiction; and meditation as a path to an experience with a "Higher Power", as in AA's 11th step. There will be an introduction to meditation (by Laurence Freeman) and several periods of meditation will be included on each of the two days. The workshop will be open to all who are interested, especially to 12-step fellowships in Europe.

Travel connections to Geneva are excellent, particularly with low-cost flights from the UK. Le Cénacle provides reasonably priced accommodation for those coming from outside Geneva. All teaching will be in English and will not be translated.

For further information contact: john.moederle@gmail.com or The International Centre in London

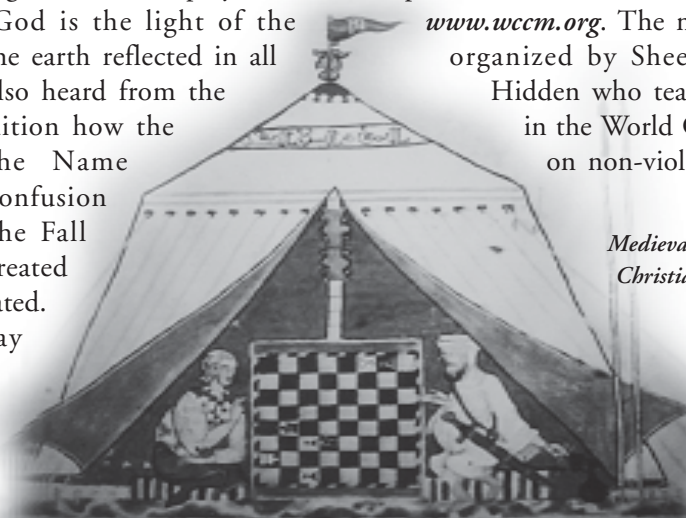


PRAYER AS MEETING: THE 2006 WAY OF PEACE

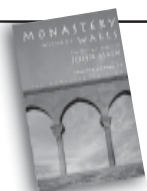
The weekend that the controversy was breaking over the Pope's comment on Islam about 200 Muslims and Christians from Britain and abroad met in York for the World Community's annual Way of Peace event. We observed the Muslim *salat*, the five daily prayers, and met for meditation introduced with Christian prayer. There were also presentations on their respective contemplative traditions by two Christian monks, Fr Laurence Freeman and Fr Silouan Lake an Orthodox, and two Muslims Dr Reza Shah Kazemi, a Shia scholar from London and Dr Musharraf Hussain, a Sunni imam from Nottingham. A verse from the Qu'ran captures the spirit of warm friendship and spiritual unity that grew among us through our times of prayer and discussion: "God is the light of the heavens and the earth reflected in all that is." We also heard from the Christian tradition how the prayer of the Name resolves the confusion inherent in the Fall between the created and the uncreated. On Saturday night we went to the local mosque for

isha the last prayer of the day, which they delayed to accommodate our schedule and after which we sat on the floor to drink tea, ask questions about each other's traditions, discuss the papal incident, tell stories and get to know each other. On Sunday a panel of young women and men from both traditions discussed how they understood and practiced prayer and spoke with engaging sincerity about their spiritual life and the challenges they faced. There were many conversations about building on the event in the future. The Way of Peace is an event that highlights the ways in which meditation and the contemplative mind can contribute to peacemaking and the healing of wounds and divisions. For more information and photos about the York meeting visit

www.wccm.org. The meeting was organized by Sheelah Treffle Hidden who teaches widely in the World Community on non-violence.



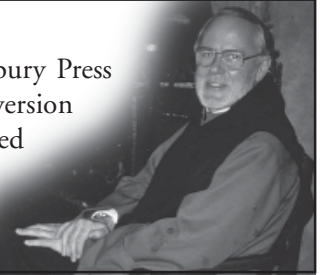
Medieval depiction of a Christian and Muslim playing chess



MONASTERY WITHOUT WALLS: JOHN MAIN

A new revised edition of John Main's spiritual letters has been published by Canterbury Press in association with Medio Media. It brings together in one volume a freshly edited version of *Letters from the Heart* and *The Present Christ* – classics of their kind which have inspired many individuals and communities around the world for more than twenty years.

The new edition by Laurence Freeman assures a new generation of readers will share these powerful insights into why 'meditation creates community'.



A LETTER FROM LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB

DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION



Dearest friends,

For myself and for many of us in the community the summer has been enriched by times of pilgrimage and retreat. These are ways of using time, experiences that the consumer in us has forgotten. We travel on pilgrimage, for example, very differently from the way we go on holiday especially a package holiday. Pilgrimage is both more fun and more serious than just holidays. There is the same refreshing aspect of stimulation and new surroundings that we expect during vacation time. And in both we hope to be in good company. But as a pilgrim there is the satisfaction of connecting the interior journey with the outward one. This is what makes it serious – a connection with the reality below the surface of life and our daily concerns. Whatever serves to harmonise the inner and the outer makes us better and feel better. Retreat time is similar to pilgrimage but without the outward expansion of consciousness. It is time of concentration that we spend going backwards so we can go forwards. We step back from the business of daily life to attend to the business of the soul; and we usually discover at the beginning of a retreat that we have a lot of backed up, unfinished soul work to attend to.¹

Retreat and pilgrimage came together at the John Main Seminar in Penang (Malaysia) this year, the first held in Asia. After a three day silent retreat on the theme of Harmony in the Soul, the Seminar was led warmly and brilliantly by Margaret Rizza. She shared engagingly with a group from twenty countries, what music, meditation and the mystical tradition has meant to her. The Saturday evening social time was a string of performances from Malaysia and the other national representatives. It was great fun and also very moving to see China and Taiwan sing together and New Zealand and Australia, Indonesia and Singapore laugh at their own stereotypes, concluding with Scottish ballads, all reminding us of what an endlessly fascinating and lovable place the world and the human family is.

On the pilgrimage afterwards we visited places in Kuala Lumpur that would have been part of John Main's life when he was there fifty years ago. The Green Temple, where he studied Chinese, has changed little though the traffic milling round it would not have

disturbed him then. It is a peaceful

enclave, named after its characteristic green tile roof, with a large cloister-like courtyard and the library and classroom where Chinese is still taught.

Most moving for us, however, was the visit to the Pure Life Society where he met his teacher and learned

to meditate. It is a sacred place in different senses and for different reasons for us, because something so important happened there that had repercussions in our lives. Through the boisterous welcome the children gave us as we arrived, we felt connected to what this place has meant for generations of children whose broken lives have been healed there. Mother Mangalam, for many the Mother Teresa of Malaysia, is the disciple and successor of Swami Satyananda, the founder of the Society who introduced John Main to the universal tradition of meditation that led him later to the Christian tradition. She remembers meeting John Main, the young Irishman on one of his weekly visits to meditate at the temple of the Universal Spirit which is on the hill above the orphanage and school. With some of her staff she attended the mass and meditation that we celebrated in the early evening of our visit. After supper we took part in an interfaith dialogue on the purpose of religion. The sense of the time telescoping into the present, of seed and harvest, became very strong.

The majority of the participants at the Seminar and retreat this year were Asian. And after Malaysia I went to Hong Kong to lead our first community retreat there and to celebrate the development of the Christian Meditation Community organisation there with Bishop Tong, its patron. While the church in the West continues to contract in a long, painful process of simplification and purification, the mood of Christianity in Asia – and throughout the developing world – feels very different. The work of missionaries has changed but what they sowed in the past has borne fruit. The faith is joyful and strong and, as many of its leaders and teachers reinforced for me, it is ready to deepen into contemplation. This contemplative seed of faith is indeed already growing. It will not only deepen faith but empower Asian Christians to lead in the great challenges of dialogue which confront and summon all religions today.

As I write we have just concluded this year's Way of Peace, in York (England), which was a warm and rich meeting *in prayer* and in the contemplative traditions of Muslims and Christians. It was a sign of our Community's commitment, however we can, to serve both the contemplative growth of Christian faith and to develop friendship and mutual understanding between religions through meditation and dialogue. Retreat and pilgrimage – above all in harmony with the daily practice – generate the spiritual power for both aspects of this work.

RETREAT

Retreats can be a necessary 'time for myself', away from the treadmill of life and over-extension in activity; but it involves the deep self. Like all creative work, retreat time refreshes and renews. It is an opportunity for making real progress in understanding – in spiritual knowledge – not just for shuffling ideas around in new ways. The silence and order of a meditation retreat are the best setting for true insight to emerge – *experience* of the truth rather than thinking about it. That's why it's so important at the beginning



of a retreat to ask yourself why you are there: “what are you looking for?” is the question Jesus posed to his disciples and it is a useful one to begin a retreat by listening to. Do we know what we want to find, even if we can't define it? Jesus also asks Bartimeus a good question for a retreat: “what do you want me to do for you?” The difference between the blind beggar and the rich young man in the earlier encounter is simply that Bartimeus knew what he wanted and needed while the young man, like so many of us today, was dazzled by his riches and range of choices.

We probably can't answer these questions completely at the beginning of a retreat. Anxiety, confusion, suffering may have clouded our self-knowledge and so we may begin the inner pilgrimage of the retreat time just feeling our way in the dark. But that is faith and if we practice it, faith will guide us. All religious experience – and prayer is the essence of religion – is about finding a higher conscious level of reality. We often imagine this in such spatial terms as ‘interior’ or ‘deeper’. The point of the metaphor is to express that we are not there quite yet. We cannot speak about it or even understand it as if it were already realised. A humble unknowing, silence, is a better response to the questions of Jesus than a superficial answer.

There is a way to go. The distance between where we are and where we are headed generates the symbols and rituals to express our longing for God. If we don't even feel or acknowledge that longing for wholeness, love and truth, we are seriously self-alienated. If we pray and worship with sincerity, opening the heart and suspending our doubts and disbelief, we will know that we are on the way and this will give us peace. The sense of distance is the challenge and it is the stimulus for every pilgrimage – whether to a sacred place or our own heart. But actually the way *is* the life and this realisation reveals that, as Meister Eckhart put it, ‘there *is* no distance between us and God’. Our feeling of separation is, paradoxically, caused by the fact, as St Augustine puts it, that God is closer to us than we are to ourselves.

Most of the time, we have to put up with the feeling of distance. We have to ‘mind the gap’ as the voice on the London Underground reminds passengers, the gap between seed and fruit even though the fruit is in the seed. If we don't remain mindful of this we miss our footing. In a sense, we have to pretend to be *more* real than we are in order to lose the delusory sense that we are *not* real. ‘Fake it to make it’, says the Twelve Step program. To illustrate this I like the story of the man and his parrot. The man was very fond of the parrot that he kept in a cage and spoke with every day. One day he told the parrot he was going to see his meditation teacher and the parrot asked him to ask the teacher what was the best path to liberation. The man returned and told the parrot what the teacher told him: die to self, let go of everything, *die*. He then put the night cover over the cage and went to bed. In the morning when he lifted off the cover to say good morning to the parrot he found it lying on its back on the floor of the cage with its eyes closed and its legs sticking up. The man was heartbroken, opened the cage and tearfully lifted the parrot out. As soon as he did, the parrot seized its opportunity and flew off escaping through the open window. It had wisely interpreted the teacher's advice.

So, on retreat we begin by pretending to be holier than we are, more focused, more silent than our minds probably feel. This is discipline not insincerity. For most people on retreat who are unfamiliar with contemplative discipline and community courtesy (like not coming into the meditation room late, sitting still) control

of speech is one of the greatest challenges. St James reminds all religious people of the importance of ‘bridling the tongue’ which he likens to the rudder of a boat. St Benedict said that even for good reasons we should be careful not to break with silence: ‘Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to be angry’. The connection between silence and the demon of anger was well known to the teachers of the Christian desert. Meditation teaches us to control speech and so discover other ways of dealing with anger than by speaking violently in the heat of the moment. Before we speak we have to understand what we want to say and, in a state of anger, this means simply facing all the negativity we feel. Silence will connect us with the deep loving truth of ourselves, but our first feelings may be impatience and restlessness.

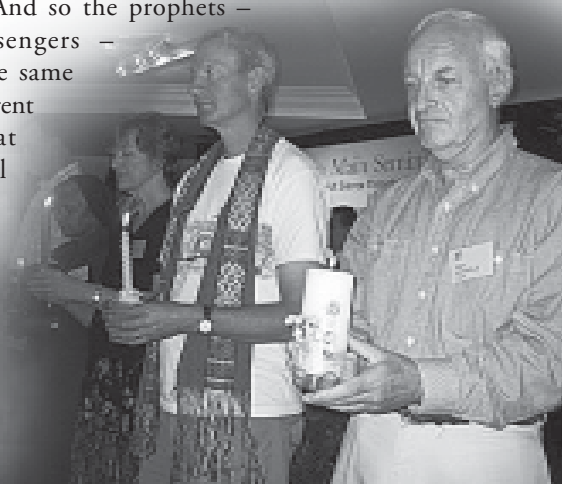
We think of speech as a means of communicating, of connecting, even though words of anger can so easily hurt and divide. Self-control, patience and the control of speech leads, however, not to isolation but healing connectedness and compassion. ‘A pure and faultless religion,’ says St James, ‘is to look after widows and orphans and keep oneself unstained by the world.’ On a retreat, the silence we practice is to be seen in relation to the compassion inherent in our true nature. Keeping the silence is not merely obeying a rule. In the community of the fellow-pilgrims on retreat it becomes one of those ‘small acts of kindness’ that John Main said are always the best way to prepare for the next period of meditation.

By silence we become open. Open above all to the Holy Spirit who teaches us what, at any particular stage of our pilgrimage, we need to learn or to let go of. As the theme of the pre-Seminar retreat was harmony I said we would not just be thinking about it but actually practising it in the way we lived. We would be working at being harmonious, peaceful, balanced and whole people – if only for a few days! St James tells us to be sure we ‘act on the message and not merely listen to it and so deceive yourselves’. If we listen to talks, read the teaching, but don't act on what we hear, we are like people who look in the mirror and then promptly forget what we look like. True spiritual teaching affords us a glimpse our true nature – ‘the face nature gave us’, as St James puts it – and through this grace of self-knowledge we move into the knowledge of God. This is the teaching on true spiritual practice that comes to us, in great power, through our whole prophetic tradition.

THE PROPHETS IN THE KORAN

As we were holding the Seminar for the first time in a Muslim country I tried to explore the prophetic tradition of wisdom in the Qu'ran.

Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad taught that the religion God has sent to humanity throughout history is really one religion. And so the prophets – God's special messengers – deliver essentially the same message to their different communities at different times. All call us to the good life – a life of morality, compassion – and to prayer.



Muslims take prayer very seriously. Each day is punctuated with the *salat* (the five ritual prayers which are one of the five Pillars of Islam for Sunnis and one of the ten Branches of Religion for Shi'ites). The contemplative tradition in Islam also emphasises the importance of *dhikr*, the remembrance of God which is focused on the silent repetition of the 'names of God' but can also refer to any activity in which a Muslim remains aware of God. 'Pray without ceasing', as St Paul says. Muhammad taught that prayer is the special opportunity to rise to higher consciousness because it dispels the forces that block and constrict us, states of mind such as grief, despair, fear and restlessness. Prayer therefore leads to harmony and that 'health of the soul' which the Desert monks called *apatheia*. It integrates the whole person so that accidents, sin, losses and suffering do not so easily overwhelm us. Prayer also keeps us humble and down to earth. The Muslim touches his head to the ground in total surrender to God just as the mantra grounds us in the depth of our being.

According to a statement by Muhammad, there are 124,000 prophets and messengers (a 'messenger' receives a revelation or scripture that constitute a new message while prophets are inspired to expound on an earlier message). The Qu'ran mentions twenty-five of these by name from Adam to Muhammad and gives great reverence to Jesus (as well as to Mary). Of these the Book identifies five prophets as messengers of the highest stature: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Each of these carries a note of the divine harmony.

The language of music – harmony, resonance, rhythm – allows us to speak of religion without images that can incite competitiveness. We do not need to say better, higher, fuller, greater and yet we can understand the fulfilling aspect of our tradition in our own way. The prophets of the Qu'ran, whose contributions to this Abrahamic wholeness we explored at the retreat, speak the Word of God in very different ways. Each group of listeners will hear the Word with different emphases. What unites the prophets, however, is the oneness of God. Then, as now, it is in communicating this insight that brings the prophet into conflict with the polytheism of their societies. Today, our gods may be celebrities and brand names, but just as in ancient society, they form a pantheon opposed to the oneness of God.

Just before the Flood came, Noah had gathered his family to take refuge in the Ark. The people mocked him, especially as there was no

body of water anywhere near. When the rain began to fall, one of Noah's sons chose to stay behind with the disbelievers and he had to see his son lost. In the work of meditation we are trying to do what the prophets did, to listen with the wholeheartedness of faith to the Word. As we do, our lives will be changed from self-centredness to God-centredness. At times, the detachment this demands will seem even heartbreakingly hard. To truly 'hear the Word of the Lord' we must disconnect from the incredulity of the ego, its complex attachments to illusion and to the condition of unconnectedness and non-commitment which today we worship as the god of 'choice'. First, our stratagems for defending separateness must be exposed and then we can see how the worship of many gods is the essence of all distraction. Idols are substitutes for God, images that we want to be real but which we have to admit, at last, are creations of our own minds. Such times of struggle – and they occur in the lives of all the prophets – may seem the very contradiction of harmony. We need to remain committed to the work of integration – our sanctification – even when it seems that all we are experiencing is fragmentation. Sometimes the time for testing comes just when we think we have earned some rest or that we deserve a reward. Instead of a reward we get conflict, *acedia*, a discouraging feeling of failure and discouragement. Like Jonah we may try to run away from the Word. Like the people whom Noah had to address, we may feel as if the waters are rising soon to sweep everything away. We may feel this psychologically or socially. The Flood is the surging up of the unconscious and the result of violent tension between the false gods and the one God. The Ark is our daily practice.

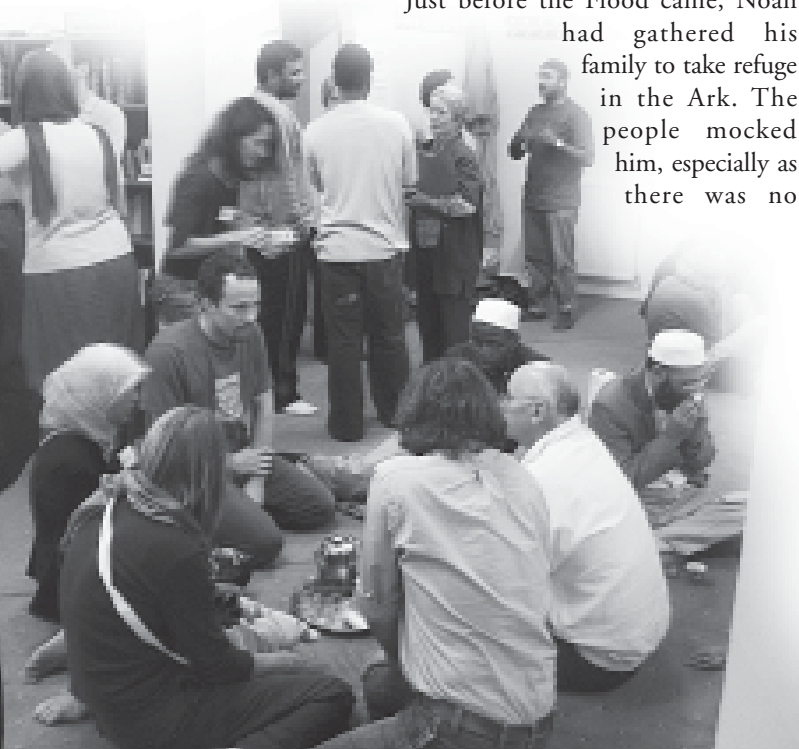
This is the struggle that the Desert fathers and mothers said would be with us until our deathbed and which forms character. Only by embracing it can we understand that resisting the wholeness we want is itself part of our journey into wholeness. Sin is behovely, says Julian of Norwich: it has a useful role to play. And as we come to understand that, we grow both in self-acceptance and in the ability to put our trust in God – another common call of the prophets. Then the nature and meaning of prayer emerges in its true light and is clarified in the way that Origen once described it:

We do not pray to get benefits from God but to become like God. Just praying itself is good. It calms the mind, reduces sin and promotes good deeds.

DEEPER LISTENING: DEEPER SILENCE

A form of retreat we have developed for some years now is the School retreat, a weeklong experience of pure prayer for people who have begun seriously to make meditation part of their ordinary life. It offers them an opportunity for deeper and longer settling into silence, with more frequent daily periods of meditation, a contemplative Eucharist, a short daily meeting with one of those leading the retreat and one short conference a day. More than this is not encouraged during the retreat, but there is also mindful walking and many participants compose haikus – very short poems that capture a particular moment or impression – to help strengthen stability of mind and so to live more calmly in the present moment.

After the seminar and the Asian retreats I helped lead a School retreat in Toronto with Kim Nataraja, international coordinator of the School, and Glenda Meakin, the Canadian School coordinator. One memorable element of it was the mindful walking sessions which took place between the meditations around the periphery of a labyrinth in the garden. The labyrinth reminded us that meditation



is not a pilgrimage we can measure and yet we can be aware that self-knowledge is growing and that often we are making progress when we least feel it. As we grow in silent expansion of mind and in the opening of the heart we can better distinguish between the *states* and the *stages* of our journey.

States of mind are transitory – which is why they are not the basis for discerning the progress of our meditation. A ‘good’ meditation or a ‘bad’ meditation are not reliable evaluations. Good today, bad tomorrow. The only real test is fidelity and the growth in love. Stages are different. Like birthdays they are irreversible points of growth which yield a new perspective on life’s journey. They are watersheds taking us into a new phase of development. States can control us, with positive or negative results, if we cannot recognise their impermanence. If we focus too much on our varying states we become increasingly distracted and anxious. Expectations begin to plague us. But seeing the *stages* of our journey is advancing in self-knowledge. They require more patience and depth awareness to recognise and they often don’t show themselves until some time after the actual events that initiate them.

The theme for the short daily conferences at the School retreat was Happiness. We looked at the difference between the *state* of happiness, which comes and goes and reaching the *stage* of deeper happiness that is unaffected by external moods and events. There is always a danger in talking about happiness that you make people sad, just as in talking about humour you can make them glum. Whenever we ask if we are happy we cease to be so! But the talks were short and there was enough meditation and prayerful practice to offset that danger. In fact, this suggests one of the practical lessons we learn from any time on retreat. Self-reflection and analysis need to be balanced by a degree of purity in prayer which takes the attention off ourselves. We can never be truly happy in the independent ego state because we are not strongly enough connected to the sense of wholeness and inclusion that *is* happiness. As long as the ego dominates our mode of perception we objectify and distance the very thing we want to be one with. We feel incomplete the more we think about completeness. The sense of Wholeness (which was the theme of the Monte Oliveto retreat this year) arises from the knowledge of ourselves as participants rather the observers in the community of the true self.

Retreats are extraordinary ways of living the ordinary. The daily routine of a retreat has to be embraced and trusted. Then it carries us above our habitual state of mind which is usually fragmented and shallow. A rhythm – another musical metaphor for the spiritual which Margaret Rizza emphasised at the Seminar – begins to develop within and among the individuals on the retreat. The sense that we are moving together from one event to the next develops a sense of friendship in community – in praying, eating, sharing space together. This is all the deeper if we can trust the common silence as a place of meeting. On retreat, life gradually slows and simplifies and a greater clarity emerges. We can begin to enjoy the freedom to see that the fear of letting go is groundless because all we are letting go of are the attachments, fears and fantasies that cause unhappiness. It is surprising to realise how little we need to do to experience what happiness really means.

Retreat times can give us glimpses into the *permanent state* of happiness which is life in the spirit and they also train us to live in the continuity of God.

‘God spoke once,’ St Bernard said, ‘Once because always. His speaking is a single, unbroken, continuous and unending act.’ This

unity of the divine self-communication empowers the testimony of all the prophets. It is the ground of unity between the three sister religions who have been formed in the prophetic tradition. The structure of prayer in daily life is what makes this truth a transformative experience. Without prayer of sufficient purity and depth we lose connection with the continuity of God and we collapse into the fragmentation that traps us in the cycle of violence and ultimately leads to the unbelief of religious hypocrisy.

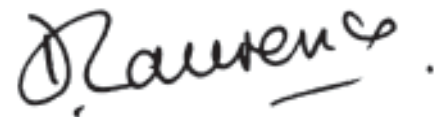
ENDS ARE ALWAYS BEGINNINGS

For most people, at least in the northern hemisphere, the summer season of retreats and pilgrimages is now over and ordinary life has already resumed with its usual worries and routines. If during the summer you were able to take some time for retreat or pilgrimage you may feel better equipped to return to normal life. Perhaps you are also able to hold onto the experience of sacred time in your daily routines and to see even your trips as pilgrimage and your meditation times as retreat.

Everything that will be is contained in the seed. If you look into a seed you see emptiness, but all future form is contained within the emptiness. In the seed of every beginning is its end; form must always surrender to the formless. Death is buried deep in the gift of life. It must be accepted as part of life, never denied, however fearful it is to face. Every end – the end of a life or of a stage of one’s life or even the end of a retreat – is the cracking open of the seed which opens to new life once it falls into the ground of our personal histories, the good soil that the gospel says can yield a hundredfold.

Ends are proofs of impermanence and would be cause for despair did they not also reveal emptiness as the formless womb of divine creation. We cannot help but feel any death to be chaotic. But the Spirit hovers over the waterfall of death just as she does over the river of rebirth bringing cosmos, order and harmony out of the chaos. The face of the earth is continuously renewed. Retreat and pilgrimage and, above all, our daily meditation restore us to these rhythms of life.

With much love,



Laurence Freeman, OSB

¹ *I realise that retreats and pilgrimages represent a financial barrier for many and that is why we always try to make a budget that includes provision for scholarships and subsidies.*



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

LONDON MEDITATION RETREAT CENTRE

Visitors from the UK and round the world are welcomed at the Centre in North London for personal retreat and short stays and a program of special retreats is open to all. Visit the News or Events pages at www.wccm.org for U.K. Retreat Centre Yearly Programme and Fall '06 List of Events. For information and reservations write retreatcentre@wccm.org or phone +44 020 8449 1319

USA

A Weekend Seminar with Fr. Laurence Freeman, OSB



*“Not as the world gives peace....”
The Parting Gift and Meditation
Houston, Texas*

October 27-29, 2006

In a world that often breeds anxiety and violent competition, it is healing to remember that the way of contemplation is an ever present way of wisdom that renews hope and leads to deeper harmony with all creation.

In this seminar, Fr. Laurence will explore the human consciousness and behaviour as illuminated by the contemplative experience. He will show that action rooted in contemplation can never judge, condemn, or kill in the name of God, but instead makes peace, and is patient and kind. The first step on the journey is to “leave self behind” and discover the True Self.

Contact: Cynthia Sapio. Phone: 713-686-6844, x229 E-mail: sapio@stthom.edu

INDIA: TERRORIST ATTACK

Tuesday the 7/11 for us in Bombay (Mumbai) was like the 9/11 of the US. The western Railway carries about two million commuters every evening and the trains are filled with people crammed in like sardines. In all probability, the terrorists could not even access the second class coaches, so they planted the bombs in First class coaches which generally have the upper middleclass and more affluent people. The timing of the eight serial blasts was to get the upper class people. This is seen as an act to disrupt the economic rise of India in Mumbai which is the financial capital of India. Most victims were young executives in the business community that generally take those particular trains to go home. There were seven blasts within eleven minutes. The eighth one did not go off and the trains were all brought to a halt and that one was detonated by the explosives experts of the Police department. Though the official figures of the dead are a little above 300, there were many

bodies lying in a mass of flesh and blood unrecognisable and uncountable! The injured were thousands. Innumerable people have gone stone deaf from the blasts!

We at Mt. Carmel's Parish lost Sanford de Sales, a young executive, who leaves behind a young widow and a ten year old daughter. Sanford used to come to our Wednesday meditation group till he shifted his residence to the outer suburbs. He was a well known sportsman especially in field hockey. Extremely loving and polite, full of joy and humour. His funeral was attended by three thousand people of which sixty were priests (one of his brothers is a priest), four Bishops and over a hundred religious sisters. Bishop Agnello Gracias preached a touching homily and said that we cannot ask God “why” he has taken Sanford from us, but only say “Thank you” for having given Sanford to us! A back pain brought Sanford to my Yoga classes and attracted him to the Wednesday meditation group. May his beautiful soul rest in the eternal loving embrace of the Risen Lord.

Fr. Joe Pereira

jpst_1995@yahoo.co.uk

EILEEN O'HEA

Wisdom, in a word, flattens.
She deflates the ego.
I know, for
Today I sit with Her.
It is a very dull place.
I am neither sad nor glad.
Wisdom claimed me today,
Disallowing by her presence.
The antics of my ego,
An ego that could easily
Revel in self-absorption
And self pity.
I am feeling gypped!
I am feeling the absence of ego-feeling.
I am feeling a little,
A very little, wise



(From About Wisdom)

NEW WEB SITES:

Visit the following new websites of the World Community:

Meditation and Children:

www.meditationwithchildren.com

Friends:

www.freindsinmeditation.com

Christian Meditation Groups:

www.christianmeditationgroups.com

Chile:

www.meditacioncristiana.cl

UK : Meditation "School for Clergy"



A two-day School workshop was held at the Christian Meditation Retreat Centre at the Monastery of Christ the King Cockfosters. It was the first UK School for priests and ministers on the teaching of Christian meditation. Anglican and Roman Catholic, we came from around England. The

programme was led by Fr Laurence Freeman and Liz Watson. It included the history of the tradition, our own personal spiritual journeys and the significance of Christian meditation for us. We deeply appreciated the intimacy provided by a small group as we got to know each other, rejoiced in each other's stories and priestly ministries, and marvelled at how God's grace works through the varied circumstances of our lives. Accommodation and food were excellent!

(Graeme Watson, London: gchwatson@blueyonder.co.uk.) See the book *Christian Meditation for Priests (Medio Media)*

JOHN MAIN SEMINAR 2007

Still Present: The Life and Legacy of John Main
Le rayonnement de l'enseignement de John Main
 Mt. Orford, Quebec, Canada,
 18 – 21 October

Pre-seminar retreat led by Fr. Laurence Freeman
 16 – 18 October

A celebration of John Main: the 25th anniversary of his death and the 30th anniversary of his arrival in Montreal. A number of speakers in this attractive location during the season of the Fall colours near Montreal will reflect on his life, work and global influence.

For more information: jms2007@bellnet.ca.

Or the WCCM webpage: www.wccm.org.

Be a **Friend** 

The outreach activities of the WCCM are financially supported by donations from meditators, weekly meditation groups, and well-wishers around the world.

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IN FOCUS

PAUL HARRIS'S 80TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Paul once told me his inclination to silence in prayer developed in high school, St. Michael's College School, Toronto. He would slip away between classes to a small chapel to simply sit in silence and solitude and, as he put it, "rest in God". It was also there that the seed of his future career was planted, when a teacher asked if anyone would represent the school as a reporter on the monthly *Canadian High School News*. Paul, age 16, with no apparent writing skills, immediately put up his hand, and his writing life began. In "Christian Meditation by Those Who Practice It" (Dimension Books 1993), he recounts his introduction to Christian meditation—"the greatest gift of my lifetime"—on a path going back to 1979. 'I read in a Montreal newspaper about John Main, the Benedictine Priest and this teaching of silence and stillness in prayer. At that time in my hectic life in journalism and the media, I was on my own personal treadmill of being *busy, busy, busy*, yet sensing a terrible spiritual void. Helping to raise three children as a single parent, having a full-time day job and teaching part-time in the evenings left me little time for any spiritual pilgrimage—or so I thought.'

Paul's close collaboration and friendship with Fr. Laurence over the years stemmed from this meeting. On retiring from

the public service, he became Director of the Christian Meditation Centre in London, England, 1988-89 and was Coordinator of the Canadian Christian Meditation Community from 1990-98.

In Australia in the 1980's Paul was on tour with Fr. Laurence who agreed to an interview on a small town TV show. To his dismay he heard the interviewer say to his audience, "We have just seen a man with his talking dog. We now have an English monk to speak about contemplative prayer, followed by the return of that wonderful cook from Thailand... This show gets the best entertainers from Australia and around the world". It was Paul's turn to laugh!

He retains a long list of friendships from 20 years of teaching Christian meditation in the USA, Ireland, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Singapore, the Caribbean, India and Malaysia. Paul says, "Gifts are meant to be given away, so I feel I must share the gift of Christian meditation with others as long as I have the strength and health... and to my last breath." (Garrett Patterson, Ottawa) See also the wccm.org tribute page to Paul.





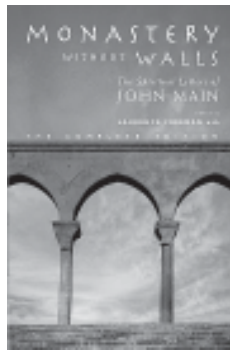
Christian Meditation Bookstore

Monastery Without Walls The Spiritual Letters of John Main

JUST PUBLISHED – this newly revised edition of John Main's spiritual letters brings together in one volume a freshly edited version of *Letters from the Heart* and *The Present Christ* – classics of their kind which have inspired many individuals and communities around the world for more than twenty years. The new edition edited by Laurence Freeman assures a new generation of readers the opportunity to share these powerful insights into why 'meditation creates community'.

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New Conferences from the 2006 John Main Seminar in Malaysia!

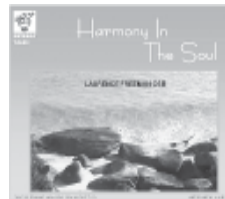
Fire of Silence through Music and Mystics Margaret Rizza



Can the spiritual language of music find birth in the fire of prayer and silence, in the power of meditation? Margaret Rizza shares her personal journey into the mystery of God, who calls us to an ever deepening relationship of love. Drawing on the deep insights and wisdom of the mystics, she leads us through silence, through music, and through scripture to experience the healing and transformative power of music.

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WCCM 2007 Calendar

This year's calendar features more stunning photography from Fr. Laurence Freeman's global travels on behalf of the World Community in 2006. The free-standing desktop calendar includes plastic case with 13 photo cards, calendar days, a listing of WCCM major events, and a monthly spiritual quote from John Main as a gentle reminder to stay rooted at our centre.

A beautiful gift – Order your copies early to avoid disappointment.

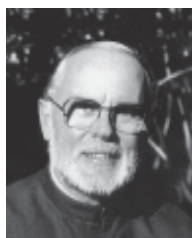
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WORDS BY JOHN MAIN....

As we enter the silence within us we are entering a void in which we are unmade. We cannot remain the person we were or thought we were. But we are in fact not being destroyed but awakened to the eternally fresh source of our being. We become aware that we are being created, that we are springing from the Creator's hand and returning to Him in love. (Word into Silence) Set to music by Margaret Rizza in her album Awakening in Love.

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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General Editor: Gregory Ryan (gjryan@wccm.org)
Graphic Design: Carlos Siqueira (info@wccm.com.br)
International Coordinator: Susan Spence (susan@wccm.org)
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