



Christian Meditation

NEWSLETTER OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

www.wccm.org

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LOS ANGELES LOVES LUCY

On May 21 evening about 40 people from many branches of The World Community in Southern California gathered at the home of Mary Ann Gould (facilitator of the Christian Meditation group at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Beverly Hills) and her husband Bill to celebrate and honor Lucy Palermino, truly one of God's longtime good and faithful servants. The Advisory Board of the California Christian Meditation Center invited Lucy's friends, colleagues and fellow meditators to a potluck dinner, fundraiser, (and meditation of course!) graciously hosted by Mary Ann and Bill. Our own Fr. Laurence Freeman, flying in for the evening's celebration, made a surprise "special guest appearance" and moving tribute reflecting on Lucy's many years of service. It was a time of joy, laughter, good food and fellowship, and a very special sharing in the powerful practice of meditation led by Fr. Laurence.

We came from many places in Lucy's life, all having been touched and inspired by her selfless giving and dedication to the practice and the World Community. Lucy has been a caring, humble, consistently energetic, generous, and selfless driving force in supporting the establishment of many meditation groups in the greater Los Angeles area. She has been integral in maintaining and promoting the presence of the World Community's teaching through tireless effort in coordinating workshops, retreats, and the 2005 John Main Seminar in Thousand Oaks, California. She was also instrumental in

establishing the World Community's California Meditation Center, initially in San Marino, CA, and most recently overseeing its relocation to Holy Nativity Episcopal Parish in Westchester, CA - to name a mere fraction of the ways Lucy has served the World Community!

At the increasingly young age of 84, Lucy is now passing on much of her work of many years to others who will carry on the continuing work of the World Community in Southern California. The rest of the quote from Matthew 25 that began this reflection ends with the master saying to the servant "enter into the joy of your master." As we gathered together that evening in the Gould's living room to share the practice in the "ground of our being," there is no doubt that we were all able to enter into that joy.

*Marie McAdam
(California Christian
Meditation Center)*



COMING RETREATS AND CONFERENCES

YOUNG MEDITATORS URBAN RETREAT LONDON

An urban retreat for younger meditators (18-40) led by Fr Laurence with Giovanni Felicioni and Stefan Reynolds will be based at the Retreat Centre at Cockfosters 9-14 August.

Information: Lukasz Gruszka: lukaszgruszka@gmail.com

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL RETREAT

Fr Laurence will lead a silent, residential, weeklong retreat (the theme, "Practice makes perfect - or does it?") 10-16 October 2009.

*Information: Judi Taylor: palmy@ozemail.com.au
Tel: +61 2 9904 4638*

POLISH MEDITATIO WEEKEND AND NATIONAL RETREAT

Led by Fr Laurence with members of the Polish WCCM Community (the theme, "Kontemplatywne serce Ewangelii" - "The Contemplative Heart of the Gospel") this retreat will

be held in Wroclaw 23-25 October.

Information: Paulina Leceaniak: pauly.lesniak@gmail.com

Tel: +48 601 70 28 29

SWITZERLAND CHRISTIAN, BUDDHIST, SUFI DIALOGUE

Fr. Laurence in Geneva 20-22 November in dialogue with Lama Deny and Faouzi Skali ('Nothing is so much like God as Silence': The mystical heart of the three traditions).

Information: John Moederle: john.moederle@gmail.com

THE WORLD PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS: MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Fr Laurence will be a keynote speaker at the Parliament which is held every ten years and whose theme 3-9 December is: 'Make a World of Difference: Hearing each other, Healing the earth'.

Information: www.parliamentofreligions.com



A letter from Laurence Freeman

DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

Dearest friends,

July 11th Feast of St. Benedict

Seeing a mind slip away from itself is like seeing a leaf fall from a tree and flutter helplessly to the ground. By the nature of the affliction not many who experience this themselves can ever describe it. They enter a great silence. But no one who has seen this unfold in a loved one can forget or fully understand the impact and significance it brings.

I felt this cruel shock of seeing human identity detaching and dissolving when I visited a dear old friend in hospital recently. He was a priest, a real character, a charmer and a relentless storyteller. For years he was who he was. His personality had long-formed. It performed well and liked to embellish but you always knew what you were getting. And when you were preparing to meet him again you knew he would, essentially, be the same although there would be new stories or variations on old ones, news and discoveries to recount. He was also an enthusiast with a contagious effect and there would usually be a new book or idea or plan to listen to. Behind his colourful exuberance there was also a truly spiritual and compassionate spirit. He was sensitive but not openly sentimental. His large circle of friends and those whom he had rescued from crisis or cared for in affliction testified to a life of constantly turning outwards to others. As no one is without critics, some would smile at his flamboyant ways or his name-dropping tendency; but those who knew him loved him simply because he was himself. His goodness and aliveness were themselves gifts to the world. For some years there had been accumulating signs of mental slippage, stories begun but petering out without a point or climax, getting lost walking down a corridor, confusing names and places. Obvious as the process was, one hoped it might not be what it seemed or that the dementia (the 'unminding') might slow down or mercifully just leave him alone. We might not hope for a pardon, a return to his full form, but we hoped for a stay of execution. When I saw him again I remembered that nature has no favourites.

In the depressing hospital ward, sadly understaffed with shabby signs of budget cuts, he was sitting dressed in his black clericals beside his bed. A television blared incoherent nonsense from the corner of the ward and the patients who

were awake looked hopelessly at it. My friend jumped up with surprising agility as we walked in and came up to me with his characteristic smile, his eyes twinkling as ever, seemingly full of things to share and describe. There seemed no doubt that he recognized me but his speech was babble. If you removed the words the sound seemed to have sense, cadences of meaning rising and falling. I listened hard to catch the content, to try to rescue some trace of reason, to find a wavelength we could communicate on. We sat and exchanged words but we were like galaxies moving away from each other. When there was some incident in the ward that attracted our attention he would look at it with us but there was no way of sharing the impression it made. I sensed a sadness and frustration in him at times. Did he know he was saying nothing to connect with? Did he mind? Where was his mind?

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR

Such experiences with people we know and love bring home to us what a tenuous thing identity is and how fragile is the assurance of being at home with ourselves. Relatives of Alzheimer's sufferers may not philosophize about human identity but they live its mystery with daily pain and wonder. I had an aunt who had lost her mind for more than ten years. Her daughters faithfully and regularly visited her even though any intelligible conversation was impossible. When my uncle died they discussed whether they should inform their mother. What was the point? But eventually they decided that she should be told. When they broke the news the babble continued unabated. But then they noticed her eyes were watery and a tear formed and ran down her cheek as she spoke about nothing.

Senility and clinical personality disorders illustrate the humility of the human condition and the dependency of our very notion of identity upon variable biochemical or neurological systems. Identity is hard to understand outside the interactions one person has with others. How we communicate ourselves by language or behaviour expresses who we are or think we are even when it is unintentional. We can reveal ourselves unwittingly. We can fail to get our point across. Occasionally, we understand that we are understood. Identity is interdependent yet feels very mortal. When the bridge collapses between a person and others we feel we are losing them. It is an anticipation of death. They are disappearing like an astronaut who is separated from his ship and floats away into interstellar spaces.

One may wonder why this has happened. Should it be

patiently accepted? Some extreme rationalists might argue that it is a living death that has begun; it will bring nothing but extended grief and better bring forward the biological end. Yet to the carers, however hard they find the situation to cope with, identity remains, even when damaged or diminished. The interplay of personality with other personalities may be ended; the circuit boards may seem fried. But to those who love the person, they are still present. The identity may be hidden, unexpressed and inexpressible. Yet however painful the loss of the former self they loved, they know that there is a self. Or that the self is present – the words fail to express it but the heart knows.

THE SOCIAL FACTOR

Identity however does not only depend on biochemistry. Through our work in and hopefully for the world we form an identity over time that we call our role or 'contribution'. Too often this becomes so demanding of our time and energy that we identify with it to the exclusion of all other sources of identity. We become our job, our status, what others see us as.

This exposes us to extraordinary spiritual danger. When the wheel of life and fortune spins and we lose this identity we can feel we have lost everything.

Such a crisis, like all experience of loss, may indeed be an opportunity for recovering a better proximity to

our 'true self'. But this will depend on many factors, not less the love and support of others at the time of the crisis who know us better than we know ourselves. Otherwise the loss of this socio-economic ego identity can be so devastating that we never really recover from the sudden immersion in the feeling of uselessness and anonymity. We drown in a sense of failure and disappointment.

The present economic crisis has exposed many false things about defective identities like these that are constructed, most often, by the prosperous or deluded in the most successful parts of the western world. Not least among these exposures has been the difference between credit and wealth and the ineluctable connection between money and illusion. The consumer fantasy has been peddled above all to the poor proffering them false identities as prosperous, powerful, independent and capable of fulfilling their desires and whims. Like all fantasies it had eventually to explode. Nevertheless, work and our service in the world is a meaningful aspect of our identity. Unemployment or retirement can destabilize the harmony we need to maintain between the different spheres of our identity. Even mundane work which, for so many today, lacks nobility or grandeur, can nevertheless be a means of interacting with others in ways that benefit them.

Someone serving Big Macs or cleaning toilets in an airport all day may find this hard to believe. But the manner in which the job is done, and if the sense of personal dignity has not been eroded, may indeed make the world a better place if only for a while. In a world where so many experience their work as only a 'job' and one for which they have no respect,

the importance of personal spiritual work is even greater. A widespread perception exists that in a modern secular society "spirituality" is primarily a leisure interest of the middle class. In fact, as I visit meditators in our community in deprived parts of the world I see the opposite. Many of those who are struggling economically or socially understand meditation more seriously than those who cannot 'find time' to meditate because of their job-dominated lifestyle.

THE SPIRITUAL FACTOR OF IDENTITY

However predictable we try to make it, life remains surprising and largely uncontrollable. When this apparent arbitrariness of existence is revealed we can feel ourselves to be the playthings of the gods. We may run away in panic at this before we come to wonder where we can run to. Or, we may discover an old, forgotten sense of humility and wonder. When we see life and our own identity this way panic changes to peace. We see how much of 'our' identity is indeed tangential and impermanent and yet something, *someone*, deeper and more real exists. I begin to wonder who I am. Oddly a sense of thanksgiving is triggered by this question and for many it can be the first stirring of a religious sense of life. "I thank thee Lord for the wonder of my being", sang the Hebrew psalmist. This sense

of awe is the meaning of the 'fear of God' which the Bible says is the beginning of wisdom.

The word 'identity' comes from a word that means the 'same' and also includes a sense of 'over and over again'. If we had no sense of continuity, that something stayed the same or was renewed continuously, we would indeed have an identity crisis. Meaning in experience would then be impossible to find. We would seek to escape from ourselves because we dreaded the idea that we were not ourselves at all. The simple absence of love from our lives can be enough to initiate a crisis like this.

If we run from the existential dread of non-being we fall either into the shopping mall or a place of worship. Neither kind of establishment may be run well but at least in the place of worship we may stumble across better leads to give new direction to our search for who we truly are. The search for true identity, what is "the same" (in the place of worship it may be called God) still has to be followed while living in a world of insecurity and complexity. Some of the great contemplative centres of the world reflect the human search for the ideal place and conditions and some of these had temporary success in achieving this. But for most of us it may be our personal meditation space.

Where I am writing this, sitting in front of a window the day outside is very changeable. The weather forecast here is much the same every day, however: "sunny with occasional showers" or "showers with sunny intervals". One has to learn to embrace and live with this. Extremes, flooding or drought, make the News of course; but mostly weather here is the subject of occasional conversation, a universal, safe way we have of adjusting with others to the world we inhabit together and, perhaps, as a meteorological code for dealing with life's

"TO THOSE WHO LOVE THE PERSON, THEY ARE STILL PRESENT."

autonomous forces outside our control. *A beautiful day, let's hope it will last. What a terrible day, but the forecast says...*

The hard truth is that identity is formed or is revealed in this funny old world of contradictions and polarities. Wholeness is found in our navigation between extremes. And according to the great Christian philosopher Nicolas of Cusa in the 15th century 'God is the union of opposites'. In his treatise "On Learned Ignorance" Nicolas addresses the problem of the knowledge of God or 'absolute infinity'. He concludes that we can only know God by knowing his incomprehensibility. There cannot logically be an opposite to God therefore God must be beyond all contradictions. "You are the opposite of opposites because you are infinite," Nicolas told God.

The Cloud of Unknowing and indeed the whole Christian apophatic tradition behind our meditation says the same thing. It is a wisdom some find without philosophy or religion. Without even knowing they have found it they learn to stop trying compulsively to control or explain everything and to take life as it comes,

'to kiss the joy as it flies'.

If this is true of God it is also a good clue to understanding human identity. We don't feel very Godlike most of the time and yet life teaches us to unify its contradictions. In the deep wisdom of most religion there is an affirmation that human nature is of, or like, or shares in the absolute. Atman is Brahman, Man is Mind, the human is the image of God. The infinite is present at each point of the finite. God is not another abstract dimension. God is where we are. In the heart of the mystery.

Change is often seen as a threat to our identity but it can just as well be seen as the revealer of real identity. What remains when all else has gone is real. Survival is the minimum we can hope for. But there is much more. We can also see that loss, the wave of the many deaths that ebb and flow through life, leads to a transformation and expansion in which all we thought we were is marvelously transcended.

THE MEDITATION FACTOR

So then, 'who am I?' is the essential human question. If we dismiss or run scared from it we cannot go far without hitting a wall. It seems at first like a wall of meaninglessness, superficiality, the frighteningly ephemeral, the wall of death. Yet behind this, as the personal crisis unfolds, we may also discover, that what we have run into is nothing less than the very identity we thought was unfindable or feared was nonexistent.

The Chandogya Upanishad uses a strange metaphor for the self – though no stranger than the many ordinary images used by Jesus to describe the kingdom:

The self is a dam, a separation between worlds so that they do not run together... On crossing this dam one who is blind is blind no longer; one who is wounded is wounded no longer; one who was suffering suffers no longer. On crossing this dam, night turns into day for the world of *brahman* is always bright. (IV.4.22)

Just as Jesus describes the kingdom ambiguously as both 'within' and 'among' us so the first sentence of this passage can be translated quite differently. Rather than separating the worlds so that they don't collapse into each other, the meaning can also be: 'holding these worlds so they do not split apart.'

Our identity is more subtle, more swift, more immediate than thought. Even sacred scriptures point towards the real but remain in the realm of signs. Only what is the same 'over and over again' is true. Our self, 'sharing in the very being of God', as St Peter says, is beyond the world of opposites. In other words it is spirit, the realm of unity, peace and wisdom.

Anyone who meditates seriously is already making a spiritual journey towards their true identity. This means into the self-knowledge which is, as the Christian tradition has long asserted, the necessary context for the knowledge of God. "Journey" describes the time it takes and the stages we pass through. But it is equally accurate to describe it as a non-conceptual experience of non-action and pure stillness. If we see it only as a journey we risk becoming merely tourists rather than explorers of the non-spatial, non-temporal realm of the spirit. So meditation is, to use another contradiction, a journey of stillness. As we sit



each day we learn – and the learning eventually turns us into disciples – that the stillness is natural, what we are made for; but it is also a choice we have continually to make – ‘over and over again’.

If we do not *want* to be still, to let go of our problem-solving, desiring and remembering, we will not (in the ordinary course of things) ever know what stillness means. Our *wanting* to be still – to seek, to knock and to ask, as Jesus describes it – may at first compete with all our other wants. We want and need many things. But is not a desire like any other desire. Meditation transforms all desire – but only if we practice it. Thinking about meditation or just wanting to meditate is not in itself a spiritual journey. If we do practice we come to see how meditation is the radicalization of all desire, the narrow path in which we shed everything except that which we most deeply want.

Once into this journey most of us face periodic crises of confidence and stamina. Few have started without ever having given up at some point. There is a grace in this, as in everything, though, because it confronts us with our own weakness. Starting again always takes us deeper. One reason for this difficulty in sustaining the practice smoothly is the feeling that it is a wasted effort or that the results do not justify the investment. This problem is considerably lessened if self-knowledge itself is seen as a major fruit of the practice.

WHO AM I?

The great I AM sayings of Jesus reflect the self-knowledge which was his authority. They are more than answers to a question. They are revelations of a unique and revolutionary human experience of the self.

Like the self, this experience that burst into history in the consciousness of Jesus was unique and universal. We don't just look at it in admiration. We participate in it. It impinges on our own more limited consciousness and draws us by an irresistible love into the loss of self that must happen if we are to find our self.

And to all he said, “If anyone wishes to be a follower of mine, he must leave self behind; day after day he must take up his cross and come with me...What will a person gain by winning the whole world at the cost of his true self? (Lk 9:23ff)

Jesus knew where he came from and where he was going. The nature of that self-knowledge is inexplicable but its effect is real. When he asks us ‘who do you say I am’ we feel the

force of it, engaging us powerfully but leaving us free to listen and respond or not, as we choose. So unusual is it for the ego to encounter a force that does not restrict our freedom, that it suspects and doubts its reality. However, this magisterial question can, if we let it, turn us into disciples. The motive behind it all seems to be a wholly loving one. He wishes us to know ourselves only so that we can know that we are known. It is the divine hunger.

Nicolas of Cusa saw deep into this mystery of the divine-human identity in the light of his Christian faith. “You care for me with the utmost attention...As your seeing is your being, I am because you look on me,” he wrote. God's attention is not a product or figment of our imagination but the power of ultimate and irreducible reality itself.

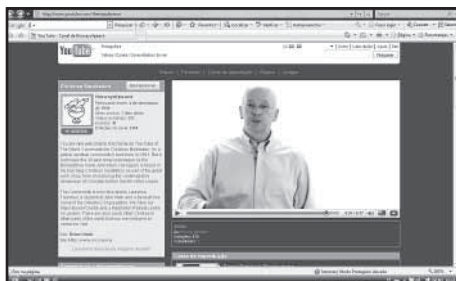
If this seems too abstract think back to the last time you felt truly loved by someone and pick up the journey again from there. We come to this experience of our true identity, this ‘vision of God, through the meandering stages of human development, from womb to deathbed. Biological, psychological, intellectual, spiritual. We pass through these stages in cycles that are repeated ‘over and over again’ but which reveal what is ‘the same’. The repetition, like that of the mantra is not mechanical: it does not take place merely in the psychological realm. It leads to and centres us in the spiritual realm, our place of wholeness, the home of the self.

One of these fundamental cycles of the process is in the experience of losing and finding. In meditation we become conscious of this cycle embedded in all of life. Becoming conscious we simultaneously become more free. By taking the attention off ourselves we lose ourselves. That is how we find who we really are and, at some unpredictable point, the meaning of our existence.

With much love,



Laurence Freeman OSB



MEDITATION TEACHING ON THE WEB

In addition to our family of websites centered on www.wcm.org there are these new internet resources: Talks by John Main, Bede Griffiths, Gerry Pierce, Laurence Freeman and others on iTunes (listen and download): search for “Christian Meditation”

Videos on YouTube search for “thewayofpeace”

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

2009 INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL RETREAT FARA SABINA, ITALY



Trish Panton, Judi Taylor, Kim Nataraja, Catherine Charriere, School Retreat Team

The School Retreat is a wonderful opportunity for meditators to go deeper during a week of more frequent daily meditation and profounder silence. Short daily interviews and conferences and a contemplative mass in the evening weave the meditation and mindful walking sessions into a powerful experience. At the end of May Fr. Laurence led a silent School retreat at the tranquil Poor Clare Monastery in Fara Sabina, Italy with Kim Nataraja, the WCCM International School Coordinator, Trish Panton and Judi Taylor, for coordinators, leaders and teachers in the Community from 15 countries. They lay aside their daily preoccupations in the silence to become more attentive to the self-communication of the Spirit. We returned to our individual countries and communities better prepared for their national or regional responsibilities.

The theme for the retreat's short daily talks was meditation as a 'way of faith' (to be published soon by Medio Media). We were encouraged see faith as much more than what we believe, part of the journey from head to heart. We were encouraged to experience faithfulness as a central part of the work of becoming fully human. The multidimensional nature of faith was linked to meditation by seeing it as engaging in acts of faith that become a process. This process of integration involves considerable discipline, leading to the interconnected stages of purgation, illumination and union. Fr. Laurence put meditation and faith in context, suggesting that we see the contemplative life as keeping the oxygen of faith flowing. He cited St. Irenaeus: 'the beginning is faith and the end is love... and the union of the two is God.' Meditation as a way of life unites discipline and faith and leads to faithfulness and love in all our actions and relationships, from a self-centered life to a God-centered life. *Joseph Clarkson, Newsletter Coordinator, Canada (joseph.clarkson@rogers.com)*

SINGAPORE YOGA RETREAT FOR CHRISTIAN MEDITATORS



A major cause of distractions in meditation is due to physical lack of conditioning, Fr Joe Pereira told the Singapore Christian meditators attending his retreat here in March. He is WCCM national co-coordinator in India, a priest of the Mumbai archdiocese, an Iyengar yoga teacher and founder-director of Kripa, an acclaimed organisation for caring for sufferers from addiction and HIV/AIDS and recently received the Indian Government's Padma Shree Award for his contributions in the field of social work. Fr Joe showed some simple breathing and stretching exercises to prepare the body for meditation, helping us to sit upright and still as Fr John Main taught. Fr Joe, whose DVD and booklet on the theme is recently published by Medio Media, says yoga helps many meditators in the essential work of shifting the locus of control from the ego to the Spirit of the Risen Lord dwelling in our hearts.

(Stella Kon, Singapore)

BELGIAN AND DUTCH MEDITATORS: PILGRIMAGE TO CHARTRES

We were 39 meditating pilgrims from Belgium and the Netherlands, who started the journey to Chartres on the morning of April 17th. Having left the chaos of Paris traffic we reached the quiet plain of Beauce where the Cathedral of Chartres suddenly loomed up on the hill. This cathedral was the destination and purpose of our pilgrimage. On our arrival we had a conducted tour by guides who inspired us with the beauty of the cathedral. Descending into the crypt where an ancient spring flows and where for centuries the Virgin Mary has been worshipped, we made the symbolic move from darkness to light. In the main body of the cathedral we deepened the pilgrimage experience by walking the labyrinth, finally arriving at the centre that symbolises Christ. During our further visits over the weekend we were overwhelmed by the beauty and deep symbolism of the stained-glass windows. Our meditation times made us more sensitive to this beauty and the cathedral and surrounding nature brought us back to the meditation with more joy and dedication. The pilgrimage was meditation in action that strengthens our inner journey *Also see our pilgrims' slideshow on the NEWS page at www.WCCM.org (José Pype, National Coordinator Netherlands: jose.pype@skynet.be,)*

SOUTH AMERICA

In April Fr Laurence visited Lima, Perú for the first time. He met with Bishop Adriano Tomasi OFM and then gave a conference to students of the Juan XXIII Institute for Theological Studies. After lunchtime talk and meditation at Iglesia Santo Domingo (where three Peruvian saints rest, Santa Rosa de Lima, San Martin de Porres and San Francisco Masias), we went to the headquarters of Caritas Peru where Fr Laurence spoke to Caritas personnel about the essential link between contemplation and service. After a public day retreat in Miraflores many remarked on the experience as “a gift from our Lord” and that “we want to continue meditation practice and groups”. Magdalena Puebla, National Coordinator in Argentina, came to translate for Fr Laurence. *Tito Otero, Coordinator Perú.*

The Argentinean community will welcome coordinators to Buenos Aires from several S American countries in October for a planning meeting with Fr Laurence and Ana Fonseca, Guiding Board Member and Coordinator for Brazil. The work of Lucia Gayon on the website www.meditacioncristiana.com has contributed immensely to the growth of the community in Latin America together with the collaboration with the Argentinean publisher Bonum and more recently with Convivium Press in Venezuela. Fr Laurence also visited Colombia and Venezuela where he spoke and opened a Meditation Centre at the Central University of Venezuela in Caracas, the leading state university.

For more news, please visit our Webpage at www.WCCM.org

IN FOCUS

Give me a Word

The Desert Fathers and Mothers were often asked for spiritual guidance from those who came to the desert seeking to live a holy life as faithful followers of Jesus. The request for spiritual guidance was often made in the simple phrase, “Give me a word.” In many ways, this same phrase, “Give me a word.” is apt for the various stages of my life.

As a child growing up in a family of eight, the school, church and local library were my favourite places. In spite of much teasing from three brothers, I loved to learn and each of these venues gave me words that were life-giving and also opened up worlds far beyond the poverty and limitations that were my daily reality.

As an adult, the “word” given to me in my husband David and our two daughters, Julie and Heather, enriches the text of my life beyond measure. Yet the generosity of the word continues: it was words of scripture (John 21:15) that spoke very clearly to me in 1980 about my vocation to priesthood; in the final year of seminary, it was a word of invitation spoken by a friend to come to a Christian meditation group that has since shaped my life and ministry. That one word given, **MARANATHA**, has opened my life to ever new dimensions of the mystery of God’s love.

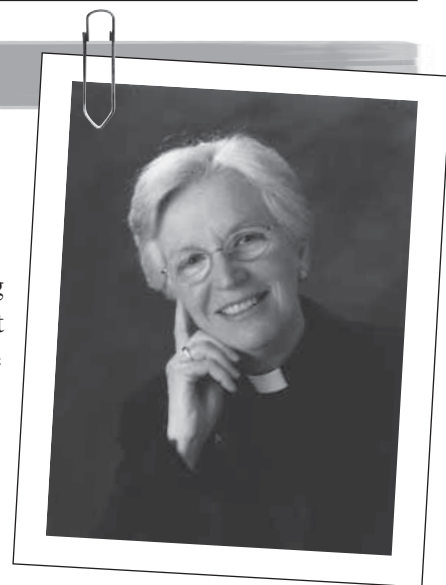
Christian meditation as taught by John Main and Laurence Freeman has brought healing words, loving words, empowering words, comforting words, challenging words. Above all, to learn the poverty of the single word has brought me into a direct experience of the Word, Jesus Christ. It is in that experience of silence and stillness where we “know” the infinite love of God that we accept that words fail insofar as we have moved beyond communication into communion. In the silence of Divine Love is everything, for in the silence all words converge in love – given, received and returned in love. In practical terms, the love we experience in meditation is returned by what John

Main called, “deepening our commitment to that part of humanity we encounter in the daily round.” It is true that for all the many times I fail to offer the word of love in daily life, my daily meditation practice calls me back to the Source whose grace enables me to be a channel of that love.

Several years ago I retired from parish ministry. As much as I loved the pastoral work, the teaching and liturgical work, it seemed beyond me to live a contemplative life in the busyness of parish ministry. As I listened in the silence of a Sabbath year, I was blessed by a word coming from Fr. Laurence inviting me to serve as a resource teacher for the School in Canada. That work has blossomed into more teaching and retreat work. The opportunity to help people learn and deepen their practice of meditation and to grow in knowledge and love of God is a deeply satisfying ministry. To be able to “give a word” to others is humbling as well as a joy and privilege. There is such gratitude in my heart for Christian meditation in my own life and for the new life it brings to the Church.

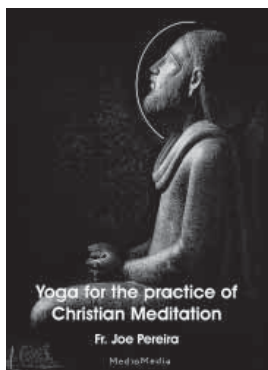
As I look back on the text of my life, I see in the chapters, all the words spoken and unspoken that have brought me to the poverty of the mantra and thus to silence. I believe that in the silence of the love of God, each of us is given a word to give to others and so we do our part to accomplish the work of the Christian Church which John Main says, “is to re-sensitize the world to the presence of the spirit in the human heart.”

Glenda Meakin, Ontario, Canada Member of the Canadian and International Resource Team for The School (meakin@cyg.net)



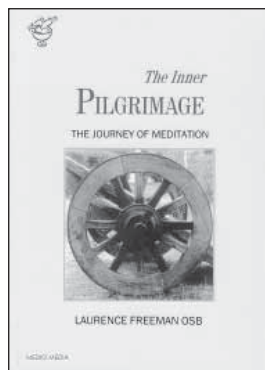


Christian Meditation Bookstore - NEW ITEMS!



**YOGA FOR THE PRACTICE OF
CHRISTIAN MEDITATION**
FR JOE PEREIRA
DVD (PAL format only)
with companion book
Catalogue #7077
Price US\$ 24.95, £16.90

This video and book is a response to the reference John Main makes to the body, in describing how to meditate. It is a yogic elucidation of learning to "sit still and upright". The body as a temple of God's spirit needs a process of Cleansing and Awakening not only to make it a worthy dwelling place of God but also as the most effective and authentic vehicle for the journey towards the heart. A simple guide for meditators, this is an attempt to include the major systems in the body in the work of shifting the locus of control from the Ego to the Antaryamin (The Inner Controller) the spirit of the Risen Lord. Fr Joseph Pereira is the founder of Kripa Foundation, the largest non-governmental organization working in the field of addiction and HIV/AIDS.



THE INNER PILGRIMAGE
LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB
This is a reprint of a very useful book
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Words by John Main....

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