



Meditatio
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Letting *Go* Letting *God*

Fr Joe Pereira

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“To be a hero, you must first be a zero.” Fr Joe Pereira sees meditation as the act of self-denial that is the call to discipleship and to recognise that our true identity is in Christ. To come to that reality, we need a pathway that shuts off all preoccupations, painful and pleasant, allowing us to come to the consciousness of Christ. Saying the mantra brings us to that poverty in which we transcend our ego.

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Self Denial

Jesus very explicitly gave us the condition for discipleship. He said if you wish to be my disciple, then:

- first, you have to learn to “deny yourself”.
- secondly, you must “take up your cross”.
- thirdly, you must “follow me” – be faithful to me.

Let us look at these three requirements for discipleship. To deny oneself is a major task of silencing one’s ego, or even bypassing one’s ego. If we live a life that is controlled by our ego, then we have two dimensions dominant in our living. The first is “my way of thinking”. In that respect, we collect a whole lot of perceptions, and this develops into “my prejudices”. So no one can make me easily give up even those ideas which may clash with reality, clash with even God, who is truth. Since truth, reality, eludes the human perception, the human being is left in a world of his own. As much as thinking takes us away from the reality of life, our will is another faculty coming from the ego that makes us choose what we like, thus creating a very subtle addictive personality. That is described as “self-will running riot”. In denying oneself, one has to reduce both “my own prejudices” and “my own will”.

The second aspect, to deny oneself taking up one’s cross, is to face reality, to be nailed to the cross – the cross that is our everyday life. We have two options: either that of the bad thief nailed to the cross next to Jesus, or the good thief nailed to the cross on the right side of Jesus. One curses reality, curses God, while the other just looks at the Master and says: “Remember me when you are in your kingdom.” And the Master replies: “Today, you will be with me in paradise.” That’s the most beautiful lesson that we learn from the Master’s call to self-denial: to accept our cross of everyday life, and

instead of cursing, instead of questioning God keep looking at Jesus.

That brings us to the third component of the call which is “Follow me”. To follow Jesus is to have our gaze fixed on Jesus. To do this, we have the most simple method given to us by Father John Main, and that is not to use words and images but to put away these which are fed mostly by our ego and self-will, and rather keep listening to a single phrase. That single phrase is a simple four-syllable mantra: *ma-ra-na-tha* – Come Lord Jesus. In the process of just saying that word, combining it with one’s breath, one keeps one’s gaze on Jesus. It helps us to bypass the faculties of the ego – my own thinking, my own self-will. It brings me to focus on the one thing that is necessary, the kingdom of God.

In doing this we put on both the mind and the heart of Christ. The mind of Christ was only to do God’s will. From the very beginning till the end, his life was that of self-denial, that of fully absorbing himself into the reality which was the Father’s will for him, and being totally centred and focused. This call of the Master is what gets fulfilled as we practise this form of meditation: To listen to the mind and heart of Christ.

Let us prepare ourselves to leave behind the self, with its two faculties of thinking and of willing, to focus on the indwelling spirit of the Risen Lord within us. John Main describes meditation as a perfect stillness of body and spirit. The way to stillness of body is to sit still, to sit relaxed and yet fully awake. The essential rule is to sit with the spine upright. It always helps to push your tailbone deep into the backrest of the chair. Or, if you are sitting on a stool or on a prayer block, or a cushion, bend forward and take the weight of the entire trunk on the front edge of the buttock-bone, and raise the trunk up. Maintain that upright chest, and slightly tilt your head downwards in the meditation posture. The way to stillness of spirit is to sound silently, interiorly, in the depth of our being, a word or a mantra; to repeat that word over and over again, and to listen to it as we sound it. John Main recommended the Aramaic word *maranatha*.

Christ Consciousness

There is a beautiful story told by Father Anthony de Mello of a group of tourists who are travelling by bus. While going through some beautiful scenery, they were all absorbed in taking photographs and capturing those scenes in their cameras. At the end of the journey, they had a very special dinner prepared for them. It was the American Thanksgiving Day and the turkeys were brought out. While they were sitting together, there arose a discussion and an argument, and the whole group got involved in that argument. At the end of the dinner, the chef came round and asked them, "How was the food? How was the turkey?" They all were at sea; they couldn't answer him. They were embarrassed because they were so involved in arguing that they did not remember how the turkey tasted.

This is a story that expresses the way we live most of the time. We miss out so much on what is really present to us. We like to capture scenes in our cameras, we are always thinking of the past or of the future, but we are so absent from what is happening right now.

The consciousness of Jesus was the opposite. He was fully present. To be fully present is only possible when you are able to silence all your preoccupations. To come into the here and now is to be able to open up ourselves to what is really confronting us, to give our full attention.

We, in prayer, also like to do a lot of thinking. We come to prayer (and we read some beautiful prayers composed by others) but we don't sometimes feel the power of those words at all, because we recite them as formulae. We rather make a concept of it rather than experience that thing or that person. A famous philosopher J Krishnamurthi said when you tell a child the name of the bird, the child ceases to see the bird. For instance, a beautiful eagle comes

up on the horizon and the father calls the child to say, "Come, look at that eagle." And the child says, "Dad, I know what is an eagle." Thus, being satisfied with the concept of an eagle we too sometimes, when we relate to God, are satisfied with what we bring by our thoughts and sometimes by our beautiful intentions.

God has given us a different faculty, not just a faculty to think, to reflect, which is good, but he has given us a faculty to make ourselves wholly present. This faculty is all about bringing our *entire* being into the presence of God. God is always present. We keep wandering away without realising that the presence of God is an eternal NOW. In the beginning was the word, the word was with God, and the word was God. And in that word the whole universe was made. That word alone gives meaning to our life.

John Main gives us a very powerful way of coming into that eternal presence of God, which is the Christ consciousness. Meditation is the most simple practice to keep away all our so-called thoughts, reflections, ideas, images. In the eyes of God, our most sublime thoughts are so absurd. What is our wisdom compared to God's wisdom? The way to do that is, not to use our thinking brain that gives us concepts, thoughts, ideas, images.

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Letting Go and Letting God

The most beautiful statement that Jesus makes to all of us as we travel in this very 'busy-body' world is where he says: "Come to me all you who labour and are over-burdened, and I will give you rest." If modern man, modern persons, recognised this we would live so much a more fulfilling life.

Behavioural medicine has captured the secret of this statement of Jesus in the research that was done on stress that causes all of us to become hyper-metabolic. The flow of adrenalin causes a rise in blood pressure, our breathing goes erratic, our entire lifestyle becomes so feverish that we are all the time literally like monkeys jumping from one branch to the other. Our thoughts as well as our lifestyle become a constant state of dissipation. Stress-management people say such a person gets tired, gets exhausted, and finally reaches a stage of burnout. When Jesus uses this word: "All you who *labour* and are *over-burdened*", he is aware that as human beings we cannot handle our life.

It is a lie to think that I am in control of anything. It's a lie. But then so many of us prefer to live with that lie, causing more and more a hypertensive disposition of being and causing so many ailments that spring from this stress-response. Technically, it is called the "fight or flight" response – when a stressor comes to me, I either try to fight it or I try to run away from it, flee from it.

When you meditate, you learn to let go. No matter how precious one thinks one's preoccupations of thoughts, of people, of responsibilities are, no matter how heavy our so called luggage in life is, it is necessary to let go of all those attachments that we have in life that encumber us, in order to be free, to be unencumbered by this baggage. For that, one has to come to Jesus. That is the vital solution.

A Harvard physicist called this process the "relaxation response". In relaxation, we let go of the body. We bring the body to restedness, just that which Jesus has assured us: "I will give you *rest*." But, when will you *feel* that restedness? When in reality your body truly lets go the control of the mind over it. There is a practice in yoga, a corpse-pose practice, which is called Savasana. *Sava* is the corpse and *asana* is the way you keep the body in position. Now, what happens there is you have to resemble a dead body. This is only possible by a combined process of exhaling as you let go the control of the mind over the body and make the body feel rested. In the process what you are really saying to God is, "Take Lord; yes Lord." With every outgoing breath you are letting go all kinds of pre-occupations, and letting God. Now there is a paradox here, that the more we learn to let go the more we are able to really *have* what we have let go. That is a beautiful paradox. That is the most effective way of life to a follower of Jesus.

In the continuum of life, at one end of the continuum, we feel inadequate by the challenges of life, so we get stressed, we get tired coping with stress. On the other side of the continuum, we are sometimes so gifted, maybe we are so highly qualified, but the jobs that we hold are not sufficiently challenging, and so we get bored. Now this is mostly the reason why people turn to addictions and chemicals. But when we come to meditation, especially the meditation of the word, we are able to expand our capacity to literally take anything that is coming up for us in life. I even would say one can tolerate any nonsense and be able to absorb that in one's consciousness. Just like the Master who, hanging on the cross, could have that love and compassion to say to his Father: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing."

To encounter the source of all life and energy, we have John Main's most powerful methodology. It is a practice; it is not a technique as men of science use it for health. Once we truly are able to practise this process of letting go and centre our hearts on the heart of Jesus, the only authentic prayer welling out from Jesus fills our entire being and we are able to relate to everything in life

with that broad expanded consciousness.

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The Disposition of Mary

The best response from a human being to God's love is the disposition of Mary: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to the word."

There is a very old Zen story that a disciple comes repeatedly to visit his Master and is very, very disappointed and frustrated that he is not getting much out of this encounter. The Master recognised that, and wanted to tell him why this was happening. He asked for a cup that was already filled with tea, but there was a teapot there also filled with tea. And the Master said, "Have this cup of tea." Then he took the teapot and started pouring into the cup that was already full. The disciple said, "Master, Master, stop! What are you doing?" He said, "You know this is exactly what is happening to you. When you come to me, you are like that cup that is already full. So how can you receive?"

This is a beautiful description of the attitude that we mostly carry in life. We somehow or the other think that we've got it all. Even when we go to God, we somehow or other have our own agenda, our own perceptions. We plan in a particular way, and expect God just to give some kind of a sanction to our own self-will. If that is what we do, then God resists the proud, and waits for us to be lowly and humble to lift us from our emptiness and nothingness, and to give us that fullness of God. Here again this is a paradox. The more we learn to empty ourselves and dispose ourselves like Mary, the more will God come into our life. And therefore, the most important thing is to completely empty ourselves of all so-called values that we treasure and to consider all that, in the words of St Paul, as so much rubbish, and to open ourselves to the treasure, the real treasure, that is God's wisdom and grace.

Now how does one do it? The way to do it is to have the heart of

Mary. This is a gradual and learned experience. To continually make myself open to God's grace, I need to empty myself of all that is preoccupying me – contemplative prayer.

Sometimes we carry within our conscious, unconscious, and sub-conscious mind a lot of things that have upset us. Sometimes we even carry memories, cellular memories, of happenings that took place when we were in the womb of our mother. Some of us have some kind of traumatic childhood, and then we try to come to God with all this stuff that is making our minds and hearts so heavy, and we do not know what is keeping us from the experience of God. In contemplative prayer, when we sit just with simplicity and a spirit of obedience to be faithful to saying that one single word, with that attitude of simplicity and complete poverty, when we submit to that word, we access the so-called experience of the unconscious. God's spirit alone can heal that area of the unconscious. No psychology, no counselling, no therapy, no analysis can ever heal a sin-sick soul as much as the Risen Spirit of Jesus.

To access that, the only disposition is that of Mary: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to the word." In the likeness of Mary, we learn to ponder that word in our heart. When you ponder that word in your heart, you heal all memories, traumatic and otherwise, and create a heart that is fully open to God. To come before God, we have to have our cup completely empty so that God's grace can fill it with that unique abundance and richness of God's kingdom – in simplicity and a spirit of poverty and obedience, opening up our hearts in the likeness of Mary to God's word.

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Authenticity

In the treatment of addiction, we have discovered that there are sometimes two personalities within us. We often identify with a personality trait that may be our own disability. All of us by virtue of being human have our limitation. This limitation could be anything physical, psychological, spiritual; St Paul talked about the thorn in his flesh. Just by virtue of being human, we are limited.

Now, it is so natural for a person with any limitation to be in a state of denial and cover it up and live a false life, and show as though he doesn't have, or she doesn't have that disability. Ask an alcoholic or a drug addict, "Do you admit that you are one?" They will always say, "No, I don't think I am an addict." While the whole family, neighbourhood, and everyone knows that this person has gone into chemical dependency on alcohol or drugs, that person always denies.

The whole process of healing is ultimately to recognise who I am. "Knowing thyself" is not possible if we do not own up everything that is true about ourself, both the good as well as the bad. This is when we fully come into what is known as 'reality therapy'. Reality therapy consists of recognising truthfully "what is my particular limitation or disability".

But then this is not an easy process. When I recognise that I have this horrible, embarrassing disability, it creates shame, it creates guilt. Because so many things I do, I end up in trouble, it causes me guilt. I hurt people whom I love almost unconsciously because of this disability or because of whatever malady I have. And therefore I feel a little upset with myself and with God and with life, and I get angry. I get very angry with the world. And then I keep looking at the world with that anger. That doesn't help. You can't live in the world with your anger; you burn out. Therefore you go into the third stage.

In the third stage, we say: "OK, I have this disability. I have (let's say) a problem of alcoholism. Fine, I will give up alcohol. But I will get on to something else – maybe food, maybe nicotine, maybe sex, maybe gambling." I seek a substitute. And that is a very subtle deviation from understanding my real self and my real nature. That leads to greater problems, and brokenness, and pain. And that ultimately gets me into depression. That depression is a state of darkness – that I just cannot accept who I am.

But when you practise meditation, when you use this simple formula that John Main has given us, you develop a state of acceptance. It is like seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Suddenly, by God's grace, by the sheer fact that you are surrendering everything to put on the mind of Christ, you begin to recognise who you are. Then you begin to see that you are not just your body, you are not your breath, you are not what you possess, you are not what you own, you are not your relationships, you are not your ailments, you are not your addiction. You are a very unique and blessed person. This is a recognition of your original identity – that we were created in Jesus, beautiful. The sin of Adam gave us a wrong identity and we started feeling that we were just that particular sin or that particular disability. But Jesus has washed that away and given us a true sense of being in him, whole and complete.

So once you reach that stage of consciousness of Christ, you still have your disabilities, you still have your limitations. The difference is your limitation, and particularly your addiction, does not have you; you have your addiction. That is to live an authentic life. Then you can face the world without any shame and guilt. It is so interesting that when people were in denial about their alcoholism, they were ashamed to say that they were alcoholics. But when they get healed by this method of truly acknowledging "my authentic self", they stand up and say to the whole world: "I am an alcoholic" even though they have made the agreement not to touch the first drink, and they are not at all in contact with alcohol. The time when they are sober, they acknowledge to the whole world that "I am an

alcoholic". What they mean to say is: "I have the disease of alcoholism."

There is a beautiful saying that, when you really tell yourself the truth, you can stand fearlessly before the world. I can stand before the world and face the world with courage and with a beautiful awareness that "I am precious, I am not a junky, I am precious; God has made me very special, and in Jesus I recognise who I am."

And therefore to feel that identity more and more, and to distance yourself from the false identity of just being a very limited and sinful human being, use this beautiful methodology that John Main has given us of coming to know your true self. It is the most simple way of journeying into an authentic being, a being created in Christ, where we find the consciousness of the spirit of Jesus in which we are baptised, in which we have died and risen back to life, and in which we celebrate once again, not the original sin and the effects of original sin, but rather the original blessing.

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Poverty

In the Sermon on the Mount, the very first Beatitude is: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for the kingdom of heaven is theirs."

So poverty, humility, becoming aware of our nothingness, is so essential to have an authentic experience of God. This is indeed a paradox. It is only when you acknowledge your own state of nothingness that God gives you the tremendous gift not to be powerful but to be empowered. When St Paul pleads with God to have his weakness removed – the thorn in his flesh – when he asks that, the response from God is not that he would be rid of that ailment, that embarrassment, that one little thing that was keeping him in consciousness of his powerlessness. Rather, the beautiful principle of spirituality was announced to St Paul, that virtue is made strong in weakness.

When we use the words of the Magnificat, we say with gratitude: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour." And then we go on to state the fundamental truth about our life, and that is "because he has looked upon his servant's nothingness". *Nothingness*.

This nothingness has been explored by many an ancient religion. There is a teaching that is centred around what is known as *sunyata*. *Sunya* in Sanskrit is a zero. We often have a very humorous way of saying that if you want to make yourself into a hero you should first begin by recognising that you are a zero, that you are *nothing* before the eyes of God. Only when you recognise your nothingness, then, as the song says, "the Almighty has done great things for me". And after acknowledging that he has looked on his servant's nothingness, yet "all generations will call me blessed". So it is again a paradox that the more I fully admit my nothingness, God raises me up and God makes me see the tremendous richness and the

tremendous giftedness that I have within me.

This paradox has much to do with our spiritual maturity. If we become more and more self-centred, we become more immature. Because all self-centredness is like the little child, who is so fascinated by the toys that it has received and totally absorbed in the gift but is not at all conscious of the giver. We are no different from that child. We are so proud of our so-called riches, our possessions, our wealth, whatever successes and our achievements; we are so lost in the high that these gifts give us, that we forget the very source and origin of them. This principle of completely acknowledging one's nothingness is the most reality-oriented principle of spirituality.

How does one drop everything? Learn in prayer that we don't focus our preoccupation and our mind on what we have to *do* and what we have to *have*. We always get it wrong in life. We start first collecting things. We keep on having, having, having things. We think that when we have these things, then we will truly be powerful. But the opposite happens. The more you run after it, the more things elude you. Then we say we have to *do* something about it. And so we are stressing ourselves by doing and doing, a whole life of just running, one after the other activity preoccupying our mind.

This is a wrong priority. The only thing that happens well is when we reverse this value system. Don't start by having and doing but rather by *being*. Recognise first who you are. Once you recognise who you are, then the quality of your doing and the quality of your having will follow from your being. That is a great teaching that when you recognise your true worth, then whatever is appropriate to that will happen. Therefore, the punch line of poverty is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all other things shall be added unto us." To seek that kingdom, to zero in to that sense of personal nothingness, use this beautiful method that John Main has given us.

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Integrated Personalities

In the search for well-being and health, medical science today is more and more discovering that you cannot treat a person unidimensionally. The old style of dealing with ailments was to just look at the symptoms and then give a remedy. But today that is counter-productive because, when you treat one dimension of the human being without being aware of the other dimensions, you end up complicating the health and well-being of the person.

Jesus was the most integrated person. You could see that he could spend long hours in prayer. He could tirelessly devote his whole being. And it is impossible to have gone through the kind of passion, death, suffering on the cross, it is impossible to have gone through that, maintaining an inner equilibrium of being and able to say words of blessing till the end. This is the most perfect human being that we have ever seen in the history of humankind.

That is why when we want to seek holiness, we must look at the different dimensions of integrating all our variety of gifts together. In medical science, we know that if one system of the body is not talking to the other systems, then we fall sick. But when all the systems communicate with each other, then we get what is known as a state of homeostasis, which is a state of equilibrium.

Let us look at the five dimensions that challenge us every day:

- the dimension of our own self;
- the dimension of our relationship with others;
- the dimension of our attitude towards life;
- the dimension of our disposition towards the world in which we live;
- and ultimately the dimension of our attitude towards God.

When we look at all these five areas of our life we begin, first and

foremost, with the question: How integrated are we with ourselves? How much are we truthfully acknowledging the reality of ourselves? Once we accept that, then we are able to relate to everybody and everything else.

Now to do this, the most essential thing in Christian theology is to recognise deep down who we are, to understand what baptism has done to us. Baptism has changed us radically. Baptism has made an ontological, a metaphysical difference to our being. We are, by virtue of baptism, carrying within ourselves a tremendous reality of the truth that we are with God. We are made one with God in Christ, in that mystery of the death and resurrection. Now once we acknowledge that, once we recognise who we are, then from there we are able to recognise the other. Till then, we live in a world with a population of one. That is our own ego. And we are completely cut off from others. We may talk about love. We may talk about relationships but we have not really encountered the other person, because we ourselves are living in a state of alienation from God.

This important realisation is the purpose of contemplative prayer. Once you get into that state, the recognition of others, the understanding of life, the understanding of the world in which I am placed, and above all the understanding of God, is transformed.

The question is how do we get there. The only way to recognise that we are made whole in Christ is to allow our minds and hearts to be focused on the reality within us. To bring ourselves into that reality, we have to use a pathway that will shut off all kinds of thinking and rationalising and only make us experience that God in his Son has made us whole. It is only in Christ that we can make all our dimensions talk to one another, make all our different faculties understand their purpose, understand what they have to contribute to our well-being. But if we are alienated from that, then we are divided, we are totally at a loss. And we never understand ourselves, we never understand others, we don't understand the meaning of life, we don't understand what is the sense of the world in which we live. Above all, we may profess a faith and call ourselves Christians, but it is only a name and not really an experience.

The only way a human being can live as an integrated personality is when he discovers that he is in Christ Jesus. Let's sit in meditation to bring that deep awakening within us, the Christ consciousness, the only consciousness that gives meaning to our life.

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Forgiveness

There was a young girl who was suffering from an acute pain in her stomach. After having done all medical check-ups from x-ray to scanning, MRI, and more, it still would not disappear. She went to several charismatic healing programmes, but she was not getting that pain off her. So she came to me and asked me to pray over her, and I said, "Would you mind if we could talk about it?" The first thing I asked her was, "Are you hurt about something?" And she said, "Yes." I said, "Have you shared this with someone?" And she said, "No, it is very, very personal. It's too embarrassing to share this." I said, "Well, if you are not going to tell me that, this praying over you may not really work. God works through nature, and we have to have a combination of science and faith. So if you are ready to open up on what has been hurting you, maybe the prayer will be effective." And she broke down and cried bitterly. After a good outburst of tears, I asked her, "Now you can tell me what the real story is."

She said, "Well, it is my uncle. He raped me, and now he seems to be a very prominent churchman". So I sat her down and I said, "Look at this uncle of yours; let us take a good look at the mindset of a rapist. And I said, "Tell me something about it." Then she said, "He was very upset in his marriage, and his wife committed suicide. So he was a very disturbed man, and one of those days he found me all alone, and that is what happened." So I said, "Do you begin to see that a rapist comes from a mindset of a completely confused human being, a completely hurt human being?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Where is he now?" And she said, "As I told you he is a very prominent person in the church. He does all kinds of church work because he went for a charismatic retreat and he has come back from there and committed his life in a very special way." I said, "See, he has got off his act but you are still carrying that hurt, because

you are not able to forgive him. Now that you understand where he comes from, can you let go of that pain?"

It was difficult. But slowly in meditation this pain, this distancing from that trauma, did take place, and this person is a happy mother of two children.

The story of this girl reveals to us the secret of not only health, not just physical well-being but *total* well-being. When we come before God, if we are carrying some poison, then we cannot expect to get nourished by God's grace. We have to get rid of this poison. This poison is very often because of the hurt that comes into our life and we cannot just get rid of it. We find it extremely difficult. We have that famous saying: "I can forgive but I cannot forget." The truth is that if you cannot forget, it percolates into your cellular consciousness.

To do it is extremely painful and difficult. It cannot easily be done by the best of counselling, but it can be done by putting on the mind and heart of Jesus. When you come into the consciousness of Jesus, you are able to say the very same words that he uttered from the cross: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing." The story of the girl brought her, through meditation, to be able to say: "Father, forgive him, for he really did not know what he was doing." So understanding of the human condition needs that kind of broad perspective; and that is possible only with the heart of Jesus.

When we practise this form of meditation, we are able to put on that mind of Christ. We, who are baptised in his death and resurrection, begin to have the same mind and heart. And then we live with the freedom that keeps us fully open to God's people.

The way to do that is difficult but simple. This method of John Main brings us to recognise that God does not need our thinking. God does not need our intelligence. God's wisdom and grace is accessed when we learn to shut that intelligence and our so-called wisdom, and bring ourselves to only *listen* to the heart of Jesus, to be able to embrace everything, even our enemies, in the likeness of the Master.

John Main describes meditation as a perfect stillness of body and spirit. The way to stillness of body is to sit still, to sit relaxed and yet fully awake. The essential rule is to sit with the spine upright. It always helps to push your tailbone deep into the backrest of the chair. Or, if you are sitting on a stool or on a prayer block, on a cushion, bend forward and take the weight of the entire trunk on the front edge of the buttock-bone and raise the trunk up. Maintain that upright chest, and slightly tilt your head downwards in the meditation posture. The way to stillness of spirit is to sound silently, interiorly, in the depth of our being, a word or a mantra, to repeat that word over and over again, and to listen to it as we sound it. John Main recommended the Aramaic word, *maranatha*.
