

**Christian Meditation  
Newsletter for the World Community for Christian  
Meditation in New Zealand**

*Greetings from the National Co-ordinator*

March 2010

Dear Friends

We had a surprise visit at our recent community day from Fr Joe Pereira from Mumbai in India. Fr Joe is the national co-ordinator for the Indian Christian Meditation Community. He has become a national figure in that country for his work with drug and alcohol addicts having received a presidential honour only last year for his work in that field.

I met Joe at the retreat for priests held in Italy nearly two years ago. His spiritual director in his early years of priesthood was Fr Anthony de Mello, who is well known for his spiritual writings. Joe told the story of how early in his priesthood Fr de Mello insisted that as a priest he needed to spend two hours a day in prayer. Joe's response was that he was far too busy to spend that amount of time, whereupon Tony de Mello replied, "On the days that you are busiest you need to do more; you need to spend two and a half hours in prayer."

He also told the story of how in 1971 he was going through a crisis of faith. Eight of his colleagues had left the priestly ministry and two had committed suicide. He went to see Mother Teresa, told her the story and asked if she would pray over him. Her reply was, "I don't pray for priests, but come, we will talk this over." There was a chapel close by and they went in there. After they had been talking for some time she said to him, "Don't leave. Jesus needs you, but it

may take about ten years.” It was exactly ten years later that he set up his first drug and alcohol centre. There are now approximately 50 such centres in India and four in other countries. In this work he combines yoga with meditation. (His visit enabled us to sell copies of his book and DVD available for \$30)

In conversation afterwards Joe spoke of his friendship with Fr Bede Griffiths, who left his monastery in England in the mid-1950s to seek out a new form of monasticism in India. Bede was one of the people who saw early on the significance of Fr John’s work. He could see the Church in Europe folding and was aware the same could happen in India if the practice of contemplative prayer wasn’t encouraged. Unless there is this contemplative prayer giving life to the Church, all you have is an empty shell.

I was very conscious of this last Sunday when reflecting upon the Gospel story of the woman taken in adultery. Some scholars are of the opinion that although this story appears in John’s Gospel, it is very Lucan, and possibly went underground for some time since it could appear to undermine Christian discipline; hence its appearance in John’s Gospel, written at a later date. It is a timely story in light of the accounts of clerical sexual abuse having reared its ugly head again in the Catholic Church, even implicating the Pope.

Much of the harm people do to one another is on an interpersonal level whether it be infidelity in marriage or physical or sexual abuse. Such harm

afflicts us at the very core of our being. The healing of such damage must be at this spiritual level. Psychology goes so far, but it is at the level of spirit that the true healing takes place. In the Church we have the means to be able to do this, but unfortunately our churches have in many respects become prayer factories churning out prayers without ever coming to real prayer.

This is where the work we do is so vital. It is not easy work but it is necessary. As we often say regarding meditation, "Nothing happens, but your life changes." Hence there is the need to keep supporting one another in this special work. May you journeying with Christ through his passion, death and resurrection give you new hope and encouragement in your everyday practice.

In love and prayer

***Peter Murphy***

### **Coming Events**

**Children's Meditation One-day Seminar** led by Ruth Fowler from Australia. Auckland, Mercy Spirituality Centre, 104 The Drive, Epsom. (Bring own lunch) Tuesday May 4. This will be of special interest to school teachers, but is open to all wanting to enter this work. Cost \$40. Contact Margaret Ph 021-058-

2660 Ph 470-5436 or 445-0420  
margaretosully@hotmail.com

**Essential Teaching Workshop** (formerly called  
Meditation School).

Led by Ruth Fowler. St Francis Retreat House, -Friday  
April 30 – Sunday May 2. Residential. This is  
particularly important for group leaders not only in  
aiding them to grow in confidence in sharing with  
others their experience of meditation but also in  
learning about the tradition to which we belong.  
Contact Jane Ph. 09-361-4657  
janelys\_7@hotmail.com

**School Retreat - Wellington**

Home of Compassion, Wellington October 29-  
November 6.

This will be led by Kath Houston from Australia and  
myself. Cost to be determined. The retreat is intensive  
and in silence and will offer personal assistance and  
guidance. The programme includes seven half-hour  
meditation periods a day.

Limited to 20 people and restricted to those who have  
already done an ETW (i.e. meditation school).

**National Retreat.**

First week of February 2011, at Waikato University.

## **Auckland Retreat:**

Seminar-Retreat, St Francis Retreat House,  
Hillsborough, Auckland, led by Fr Michael Misfud

Fri. August 27 – Sun. Aug. 29

Theme: **Toward an Integrative Spirituality.**

Michael is a hermit (not a recluse) living in Victoria, Australia. He is experienced in giving Christian Meditation retreats having given two this year in Victoria. He is a Camaldolese Oblate in the Benedictine tradition since 1992. He is very involved in the East-West meditation foundation, interfaith area.

## **Wellington News**

### **Day of Reflection**

Saturday May 8th 2010

Home of Compassion, Island Bay, 10am - 3 pm  
Please bring a lunch.

Saturday 19th June

Muslim / Christian Meditation afternoon

31 Hobson Crescent, Thorndon, Wellington

Beginning at 2.30pm

A small donation would be appreciated

### **Weekend Retreat**

From Friday evening 30th July until Sunday  
lunchtime 1st August  
at Home of Compassion, Island Bay

The retreat director will be Monsignor John  
Broadbent.

This is a very popular weekend so book early.  
Contact is Sister Annette  
[sr.annette@compassion.org.nz](mailto:sr.annette@compassion.org.nz)

## Auckland News

### Community day 20<sup>th</sup> March 2010

#### John Cassian lives

MEDITATION mentor John Cassian (CE360-??) returned to earthly life for 33 Auckland WCCM members meeting March 20 at Tyburn Convent, Bombay.

Guided by Michael Dougherty we considered Cassian's profound influence on meditators worldwide, coming to us in the 20th century through WCCM founder John Main

Cassian took to the North African desert -- as did many thousands of early Christians -- seeking wisdom and guidance from the desert fathers/mothers.

#### Why the Desert?

The early church, given Emperor Constantine's approval and blessing, had gone flabby, worldly.

Cassian and others went seeking the essentials: prayer and the Kingdom of God. These they found in stillness, silence and simplicity.

We heard also from Indian priest and leader Fr Joe Pereira, founder and leader of Krippa Foundation,

India's largest non-governmental organisation working to help drug addicts and HIV/AIDS sufferers.

Joe, from Maharashtra state, says that reliable estimates suggest the Indian church is growing fast. Christian numbers will increase from their present 2.5 million (out of 1.1 billion populace) to 15 million by 2020.

He is expert in yoga and has published a book/DVD package "Yoga for the Practice of Christian Meditation", available via Peter Murphy; cost \$30.

WCCM Auckland's next Community Day will be on June 19, at St Benedicts, Newton.

### **John Main**

The children who come to our monastery to meditate are a marvellous witness of the naturalness of this way of meditation. They are a real example for the adults who come. They show the essentially childlike quality that we need to tread the way.

*"Unless you become like little children you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mark 10:15)*

It is a simple way. Its simplicity is the great challenge to us because we are trained to seek the truth.....only in complexity. It is a simple but not necessarily easy way. It requires trust and perhaps indeed a certain recklessness to begin and it requires courage to

persevere, but all we have to lose are our own limitations.

From “Community of Love”

### **Smile Corner**

The local priest and the village policeman did not get and had been sparring for years in a little Irish village.

One morning the priest looked out his window and saw a dead donkey on his front lawn. He phoned the policeman and told him what he had seen.

The policeman replied and said: “ Ah sure Father, aren’t the dead your responsibility?”

To which the priest replied: “ That’s true, but before we can do anything we are obliged to contact the next of kin!”

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