



SMILE TIME

A writer dies and Saint Peter offers him the choice of Heaven or Hell. To see what he has in store Saint Peter takes him to Hell where rows of writers are chained to their desks being whipped by demons in a steaming dungeon.

However when they get to Heaven the writer is astonished to see that nothing has changed – rows of writers are chained to their desk in a steaming dungeon being whipped. “Hey!” says the writer, “this is just as bad as Hell!”

“No it's not”, says Saint Peter, “Up here you get published!”

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Dear Friends

In my last letter I mentioned the seminar that I was conducting with Diana Halloran and two teachers from the Hamilton Catholic Diocese on meditation with children. The convention is a major event at which there were over one thousand people.

We had over thirty people at each seminar. It was significant too that we were bringing this into the national arena.

As many of you know Diana had breast cancer which she had been fighting for over a year. She was just so determined to make this convention and my lasting image of her is speaking to the teachers gathered of the desire for children to come to a deep relationship with Christ. She said this with such deep love and conviction. This has been a feature of Diana's journey to meditation, the longing that others may share in the joy that meditation can bring. Children are the ones most receptive to this.

It was during this week that she began to take morphine to control the pain. She managed to hold out for the retreat led by Dr Eric Ryan but after that her condition began to deteriorate quite significantly. I gave her Viaticum, which is communion for the dying, two days before her death and she was just radiant. From then on she went down very quickly and died very peacefully immediately after the family had finished praying the rosary. There is no doubt that she is in a place of unspeakable joy. In the meantime please hold Tony and the family in your hearts.

Diana's journey to meditation is a good one to reflect upon for in it there are touchstones which are universal. The discovery of meditation is often described in terms of finding the pearl of great price. Accompanying this parable is another one, finding the treasure hidden in the field. They are similar but there is a subtle difference. The pearl is what you search for, the treasure is what you come across without knowing but when you find it, it becomes everything.

The meditation group here at Massey had been meeting in the parish for four years when Diana became aware of it. Mark Clay and Frank Fagan

(both of whom have died in the last few months) were alone. Diana, although very active in the parish, did not even know of the group's existence. One of the priests in the parish suggested she might like to join the group and immediately she found she had come home.

After the initial honeymoon she began to doubt: “How come this is prayer? Nothing is happening.” Sound familiar? Mark and Frank gently coaxed her along until she overcame this hurdle and the practice became an integral part of her life. She wrote of Frank's loving guidance in the last newsletter.

The full flowering came when she accompanied me in teaching meditation to children at our parish kindergarten and school five years ago. Passing on this gift to children became her mission. She had found her calling. It was work that she loved and the children loved her.

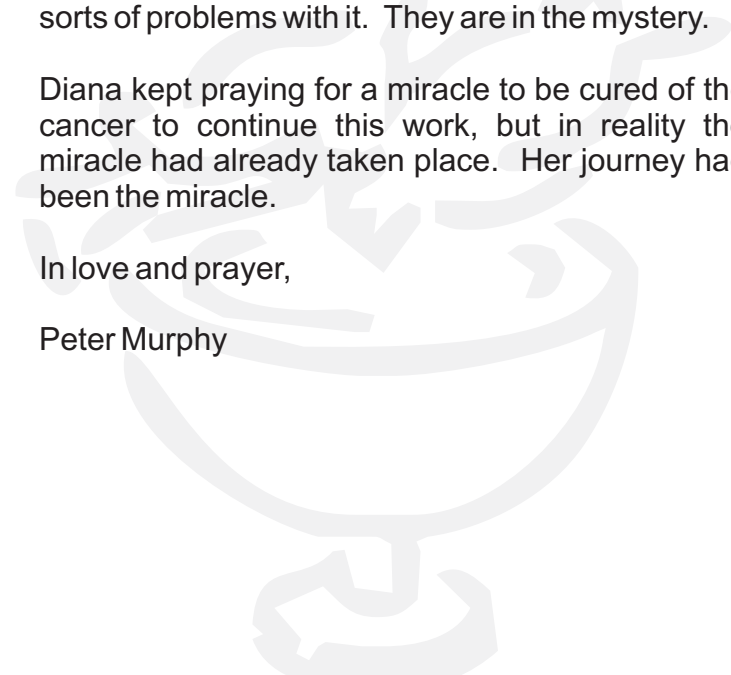
As we know children are naturally contemplative. They can sit and watch a butterfly, an insect, a flower in perfect contentment. But that gift is taken from them by giving them toys and filling their minds with all sorts of junk.

As Fr Laurence says not only do you have to be like a child to meditate, but only children can really meditate. They are there. It is we who have all sorts of problems with it. They are in the mystery.

Diana kept praying for a miracle to be cured of the cancer to continue this work, but in reality the miracle had already taken place. Her journey had been the miracle.

In love and prayer,

Peter Murphy



AUCKLAND NEWS

FROM PETER MURPHY

As mentioned above Mark Clay died early last month. With Frank Fagan he founded the meditation group in the Catholic parish of Massey. Mark was also a member of the Third Order of Carmel. May he rest in peace.

Dr Eric Ryan's retreat, "Who is this Christ whom we ask to come?" was a very special experience. When you hear Eric speak you recognise you are in the presence of a great mind. His passion in his later years had been to break his learning down in a way that ordinary people can understand. Like the teaching on meditation, the message is very simple and one requires the simplicity of a child to be able to enter into the mystery. When all is said and done we know nothing. The path to know Christ is to come to know ourselves and our growth in self-knowledge is what the journey of meditation is all about.

Community Day
The next Community Day is in November 21. The presenter will be Fr Kevin Waldie, a lecturer in New Testament Studies at Good Shepherd College. He will be speaking on Prayer in St Paul.

Friends
Please remember to keep supporting the work of Fr Laurence especially in developing countries. Payments can be made into the NZCCM account with Kiwibank, A/c No. 38-9003-0812910-02

WELLINGTON NEWS

FROM HUGH MCLAUGHLIN

Saturday 10 October

Day of Recollection on at Home of Compassion, Island Bay from 10am - 3pm

Note the original date of October 24 had to be re-scheduled and this is the new date.

Sunday 8th November

Afternoon meditation period

1.30pm - 4pm Home of Compassion Island Bay.

Saturday 5th December

Joint Muslim / Christian Meditation afternoon at Wellington Study Group
31 Hobson Crescent
Thorndon

2pm for 2.30pm start Afternoon tea provided
Any enquiries contact
Caroline Williams at (04) 3885329

SOUTH ISLAND NEWS

FROM JANE HOLE

CHRISTCHURCH:

Group leaders met recently to discuss our programme of community events for 2010. We decided on two community days and a weekend silent retreat, to be held in a variety of places to reflect the ecumenical nature of our community. A list of 5 possible speakers was drawn up, and we discussed our video resources. It was decided to post flyers publicising these events to the parish offices of all the major Christian denominations in Christchurch.

On 11 September, Sally and Jane from the Cathedral Meditation group, and Danny the leader of the Greymouth meditation group met at Arthur's Pass for shared meditation in the chapel there and lunch and talk together. It was a warm and rewarding encounter in a startlingly beautiful place, and we plan to meet next year in the same way and encourage other Christchurch meditators to join us.

The book 'Under the Huang Jiao Tree: Two Journeys in China' (written by Jane under the name Jane Carswell, and published by Transit Lounge Publishing, Melbourne) will be released into New Zealand bookshops during October. The book (travel/memoir/spirituality) tells of the outer journey of a year spent teaching English in China, and also the significant inner journey which proved to be the last stage of her journey towards Christian Meditation and becoming a WCCM Benedictine Oblate. Details of the book can

be found on Jane's website: www.janecarswell.net. There will be an online buying facility for the book (details of this to be finalised soon) for those who can't get the book through a local bookshop. If you email Jane during October, she'll be able to give you these details, which will be on her website as soon as they are available.

NELSON

Meditators in the Nelson region held their annual Retreat Day on 12 September, a whole day of stillness in the beauty of Marahou (Abel Tasman National Park). We'll hope for a report on this in the next newsletter. The Nelson groups hope to have another get-together before the end of the year.

THE NZCCM WEBSITE

The New Zealand Christian Meditation community now has a website. It went live in August and has all the key elements found on other WCCM websites around the world: How to Meditate, Meeting Times, Retreats & Seminars and Links & Resources are four of the ten pages on the site.

It also has a mailing list page. Add your name here to receive updates on any new initiatives happening around the country. So far only 24 people have done so and it would be nice to see more names there. We promise not to inundate you with emails.

While it took a few weeks to create the site it was an interesting exercise with updating information on the more than 50 groups around the country being the most challenging. Some new groups emerged during this exercise and some groups had their details updated. If you are part of a group please check this page to make sure your details are current, and if not, let me know via the 'Contact Us' page.

Another thing that became apparent during this exercise was the lack of groups in certain areas of the country. Hamilton and parts of the Waikato, parts of the Bay of

Plenty, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Palmerston North, Wairarapa, the Far North and a great many suburbs in Auckland do not have meditation groups. If you know anyone who is interested in helping to get a group going in these, or any other areas, please send a message via the website and the National Council will do its best to help.

The other thing you can do is to make sure that everyone in your weekly group knows about the website and has the address which is www.christianmeditationnz.org.nz
<<http://www.christianmeditationnz.org.nz/>>

Vincent Maire
Webmaster

LIBRARY NEWS

After many years helping us with the running of our Library, Bertha Casas has asked that she be relieved. Her circumstances do not now allow her to give the task the attention she has given it in the past. So Vince Maire has kindly taken on the responsibility. Thank you both very much for looking after this work for us.

JOHN MAIN

Meditation is our way of a total entry into the present moment. All of us have a tendency to live in the past or perhaps to live in the future. Do not live either in the past or in the future. Learn to be present wholly to the present moment, to the now, to the now that we can describe as the eternal now of God.

Unhappiness comes largely from our refusal to be in the now. Even suffering has its meaning and unless we accept it fully in its moment, then we had the experience but missed the meaning.

So what we have to learn to do in our meditation is to listen to the mantra with total attention. It is a narrowing down of our consciousness to a single point: the pointedness of the single sound of the mantra. That is what we have to learn to do: to say the mantra ma-ra-na-tha, to listen to it with a total and deepening attention – ma-ra-na-tha- and to do so in a growing simplicity and humility.

from "In the Beginning"