

# meditation news



Newsletter of The World Community for  
Christian Meditation in the UK

Autumn 2020

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## 'Mine!' – A Lockdown Message



'Mine!' A visceral bellow punctures the evening quiet. It is followed by a series of shrill squawks. Not the sound of children fighting over their toys but my neighbours playing a game of tennis doubles. 'Mine', in this context, a clear-cut call required for effective partnership, the setting of bounds, 'this is my shot to take, not yours!'

Our world, a world that is necessarily governed by laws and regulations that set bounds on our behaviour, has become infused with new boundaries crucial for limiting the spread of COVID-19. How do we view these new bounds, for example, those 2 metres apart yellow safe-distancing lines outside the supermarket? 'This is my space, keep out! You might be carrying germs that could pass to me and kill me?' Or 'This is shared space. Out of respect for a common destiny and for one another, we'll keep our distance'. One approach is exclusive, closed, fear driven; the other, inclusive, open and inspired by

hope. In all likelihood, both approaches play out in our minds!

A Shabbat<sup>1</sup> message from Rabbi Yoel Glick, a Rabbi who teaches the contemplative way of silence and stillness within his Judaic tradition, is all about openness. Here are some of the points he makes:

*One of the essential qualities in the spiritual life is openness.*

*Spiritual openness begins with an open mind. An open mind does not imply a lack of convictions and standards; rather, it is the willingness to examine the standard that we are currently using in the light of reason and the higher dictates of our heart.*

*An open state of mind requires humility and courage — humility*

*continued on page 2*

## Next issue

**meditation news** is published quarterly by The World Community for Christian Meditation in the UK. Contributions are warmly welcomed.

Please send articles for the **Winter 2020** issue to: [uknewsletter@wccm.uk](mailto:uknewsletter@wccm.uk) to reach us by **1 October**.

Space is limited and if the item is more than 700 words please contact us in advance.

Please send events to: [events@wccm.uk](mailto:events@wccm.uk)

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**WHY? IS THIS ISSUE IN BLACK AND WHITE? SEE PAGE 3 FOR THE ANSWER! VIEW IN COLOUR AT [WCCM.UK/NEWSLETTERS](http://WCCM.UK/NEWSLETTERS)**

## Lockdown Email – ‘Mine!’ continued from page 1

to let go of our own certainty, and courage to address new possibilities.

Openness also means an open heart. An open heart expresses itself in a willingness to uphold others in their suffering. It awakens within us a desire to help wherever we see another in pain. It empowers us to love our enemies, even as we must fight them with all of our might.

Openness is essentially a liberating force; it frees us from the bonds of intolerance and opposition to others. It also frees us from the idea of ‘I and mine’, and focuses our consciousness on the larger picture, where there are many other people with needs that are greater than our own.

The energies of openness, love and freedom shatter the physical consciousness that is based on separation and limitation. They enable us to work in the consciousness of Unity and Oneness.

One of the fruits of Christian Meditation, of our disciplined and regular contemplative practice, twice daily spending time in stillness and silence, is the experience of an expanding mind and heart, an increasing openness and inclusivity. In this way of prayer, learning as we are to leave self behind<sup>2</sup> (Mark 8:34), we gradually notice the bounds between ‘me and mine’ and ‘you and yours’, thinning. And this thinning of boundaries is not intrusive. I am not pushing my way into your personal space. I continue to hold you in highest regard,

both respecting your personal space and yet becoming part of that personal space through love. This is a wonderful gift.

The beauty of our contemplative practice is its commonality with other traditions. It is not ‘mine’ as opposed to ‘yours’, but ‘ours’. This is Rabbi Yoel again:

*Through inner contemplation we can lift ourselves out of the confines of linear thinking and touch the powerful immediacy of the direct experience of the Higher Mind. Here we experience truth instead of learning it; we live an idea instead of mentally analyzing and then digesting it. It is the difference between finding our own solution and being a perfect instrument of God. In the first case, we use the powers of the lower mind to sort out the solution to a problem; in the other, we put ourselves aside and rest in stillness and silence — waiting to receive the ‘Word’ of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>*

And here’s another beautiful thing. Our shared contemplative practice of stillness and silence gradually morphs beyond the bounds of those two half hour daily sessions and becomes a way of openness of being... lived out even whilst waiting within those yellow supermarket safe-distancing bounds and the white lines of the tennis court!

Alex Holmes

*a message sent to the meditation community in Scotland*

<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Yoel’s teaching on Openness <https://medium.com/daat-elyon/spiritual-openness-8b51bfc17236>

<sup>2</sup> ‘Leaving Self Behind’ talk by Fr. John Main, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kMfNDnc6oM>

## Sharing the Gift of Meditation – Grants

The World Community for Christian Meditation exists simply to share the gift of meditation, a gift it received through the teaching of John Main.

If you have an idea about how you would like to help share this gift and need a grant to help you, please follow the link from the ‘Grants’ banner on the homepage or contact the UK Office for more information about how to apply.



## meditation news

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**Do you have any questions about your meditation practice, or your spiritual life in general?**

**Meditation Companions are experienced WCCM meditators who are there for you to talk to, in confidence.**

**Contact Bob Morley.**

**[rgm1@live.co.uk](mailto:rgm1@live.co.uk)**

**tel. 07704 419526.**



## From the Chair of the Trustees

What an unimaginable year this has been. Every one of us has been affected by COVID-19 and I write this conscious that it has been a time of many challenges, of loss and sadness, as well as financial hardship, for many. As a Christian community we are here to offer help and support to each other and to the wider world in whatever way we can. You and I have been drawn together as a community by our interest in the spiritual life and our practice of meditation as taught by Fr John Main - a wonderful gift which at some point someone shared with us – and which we wish to continue to share with others.

Whilst the wonderful blessings of individual and online meditation have continued, as is evident from feedback from meditators, we have been unable to hold events and physical group meditation. Consequently, and like all charities who are dependent upon the kindness of their benefactors and the income from events and donations, WCCM in the UK has also been affected and as a consequence our costs will outstrip income this year. This is challenging for us in the UK; it also means that we will probably be unable to contribute to the international work of the community.

The first action we have taken is to review our cost base and seek to cut back where we can and a significant action has been the reversion to a black and white newsletter. In addition, and where possible, we have deferred events until 2021, thus saving event cancellation fees. We also need to think about the income side, which is where you may like to help. The Appeal letter will, as usual, be issued in September but you can also donate on our website [wccm.uk/donate](http://wccm.uk/donate) for a one off or regular donation, or send a cheque, made out to CMT(UK), into the office – the address is on page 2 of this newsletter. Thank you for considering this.

The other piece of news I would like to convey, and nothing to do with COVID-19, is that the Trustees have made the necessary decision to incorporate as a new legal entity. This means that we will be known as WCCM in the UK

legally and we will eventually dissolve the charity CMT(UK). Whilst this will have very little impact on most of you, we will gradually see a morphing into a new expression of ourselves, including a new website and bank account. So for those of us who donate by standing order, we will eventually receive a request to change this to the WCCM in the UK bank account. There is nothing for any of us to do at the moment but watch this space!

I finish this short piece by wishing you all health and well being during the coming months and pray that the spiritual benefits of this enforced time of isolation, separation and silence will continue to become apparent in all of us.

*With much love,  
Roz Stockley, Chair of the Trustees.*



## Donations

If you would like to make a donation to support the work of WCCM in the UK, you can donate online at:

**[wccm.uk/donate](http://wccm.uk/donate)**

You can also send cheques to:

**The Christian Meditation Trust (UK)  
Lido Centre, 63 Mattock Lane, London, W13 9LA**

Please include your name, address and email and make cheques payable to: CMT(UK)

### Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer you can Gift Aid your donation, which increases the amount we receive at no extra cost to you. Information about Gift Aid and a declaration form is available online or from the office.



## Twelve Talks for Prisoners

At the National Council in 2018 it was agreed that there was a growing need to produce some short introductory talks specifically for prisoners.

Feedback from those leading meditation in our prisons was that the CDs distributed to groups in the UK, although helpful, were often too long and the language was not always accessible. So, one of the action points from the Council was to produce 12 talks specifically for prisoners. I am happy to report that twelve talks have now been written and recorded on CD.

It is particularly challenging in our prisons at the present time. Due to COVID-19, prisoners are spending 23 hours a day in their cells. For the past 8 years, weekly Christian Meditation sessions have taken place in one of the largest men's prisons in London. But due to COVID-19 these have

had to cease temporarily. However, the Chaplaincy has agreed to use these talks in an imaginative way. For the next twelve weeks, Radio Wanno (the prison radio station) will, immediately after every Sunday morning service, broadcast one of the talks, followed by a description of how to meditate. This will mean that Meditation will reach far more prisoners than previously. We are looking forward to getting feedback from the staff and inmates.

We hope that in time, the talks will be distributed more widely and used to support and encourage inmates of prisons across the UK and beyond.

The talks were written by Geoff Waterhouse & Mick Bow and one by a prisoner. Mick Bow read and recorded them to CD.

If you would like to learn more about these talks please email [ukprisons@wccm.org](mailto:ukprisons@wccm.org)

## Sharing the Gift of Meditation with People on the Margins

Earlier this year, before lockdown, I facilitated a 2-day Wellbeing Retreat for 25 Asylum Seekers from the Methodist Asylum Project (MAP) in Middlesbrough and Redcar, at the beautiful Benedictine Monastery at Ampleforth in North Yorkshire, UK.

The days away proved to be a profoundly healing and beneficial time for all involved, and very humbling for me to be able to introduce the gifts of our meditation practice to such lovely but deeply wounded people. The time was not without its challenges however as many of the group were very hesitant at first to go into silence and apprehensive to begin to negotiate what traumatic memories might be lurking in their minds. Also, the mix between Christian and Muslim in the group made the use of the mantra Maranatha slightly problematic- an issue we overcame when some used Maranatha and others preferred the phrase, 'I am safe, relax, all is well'.

We started proceedings with a small tour of the Abbey and Visitor Centre to help settle us in and a hearty lunch. Lunch provided much needed nourishment as most of the group wouldn't have had much of a breakfast at home, if anything at all. Some of the group were struggling to feel



relaxed enough in themselves to commence the inner work. Some even asked in our introductions if they could leave their eyes open when meditating. So, after lunch we had fun playing table tennis and pool before

doing some Tai Chi to help relax and soften the body mostly locked in tensions and tightness through years of struggle and hardships.

We had more group sharing in a circle which helped to bond us as a group. We did a session of 'energy psychology' or Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) which further served to build the necessary trust and confidence to begin the process of dropping our defences just a little bit, so we could, tentatively enter the healing waters to be found in the silence and stillness of meditation.

What happened in the first meditation period was so deeply beautiful it brought tears to my eyes.

One of the young men from Iran who had been particularly anxious before the trip because he had an important meeting coming up with a government official that was greatly troubling him. He was very fearful to the point that his body was shaking, but, he listened to my words and stayed with the process until he felt able to let go and started to relax for the first time in years:

'I cannot believe the meditation session; you have no idea what it is like inside my mind. I get no quiet, ever, and nothing stops it. My mind is so bad; I am dying in there. Then we meditated and it was, ohhh, I can feel the peace coming into my body. I had no idea this could ever happen for me. I had such problem because I cannot relax. In the

meditation session, I could feel energy around me. All of a sudden my hand jumped similar to a shock and my body was coming from tight, tight, tight, to loose'.



The atmosphere in the room was just so peaceful and holy; a Sacred Space wherein the Spirit could begin the process of healing and harmony so needed by the bodies, hearts and minds of the group.

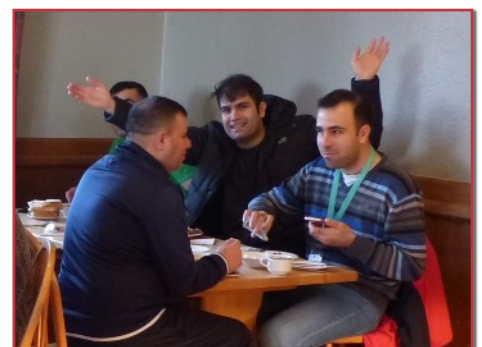
Next came more food, games, music and laughter in between our other healing sessions and an excellent session on the Benedictine 12 Steps of Humility from Fr Christopher who commented that he had never experienced such honest and direct questions!

Then the bus arrived to take us home to a much starker reality – to Middlesbrough – but now, people were empowered with the gentle healing art of meditation, leading to all the nurturing that ensues for those that embrace the discipline of the regular practice. Indeed, the process continued as a weekly group was started on our return home.

But now, as I write during lockdown, the meditation group has temporarily stopped and I am busy getting this work online so that the momentum keeps building and people feel supported until we can resume the face to face healing work.

It is a privilege to be part of this sacred work of taking meditation to where it is most needed, amongst people living on the very margins of society. We are now being funded to develop a working partnership between Meditatio and MAP which I'm confident will bear much fruit as we move forward.

The ongoing work with the Asylum Seekers has been made possible through the help of the Eileen Cox Legacy Fund which is helping Meditatio to partner with the Methodist Asylum Project MAP in Middlesbrough and Redcar.



*Terry Doyle  
Special Interest Coordinator for the Marginalised*

There is an interview with Terry on the Contemplative Path website under Themes > Society. Go to [wccm.uk/conpath](http://wccm.uk/conpath)

## The Experience of Gift

My resistance to a Holy Land pilgrimage was decades old. I had always had a deep sense of Gospel place and I dreaded having that eroded by crowds, unedifying inter-church politics and lengthy processional vocal prayer; and perhaps finding a Jesus theme park in the Holy Places, some of whose authenticity was very suspect. And, of course, there were the politics. But the Holy Spirit can take you off-guard and lead you on unexpected paths.

*Contemplative Pilgrimage* with Father Laurence caught my eye on the WCCM website and, this year I booked. It was the opposite of my prejudices. Each holy place was further hallowed by silent meditation, and the churches by contemplative Eucharist. All was interspersed by the reading of the relevant Gospel passage and reflections by Father Laurence. The disparate international group cohered, and there was a feeling of mutual care and support, as well as love and plenty of laughter. My fellow meditator from the Colchester group, Peggy, was a happy roommate and companion.

The prayer at the Sea of Galilee, in the Garden of Olives and along the Via Dolorosa was laden with gifts and stays with me still. But what fills me with particular gratitude is how this carried over into the lockdown. Very soon, the 'Holy Land Pilgrims' joined by Oblates began a weekly morning prayer and meditation followed by a talk from Father Laurence in his Bonnevaux sitting room, an inspiring way to start a Monday morning, with ever growing numbers participating. Then began the excellent

talks and retreats following *A Contemplative Path through the Crisis*, Sunday Mass from Bonnevaux, with Fr Laurence and the community in Lockdown, and other opportunities to join meditations there and with Meditatio. The Holy Spirit was evidently on the board of Zoom as well as in humbler digital communication, such as email and Facetime.

As someone well into the 'elderly' bracket and self-isolating, I felt continually held in prayer by a deep experience of community; the joy of the natural world, from early spring through until summer gave a sense of solidarity with nature, sharpened attentiveness and perception. Walking is also pilgrimage. *Deo Gratias.*



Fr Laurence by the Sea of Galilee

Valerie Quinlivan

## Meditating During Lockdown - Online Groups

During 'lockdown' Zoom seemed to be a word on everyone's lips. Whilst physically we may have been restricted we certainly haven't been spiritually. There is a wealth of spiritual nourishment available online.

Yoga sessions, retreats, meditation sessions, inspiring talks, Sunday Mass all available via the new WCCM website *A Contemplative Path Through the Crisis* ([wccm.uk/conpath](http://wccm.uk/conpath) will take you there).

Here in the UK we have added quiet days, retreats, informal Coffee and Chat sessions and Introduction to Meditation for newcomers, to our twice daily meditation sessions.

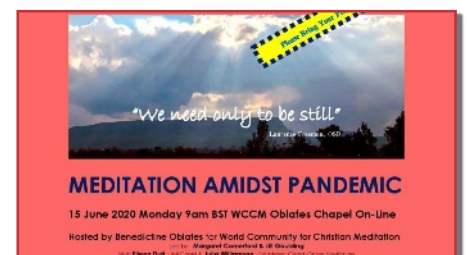
The Meditation Amidst Pandemic arranged initially by the Philippine Community was so popular that it had to

be screened live on YouTube.

Our daily meditation sessions have seen a large increase in

numbers, many expressing how much the daily discipline has been helped by joining our groups. Some thoughts by our meditators are shared on the following page.

You can find an online group at the *WCCM Online Meditation Groups* website using this link: [wccm.uk/online](http://wccm.uk/online)



Julia Williamson

Special Interest Coordinator Online Meditation

### Meditating Online with Friends and a Cat

*The morning maranatha bids me come.  
I settle into silence. Nothing heard  
Except the leader's gong, the laptop's hum,  
And from afar the rumour of a bird.  
Upright, alert but gently in the room  
We sound the word in silence. Rhythmic, slow.  
The universe enfolds us in her womb*



*And we enfold the One who made it so.  
But then the lightest leap, the softest purr,  
A little kitten joins me on the chair  
My arm, robotic, strokes his silken fur  
Until he settles down into the prayer,  
And all of us breathe, purr, and pray together  
In that eternal moment, now, and ever.*

Aileen B Urquhart

## Meditating During Lockdown - Thoughts About Online Groups

I have been meditating for a few years now. When lockdown happened, I think the sudden loss of my entire routine - work, going to the gym, weekly meditation group etc.etc (many of us probably have a similar story and sense of loss) - meant that I found myself drifting through the days.

I had heard of online groups before but not looked into them further. I can't say enough how valuable they have been - starting each day with meditation and becoming familiar with the faces. It has really made such a difference. I think the groups are really well run, keeping to time and mindful of others commitments. In fact when my routine returns, I have been thinking about how to still attend the online groups!

*Emma*

I haven't participated in online meditation for that long, but so far I have been very happy. It helps me with my daily meditation practice.

*Ma Shantie. Denmark*

Online meditation is a great gift to me, it has transformed my life. I live on my own now but each morning I join with other to meditate and share insights of our spiritual journey; this sets me up for the day. It's a good discipline to have in place.

The group has become a community for me and though I have never met some of the participants I feel I know them and have empathy with them. Since lockdown its even more important for me, a 'shielded' person; its a lifeline truly. As we read in Genesis " it is not good for one to be alone"

*Breda. UK*

I feel that this lockdown has opened a pathway for me. I had previously thought about joining an online meditation group but never got around to doing it. Not being able to physically meet with the two groups I usually attend, prompted me to

pursue the online option. Now suddenly I have the possibility of joining in with groups twice a day, seven days a week!

For many years, I always aimed to meditate on my own at least once a day but times varied from day to day, there was no consistency and often missed one or even both meditations.

Now, I am finding the discipline of fixed daily times very helpful. It gets me out of bed in the morning and gives a rhythm and purpose to my day. Also I have always found it helpful with others and now I have the support of meditating in a group daily and not just twice a week as before .

I recognise many members of the group and feel that I now know them even though we have never actually met. I know I shall want to continue with online meditation if and when lockdown finally comes to an end.

Being able to join in daily meditation is helping me to get through this difficult time. Like many people I am finding this pandemic very worrying and depressing especially as I am usually quite an anxious person. Daily meditation is helping me to come to terms with the situation and to cope with the fear, uncertainty and separation from my family, simply by setting aside the time each day to put all to one side and spend the time just making myself available to be in God's presence.

*Margaret*

When my meditation group shut down about 2 months ago, due to CoVid 19 restrictions, I decided to give Online Meditation a go. I was lucky enough to find a group of meditators who live mainly in England but also in Africa, Sweden, Germany and Australia. So each day at 4.00pm

I log onto Zoom to participate in 30 mins of meditation and another 20-30 minutes of discussion, if time permits.

It is a wonderful meditating with people from all over the world and there's a definite feeling of strength and companionship. Just as I feel stronger when meditating with a group, that's how I feel when meditating online. What's amazing is that my fellow meditators are thousands of kilometres away. Online meditation has become an important part of my day. If I am out I try to get back home for 4 for online meditation. I definitely intend to continue it when things get back to normal and my local group recommences.

Discovering online meditation has, for me, been a definite positive from this CoVid 19 period.

*Anne Dudzinski.  
Adelaide, South Australia*

Lockdown seemed a good opportunity to give online meditation 'a go'! And it doesn't disappoint! It's really good to have a regular time for meditation in the morning and in the evening.

The discipline is good and keeps one faithful to the practice.

A facilitator chooses the readings before and after meditation, when some people leave while others stay to discuss the readings or some aspect of their spiritual journey.

People from all parts of the UK join the group plus others from across the world. It's a mixed group, male, female, young and not so young.

It's a great opportunity to meditate with like-minded people. We share with each other, help each other and strengthen each other on our journey. A bond of friendship develops between us - a true 'community of love'.

If you are reading this piece I would say give online meditation 'a go'. It will not disappoint.

*Anita Finnigan. Dorset*

## The School of Meditation in the UK – Offering Events Online!

It was very disappointing to have to cancel the School of Meditation 7 day silent retreat planned for May but it provided the perfect opportunity to try something completely different - an online retreat. I think it was a surprise to most of us that we were able to share a very rich and fruitful week together. Mark has kindly written a few words about it below.

While it would never be possible to enter the depth of silence that we enjoy at our residential week, the online retreat was much appreciated by all. So, if this is something that might suit your circumstances, please contact me directly and when we get enough interest we can maybe set something up again. Or, if anyone is thinking of offering an online retreat in their region and would like some help, do get in touch.



Greenhouse Centre garden

Meanwhile, the next 7 day silent retreat has been rescheduled and will hopefully be at the Greenhouse Centre, Dorset from 18/25 July 2021.

*Julie Roberts - [julie.ann.roberts@icloud.com](mailto:julie.ann.roberts@icloud.com)  
UK Coordinator- School of Meditation  
WCCM in the UK*

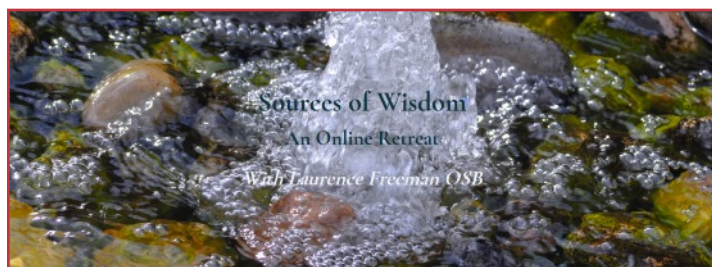
## An online retreat ....

Recently, WCCM in the UK held their first ever online retreat. It took place between Saturday 16th May and finished a week later on Saturday 23rd May. This online retreat was a very different alternative to the 7 day silent residential retreat that was due to take place at the Greenhouse Christian Centre, Poole. This event, like many others, had to be cancelled because of COVID-19. However, the School of Meditation team decided to be adventurous and offer an online retreat instead.

Julie Roberts, the School of Meditation Coordinator in the UK, was our facilitator for the week. There were nine of us, including Julie. I was the only man, though this did not worry me particularly. The format of the week (apart from the two Saturdays) consisted of half an hour's meditation (on Zoom) in the morning, midday, and early evening. Each meditation usually began and ended with a reading and a prayer.

During the morning, we listened to a series of talks by Fr. Laurence entitled 'Sources of Wisdom' which is available on the School of Meditation website (details below). There were six talks in all. However, each talk was divided into two halves – with accompanying questions for us to reflect on. Listening to the talks and reflecting on them, took longer than I expected them to. Others had the same experience. Julie's choice of readings were always thoughtful. She tried to relate them to things that Fr. Laurence had said in his talks. Then, in the evening, we met together on Zoom and reflected on the questions that had been put to us.

We shared our thoughts on various issues that were prompted by the talks. One was about our attitude to ritual. This, of course, opened the floodgates about our various experiences at our respective churches – most of us were Anglicans. Not all of our experiences were



positive. In fact, only one person was full of praise for the church she attended.

Another issue that came up during the week was the difficulty that some people had in trying to introduce meditation to their churches – in particular the difficulty of starting a meditation group.

Another issue was the difference between mindfulness and Christian meditation. One person told us about someone in her church who was very enthusiastic about a mindfulness course in her town. She wanted to introduce the course to her church. The person on our retreat pointed out to her that there was a long tradition of meditation in Christianity, going back centuries. I wonder how often this scenario is being repeated.

The cost of the online retreat seemed ridiculously cheap – with our group discount it was only £20 each as there were no costs. If the concluding emails are anything to go by, overall, everyone was very happy with the retreat. I thought this was a really good experience and probably worth repeating. The format could not be improved on.

*Mark Kirkpatrick*

Sources of Wisdom - An Online Retreat with Laurence Freeman:  
<https://www.theschoolofmeditation.org/all-courses/sources-of-wisdom/>

## The Essential Teaching online...

Due to the pandemic postponement of the March 2020 Essential Teaching Weekend due to be held in Ely, Cambs, I consider myself fortunate to have been able to take part in the alternative, the first ever Zoom-facilitated version of the residential course. Liz Watson and Julie Roberts set the 'experimental' programme to run as seven evening sessions over three weeks. Preferring face-to-face contact for learning, I have to say I was slightly reticent about my ability to fully participate in an online format. However, perhaps equally as concerned about this new way of delivery, Liz and Julie carefully structured and delivered it such that it allayed any concern.

Thankfully, myself and fellow participants, through the wonders of the internet, were visually and audibly connected. We were still able to form those special bonds through shared reflection and contributions. The comfortably consistent pace to each evening's session, started with silent meditation followed by teaching and reflective discourse. This structure kept us focused and the timing spot on. My husband knew that from 7-9pm on these evenings, I'd be tucked in a quiet cosy corner of our home, linked to a lovely group of people from around the country, exploring meditation via our small portable laptop!

The thing that helped to make this 'from a distance' experience particularly engaging for me was the fact that Liz and Julie facilitated in a very relational, personable, way. I don't do so well with pre-recorded talks, unless simply listening for information, so to have their input like this was a real treat.

Despite my initial reservations, I really felt able to take part in the experience, developing my confidence to share more about the gift of Christian meditation.

My husband and I are in the process of building a garden meditation room at home - a space for individuals and groups to explore more about Christian Meditation. Once completed, we will be offering WCCM Introduction courses, practice days, and resources for explorers. This course has very helpfully reinforced my confidence to engage others with meditation, and emphasised the notion of less 'teacher' of meditation, more fellow pilgrim meandering together in our discoveries and understanding.

Offered in this way, the course opens access to people at geographical distance, and for those who, for whatever reason, are unable to take part in a residential weekend. Not to mention benefits such as cost-effectiveness and environmental impact! Residential experiences do have their own special features, yes, but it is great to see this method of delivery as an 'as well as', rather than 'instead of' option.

Thank you, Liz, Julie, and WCCM School of Meditation in the UK, for a very insightful and enjoyable course. And for taking on the challenge to deliver it this way, at this time - no mean feat in creating seamless sessions. I'm so very grateful to have been a 'lockdown guinea-pig' sharing in another 'alone yet together' meditation experience.

*Tina Jefferies, Group Leader, Herefordshire*

## Essential Teaching Weekend The Briery, Ilkley - 2 to 4 October

At the time of writing (July) it is intended that the Essential Teaching Weekend due to be held at the Briery in October will go ahead. The Briery have confirmed that they will be fully compliant with the government requirements for social distancing in hotels and residential establishments, and plan to re open to guests in August.

All the rooms at the the Briery are ensuite rooms. All talks will take place in the large chapel. Meals will be taken with 2 people at a table instead of 5/6.

See <http://www.briery.org.uk/wordpress/conference-facilities/>

No doubt, the Briery will do all they can to keep the retreat centre safe for guests, however we will also have to accept personal responsibility for ourselves and others and maintain social distancing. It will be different and whether as a participant you think you would feel safe is very personal. If you would like to attend please book your place as soon as possible, as there will be limit of 20. If we have to change plans due to COVID-19, you will be offered a full refund.

See the advert below for full details.

*Julie Roberts  
School of Meditation Coordinator, WCCM in the UK*

The School of Meditation in the UK

World Community for Christian Meditation in the UK

### Essential Teaching Weekend

Ilkley, West Yorkshire

**2-4 October 2020**

Have you been meditating in the John Main tradition for more than a year? Do you feel you would like to grow in your understanding of your meditation practice and be more confident about passing it on to others? An Essential Teaching Weekend is designed as a participative residential weekend. Presentations by teachers in the community, group discussion and practical exercises will help to build confidence to pass on the gift of meditation.

The style of the weekend is relaxed and takes place at the Briery Retreat Centre in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. The comfortable accommodation is mainly single rooms with shared bathrooms - we are unable to guarantee an ensuite room. The weekend is subsidised by the UK Community and includes all accommodation, meals, and talks.

**Cost £85 per person**

**For more details, information about bursaries and an application form please email:**  
[jacqrussell3@gmail.com](mailto:jacqrussell3@gmail.com)  
**or call the UK office on 020 8280 2283**

## Mental Health Advice

This is a new and simplified service within the UK community. There are now two members of the community who can make themselves available to offer Mental Health Advice.

Meditation is often endorsed as being beneficial to our health and wellbeing. There are many different meditation traditions and they vary widely. They are not all appropriate for all people and at all times.

Mental Health Advice is mainly a resource for Group leaders or members in our UK community. We are there to discuss concerns, give advice where appropriate and to prevent the blurring of boundaries.

Sometimes mental health issues will arise either in the group or individually. On those occasions it may be helpful to talk to a mental health advisor about how best to manage these situations. Referring back to their mental health professional to talk things over is often the best solution. Other times it can be managed in the group as long as we remember we are meditators, not counsellors and our groups stay true to the tradition of John Main and do not become support groups.

Intrinsically Christian Meditation is a safe practice. It is well structured and the periods of meditation, 20-30 minutes twice a day, are not too long or too onerous.

It is passed on mainly in a group setting with the fellowship and support of the group as well as the guidance of the group leader.

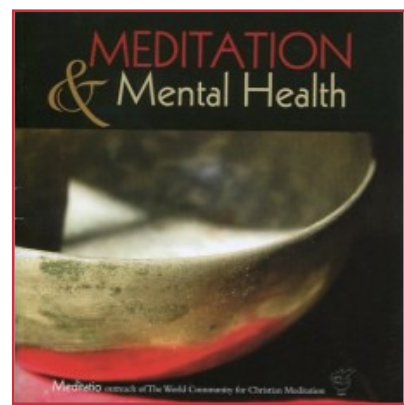
Christian Meditation is a spiritual path – not a treatment. However, now and then people with mental illness find their way to meditation hoping it will be the answer to their problems. When dealing with this, it can sometimes be helpful to distinguish between mental health and mental illness.

The two meditators in our community who can be contacted are Birgit Duncan and Shelagh Layet. They both have a background and training in Mental Health.

Birgit Duncan [birgitduncan@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:birgitduncan@blueyonder.co.uk) is regional coordinator for London (Northeast).

Shelagh Layet [shelagh.layet10@gmail.com](mailto:shelagh.layet10@gmail.com) is a group leader of long standing in Nailsea and elsewhere, and a member of the steering committee for the Bristol and Bath region.

Please make the initial contact via email and we can then arrange a call.



## Useful Resources for Meditation and Mental Health

We are fortunate to have some excellent publications written by Jim Green. He demonstrates a deep and sympathetic understanding of mental health issues and how meditation can help on the path to recovery.

There are two small, affordable booklets *Meditation and Mental Health* and *Meditation and Addiction* price £3 which are well worth making available in your groups. I would encourage anyone with an interest or concern in this area to read them.

Jim shows how meditation is a path to self-knowledge and discovery of self-worth. He is realistic about difficulties but encouraging: 'The best way to let go of bad habits is to develop good ones.' Or to quote again, 'The daily practice of meditation invites the healing work of prayer into every moment of our lives.'

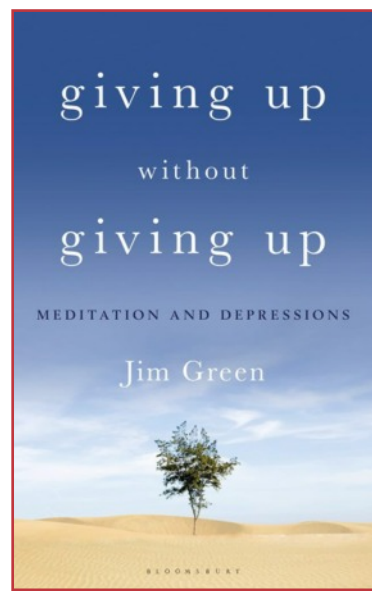
He has also brought out a fine book published in 2019 *Giving up without giving up*. It is packed with information and draws quotations from many excellent sources. It is published by Bloomsbury: [www.bloomsbury.com](http://www.bloomsbury.com).

His subtitle is *meditation and depressions* – in the plural. Jim writes movingly about his personal experiences and that of others. He speaks of *the reception and befriending of what seems to threaten our very existence*.

He accompanies the sufferer through depressions and explores the whole field of depressive or 'desert' experience. He gives encouragement throughout and shows how it can be a time of spiritual growth. The practice of Christian meditation is intrinsic to this and woven through the many chapters of his book.

One further possibility. Jim is offering an online course, just launched a few weeks ago, *Meditation, Wellbeing and More* which is proving very popular. See the WCCM website <https://www.theschoolofmeditation.org/all-courses/meditation-wellbeing-more/>

We are indeed very blessed.



Shelagh Layet



## Memories of Dialogues with Father Graeme Watson

It was around the summer of 2018 when I saw a banner outside St Mary's Church inviting the public to meditation sessions. I was going through a challenging transition and had the strong intuition that I should try to attend, as meditation has

become a solid practice in my life over the years and I've always been very open to different approaches to it. That's what I did. I joined the Wednesday evening group and felt very welcome. I continued to attend; gradually getting to know the people and after a while it turned into a steady routine.

Almost one year later, Father Graeme Watson, whose wisdom, kindness and knowledge I've so admired since my very first attendance, approached me at the end of a session and asked if I'd like to join the group's team of facilitators. I looked around to make sure he was talking to me. He smiled broadly and said: 'Yes, you! Why not?' It took me quite a few seconds to actually acknowledge that, as I'd never have expected such an invitation! I felt flattered and speechless; but ended up managing to say 'Yes.'

We had a meeting to talk properly, and on my first evening as a facilitator he sat by my side, solidly present and supportive. He had an expression of trust in his eyes which gave me such confidence, opening a new cycle in my own meditation practice. I remember, in the middle of that session, hesitating slightly, looking at him and finding a gentle and warm smile as though he was quietly saying to me: 'It's all fine.' All my memories are immersed in the richness of those weekly moments of mysterious, deep silence, which a church, carrying so much time and history, can gift us in a very particular way.

Last December, after learning the devastating news of Father Graeme's diagnosis of terminal cancer, I sent him a message, to which he replied with words I'll never forget:

*Dear Clelia, please pray for my full acceptance of the coming death of my earthly body. I do not wish to leave my beloved wife Liz and many friends, but I do wish to be with my beloved LORD in eternal bliss. 'In my Father's house are many resting places.'* (John, 14:2).

Those words stayed with me so intensely that even today, months later, they echo in my mind and I know they always will. I then wrote him a card:

*Dear Father Graeme, I cannot describe how present you've been in my meditations. How your last message has made me reflect and truly appreciate the gift of having met you: a human being with such a special light, and a rare spiritual maturity towards life, that I strongly admire and which teaches me a great deal. You are such a*

*source of inspiration. To witness the affection and respect that people have for you makes me understand again the real purpose of life. May your days be filled with love, serenity and strength. Every blessing (as he beautifully used to finish his letters), Clelia.*

The year reached its end and I sent him another message saying that I'd be away at a retreat for ten days. A few days after my return to London, I was told he had passed away on January 12th. My heart sank. Shocked and deeply upset, I was the one in charge to facilitate the first meditation session after that, on January 15th. The routine of our sessions includes a reading from *Silence and stillness in every season* by John Main, and I didn't hesitate to choose the one of the day of his passing (there is a reading for each day of the year). To my astonishment, it couldn't have been a more appropriate text for that moment! It felt as though it had been genuinely inspired by Father Graeme; magically portraying the person he was and symbolically paying him tribute; with passages that clearly reflected what I and others had certainly learned from him:

*To live meaningfully is to know our lives as a constant, deepening maturity.... Meditation is important because it leads you to that first step in all growth, which is rootedness.... Growth as a whole person unfolds by our becoming rooted in our deepest, innermost centre.... To find and become familiar with our spirit, the centre of our personal identity, is to begin to live from the power of that centre; no longer blown around by every wind that happens to ruffle the surface, we learn to be rooted in ourselves.*

At the end of the session, I shared with the group the message he had sent me, which clearly touched some people who came to me to say that everyone should know about it, given its strength. This is one of the reasons why I am writing this article now. Also, in last summer's issue there was an article about Father Graeme by Evonne Galloway, facilitator of Tuesday morning sessions and whose work I highly regard, which I found so inspiring that it encouraged me to pay him this homage.

Still these days, when I am facilitating, I sense his very presence on my side. The presence of that humble, wise and very unique man guiding me through; looking at me with warm and supportive eyes; gently moving his head down with a calm smile as an affirmative gesture and invisibly whispering in my ear: 'It's all fine.'

May Father Graeme be eternally embraced with all the love, kindness and gentleness that he taught us; and may his integrity, groundedness and generous nature keep inspiring and giving us strength in our journey through life. Always.

*Clelia Rinaldi*

## Lockdown Emails from Christian Meditation Scotland

Alex Holmes, coordinator for Scotland, has written a series of *Lockdown Emails* that were sent to meditators in Scotland. Our leading article this issue was one; here are the others...

### Here I Am

*You do not delight in sacrifice and offering; you open my ears to listen.  
Burnt peace offerings you have not requested;  
Instead, here I am. (Psalm 40)*

In these COVID-19 days when Christians can no longer receive Holy Communion, there has been a renewed focus within the different Christian denominations on the tradition of Spiritual Communion. St Teresa of Avila wrote: 'When you do not receive communion, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you'. St John Vianney, the Curé d'Ars, said we can make a spiritual communion 'every moment for we ought to have always a burning desire to receive the good God. Communion is to the soul like blowing a fire that is beginning to go out, but that still has plenty of hot embers; we blow, and the fire burns again. When we feel ourselves slacken in the love of God, let us have recourse at once to a spiritual communion'. This desire that the Curé d'Ars speaks about is beautifully articulated in these words from St Alphonsus Liguori's<sup>1</sup> prayer for spiritual communion: 'My Jesus I love you above all things. I embrace you...and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you'.

Spiritual communion is saying 'Here I am'. It is a response to God who is 'more intimate to me than I am to myself', (St Augustine), yet from whom we can so easily drift away. It is a response to God who calls us by name. 'Here I am' said Abraham in reply to God's call. 'Here I am' said Jacob to the angel of God who appeared to him in a dream. 'Moses, Moses' came the voice of God from the burning bush; 'Here I am' replied Moses. Samuel said these same three words, as did Isaiah, as did Ananias responding to God's call for him to go and lay his hands on the blind Saul in Damascus. *Hineni* is Hebrew for 'Here I am'. '*Hineni, hineni*, I'm ready my Lord' are the chorus words in one of Leonard Cohen's last songs, 'You want it darker'.

The 'here I am' of our response is saying 'Here I am, Lord, I am yours, an empty vessel ready to be filled with your will for me, with your love'. It is a revolutionary act, an invitation for the 'I' of 'I am here' to be radically transformed from its limited, wounded, societally conditioned state into the 'I' of the true self, the self whom God has created each of us to be. This is the transformation to which we assent as, 'dying to self' (Matthew 16:24), 'we take the spotlight of consciousness off ourselves' (Dom. John Main) and let go into the stillness and silence of our contemplative way of prayer.

The 'here I am' of our response is saying 'I am ready, I am listening'. It is an incarnational act that will take us out into the world as the lockdown eases to say 'here I am'.

'Here I am' to those calling out to us, the lonely, the marginalized, the forgotten, the oppressed.

'Here I am' is also our response to the 'here I am' offered by another to us.

And if our 'here I am Lord' seems to soak into an answerless silence, take heart from these words said by a man whose witness to Christ and whose persecution by the powerful ended in his brutal murder. 'God is not failing us when we don't feel his presence. Let's not say: God doesn't do what I pray for and therefore I don't pray anymore. God exists, and he exists even more the farther you feel from him. God is closer to you when you think he is farther away and doesn't hear you. When you feel the anguished desire for God to come near because you don't feel him present, then God is very close to your anguish. When are we going to understand that God not only gives happiness but also tests our faithfulness in moments of affliction. It is then that prayer and religion have most merit; when one is faithful in spite of not feeling the Lord's presence. Let us learn that God is always our Father and never forsakes us, and that we are closer to him than we think'.<sup>2</sup>

'Hineni'... 'Here I am' we cry;

And the voice we hear: 'I am with you always, even unto the end of time'.

Alex Holmes

*a message sent to the meditation community in Scotland*



<sup>1</sup> more from St Alphonsus '...after your infidelities you must turn back to God at once even if you should fail a hundred times a day; and when you have done this, immediately set yourself at peace again'.

<sup>2</sup> Oscar Romero, saint and martyr, as translated from the Spanish in 'The Violence of Love', p146  
<http://www.romerotrue.org.uk/sites/default/files/violenceoflove.pdf>

## Try and Try Again

*A young doctor, going through a very stressful time in his life, came to our silent prayer group. A few months afterwards he wrote, 'I am pleased to say that my daily double 'dose' of meditation is completely changing my life. My energy levels have risen dramatically. I now need two hours less sleep at night and don't yawn during surgery! Also, slowly, my cravings are dropping away.'*<sup>1</sup>

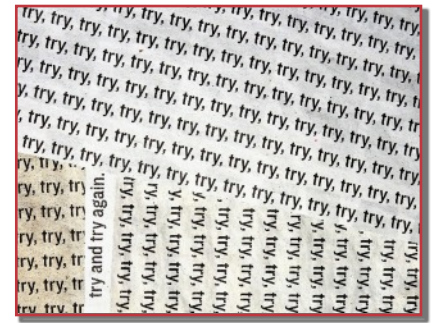
'...slowly, my cravings are dropping away'. This immediately caught my attention. A few weeks back I wrote this: 'Confinement may well be bringing our own struggles closer to the fore... Struggles with our own demons and addictions that the normal business of everyday life can paper over'. I recently said to a close friend that I have welcomed this time of forced lockdown as it has given me the opportunity to be more honest with myself and with God about my cravings, about the things that draw me away from God and push me into 'missing the mark'.<sup>2</sup>

I am not a psychologist or behavioural scientist so I'll leave the theories and explanations to those of you who are. But I do fully recognize the 'cravings' that the young doctor refers to. Over time, the practice of entering stillness and silence, of the 'daily double dose of meditation', has loosened stuff buried in my unconscious self, painful stuff from long past that has emerged and crashed into the day-to-day of my life. I've sought ways of blurring the emotional pain, of filling the gaps. These routes have given me temporary relief, but have not supplied a lasting solution. On the contrary they have all too easily become addictions, cravings. And yes I've turned a million times to God. I try and try, but 'the spirit is indeed willing but the body is weak' (Matthew 26:41).

The verb 'to try' has taken on a particular nuance for me since living alongside young people in Calais who have escaped the terrible conditions of life in their home countries, endured unimaginable trials on their journeys to the Channel coast of France and dream of a new life in the UK. For them, to 'try' is to make an attempt to stow away on a UK-bound lorry, the only route open to them to get to the UK and pursue their legal right to claim asylum. The tenacity of their 'trying' gives me strength and determination in my trying not to 'miss the mark', to open myself to the full radiance of Divine Love to heal the causes of my cravings.

And, in my trying, I'm hugely strengthened by these words of Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, killed by an assassin's bullet in March 1980. 'It is wrong to be sad. Christians cannot be pessimists. Christians must always nourish in their hearts the fullness of joy. Try it, brothers and sisters; I have tried it many times and in the darkest moments, when slander and persecution were at their worst: to unite myself intimately with Christ, my friend, and to feel a comfort that all the joys of the earth

do not give – the joy of feeling oneself close to God, even when humans do not understand one. It is the deepest joy the heart can have.'<sup>3</sup> (May 20, 1979)<sup>3</sup>



What an amazing prospect, an intimacy with Christ that offers 'a comfort that all the joys of the earth do not give... the deepest joy the heart can have'. What an irresistible prospect! This is an intimacy that I know will touch the deepest and darkest recesses of our being, relieve us, over time, of our cravings and heal us of our pains. 'Try it, brothers and sisters; I have tried it many times... to unite myself intimately with Christ, my friend..'

Yes I try it and I fail and I try again and fail again. But that's ok! 'The spirit is indeed willing, but the body is weak', the words of 'Christ, my friend'. Immediately preceding this, He says 'All of you must stay awake and pray that you won't be tempted'... tempted to give up trying perhaps?

Our twice daily practice of the prayer of stillness and silence, Christian Meditation, is the school where we keep on 'trying', trying to put ourselves to one side and nourish that deep intimacy with Christ who is 'more intimate to me than I am to myself' (St Augustine).

And when I return to words, I pray:

*Christ, my loving friend, make known your intimacy to me,  
Impress it on me so forcefully that I feel it, know it,  
Know it 'like a child that rests in its mother's arms'  
(Psalm 131)*

*Know it now, 'even as I am fully known.'  
(1 Corinthians 12:13)*

*Alex Holmes  
a message sent to the meditation community in Scotland*

<sup>1</sup> Benignus O'Rourke, Augustinian monk, 'Finding Your Hidden Treasure' p142

<sup>2</sup> Mirabai Starr, in her translation of Mother Julian of Norwich's 'Showings', translates 'to sin' as 'to miss the mark'.

<sup>3</sup> p148  
<http://www.romerotrue.org.uk/sites/default/files/violenceoflove.pdf>

## A Universal Family

*All of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect.*  
(Pope Francis, 'Laudato Si')

24 May was the 5th anniversary of the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*. The emphasis in this encyclical was on our common home. The year from May 24 has been announced as a special anniversary year for *Laudato Si*. 'Truly, COVID-19 has made clear how deeply we are all interconnected and interdependent... Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.'

A cry magnified many times over by the 25 May killing by the police in Minneapolis of George Floyd, the 46 year old black American, father of two daughters, a security guard made redundant as a result of COVID-19, an active Christian, who died begging for his life, gasping 'I can't breathe.'

Sunday morning, late May, the wind blowing and the birds singing in the background, a voice message from a young Eritrean Orthodox deacon in Calais: 'Dear Alex, How do you do, what about life? I miss you. Today, Sunday, together we have Tsolot (Orthodox prayer). God bless you God bless you God bless you much.' His voice takes me back to February when we were last together, huddled around the fire after Sunday Tsolot, his outpouring of curiosity: 'What is the meaning of "loyal... gossip... recommendation... poppycock? What is the difference between he is going to come and he will come?'

More messages follow from others in the same Eritrean refugee community, 'I wish you happy Sunday. How was your day? I hope you are fine. There is no one sick for us'; 'I am fine, how are you. I hope you enjoyed this day. Three guys arrived to UK. I hope soon I come too'. 'I am fine'. I had always thought this to be just a typically British way to reply to the question 'How are you?' regardless of how one really felt. But it is the standard response from the refugees I know in Calais, a response that I imagine, as with all of us almost always, is a thin veneer covering a plethora of other more complicated emotions.

Later in the day, photos arrive, photos that to the uninitiated eye, might convey a carefree holiday atmosphere, friends warming hands around the camp fire, a conviviality. But the message that follows the photos conveys a deeper reality. 'Every two days the police come to take our tents but we take them away before the police come but if we don't take them, they take the tent and the person, the owner of the tent, to a detention center. And CRS (the French Riot Police) they always hit people, break phones, also spray gas on us. We need your help. We need you to speak about us in social media. I hope you understand what I write because my

English is not enough good to explain.'

COVID-19 has triggered an outpouring of solidarity and compassion and empathy across swathes of the

world. Yet, as always, there are darker sub-strata, worlds where compassion and empathy remain in large part absent. Recently a group of Eritreans in Calais made an official complaint to the authorities. 'We are exiles from Eritrea. We are not criminals. We are innocent people trying to go to England. Our complaint concerns a CRS company and their aggressive actions towards us. They don't consider us human beings. They insult us with names like 'monkey', 'bitch'. For the past few weeks, they started threatening our lives by fighting us as soon as the opportunity presented itself. When, for example, they find a group of two or three people walking towards the food distribution, they speed up in their vehicles by rolling in our direction, like they want to crush us. They also took people with them to remote places of Calais, and hit them until they lost consciousness.' This is happening 25 miles from the coast of the UK.

At Christmas Eve mass in 2015, Pope Francis spoke these words, 'Amid a culture of indifference which not infrequently turns ruthless, our style of life should be filled with empathy, compassion and mercy, drawn daily from the wellspring of prayer'.

*Drawing from this 'wellspring of prayer' is critical; critical for you, for me, for the world; critical in preventing us from slipping into indifference.*

*Drawing from this 'wellspring' is what we do in our prayer of silence and stillness. In our practice of Christian Meditation, we move beyond the ego self and experience our deep interconnectedness, we break the bounds of separation, we grow in understanding and empathy, compassion and mercy, come alive to this Universal Family to which we all belong, and experience the "sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect."*

*Alex Holmes  
a message sent to the meditation community in Scotland*



## Through a Glass, Darkly

Life at the moment is full of questions. Will science come up with a vaccine for COVID-19 and, if so, when? When will we be able to travel freely, embrace our family and friends, go to church, to a bar, to the cinema or, as is the fantasy of a recently retired friend, go clubbing? Clear answers will no doubt emerge.

What about the bigger questions. 'For now we see through a glass darkly; all that I know now is partial and incomplete' writes St Paul to the Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 12:13). Our partial and incomplete knowledge begs questions, but finding answers to these bigger questions is another matter. The remarkable Russian film director Andrei Tarkovsky's seventh and final film *The Sacrifice*<sup>1</sup> is filled with the big questions. 'How is your relationship with God?' 'All my life I've felt as if I was waiting in a railway station as if the living I've done so far hasn't actually been real life, just a long wait for something real. What about you?' 'Truth, what is truth?'

The film ends with a question. At the very start, Alexander, the main character, is talking to his young son, known only as 'Little Man'. Little Man is mute. Together they are planting into the ground a withered, dead tree. Alexander is telling the boy the legend of the Orthodox monk Pamve who plants a dead tree and asks the novice monk Kolov to water it every day. Kolov obediently carries out this instruction and after three years the tree bursts into blossom. Task completed, Alexander and Little Man walk off, Alexander finishing his monologue to the boy with the words 'In the beginning was the Word...but you are mute, silent as a little salmon'. The final moments of the film see Little Man struggling along a track towards the withered tree with two heavy buckets of water. He waters the tree, lies down at its base, and utters his first words, 'In the beginning was the Word. Why is that Papa?' The tree hasn't burst into life, but Little Man has.

The big questions will probably remain as big questions without clear answers. They contain layer upon layer of meaning, like a Russian doll. If we lightly hold the big questions, their meaning will gradually unfurl, not as clear answers but as a deep knowing. For this to happen, we need to stay where we are and go deep within. Like the novice monk Kolov, like Little Man, we need to persist in our daily task of 'watering', of gently laying aside our worries and questions, and with the help of our prayer word, enter into stillness and silence.

'God made our capacity for goodness the innermost part of us' wrote the 14th century German Dominican Johann Tauler. 'In this he gave us our greatest likeness to him who is our father, and this wonderful divine spark is deeper inside us and closer to us than we are ourselves'. The deeper we sink into our silent prayer, the more we become aware of the riches within, our deepest, original self formed by God in his likeness. We begin to reclaim the gifts which have lain unused, unrecognised within us.

The deeper we go the more we discover. And at the end of our journey inwards we find our wellspring of love, because Love has made its home within us.'<sup>2</sup>

And living out of that wellspring, we will, like Pamve's tree, like Little Man, burst into life.

*Alex Holmes*

*a message sent to the meditation community in Scotland*



<sup>1</sup> . Andrei Tarkovsky 'The Sacrifice'

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-sacrifice/on-demand/3149-001>

(available free-to-air for 20 more days)

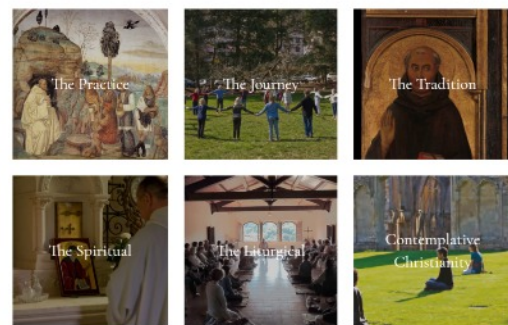
<sup>2</sup> . Benignus O'Rourke (Augustinian monk) 'Finding your Hidden Treasure'. p137.



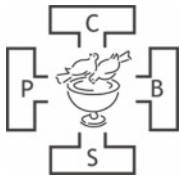
**The School of Meditation**  
SIMPLICITY · GROWTH · COMMUNITY

We're excited to introduce you to our newest piece of work on the School Website. The Resources section has gone through a complete overhaul, with previous material reviewed and refreshed. It is now divided into three parts- Meditation Resources, Teaching Resources and Contemplatives in Action, where you will find an extensive selection that support the journey of meditation for both individuals and groups. Of course, new material will be added in the future but for now, we hope you find this new catalogue helpful.

### Meditation Resources



[www.theschoolofmeditation.org](http://www.theschoolofmeditation.org)



## Monastics in the World – WCCM Oblate Community

Meditation creates community. Meditators who experience personal transformation through a daily practice seek to express this in ways suitable to their own path. Oblation is one of these.

The World Community is ecumenical and the Oblate community specially reflects this. However, the WCCM as a whole acknowledges a special relationship to the Benedictine tradition which was the first in the western Church to form a stable form of inclusive religious life and, in succeeding generations, has always adapted to the needs and circumstances of the age. Oblates live out their oblation in a spirit of 'obedience, stability and

### Oblate Events

**Annual UK Oblate Weekend:** Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 October 2020. at The Monastery of Christ Our Saviour, Turvey, Bedfordshire. Please contact: Angela Gregson: rydal2814@yahoo.co.uk 01706 563 024 or text Oblates 07792 083 942.

The next **Quarterly Oblate Community Day** will be an online Zoom meeting. Contact: Gilly Withers gilly@withers.org 07896 742047 for details.

**Benedict's Well** - weekly online Oblate led prayer session and talk. Mondays at 9am. Contact: Julia Williamson julia.williamson78@gmail.com

### WCCM Oblate cell meetings

**Cambridge:** Contact: Jane Serrurier 07557 476227

conversion' and promise 'to share always in the life and work of our Community'.

The basic element of the Oblate Community, is the 'cell'. This word has a long monastic tradition referring originally to the monk's cave or room. With us it is used to describe presence not only physical space. The cell meets with regularity, to meditate, to share the Word, to consider their ways of sharing in the work of the wider community and where time allows share a meal together. All are welcome.

### International Oblate Coordinator: Eileen Dutt

07721 574767 or eduttobl@christianmeditation.org.uk

### North London:

Meets at Christ the King Church, Cockfosters. Contact: Rita McKenna on 0208 449 5013.

**Berkshire:** Online Zoom meeting on the last Wednesday of each month from 14.15 - 15.45. Contact: Angela Greenwood angelagreenwood@hotmail.com 01344 774254

### Northern Cell (Leeds):

Saturdays 5 September, 24 October & 28 November. Contact: Angela Gregson for details at rydal2814@yahoo.co.uk or on 01706 563024.

### Online UK Led Oblate Cell Meetings:

Sunday 13 & Wednesday 23 September; Wednesday 21 October; Sunday 8 & Wednesday 18 November; Sunday 13 & Wednesday 23 December. Contact Angela Gregson rydal2814@yahoo.co.uk for more information.

## Events

Events are subject to COVID-19 restrictions, some may be held as online Zoom events, others may be cancelled at short notice. Contact the organiser(s) for the latest information.

**Events from September.** Please visit the Christian Meditation UK website for more details and to check for changes and additional events: //wccm.uk/events

### National

**Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June 2021. Annual Conference. Save the Date!**

**Venue:** The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick DE55 1AU.

**School of Meditation Events.** Contact: Jacqueline Russell jacrussell3@gmail.com or phone UK office: 020 8280 2283.

**Friday 2 to Sunday 4 October. School of Meditation Essential Teaching**

**Weekend. Leader:** Julie Roberts with Joanne Caine. **Venue:** The Briery Retreat Centre, 38 Victoria Road, Ilkley West Yorkshire LS29 9BW. **Cost:** subsidised £85 includes talks, meals and accommodation.

### Northeast England

**Friday 25 to Sunday 27 September. Embodied Contemplatives – Christian**

**Meditation and Tai Chi Retreat.** **Venue:** Minsteracres Retreat Centre, Minsteracres, Consett Co Durham DH8 9RT www.minsteracres.org.uk **Contact:** 01434 673248

**Friday 2 to Sunday 4 October. Embodied Contemplatives – Christian**

**Meditation Silent Retreat.** **Venue:** Ampleforth Abbey, near York YO62 4EN. www.ampleforth.org.uk **Contact:** Hospitality & Pastoral pastoral@ampleforth.org.uk 01439 766486.

### Northwest England

**Saturday 10 October 10:30-15:15. Meditation Matters. Leader:** Fr Laurence Freeman OSB. **Venue:** Chester Meeting Rooms at Chester Quaker Meeting House, Union Walk, Frodsham Street, Chester CH1 3LF **Cost:** £25 / £20 Limited Numbers. There will be a long lunch break for a packed lunch or buying lunch nearby. **Contact:** www.retreathousechester.co.uk (or call Retreat House Chester on 07514 357 427 if no internet).

**Tuesday 3 November 10:00-15:00. Living with the Mystics – Eckehart Tolle.**

**Speaker:** Angie Greenwood. **Venue:** Quaker Meeting House, Elliott Park, Keswick CA12 5NZ. **Cost:** suggested donation £5. Drinks provided, please bring your own lunch. **Contact:** Bob Morley rgm1@live.co.uk; 016974 72644

**Tuesday 24 November 19:00-21:30. Contemplative Christianity Event.**

**Venue:** Glazebury Methodist Church, Warrington Road, Glazebury, Warrington WA3 5LD. **Cost:** free of charge. Hot drinks provided. **Contact:** Delia Caswell: pndcas@aol.com or telephone 01942 671938. (booking essential due to limited places available). The Event includes: a retreat based on the Christian meditation practices as passed on through the teaching of John Main OSB, there will also be a short storytelling / theatre performance based on this desert spirituality and set in a modern, contemporary setting.



## London

**Wednesdays** (2nd September onwards) **19:00-20:15. Addiction and Grace Meditation Group.** Venue: Kairos Centre, Mount Angelus Road, Roehampton, London SW15 4JA. Contact: May Nicol maymbnicol@aol.com 07768 310666

**Meditatio Centre** St Marks Church, Myddelton Sq London EC1R 1XX  
020 7278 2070 meditatio@wccm.org www.meditatiocentrelondon.org  
Bookshop opening times: Monday - Friday 10:00-17:00

As of July it is unlikely that we will reopen in September. Booking ahead is essential so we can plan for safer events. We will offer some events online. Please keep in touch for up to date information.

We are continuing to offer online meditation on Wednesday 13:00. Please contact meditatio@wccm.org to join.

**Repeating events:**

**First Thursday of every month 18:30-20:00 On beginning Meditation:** an Introduction to Christian Meditation.

**Single events:**

**Saturday 5 September 10:30-16:00. Retreat with the Mystics:** Hildegard of Bingen. Leader: Revd Sheena Gabriel. Cost: £30 Concessions £20. Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**Wednesday 16 September 18:30-21:00. Science and Spirituality.** Making space and time for God. Can Physics help? Leader: Prof Bernard Carr. Cost: £15 Concessions £10. Light refreshments provided.

**Saturday 19 September 10:30-16:00. Environment and Meditation.** A faith response to Climate Emergency. Leader: Ruth Jarman. Cost: £30 Concessions £20. Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**Saturday 26 September THIS EVENT IS NOW ONLINE 1-3 PM AND 4-6 PM UK TIME. Retreat with the Mystics.** Simplifying Matters: Engaging the transforming Wisdom of the Mystics. Leader: Prof Mark Burrows. Cost: £20 Concessions £10.

**Saturday 3 October 13:00-17:30. Movement & Meditation Letting Go.** Leader: Chris Hurley. Cost: £25 Concessions £15. Coffee and tea provided.

**Wednesday 7 October 18:30-21:00. Interfaith.** Baha'i and the harmony between science and faith. Leader: Prof Faraneh Vargha-Khadem. Cost: £15 Concessions £10. Light refreshments provided.

**Saturday 10 October 11:00-15:30. Teaching on Christian Meditation - London Group Leaders Meeting.** Leader: Geoff Waterhouse and Birgit Duncan. Cost: £10 donation for lunch.

**Tuesday, 13 October 18:30-21:00. Interfaith.** An evening of Zen sitting. Leader: Fr Robert Kennedy. Cost: £15 Concessions £10. Light refreshments provided.

**Saturday 17 October 10:30-16:00. Contemplative Reflections.** The city is my monastery. Leader: Revd Richard Carter. Cost: £30 Concessions £20. Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**Thursday, 22 October 18:30-21:00. Leadership.** Holding the space. Leader: Esther Stephenson. Cost: £15 Concessions £10. Light refreshments provided.

**Saturday 24 October 10:30-16:00. Poetry.** Mysterious wisdom: the spiritual quest of W.B. Yeats. Leader: Grevel Lindop. Cost: £30 Concessions £20. Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**Saturday 31 October 10:30-16:00. Contemplative Arts.** Watercolour painting. Leader: Mary Cook. Cost: £30 Concessions £20. Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**Thursday, 12 November 18:30-21:00. Contemplative Arts.** Islamic geometric design. Leader: Margi Lake. Cost: £15 Concessions £10. Light refreshments provided.

**Saturday 14 November 10:30-16:00. A Burning Passion for God:** Reflecting on Marguerite Porete. Leader: Revd Dr Rebecca Stephens. Cost: £30 Concessions £20. Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**Saturday 21 November 10:30-16:00. Contemplative Reflections.** The transformative experience of meditation. Leader: Kim Nataraja. Cost: £30 Concessions £20. Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**Thursdays in advent 18:30-21:00: 26 November, 3, 10, 17 December. Spiritual Growth.** Stepping Inside: Meditation in Advent. Leader: Liz Watson. Cost: £15 Concessions £10. Light refreshments provided.

**Saturday 5 December 10:30-16:00. Interfaith.** Abishiktananda. Leader: Sr Marie-Claude. Cost: £30 Concessions £20. Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**Saturday 12 December 10:30-16:00. Preparing for Christmas.** Leader: Laurence Freeman OSB. Cost: £30 Concessions £20. Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

**Westminster Cathedral**

**Daily Meditation: 12.30-13:00 Monday to Friday.** In the chapel in St Paul's Bookshop. All welcome.

**First Wednesday Quiet Days:**

**Wednesday 5 August, 2 September, 7 October, 4 November, 2 December 12:00-16:00.** The first Wednesday of each month is a retreat day, an opportunity for quiet reflection and meditation. Theme of the year: 'Did our hearts not burn within us?' Venue: Hinsley Room in Morpeth Terrace, next to Westminster Cathedral. Cost: free; Coffee and tea available; Please bring packed lunch; many places to buy lunch are in the vicinity.

**Silence in the City**

See [www.silenceinthecity.org.uk](http://www.silenceinthecity.org.uk) for the programme. Unless stated otherwise all talks are at: Westminster Cathedral Hall, London SW1P 1QH. Pre-booking is necessary. Contact: 020 7252 2453 [info@silenceinthecity.org.uk](mailto:info@silenceinthecity.org.uk)



**Goodnews books** Christian

See online the range of books, talks, and DVDs

**WCCM UK Distributors**

- Resources for schools and churches
- Sale or return book-packs for events

**Goodnews Books**

St John's Church Complex  
296 Sundon Park Road  
Luton  
Bedfordshire LU3 3AL

01582 571011  
[orders@goodnewsbooks.co.uk](mailto:orders@goodnewsbooks.co.uk)  
[www.goodnewsbooks.co.uk](http://www.goodnewsbooks.co.uk)

**Keeping In Touch**

If you would like to ...

- Receive Meditation News by email or post
- Find out about meditation groups in your local area
- Find out about the Lone Meditator Network

Visit: [www.christianmeditation.org.uk](http://www.christianmeditation.org.uk)

Email: [uk@wccm.org](mailto:uk@wccm.org) or Phone: 020 8280 2283

Or contact:

**WCCM UK Office,  
63 Mattock Lane, London, W13 9LA**

# Contacts

## UK Office

**The Christian Meditation Trust (UK)** – Registered Charity No. 1101900  
Lido Centre, 63 Mattock Lane, London W13 9LA ☎ 020 8280 2283

**Office is closed during the pandemic. Please use email to contact.**  
✉ uk@wccm.org 🌐 www.christianmeditation.org.uk

## National

**National Coordinator:** See Action Group  
**Chair of The Christian Meditation Trust (UK):** Roz Stockley–07929 007808  
ukchair@wccm.org  
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**Goodnews Books:** John Roberts–01458 832704 john.wilcott@gmail.com

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**Events Listing:** Pia Huber–events@christianmeditation.org.uk  
**Website:** Andy Goddard–07881 988767 cmukwebsite@gmail.com

## Action Group

**National Coordinator:** Contact Action Group team leader, Regional or Special Interest Coordinator. Otherwise, contact UK Office.  
**Administration:** Roisin Williamson–020 8280 2283 ukadmin@wccm.org  
**Communications:** Roz Stockley–07929 007808 rozstockley@copsewood.org.uk  
**Meditation with Children in Schools:** Laura Mapstone–07503 737350  
ukmeditationwithchildren@wccm.org

**Outreach:** Contact UK Office  
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richard.broughton@zoho.com  
**School of Meditation:** Julie Roberts–01458 832704 julie.ann.roberts@icloud.com  
**Liaison with WCCM International:** Roger Layet–01275 463727  
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## Special Interest Coordinators

**Addiction:** Mike Sarson–0118 962 3332 mikesarson8@gmail.com  
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**Clergy:** Fr John Bannister–07788562488 johnlbannister@gmail.com  
**Learning Disabilities:** Carolina Ghiuzan–07749 975368  
carolina.ghiuzan@gmail.com  
**Lone Meditators:** Pam Winters–020 7278 2070 pam@wccm.org  
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bentickbelinda@hotmail.com  
**Prisons:** Contact UK Office or email ukprisons@wccm.org  
**Safeguarding:** Lucy Blows–07791 646044 lucystepsplane@gmail.com  
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**Online Meditation:** Julia Williamson–01252 672145  
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## Regional Coordinators and Contacts

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### Wales

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### North East England

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### North West England

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### Midlands

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Jon Kille 01952 253648 / 07912 026014–westmids@christianmeditation.org.uk

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