



Friends

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in a **World-Wide Community of Love**

'Sincere thanks for just *being*. You have not yet met us, but you have deeply influenced us.'

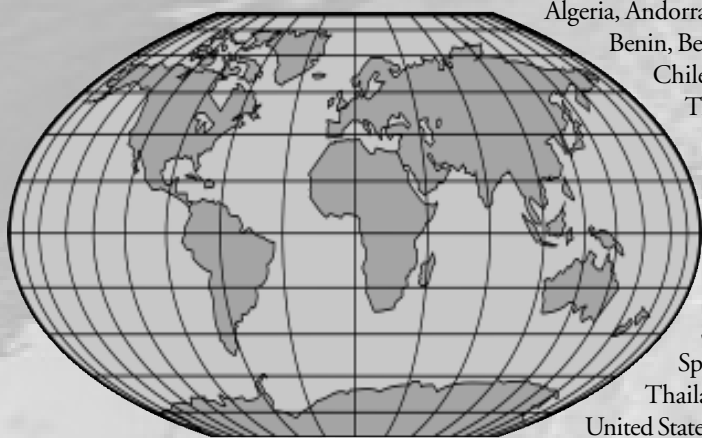
Anon, New Zealand

'I learnt about Christian meditation from a wonderful, holy woman - Sister Marie-Berise Nash, a Marist Sister. I have been meditating now for four years. I lead a group in my parish of St Bernadette's. I can honestly say that our group is a true community. Each member brings a unique lovingness and deep care and concern for the others in the group as well as the wider world. Christian meditation has deepened our sense of the sacredness of all things, both 'seen and unseen'. We are truly blessed with a wonderful mix of people!'

Maria Baden, Australia



In the past year we welcomed into our Community, over 80 new groups around the world. We now have close to 1,600 meditation groups in over 110 countries, sharing the teachings in more than 15 different languages.



Algeria, Andorra, Antigua, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bermuda, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burma, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dutch Antilles (Curacao), East Timor, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Gibraltar, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Caledonia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, St Lucia, St Vincent, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tobago, Trinidad, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela, Vietnam, West Africa, Western Samoa, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

As a spiritual community we **share**, we **care**, we **support**

WCCM distributes resources and offers training for leaders and provides other teaching assistance wherever the need may be.

Group Leaders in their commitment to their little groups build loving communities that offer friendship to all who come.

Volunteers share their time and talents unstintingly to keep all the wheels of the community running.

Our community-building work is greatly assisted by the generosity of **Friends**



WCCM BRINGS SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP

by Presence

“Fr Laurence came at the end of November for a weekend introduction to meditation for 12-step AA/ NA groups. Several people have gone back to their home towns with the intention of setting up a group if possible. ... After the Thursday group we have got into the habit of going out for a meal together and this has proved to be a great opportunity for sharing experiences. When the good weather comes along again, we are planning to organise another outing in the mountains as we did with Fr Laurence, meditate together and share our ideas and difficulties.”

Deborah Walton, Switzerland

“Many seeds were sown in the four seminaries Fr. Laurence visited in 2004 and which I subsequently visited in 2005 and 2006. While several seminarians are meditating on their own, we are hopeful that the retreats Fr. Laurence will lead this August may produce an increased harvest.”

Liz King, China

“Up until 2002, Hong Kong had one meditation group, faithfully led by Fr. Sean Burke. Following Fr. Laurence’s visits in 2003, 2004, 2006, ... Now seven meditation groups meet regularly each week and the numbers are steadily growing and, as Fr. Sean remarked, ‘Hong Kong, though a worldly city, prosperous, busy, rich and noisy, but it is so poor in spiritual wealth... As Hong Kong grows taller and taller with larger buildings, there is such a need to go down, down into the centre of the human heart.’”

Liz King, Hong Kong

by Sharing the Teaching

“Words are meaningless until they are matched with deeds.” Inspired by the aforementioned enlightening remarks, I blazed the trail for setting up a group in the New Territories. With the consent of our parish priest and the aid of WCCM (HK), a Christian mediation briefing session was held on the Epiphany for the congregation. Now the group meets every Sunday morning at Tsing Yi St Thomas the Apostle Church, to address the spiritual hunger in this area of the city.”

Paul Li, Hong Kong

“Cardinal Jean Margeot, retired Bishop of Port Louis started the contemplative movement here in 1997, already 10 years! He invited Patricia(RIP) and Peter Ng from Singapore to give us a workshop and it was from that workshop that the

Dear Meditators & Friends

You received without charge, give without charge. (Matthew 10:7-15)

Fr John Main said that meditation builds community. Fr Laurence Freeman likened the practice of meditation to the pearl of great price; it is a gift freely given and, once received, we cannot but want to share it with others. And in the process of this giving, we invariably establish ties and build communities. What began as a single community in Ealing Abbey back in 1974 is now a growing global community that spans more than 110 countries that shares Fr John Main’s teachings in more than 15 different languages. This past year alone, we have had the privilege of welcoming into our midst over 80 new groups.

Much of the sharing of this pearl of great price has been made possible by the continuing financial support of Friends of the WCCM. Their generous contributions make it possible for our volunteers to continue to do the work that they do. Friends make it possible for teachers and group leaders to be trained, for introductory workshops to be conducted, for books, CDs, and other resource materials to be produced, translated, and made available either at a great discount and even for free.

This year, the Friends Newsletter celebrates the building of community and we thank our Friends for helping, in one way or another, to make this possible. Much of what you read here has had to be edited to fit the space available. If you would like to read the full texts and other accounts, please visit us at www.friendsinmeditation.com.

We would like to encourage and invite you to support the work of WCCM by becoming a Friend of the WCCM. You can support the WCCM as an Individual Friend, or as a Group Friend together with other meditators from your community.

If you would like to find out more about the Friends Programme, please do not hesitate to contact us or visit our website. Our contact details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

God bless!

Handwritten signature of Leonard Ong.

Leonard Ong
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meditation groups took off. New editions of Gerry Pierse's *Silence into Service* and Laurence Freeman's *Introduction to Christian Meditation* have been published in French and are selling like hot cakes!"

Sr Miriam Boyle, Mauritius

by Starting New Groups

"In 2001, one of our BEC leaders, Roslyn McGuire, suggested forming a group to practise meditation. To date, our "little community" has grown to fifteen regulars. We gather weekly at Roslyn's residence. This weekly time of group meditation is a great source of encouragement and growth for most of us, especially those who find that even ten minutes of meditation on our own is so difficult. The "community" feeling is a great support. After each meditation session, the fellowship that follows is interesting. We share humorous incidents, exchange recipes, exchange home remedies for minor ailments. In short, we help each other, laugh together, and grow together."

Hillside Meditation Group; Penang, Malaysia

by Reaching Out

"Almost nine years ago I was asked by the leader of my original group to start a new group. As part of a deliberate policy to be outward-looking we decided to invite our original group and also another group in the next town, Portadown, to join us in paying a visit to a newly established Benedictine (Olivetan) monastery about forty miles away. So on a lovely June evening, twenty-five meditators and their friends attended Vespers with the monks and during the monks' period of silent prayer after Vespers, we meditated. A welcome cup of tea provided an excellent opportunity to socialise with other groups before sharing in Night Prayers with the monks. It has now become an annual event and a firm favourite with all participants every June.

"As a result of that outreach, our group became more aware of reaching out in other ways and we began to think of ways we could share the gift of meditation with others, especially those less financially fortunate than ourselves and that was how we became Group Friends. When the Friends Newsletter came last year, it was very exciting for us to read about all the ways in which our small donations were helping to make a difference in providing support to emerging groups all over the world, especially those in most need.

Did You Know?

In the past year

- Fr Laurence visited 21 countries to give talks, retreats and seminars to build, nurture and support the communities there,
- At least 10 Schools were conducted around the world to encourage and train leaders and teachers to spread teaching, start groups and build community.
- 6000 CD's were distributed as gifts to Group Leaders to help them in their work of sharing the teaching and to develop a sense of belonging and community.
- Medio Media, our publishing arm produced 14 new titles in books, CD's & DVD's at greatly reduced prices to make the teaching more readily accessible to people worldwide.

"The latest outreach in which our two groups have been involved is in helping our N Ireland co-ordinator and her team to bring Christian meditation to our schools. We ask your prayers for its continuing success."

Elizabeth McStravick; Lurgan, Northern Ireland





through Resources & Websites

“The new Web site of the South African meditation community is a landmark. Groups and lone meditators are spread across the country and the Web site is certain to facilitate closer and more regular contact. Preparations are under way for a hike in the mountainous Magoebaskloof area. Meditation has inspired this six-day venture on the part of locals, Australians, and Singaporean meditators. The trail offers many wonderful opportunities to share stillness, practise walking meditation and forge or strengthen international friendships.”

Christa Roodt, South Africa



“In 2003 you sent me a copy of *A Pearl of Great Price* and *The Way of Peace* booklets. I wasn’t able to start a little group, but I do feel connected with all groups around the world. I’m grateful for the WCCM newsletter which arrives in good time and is shared with my Sisters here and the Fathers over at the church. An assistant pastor has introduced Holy Hour for people who are interested in coming. Just the peace and quiet of an hour is a rare commodity in a relatively small country packed with 130 million. My prayers are with all my sisters and brothers of the WCCM around the world.”

Sr. Gwen Legault OLM; Our Lady's Missionaries, Nigeria

through the School Programme

“The number of meditators in Fiji continues to grow steadily. In July there will be a School for Teachers for the formation of new leaders. A special effort is being made to reach out to the priests of the diocese to become meditators and also to encourage their parishioners to join a meditation group. During the last few months, a concerted effort has been made to spread the teaching through the Catechist Training School where all the trainees are now meditators. When they return to their villages in the rural areas they will be able to pass on the teaching to their people.” *Fr Denis Mahony, Fiji*

Simply by BEING SILENT

“All priests are convinced that prayer is important, and that prayer as a family can be a matter of life and death. Family rosary is no longer so attractive. Bible reading and sharing is a lofty idea, yet not so simple for most of our Catholics. Spontaneous prayers could easily become a routine. There is also the danger of being manipulative with spontaneous prayers. I am convinced that ‘silence’ is the only common language all human beings have and understand.

“Learning to meditate in silence as a family could become a powerful alternative. It can sound impossible and difficult. In fact, nothing is more simple and accessible to all. It is also non-threatening, as nobody has to ‘say’ anything. There is no danger of competition and rivalry. There is only one dynamic: focus on the presence of God!” *Fr Frans De Ridder; CICM, Singapore*

“For the past two years, I have been helping to develop the Christian Meditation Community in other countries of South America where groups are now forming, including Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. After ten years of meditating I have begun to learn from experience the meaning of these words of John Main “meditation creates community”. I never cease to wonder how so many different kinds of people – with big cultural, national, social and age differences – can feel part of the same community simply by praying (and working) together without most of the links formed by strong structures, rules or organisation. I have come to feel the power of the Spirit acting in the silence of prayer and uniting people in a community of love. Meditation opens the heart directly to love and to the presence of Christ. The need to share this experience within – and beyond – the community is inescapable. It is love that generates community.” *Ana Fonseca, Brazil*



If you would like to support our work as a **Friend**

1. Visit our website: www.friendsinmeditation.com
2. E-mail, fax or write to us for contribution details at:

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