



Stillpoint

Stillpoint is the official magazine of the New Zealand Community for Christian Meditation

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Websites to visit:

- www.christianmeditationnz.org.nz
- www.wccm.org/content
- www.wccmmeditatio.org
- www.christianmeditationaustralia.org
- www.christianmeditation.org.uk

Bonnevaux

New International WCCM Retreat Centre



Dear Fellow Meditators

It has been an exciting few weeks! On 19 October the legal papers were signed, and Bonnevaux became the home of our community. As Fr Laurence said "A new chapter in the life of the community and our service of the mission that Fr John Main began, has opened." This is the start of our commitment as a community to be stewards of a sacred place where the gift of meditation will be preserved as a living experience and continuously offered to the world.

The blessing of Bonnevaux took place on 21 November with the installation of an icon of John Cassian. There is a six minute video with Fr Laurence describing this lovely event on the WCCM website, which is well worth viewing. We are grateful for the presence of WCCM in the world, for the gifts that have been shared up til now, and for the all the hopes that Bonnevaux embodies for future generations.

Meditation is the supreme way into faith, into commitment. All action must be shallow, mere immediacy, if it is not based on the commitment to what is real, which must also be to what is eternal. Our invitation is to know now, with direct, personal knowledge, what is real and eternal, and knowing it, to live our lives inspired by love. John Main OSB

May Bonnevaux flourish as a lamp on a lampstand, a new way of contemplative Christianity, a centre of peace, a place of teaching and transmission, and a home for future generations of our community. May the Lord bring to completion the good work he has begun in us and in the Bonnevaux of the 21st century. Laurence Freeman OSB

Kathryn Houston

*Director of Liaison with National Coordinators
The World Community for Christian Meditation*

To find out more about our new International Retreat Centre in Bonnevaux
<http://bonnevauxwccm.org/>



National Co-ordinator Update

December 2017

Season's greetings to you all.

Essential Teaching Weekend:

For those wanting to deepen their meditation practice and grow in confidence in sharing the gift of meditation, an Essential Teaching Weekend was held in Wellington in late October. Nine of us, from Ashburton to Napier, plus Fr Peter from Auckland, gathered for a weekend of meditation, learning and sharing. The programme covered the essential teaching and history of Christian Meditation, skills to guide us in preparing to present CM to a group, and the spiritual journey. We had the opportunity to practice presenting CM to each other. It was reassuring to experience different styles and to realise that they were all effective, given we each had an enthusiasm for sharing the gift of meditation and resources to enable us to explain it. This enriching weekend ended with a contemplative, inclusive Mass.

Starter Pack for New Groups:

We have put together a series of documents as a "Starter Pack" for those thinking of setting up a new group. The packs are emailed to anyone who asks – just email Linda at:

nandlpolaschek@gmail.com

The documents are:

- * an example brochure you can adapt with your own details.
- * a sheet on how to download audio files from the World Community for Christian Meditation (wccm) website.
- * a sheet with links to some suggested initial talks for CM groups that can be downloaded and played directly from a laptop or other device.



Some of the participants at the ETW:

left to right: Tony Scott, Alison Kerr, Fr Peter Murphy, Lesley Cotterill, Fiona Cummings, Anne Cave

* a membership form for anyone interested in CM to complete and send their details to the membership secretary so that they go on the email list for NZCCM postings.

* the latest copy of *Stillpoint* to show anyone interested the NZCCM newsletter distributed quarterly, (free to all via email; posted to those who have a current subscription and request a posted copy).

* information about TimePeace (the CD that plays music, has silence for the time of meditation and then plays music again).

* information about Silence and Stillness in Every Season – an optional resource book of short excerpts from John Main which can be purchased from Pleroma.

In addition to these, new group leaders may also receive a CD or two to start with and then go on the distribution list for the new CDs which are regularly received from MedioMedia (wccm publishing). The booklet *The 6 Week Introductory Course* is also available for those planning to run an introduction to Christian Meditation.

Exciting plans for January 2019:

The dates for our next National Silent Retreat at Waikato University are: Sunday 13 to Wednesday 16 January 2019. Fr Laurence Freeman will be our Retreat Leader. We are very grateful that Fr Laurence has agreed to come and support our meditation community in New Zealand.

After the Retreat, on Thursday and Friday 17 & 18 January, we will be holding a *Meditatio* Seminar in Auckland on Contemplative Care.

Fr Laurence will also be speaking at this. The focus will be on Caring for the Carers and End of Life Care.

I suggest you keep these dates 13 to 18 January 2019 in mind. With the purchase of Bonnevaux now completed, (see the wccm website for more on this story) and the renovation beginning, Fr Laurence will be more and more stationed there and less available to come to out of the way places like New Zealand. The opportunity to hear him in person is a privilege for us.

Please let me know:

ETW - We are starting to collect names of those interested in attending, or finding out more about the next Essential Teaching Weekend. Please let me know if you would like to have more information when it comes to hand.

7 day Silent Retreat – 8 to 14 October 2018. Known as the “School Retreat”, this intensive, meditative retreat will be held at Tyburn, Ngakura, near Rotorua. Please let me know if you are interested in attending.

Webmaster/mistress – We are looking for a new webmaster. We are very grateful to our wonderful current webmistress, Ingrid, who continues in this role in the meantime. Please step forward if you have even minimal computer skills as Ingrid will support you to learn the role.

2019 - With both the January retreat and seminar we will need some people to help organise these in 2018. Please let me know if you would like to be involved in the planning and organising.

Warm regards,
Linda Polaschek
National Co-ordinator
nandlpolaschek@gmail.com
04 4797955; 020 4797955

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The Essential Teaching Weekend

by Fr Peter Murphy

The Essential Teaching Weekend (ETW) is now an established part of the life of the world community. It consists of a residential weekend in which participants who have been meditating regularly for approximately a year to two years or more, come together to learn more about the essential teaching of Christian meditation, the history of the tradition and a map of the spiritual journey. It is seen as a vital step in enabling meditators to not only grow in understanding of the practice, but also grow in confidence in being able to share it.

John Main did not encourage reading about meditation when one started meditating mainly because it is the experience of meditation that becomes the primary teacher, otherwise it is just a head trip. Knowledge of the practice and the tradition comes later once one has committed to the practice, especially relevant as we live in an age that is short on commitment.

A key part of the weekend is a ten minute introductory talk to an audience of your choice on the practice of meditation. Obviously the talk would be measured to the audience, whether it be a secular or a Christian one. Similarly if it is directed to children or adults. But the core of the talk would be the same, namely the posture, closing one's eyes lightly, the mantra *Maranatha*, and the discipline of doing this twice a day, in the early morning and early evening for 20-30 minutes (for adults) each time.

Those who have access to the WCCM website should be aware of the app that contains the Daily Wisdom, Weekly Readings and Weekly Teachings along with other matters. All these aids are there to help us in our practice. The Daily Wisdom can be accessed first thing in the morning. The Weekly Readings are there for personal use. The Weekly Teachings are for the group and group leaders are encouraged to make these available, particularly for those who do not have access to the website. All these resources are there to help us in our practice by offering personal encouragement. The weekly teachings particularly offer assistance by providing an understanding of the spiritual journey, its ups and downs, its ins and outs, especially when one feels one is making no progress.

I recently led an ETW in Wellington at the Home of Compassion at which there were nine participants. Next year we are proposing an ETW in both Auckland and Christchurch. Dates and venues are still to be determined. The next stage, the School Retreat, is being held at the Tyburn Monastery in Ngakuru in October. This is by invitation to those we see as contributing further to the work of the community.

Addendum. Some years ago at an ETW we were discussing bringing Christian meditation into public schools, where of course anything that smacks of religious practice is taboo. We proposed that the word *aroha* would be a suitable mantra to use. I checked this out with Kim in London, the then leader of the teaching arm of the community and author of the weekly teachings. She concurred that this would be acceptable in a secular setting. However, when I spoke about this to Fr Laurence he indicated that when we are talking about the practice in whatever setting, we should always propose *Maranatha* as the recommended mantra. What people choose to use is up to them but at least in public we should not deviate from the teaching, thus remaining faithful to the tradition. ✘

Advent Meditation

Drawn substantially from Archbishop Rowan Williams : A Ray of Darkness

by Ross Miller

In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and the bats. Isaiah 2:20

Archbishop Rowan Williams is a poet and it is not difficult to see how this picture appealed to him. I imagine him in the pulpit of some Anglican shrine, opening the Advent season as he was, surrounded by gold plate and colour and consigning it all to the rodents where it ultimately belongs. He begins by describing something of the appalling moral anxiousness of our age. We invented photography in case we really are invisible. We became credulous about extra-terrestrial beings in case we really are alone – we project on to the empty space before us the voices we need to hear. But above all we make idols, and we have achieved the vast pantheon of the gods we now live for and die for, with their harvest of paralysing unhappiness and anxiety.

Thomas Keating describes this as the ego's fatal tendency to look for

happiness in all the wrong places. The eyes of the idol are my own says Williams. But Advent is when we all become Jews again. For the Jew, loyalty to the Covenant meant above all the forsaking of idols – the task is not to make sense of the world, beginning from unaided human resource, but to let ourselves be given sense purely by the summons of God. It is simply the first and second commandment that we cannot make God and it is the hardest lesson of all.

The Advent tension is a way of learning again that God is God: that between even our deepest and holiest longings and the reality of God, is a gap which only grace can cross; otherwise we are alone again, *incommunicado*, our signals and symbols bouncing back to us off the glossy walls of the universe...

Advent insists we stay for a while in this tension of being "on the eve",

if only in order that the new thing we celebrate at Christmas may have a chance of being truly new for us, not a stale and pious cliché. In Advent we notice again the power of our urge to idolatry. We are pushed back into the experience of Israel's unconsolated rejection of idols. Advent tells us to look for mystery, absolute grace and freedom in a human face. It brings our idolatry - philosophical and mythological – to judgment. Our hunger is met, and we are talked and touched into new and everlasting life, as our desire is answered - but only insofar as we have lived in an Advent of the religious imagination, struggling to let God be God, "casting our idols of silver and gold to the moles and the bats" for fear of the Lord and the glory of his majesty "longing simply for our God to show himself as God, in the total love of his incarnate speech to us".

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WCCM Benedictine Oblates

Oblation is a traditional form of monastic life that appeals to many on a contemplative path today. Some meditators want to support and express their spiritual journey by becoming Benedictine Oblates of the World Community of Christian Meditation. In New Zealand there are twenty fully professed Oblates, plus seven Novices and one Postulant in formation. Oblates may be single or married, young or old. They take monastic promises adapted to their way of life and share in several of the spiritual practices of monastic life. They meet in local cell groups for support and spiritual growth.

The Wellington and Hawkes Bay cell groups met recently at Southern Star Abbey. During this gathering Kathy Egan from Napier was received as a novice and Shirley Duthie from Otane, Central Hawkes Bay, was fully professed as a Benedictine Oblate. The ceremony was conducted by Hugh McLaughlin, the New Zealand Co-ordinator of the Benedictine Oblates of the WCCM, and Father John Pettit of Southern Star Abbey.

Historically, Oblates have been around since the time of St. Benedict, in the sixth century. The term "oblate"



Left to right. Shirley Duthie, Hugh McLaughlin and Kathy Egan

comes from Latin, meaning, simply, "to offer". In the beginning, Oblates were children offered to the monastery by their parents. Over time, the term "Oblate" came to mean lay people outside the monastic enclosure who were connected with a particular monastery, and deeply informed by the monastic way of life.

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“The Art of Meditation and Dadirri”

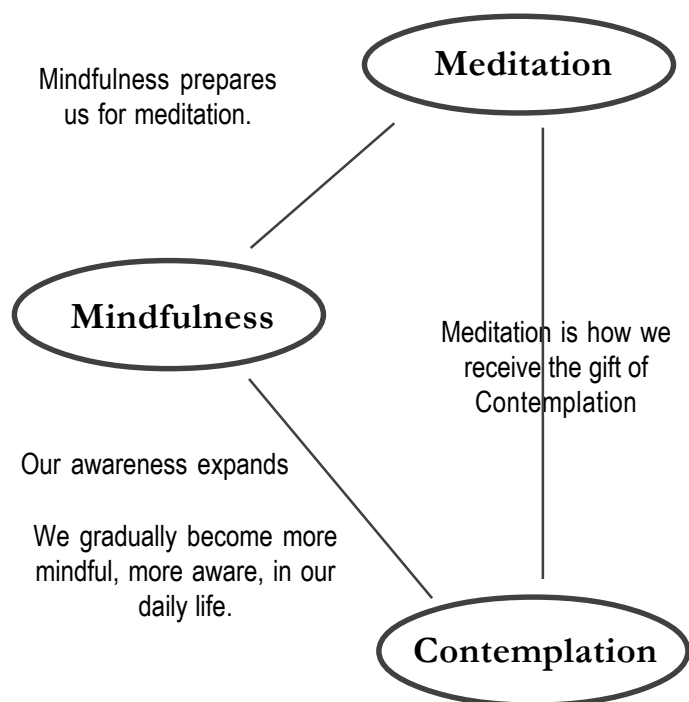
A Conversation between Fr Laurence Freeman OSB and Mirriam-Rose Ungunmerr was part of the Meditatio Conference held in July 2017 at the Australian Catholic University

The following edited transcript was contributed by Maximo Crisanti

Teachings on Mindfulness, Meditation and Contemplation by Fr. Laurence Freeman:

Mindfulness, it seems to me, comes from a great spiritual tradition which is Buddhism. Mindfulness has been extracted from this spiritual tradition and packaged for the purposes of the modern urban living, as an emergency measure to slow people down, to calm the mind and make them more aware of the present moment. It has been packaged as an emergency measure because of the level of distraction and anxiety that has become so great. Mindfulness, it seems to me, has its attractiveness as a method for calming the mind and slowing it down, this is an indication of how desperate things are becoming. We should not lose sight that Mindfulness is part of a broader understanding of spirituality in which Mindfulness techniques are a preparation for meditation, and meditation is the way we receive the gift of contemplation. If you meditate you become more mindful in your own daily life and mindfulness becomes a way of life.

It is a circle:



Question: I would like to know what the spiritual fruits of meditation are? Do we experience God more or what?

Answer by Fr. Laurence Freeman: Contemplation is understood as the work of love. As you move into this work of receiving the gift of contemplation, you are loving and you are receiving love. That’s what you are entering

into so you should become a more loving person. There are many ways to describe this. One way is that the fruit of meditation is that you become the person you truly are. The person God has created in the mystery of eternity; manifesting God-self in you and through you as part of the whole of creation and yet a unique manifestation. That’s one way of saying it.

Another way of saying it is ... Most people today in the streets of Sydney may be interested because of the benefits of meditation. Improved blood pressure, better sleep pattern at night, reduces your anxiety level and stress level and improves your cardiovascular system; and all of these things can be measurable to a point. Modern medicine and science have proved all these benefits. And that’s a good enough reason to start for many people today. But when you start and experience the benefits of meditation, something expands; your awareness expands and now you will inevitably look for the meaning of this experience. That’s where, I think, the person that is looking for benefits finds it is worth devoting this time to meditation because of what I get out of it; then this person becomes aware of the fruits of the spiritual fruits of this.

And the difference between the benefits and the fruits is that the fruits are even deeper experiences but cannot be measured. One way of describing the fruits will be like St Paul describes them; Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Fidelity, Gentleness and Self-Control. And he says there is no law dealing with things like this. In other words they cannot be regulated, measured or put under the microscope; and yet these things are very real qualities of life that make life worth living it. I mean, it may be very important for you to have good blood pressure but good blood pressure in itself does not make life worth living whereas becoming a more loving, joyful, peaceful and kind human being does make life worth living for its own sake.

Now the interesting thing from a Christian perspective is that I think you can see there is a link between the benefits and the fruits. They are not different worlds. They are different ways of looking at the same thing; there is a basic principle in theology which is that Grace works on nature, it does not come from outer space, it works from within the natural world and that includes our own human nature which includes our psychology, physiology and neurology.

So it isn’t surprising then that as we open ourselves to the Grace in the work of meditation that we should see this work of Grace reflecting in our physical and psychological dimensions, and seeing that connection is one of the greatest discoveries we have to re-make (to rediscover) in our time.



My Various Meditative Practices

“The Doctor of our souls has placed the remedy in the hidden regions of the soul.”

St John Cassian [360-435 A.D.]

by **Gabrielle Daly**



Encouraged by the NZCCM to a daily practice of Christian Meditation, I am, sadly, one of those souls who cannot always achieve what I hope to in each day. But instead of beating myself up over it, and feeling like a failure, as I was wont to do, I have taken it to God in prayer on the page. Yes, I have opened my soul to Holy Spirit on the page, of my Journal, of which there are now nearly thirty. In opening my soul on the page, the Dear and Divine Physician is able to minister to me very well indeed.

In 2016 I was trying to make sense of my life circumstances; asking advice from wise people; praying in various ways; seeking the company of fun people; studying my last papers towards “yet another diploma”; and doing my professional mahi [work] to my best capability, and sometimes succeeding. One day I opened *The Message*, a contemporary language Bible, a thing of rare beauty. I was drawn to Isaiah and found this statement in Isaiah 30:15 -

Your salvation requires you to turn back to me and stop your silly efforts to save yourselves. Your strength will come from settling down in complete dependence on me — The very thing you’ve been unwilling to do.

I sat in silence, admonished yet grinning from ear to ear, laughed out aloud and thought: “There really is a way through this that will take less effort on my part, and more of Your presence. Yay and triple yay!”

What followed was this: I started again by meditating 2 to 3 times a week, and not chastising myself anymore for not meeting my own expectations of seven days a week. I prayed with my breath every day – continuing to breathe out and in yet firstly focusing on my out breath - breathing out three times all that is not of God in me (the negative passions eg resentment), then breathing in all of God’s resources for me (the fruits of the Spirit eg self-control). I Journalled 2 to 3 times a week, talking with God on the page. I wrote Haiku poetry to centre myself; I drew mandalas [circles drawings] and frequently drew mandorlas as well (two overlapping circle drawings). God and I were meeting in the central almond shaped overlap. Blessings galore!

All of these are meditative, or contemplative practices. They sit well with me, and my Enneagram Personality Type Four. The Four is The Romantic, sometimes The Tragic Romantic. Fours love things solitary, beautiful, and artistic; we can be mystical or at least seek to be mystically aware, attuned, intuitively alert to things unsaid. So, I employ my self-awareness in seeking God in all circumstances, just as God seeks to be with and in us in all of our circumstances.

Gabrielle Daly: South Waikato.

*Spiritual director, psychotherapist, counsellor,
professional supervisor.*

www.compassioservices.com



Wellington Regional Day of Reflection

a report from Elspeth Preddey, Co-ordinator

Fr Alan Roberts led us on a journey to ponder the thirst, the hunger, the spiritual desire each of us is born with, to realise the Holy Spirit fully in our own being.

On Saturday 4 November 2017, about two dozen of us were there to learn something of the St Ignatius Way of Contemplation. We kept silence as we broke for some time alone to ponder the morning's ideas. How early in our lives could we remember feeling a longing to know God? What kept us from seeking to satisfy that longing? What was still holding us back?

To prepare for silent meditation, we took half a dozen long slow deep breaths and deliberately relaxed each part of our body in turn.

To come out of each meditation, we took a couple of minutes to slowly stretch each part of our body.

Listening to the questions and comments people raised in the afternoon, we learnt what different paths had brought us together for a day of contemplation with Fr Alan and how similar were the reasons for the importance we attached to meditating in our daily lives.

For myself I felt more deeply than ever what Martin Luther expressed in his hymn: *Ein Feste Burg Ist Unser Gott (A mighty fortress is our God)*.

It was great to have people from all over the Wellington region, Carterton and Otaki to Island Bay.

The Home of Compassion is a superb venue with the preparations of the site beautifully finished to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of Compassion by the Venerable Suzanne Aubert. We were thankful to the Sisters to be made so welcome there.

Kia ora, Elspeth



Christian Meditation as an 11th Step Practice

Christchurch Christian Meditation Community Afternoon with Linda Kaye

a report from Paddy Walker

Our guest speaker at our Labour Weekend Community Afternoon of Reflection was Linda Kaye, Director of the World Community of Meditation at Neptune Beach Florida, USA.

In a wide-ranging discourse, she outlined her journey since joining AA 33 years ago. It led her and supported her to sobriety and she believed she had “Come Home”. But something was missing. 16 years ago she was challenged: “Have you practised the 11th Step of the AA programme ?” (ie “sought through prayer and meditation to improve your conscious conduct with God as you understand Him”) “Well, no, actually” she replied.

A small notice led her (having previously dabbled in Eastern meditation practices) to a Christian Meditation group. The St. Francis of Assisi prayer “it is in giving that we receive” resonated with Linda. The special “Christian Meditation as an 11th Step Practice” Outreach, developed twelve years ago within the WCCM, has as its Mission Statement:

“We are a group of men and women from 12 step programmes, following the teachings of John Main and the World Community for Christian Meditation. We are not a replacement for, nor are we affiliated with, any 12 Step Programme of Recovery. We are here to share this ancient path of contemplative prayer as a way to practise the 11th Step”

After the time of silence at a group meeting, the following prayer may be said:

*In the name of the One
Beyond all names
The Word made flesh
Of the Spirit poured into our
hearts
In whom we live and love
And have our being
Amen*

Like John Main (and our own meditation group knows this too) Linda also values the community aspect of a meditation group “sharing is a way of staying ‘right sized’”.

Linda’s simple, daily Arrow prayers towards God are an inspiration to me:

*“Thank you”
“Help me”
“Free me”
“Hold me”*

The Centre she leads is fully staffed by volunteers, like herself, and offers three meditations daily – 7am, noon, and 7pm, for people of any beliefs. How marvellous for their city!

Linda is now convinced that, through Christian Meditation, she has been blessed:

AA = ½ way Home
+ Meditation = FULLY HOME

I, like quite a number of our well-attended afternoon, had little prior knowledge of AA. It was an enlightening and heartfelt talk and I was blessed to be there. Thank you Linda – also thanks to Annette, from our Wanaka group, who escorted Linda round New Zealand.

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left to right:

Annette Reinheimer from Wanaka, Michael Dougherty from Whangarei and Linda Kaye from Florida.

photograph taken recently in Whangarei

Abbot Pastor said: A man must breathe humility and fear of God just as ceaselessly as he inhales and exhales air. It was said of Abbot Agatho that for three years he carried a stone in his mouth until he learned to be silent.

The Wisdom of the Desert : Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century

A Cloud

Transcript of talks prepared by Liz Watson to help meditators understand the meaning and purpose of the practice of Christian Meditation. The talks were recorded in the UK in February 2013 specially for the Meditatio Series.



No one has ever seen God and, of course, we know that. It is as though God is hidden, hidden in a cloud.

The cloud is a very good image for our experience of God. A cloud can completely obscure a mountain top and if we are in the cloud, with all the familiar landmarks gone, we are very disorientated; we do not know where we are. And so it is with God. But this cloud which hides God is not impermeable. It is not a brick wall. It does not stop communication; it does not stop all communication from happening. When we are in a cloud, the cloud does not completely block out all of our senses. We can still hear although it is difficult to know where a voice is coming from. We can still touch and taste, but we are definitely out of the normal territory that we know how to navigate. We are outside of our comfort zone and when we are outside of our comfort zone, that is a good place to encounter God. God can speak to us in new ways.

When we come to the stories of Moses in the Old Testament, it is in a cloud on a mountain top that Moses has his closest encounters with God, and those encounters are profound for himself and also very fruitful for others because it is in the cloud that he receives the Law and the Promise for the people. These encounters with Moses in a cloud were of great interest to some of the spiritual writers of Christianity. In the early centuries, Gregory of Nyssa, in the fourth century, was particularly interested in them. He puts it this way:

“Moses boldly approached the very darkness itself and entered the

invisible things. He teaches, I think, by the things he did – that one who is going to associate intimately with God must go beyond all that is visible and believe that the divine is there where the understanding does not reach.”

So, that is the point – no one has ever seen God. We cannot grasp God with our reasoning mind; we cannot grasp God with our thoughts. Because this meeting with God is an intimate meeting, Gregory of Nyssa says, it is to do with love, to do with relationship. And you cannot fall in love with God by thinking about God. We cannot fall in love with anyone by thinking about them and if you do think yourself into believing that you love someone, you are very soon going to discover that you have fooled yourself and that would be a tragic mistake. It is the same for intimacy with God. It is not so much an effort of the head, of the mind or the will, but it is an affair of the heart that involves everything that we are, that catches us up whole and takes us beyond our self.

The image of a cloud is one that is also taken up very prominently by the fourteenth century spiritual text on meditation, *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The writer of *The Cloud* - we do not know the name of him or her - has at the core of the work, the idea of two clouds. There is a cloud of unknowing in which God is hidden because we cannot know God in that way.

The author says:

“Of God himself, no man can think. He may well be loved but not thought. By love, He may be grasped

and held, but by thought, never. So, we have to put our own thoughts in another cloud, in a cloud of forgetting; and it is only if we put our own thoughts in a cloud of forgetting that, paradoxically, we are able to direct ourselves into the cloud of unknowing where God is hidden beyond thought.”

When he is talking about the work of meditation, the author of *The Cloud* tells us to allow ourselves to forget all of our thoughts and feelings, to put them in the Cloud of Forgetting, but to try and strike the Cloud of Unknowing with a dart of longing love.

We should reach out with a naked intent to God, he says, with no desire but Himself. And, in order to do that, he says, you can have this naked intent wrapped up and enfolded in one word. Fasten this word to your heart so it never leaves you, come what may.

So we take up our word, we repeat it in our heart, come what may; give it our attention, come what may.

If any thought should press upon you to ask what you would have, answer it with no other word but this one word, says *The Cloud* author.

So he knows what it means to be human. If any thought should try to interrupt us or try to steal our attention away, all we have to do is answer that distraction by coming back to the word, the same one word. *The Cloud* author again:

“And, if you should be tempted to analyse this word, answer that you will have it whole and undeveloped. So there we are – you are not to be tempted into thinking about

your distractions. If you will but hold fast, *The Cloud* author says, be sure your temptation will not last long.

So whatever sort of distraction comes your way, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* suggests that you have one answer and that one answer is your word, your mantra. You keep on saying the mantra and anything that invites you away from it, you answer it by coming back to the one word.

Or as John Main says:

“The only advice I have to give you is ‘Say your word’”.

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Radiating Christ

a prayer written by Cardinal Newman

contributed by Damian Robertson

Dear Jesus,
help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go.

Flood my soul with Your Spirit and Life.

Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly
that all my life may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through me and be so in me that every soul
I come in contact with may feel Your presence in my soul.

Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus!
Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as You shine,
so to shine as to be a light to others; the light, O Jesus,
will be all from You; none of it will be mine:
it will be You shining on others through me.

Let me thus praise You in the way You love best:
by shining on those around me.

Let me preach You without preaching, not by words,
but by my example, by the catching force,
the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness
of the love my heart bears to You.

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Waikato Bay of Plenty Region Community Day

a report from Damian Robertson, Co-ordinator

Our region's second Community Day was held on Saturday 14 October 2017 in St Joseph's Catholic Church Lounge at Waihi. A very pleasing 19 persons attended from as far away as Turangi. The host group was led by Raewyn Blair and supported by the nearby Katikati group.

In the morning session we listened to the meditation story of Gabrielle Daly-Fong and then watched the second of Fr Bede Griffiths' talks to the 1991 Indiana John Main Seminar. In the afternoon we heard the meditation story of Dolores Edge

before watching the third of Fr Bede's talks. The recording failed after about 20 minutes, but we were able to pick up from what he had been saying and read a passage from one of his books which was amongst the stock provided by *Pleroma Christian Supplies* for our sales table. We managed to pick a passage which dovetailed very well and led us nicely into our second meditation.

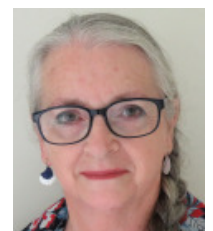
Sales at the *Pleroma* book stall amounted to around \$140.00. The \$60 offered to the hosts for their costs was returned as a donation, so we were able to

bank \$73-00 in the Friends Account and \$52.70 in the General Account as a donation. Three copies of *Sharp Darts of Longing Love* were also sold and the proceeds banked.

We were blessed with a beautiful Spring day, which added to the very warm and communal ambience of the event.

Damian
Robertson

Co-ordinator



The New Monasticism

An inter-spiritual manifesto for contemplative living by Rory McEntee & Adam Bucko

recommendation by Ingrid Bryant

I have enjoyed reading and going back to this book over the last few years. The passages that spoke to me the most were part of the introduction:

If you, also, are a seeker drawn to a committed spiritual life and yet do not feel at home in any one of the established religious traditions, you are not alone. You are probably a new monastic — a member of a growing tribe of inter-spiritual beings who draw from the many wells of the world's timeless mystical teachings, and with these mingled waters, cultivate the garden of your soul and feed the hungry. This is a process that involves discernment, patience and faith, in the invisible life germinating underground. It is an endeavor that comes with no manual, though there are many teachers who can offer guidance on plowing or planting, weeding or deadheading, harvesting and feeding. The journey of new monasticism requires deep quiet, deep listening, deep dialogue. It is not for those who are looking for predictable questions and reliable answers. It may yield blissful moments, but it is not feel-good spirituality. It is a ferocious devotion to Love itself. If you are this fierce, tender, curious, broken-open kind of being, you are probably a new monastic.

And words attributed to Bede Griffiths:

He went on to express a new vision for monastics, one in which communities and individuals live spiritual lives independent of religious organisations or institutions, independent of celibacy and overarching rules and dogmas — free to follow their own conscience and guidance of the Holy Spirit in living a sacred life, yet united in the common cause of building a sacred world. We envision these “new monastic” lives as being fully engaged in contemporary life, involved in relationships, exploring new ways of walking the spiritual path and committed to sacred activism.

He goes on about describing these monastic communities in the world:

Some communities may remain very loose, some may become very close. Each one has to evolve as the Spirit moves

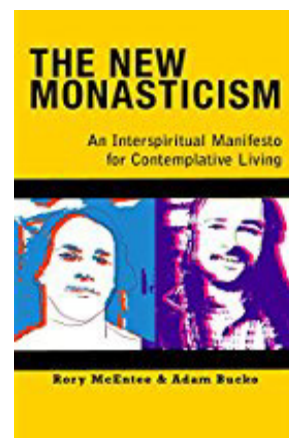
it ... We must keep that freedom of the Spirit by learning from one another, coming together day by day and discerning ... all in a growth process ... It is so easy to get into rules and organisation and so to narrow the freedom of the Spirit ... It is by learning really to trust the Spirit, in our prayers and meditation, and to share this trust with one another, that a new language will gradually form ... Social action should flow from our contemplation. It should not be a sideline or something inherently different, but should be integrated in our prayer and meditation ... unless meditation is fed by concern with people's problems and the world's problems, it loses its depth. There is no rivalry between contemplation and action.

Father Bede compares these communities to those of the Sufis, practitioners of the mystical branch of Islam, who are often married, have families, and are deeply engaged in the world, organised in communities which help them to live from the depth of their commitment to contemplative life.

The descriptions of the book, *The New Monasticism*, give more insight into what the book is about:

In this book young leaders of the new monastic movement introduce their vision for contemplative life - one that draws from the long traditions of East and West but also seeks an interreligious and 'interspiritual' dimension to intentional living in our time.

The New Monasticism is an introduction to the "new monastic movement," offering the authors' intellectual and spiritual reflections on what contemplative life could look like in the 21st century. With chapters focusing on spiritual practice, vocation, contemplation and activism, dialogical dialogue, the relationship with traditional religious paths, contemplative psychology and the building of intentional communities, the authors seek to "cut across the boundaries of religious traditions, of contemplation and action, and endeavor to create inter-generational alliances between those immersed in the depths of our traditional religious frameworks and those who are being called to contemplative and prophetic life outside of those frameworks."



While drawing on the work of Raimon Panikkar, St. Teresa of Avila, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Ewert Cousins, Fr. Bede Griffiths, Thomas Merton, Brother Wayne Teasdale, St. John of the Cross and the Russian sophianic tradition, among others, the book also incorporates some popular modern day academic, cultural, and contemplative theorists, such as Ken Wilber and Fr. Thomas Keating, who speak to young people about creating a more sacred and just world while providing them with sophisticated tools for psychological analysis and integrated action. It also offers specific practices for a disciplined contemplative life and inspired social justice activism.

"The inspiration of this book and its presentation of *The New Monasticism* seems to be a genuine movement of the Holy Spirit Adam and Rory have recognized the benefits as well as the hazards of trying to create a new set of spiritual practices built on the wisdom of traditional monastic structures, but with great openness to the technological and scientific opportunities of contemporary culture This great love calls for a personal response from humans that leads to the most intimate relationship conceivable. It awaits our consent.

Fr Thomas Keating

A superb, important new book surveying a significant new spiritual movement A large part of this movement in any of its many forms is driven by the fact that today, for the first time in history, we have access to all of the world's great religious and spiritual traditions, and the many ways that they complement and in some ways complete each other Highly recommended for anybody who wants their thumb on the spiritual pulse of today's religious seeker, or who feels themselves that they are spiritual but not religious.

-Ken Wilber



Praying with the Masters Today

by Nick Polaschek

At the recent John Main seminar in August 2017 in Houston, Bernard McGinn gave a series of talks on western mysticism - entitled "Praying with the Master Today", (available online at WCCM.org). Professor McGinn, from the School of Divinity at Chicago University, is generally recognised as one of the leading scholars on western Christian mysticism. He acknowledged the influence of John Main on his own reflection over many years. The talks were very stimulating, viewing the mystics as writers on prayer that can still speak to us today. He gave an overview of his understanding of the nature of mysticism, then discussed a number of writers (men and women) from different eras, finally looking at several writers on the Lord's prayer.

McGinn's starting point was that in our prayer and meditation we all have an intimation of the gracious divine presence. He called this everyday or ordinary mysticism. As the New Testament teaches, all Christians have the Holy Spirit within their inmost being. Those we call mystics simply have a more intense or deeper awareness of God within them than most people have.

For all of the mystics, the Christian faith experience is one of an awareness of divine graciousness - a transformative divine presence within them. This is not something we achieve ourselves but a divine gift for which one can only dispose oneself through faithful openness in meditative prayer. McGinn observed that the mystic does not actually know any more about God than the rest of us, as none of us can really know anything about God beyond what is revealed, but we can all be open to receiving the gift of a deeper



awareness of divine presence. Laurence Freeman noted (in dialogue with McGinn) about knowing in prayer and meditation - in the moment what we know is that we are known, lovingly known.

All the mystics are clear that the significance of this gracious awareness of God in prayer, the only reason that it matters, is that it is transformative, it changes them and the way they live, enabling them to become more open and loving towards their fellow human beings. This reflects John Main's teaching that it is not what happens in meditation that matters but the gradual transformation of our lives as we are faithful to meditative practice.

In his talks McGinn discussed a sequence of mystical writers, from the earliest writers who shaped the mystic language used in the Christian tradition, notably Origen and Dionysius, through to several modern writers such as Simone Weil and Thomas Merton, who have been important in raising contemporary awareness of mysticism. Some who were almost forgotten in the past have

become very popular today, because they speak meaningfully to us in our contemporary situation, notably Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*.

Reading McGinn: His massive 7 volume history on mysticism is not the place to start, or perhaps (speaking for myself) to ever get to. A great book is his anthology, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism*, with an excellent introduction setting out his view of the nature of mysticism, and a pretty comprehensive sampling of writers, each reading being well introduced and contextualized. The mystics in these talks are all represented and many more.

Another book he wrote with his wife: *Early Christian Mystics*, is a short very readable overview of the contribution of key early mystics to the Christian understanding of prayer, kind of a "a very brief introduction to".

These writings, like the talks themselves, can help us today in appreciating the insights the mystics have to offer us about prayer.



Questions and Answers

by Shirley Duthie

Q: I'm finding myself thinking/saying the mantra at odd times during the day, or even when I wake during the night. Is this OK?

A: There are many admonitions in spiritual writings and in Scripture to "pray at all times". Using your mantra when doing repetitive tasks such as exercising, waiting in traffic, feeding an infant, sitting in the sun, all contribute to anchoring the mantra into your subconscious.

Paul Harris warns about inappropriate times to use the mantra: "driving a car, operating machinery or using dangerous tools" and especially "when we need to give our full attention to writing, reading, listening to music, conversation with others and other tasks requiring concentration"1.

Q: Like many of my generation, guilt is wired into my brain. How do I get the balance right between regular commitment and a sense of failure when circumstances or my misjudgement means a missed meditation time?

A: Meditation is intended to be freeing, a delight to be looked forward to, not a duty to be "done". Yes we do try to build a regular practice of meditation times but we live in the world and despite our best intentions, the world gets in, up-ends our plans or, just perhaps, God has another more urgent task for us. Turning off your phone is easy, a knock at the door from a neighbour, or a friend in need, is less so. So, goodbye guilt, and welcome innovation. Maybe a rescheduling of your meditation time is necessary if interruptions persist. In New Zealand sometimes daylight saving means scheduling a later or earlier time during summer. We do our best then we need to trust that our Creator will lead us to the solution.

1. Paul Harris: Frequently Asked Questions About Christian Meditation



Q & A - a place for your questions related to Christian Meditation - no matter what! The **Q & A** Convenor Shirley Duthie will answer, or find an expert to tackle any question relating to your daily practice, your CM Group or Community Days, parish difficulties related to Christian Meditation, Christian Meditation history or writings about CM and related subjects.

The Art Of Grief

(www.artofgrief.com)

The Art of Grief is an illustrated booklet released on Sunday 12 November, 2017, at the memorial event to mark the life of Caroline Boyd, public servant, women's advocate and avid jogger. It is available from Juliet Cooke, author, artist and sister-in-law of Caroline. Quotes in it are taken from the family (she was my cousin's eldest daughter), eulogies, and the obituary.

Caroline's death was on 19 March 2017 from a speeding car as she jogged home along a footpath beside Paekakariki School. For her memorial event about 400 of us gathered in Paekakariki and walked or ran the same route she always took. We raised over \$10,000 for a Memorial Fund set up in her name through the Nikau Foundation (www.nikaufoundation.org.nz) to support causes close to her heart.

A quote: She was deeply embedded in her community. All these roles were as important to her as her paid work, and she completed them with the same proficiency and drive.

She believed in people.- she nurtured their skills, listened carefully to their thoughts and made time to support their work. She was loved. She kept her deep faith discreetly and humbly within her own church circle.

*Kia ora
Elspeth Preddy*



Membership Secretary Wanted

The person in this role maintains the membership list and sends out the annual subscription invitation. It involves:

- * Keeping the membership list (stored on Google Drive) up-to-date when any changes are notified.
- * Liaising with the webmaster to ensure that any new members are also added to the mailchimp list of those who receive NZCCM emails from the webmaster.
- * Ensuring an invitation to pay the annual subscription is sent out to each member when due.
- * Checking that those receiving *Stillpoint* by post are currently up-to-date with their subscriptions and sending out subscription reminders by post as needed.
- * Liaising with the treasurer and national coordinator as needed.

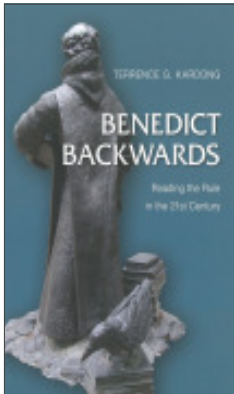
This role is not onerous, usually taking just a few hours a month.

If you would like to offer your help or find out more about this role, please contact:

Linda Polaschek nandlpolaschek@gmail.com or phone 04 4797955

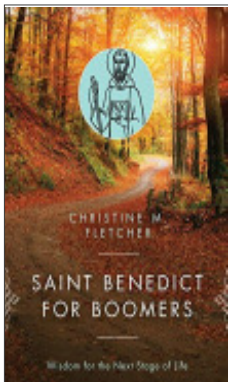
New on Pleroma Shelves by Shirley Duthie

Benedict Backwards: 130pp. \$35.99



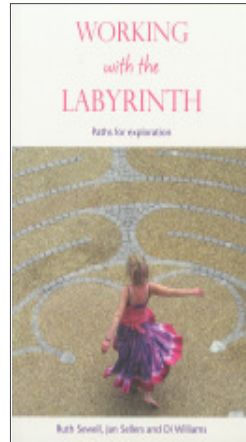
Reading the Rule in the 21st Century, Terence G. Kardong.
The author, suggests that the emphasis in the Rule should be on the last chapters, not the first ones. The final chapters of the Rule are primarily about community and they provide insight into Benedict's vision for his monks. Oblates and those who use the Rule daily will find this viewpoint exposes relevant new insights, a fresh breeze ruffling the pages without damaging the content.

Saint Benedict for Boomers: 136pp. \$33.99



Wisdom for the Next Stage of Life by Christine M. Fletcher.
This book is based on the idea that no one can retire from being a Christian; we are to love God and our neighbour throughout our life. It recognises that aging presents us with change, loss and death, as well as new growth and opportunities for deep gladness and peace. Benedict's wisdom remains helpful even as we negotiate new challenges in living well, preserving health and ultimately facing sickness and death.

Working with the Labyrinth: 140pp. \$29.99



Paths for Exploration Ruth Sewell, Jan Sellers and Di Williams. Here are ideas and examples of labyrinths in use in various situations: arts, community and social settings; schools, colleges and universities; a hospice, and a secure hospital, counselling, psychotherapy and well-being; churches, retreats and interfaith contexts. Includes photographs and plans for both permanent and temporary labyrinths. Ideal for anyone looking for fresh ideas and ways forward in introducing, creating and working with labyrinths.

Order at:

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Auckland Retreat - November 2017 St Francis' Retreat House, Hillsborough, Auckland

Everything that is : is Holy Led by Fr Raymond Schmack



Front row:

Bernadette Hannon, Jocelyn Owen,
Pik Ho, Fiona Green, John Cole

Second row:

Barbara Polman-Lee, Bev Neale,
Jacqueline Driscoll, Carol Byrne,
Margaret Fairweather

Third row:

Carmel O'Neill- Gregory, Suzie Haddow,
Penny Emslie, Paulina Ifopo,
Vincent Maire, Damian Robertson

Back row:

Charmainne Tolich, Julia Mullan,
Pam Marlow, Mary Meuli, Fr Peter Murphy,
Randell Tinsley, Nicky Frame,
Tyronne Cooke.

Absent:

Fr Raymond Schmack, Pippa Grant,
Elisapeta Solia, Paul O'Neill,
Dolores Edge.



Grief's Shadowed Path

Poems of Loss and Healing by Hilary Smith

This collection of poetry comes with a backstory. Uncovering this story is as engaging as the poems themselves and enhances the uniqueness of the collection. Subtitled 'Poems of Loss and Healing', it is an account of Hilary Smith's journey over the period leading up to and following the death of her father, Joe, in 2007. The collection opens with the poet recounting how there was an expectation among friends and colleagues that, with her father now dead, her life would "get back to normal" because she no longer had to worry about him. The very opposite was true. Grief is more than just sadness; anger, frustration and a feeling of having let a loved-one down; it can be dominating emotions as we discover in the opening poems. The health system is taken to task, exacerbating grief in the way it adds stress upon stress to loved ones ill-equipped to provide the level of care they so wish to offer. Precisely at a time Hilary wishes to be a daughter, she becomes a carer while also continuing her role as bread winner.

And there you were / another pawn in the chess game of healthcare / the patient patient / discharged from hospital so many times when you weren't well. /

We need the beds, the junior doctor said. And then there is the moment of death itself. The mobile phone rings / your life / ebbing away / I run ... run ... run.

Death, as we all know, comes with its red tape and protocols. There are forms to fill in, the funeral, the wake, catering, condolences to acknowledge. All these make demands at a time we are low in spirit and at our most vulnerable. Hilary Smith uses her skill as a poet to unpack and explore these experiences and their attendant emotions.

Joe, it seems, had his quirky ways and a sense of humour to match. Amongst the emotional turmoil surrounding his passing, is the feeling of astonishment when our poet finds his much-loved French grammar book open and lying on the floor underneath her desk. Well, he was a Scot and a seafarer at that.

Can't rationalise it / didn't imagine it / know that it happened.

Hilary Smith is not alone in her journey of grief and the poem Soul Friends attests to this. But as previously noted, this collection comes with a backstory. Joe, it seems, was a solo-dad at a time and a place (Scotland) when solo-

parenting by a man was unusual. Yes, there is family, but ... / the same blood coursing through our veins / flowing in different directions. Enough said! Memories, dreams, flashbacks, the first Christmas with Joe and the problem of forgetfulness which is one of grief's most common symptoms are explored. And the aptly named *Ambushed* cuts to the heart of how grief can so easily catch us out. Strange the way / triggers return me to the shadows.

All of us will encounter grief at some time in our life, and often more than once. It is, after all, the price of love. It also generates many books, most of which are of a psychological or self-help nature. *Grief's Shadowed Path* is different and not because it is a collection of beautifully crafted verse. Hilary Smith has used her journey to capture grief's rawness and unpredictability. She also offers hope and a heart-centred guidebook to people lost in grief's emotional maze.

Grief's Shadowed Path:
Poems of Loss and Healing
Publisher:
EVBooks, Napier,
evbooks@gmail.com

A brother asked one of the elders: What good thing shall I do, and have life thereby? The old man replied: God alone knows what is good. However, I have heard it said that someone inquired of Fr Abbot Nisteros the great, the friend Abbot Anthony, asking: What good work shall I do? and that he replied: Not all works are alike. For Scripture says that Abraham was hospitable and God was with him. Elias loved solitary prayer, and God was with him. And David was humble, and God was with him. Therefore, whatever you see your soul to desire according to God, do that thing, and you shall keep your heart safe.

An Elder said: Here is the monk's life-work, obedience, meditation, not judging others, not reviling, not complaining. For it is written: You who love the Lord, hate evil. So this is the monk's life - not to walk in agreement with an unjust man, nor to look with his eyes upon evil, nor to go about being curious, and neither to examine nor to listen to the business of others. Not to take anything with his hands, but rather to give to others. Not to be proud in his heart, not to malign others in his thoughts. Not to fill his stomach, but in all things to behave with discretion. Behold, in all this you have the monk.

The Wisdom of the Desert : Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century

Greymouth



left to right: Jane Hole, Danny Cattell, Margaret Moore (insert) and Sally Dunford

Behold the team that crossed the Alps and braved drenching rains to bring the gift of Christian Meditation to the people of Greymouth on the weekend of November 3 to 5. Jane Hole, Sally Dunford and Marg Moore (inset), shown here with longtime Greymouth resident and longtime faithful meditator Danny Cattell, held an introduction to Christian Meditation on the Saturday afternoon, hopeful of finding others to expand Danny's group of one.

Yes, we know not to look for results but it was still surprising that, in spite of some enquiries, no-one turned up. So we went ahead as planned and told ourselves that we'd sowed (given it our best shot indeed) and there would be a reaping in some way, some time. *God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform* perhaps.

In the event we all four had a jolly good time, experienced something of the Wild We(s)t Coast, and knew without doubt that we'd given Danny the encouragement and good fellowship that meditators always experience when they gather. And Danny, as he continues his twice-daily meditation and twice-daily dialysis, will surely feel himself more strongly connected to the rest of the South Island meditation community. And as we reached the divide on the way home - behold! a sunny blustery nor-west day.

Sally Dunford

NZCCM Webmaster/Mistress and Email Distributor

This role covers content management of the NZCCM website (Wordpress) and emailing out emails to members on the mailchimp (email) list. It involves:

- * Entering information about upcoming Community Days, seminars, retreats.
- * Managing the events calendar. Information that needs to be entered on the website comes in 1-2 times per month on average and takes between 30- 60 minutes each time to be entered.
- * Sending out mailchimp emails 1-2 times a month on average. These emails are usually linked to the information about events on the website. Most information comes as finished flyers and just needs to be copied and pasted into the website and emails.
- * Communicating with the web designer if needed. The web designer is prompt in responding, easy to talk to and very helpful. Some creativity is involved if you like adding relevant pictures to the flyers and to the content on the website. The person in this role is also a member of the NZCCM Committee and communicates with the National Co-ordinator as needed. The current webmistress will offer full training and support for this role as needed.

If you would like to offer your help or find out more about this role, please contact:

Linda Polaschek
nandlpolaschek@gmail.com
or phone 04 4797955



<http://www.meditatio.co.uk/video0contemplative-exchange-2017/>

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