



# Stillpoint

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

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## Websites to visit:

[christianmeditationnz.org.nz](http://christianmeditationnz.org.nz)  
[wccm.org](http://wccm.org)  
[christianmeditationaustralia.org](http://christianmeditationaustralia.org)  
[christianmeditation.org.uk](http://christianmeditation.org.uk)

## 2017 National Silent Retreat - “For the Love of the World: Contemplation, Faith and the Active Life”

a report from Vincent Maire, NZCCM National Co-ordinator



Sarah Bachelard

When Fr Laurence Freeman was here for the John Main Seminar I asked him to suggest someone to run the 2017 National Retreat. Without a moment’s hesitation he replied, “Sarah Bachelard.”

Sarah is a theologian, retreat leader and priest in Anglican Orders. She is the founding director of the ecumenical worshipping community, Benedictus Contemplative Church, and an Honorary Research Fellow at the Australian Catholic University. She was formerly Lecturer in Theology, Spirituality and Ethics at St Mark’s National Theological Centre in Canberra, and director-in-residence of the John Main Centre for Meditation and Interfaith Dialogue at Georgetown University in Washington DC.

Sarah has been a keynote speaker at a number of national and international gatherings, including the

WCCM’s symposium, *Meditation and the Monastic Vocation*, held at San Anselmo Benedictine University in Rome in July 2015. She is the author of *Experiencing God in a Time of Crisis and Resurrection and Moral Imagination*.

For more information on Sarah and the Benedictus Contemplative Church visit [www.benedictus.com.au](http://www.benedictus.com.au).

Sarah has chosen “Contemplation, Faith and the Active Life” as her theme. This retreat will allow space for participants to discover and deepen a personal practice of contemplative prayer, as well as explore connections between meditation, faith and the active life.

We are returning to Waikato University for the Retreat and will locate ourselves near the chapel, not where we were for the John Main Seminar. The Retreat will start late afternoon on Monday 23rd January 2017 and end after lunch on Thursday 26th. Like previous events it will be a silent retreat. NZCCM is doing its very best to keep the price of the Retreat as realistic as possible. Brochures will soon be posted to all group leaders and it will be widely promoted via the NZCCM website and other media. Keep an eye out for more information coming your way soon. And yes, we will need a band of willing volunteers to help make this the best Retreat ever. Please contact me if you can help. ✕

# NZCCM Annual Meeting

## June 2016 at the Franciscan Friary in Auckland

a report from Vincent Maire, NZCCM National Co-ordinator



After a very successful Auckland Retreat, the NZCCM Committee gathered on Sunday afternoon of Queen's Birthday weekend at the Franciscan Friary for its annual face-to-face meeting. Everyone except Margaret Moore, South Island Regional Coordinator, was in attendance.

We had a five page agenda to get through so cherry picked some meaty topics for Sunday evening. By 8.30am on Monday we were back at the committee table and didn't stop until 4.00pm.

Key issues considered over the meeting were:

\* Linda Polaschek has taken over the role of NZCCM Secretary in addition to the great work she is doing co-ordinating the membership database.

\* Following the resignation of Grahame Howie, we appointed our webmaster. Ingrid Byrant, as a trustee of NZCCM. Our constitution calls for up to seven people to be trustees and these people are Margaret Moore, Jane Hole, Shirley Duthie, Ingrid Byrant, Vincent Maire, Fr Peter Murphy and Hugh McLaughlin.

\* We discussed the 2017 National Retreat and finalised details around planning and promotion.

\* Jane Hole tabled a proposal to publish a collection of blogs by Warkworth Group leader and oblate, Ross Miller. This was warmly received and we asked Jane to come back with more information so this could be actioned.

\* We discussed the idea of the New Zealand Community hosting a *Meditatio* Seminar in 2018 or 2019. WCCM has been using these seminars to connect with diverse sections of society such as business, health, ecology, social justice and education. We hope to announce more details of this event later in the year.

\* The Committee endorsed a proposal from Northland Regional Co-ordinator Michael Dougherty to run a series of 11th Step Community Days in 2017.

\* A suggestion by Gabrielle Daly-Fong that NZCCM needs to consider Community Days in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions was also discussed.

\* In addition to all of the above, each Committee member tabled and spoke to a report on their particular area of responsibility.

There was a lot of healthy debate, time set aside for meditation and time spent appreciating the wonderful food provided by the Friary catering team.

A common theme from all Committee Members was finding willing hands to help with the myriad tasks of organising events and activities. This, I have found, is not restricted to NZCCM but a feature of most "CCMs" globally.

Our greatest need is for people who are prepared to take the teaching of Christian Meditation into their communities. When group numbers drop off or groups cease to exist, the underlying problem is often a lack of introductory courses being run. If you think you can help, please make contact with your regional co-ordinator for support and guidance.

In July I am attending a WCCM National Co-ordinators Conference in the United Kingdom. I believe that more than 60 people will be there. This event is held every five years and I'm looking forward to hearing how other countries are faring in their efforts to take the teaching to more and more people globally.

I look forward to reporting on this event in the next newsletter. ✕



**NZCCM National Committee from left to right:**

Linda Polaschek, Wellington (Secretary & Membership Secretary); Fr Peter Murphy, Auckland (ETW & Meditation in Schools); Jane Hole, Christchurch (Meditation in Schools National Co-ordinator); Ingrid Byrant, Hastings (Webmaster); Shirley Duthie, Otane (Hawkes Bay-Manawatu Co-ordinator); Vincent Maire, Auckland (National Co-ordinator); Hugh McLaughlin, Paraparaumu (Central Region Co-ordinator & National Oblate Co-ordinator), Ngaire McLaughlin, Paraparaumu (Treasurer); Charmaine Tolich, Auckland (Auckland Region Co-ordinator);  
**Absent:** Margaret Moore, Christchurch (South Island Co-ordinator).

# “Falling in Love with God” Auckland Retreat June 2016 at the Franciscan Friary in Auckland



Some people immediately see the value of walking meditation, but I needed some persuasion before I tried it. “Surely we need to be still to meditate” I grumbled, but after a few self-conscious attempts I began to see that slow, careful walking, whether using a mantra or not, was another helpful way of learning to give single-minded attention. Occasionally, when my meditation time comes, I find sitting too uncomfortable to allow me to pay proper attention to the mantra, and appreciate this alternative way to help calm and focus my distracted self.

There are various forms of walking meditation. When I attended a WCCM retreat in a castle-convent at Fara Sabina outside Rome some years ago, we practised a form of walking meditation every day. Here’s what I wrote in my diary:

‘In the late afternoon, forty of us, bare-footed, walk slowly in a circle on a high terrace bathed in the fine light of a Roman sky, each carefully following the careful footsteps of the person in front. We try to match those footsteps exactly. In our absolute attention we become the feet of the person we follow. I forget to ask myself ‘How am I doing?’ I forget someone is watching my feet.’

*Jane Hole*

The Christian Meditation Retreat was the first Meditation Retreat I have attended and I found it both refreshing and inspiring. The Guest Speaker and Retreat Director was Sr Christina Cathro. Christina led us in an inspiring blend of meditative practice, spiritual direction and Ignatian spiritual practice (with many topical quotes and poetic excerpts included).

We were invited “to the sacred space where God lives. This becomes the operational narrative that gives meaning to our lives.” We were encouraged to reflect on God’s goodness and to also gain an awareness of the self. “As we come to know ourselves we begin to notice those patterns of un-freedom that dictate our actions.”

I appreciated Christina’s breadth of theological and spiritual reflection; acknowledging modern scientific knowledge and our need to personally evolve and grow. The supernatural Theistic belief of the past is replaced by a far greater God of extensive complexity, personal simplicity and future possibilities. And how do we connect and fall in love with God? By cultivating a meditative openness to the presence of God. By being consciously present to God, other people and the wonders of God’s surrounding creation.

The practical application of this broad stimulating teaching was, of course, to mediate. We enjoyed morning and evening meditation sessions, interspersed with free reflective time, personal spiritual direction and combined meditative walks. And, of course, all this was combined with good food and excellent Franciscan hospitality. All in all, an inspiring and very memorable weekend retreat.

*Warwick Rope*



## The New Zealand Community for Christian Meditation 2017 Silent Retreat

“For Love of the World: Contemplation, Faith and the Active Life”

led by

**Sarah Bachelard**

Founding Director of Benedictus Contemplative Church

Monday 23rd to Thursday 26th January 2017

University of Waikato, Hamilton

For further information and to download registration brochure go to: <http://christianmeditationnz.org.nz/>

# Relationship with Jesus Part III

Transcript of talks given by Fr Laurence Freeman OSB at a retreat in Singapore, November 2001



*“Who do you say I am?” That question will lead us on a journey, a journey of relationship and a journey of discovery; a journey of relationship with Jesus*

## Jesus as Teacher

Jesus is called teacher in the gospels more often than by any other title – rabbi, rabboni, teacher. His contemporaries saw him as a spiritual teacher, and one of his characteristics as a teacher is that he taught very frequently by asking questions. A good teacher, when you think about it, does use questions. You can get information out of a book, but to really understand a subject, to really open your mind to it, you need to be stimulated by the right questions and to understand the questions.

When I was a little boy at school, I was very bad at maths, and this was a long time before I became honest and truthful. I discovered with some of my friends that the teacher had a book with the answers at the back, and we reckoned that this probably was not the only copy of the book in existence. So we went down to a bookshop in London one Saturday and we got the textbook with the answers – teacher’s edition. All our problems were over; we never had to worry again about sitting for hours at night doing algebra and geometry; all the answers were there. So our marks shot up overnight. But it didn’t do me any good because I had the answers, but I still couldn’t even understand the questions. Very often we’re much more concerned about getting the answers to our problems than really listening to the important questions.

We all have questions; we’d like to know about the afterlife, about reincarnation, about purgatory, about what happens next and so on. Why is it that the great teachers, the great spiritual teachers of humanity, didn’t just write down the answers to all

these questions once and for all. Maybe these are not the important questions. So what are the questions that Jesus asks?

He asked (I counted once for my book but I’ve forgotten how many) something like 163 questions. “What are you looking for?” is one. Another one he asked one day when he was with some of his friends; he was praying with his disciples. When he finished praying, he turned to them and said, “Who do people say I am?” (Mark 8:27) In the various gospels you get slightly different responses. In one version, they say, “Some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah come back to life,... some say one of the prophets.” (Mark 8:28) And then he says, “But who do you say I am?” At that point Peter jumps in and says, “You are the Christ, the son of God.” (Mark 8:29) What does he say to Peter? He doesn’t say “Peter, you’re right; you get a hundred percent; you can become the first Pope.” What he says is “be quiet.” He gave them strict instructions not to tell anyone this. This was the answer, but he was more interested in the question: “Who do you say I am?” And immediately then he goes on to give his teaching on leaving self behind. He told them that he himself would be going to Jerusalem, he would be dying in Jerusalem, and that they too, if they were to find their true self, would have to lose themselves. “What does it profit you if you gain the whole world at the cost of your true self?” (Matthew 16:26)

Just take this one question of Jesus: “Who do you say I am?” And instead of trying to come up with the right answer, the catechism answer,

just stay with the question. That question will lead us on a journey, a journey of relationship and a journey of discovery; a journey of relationship with Jesus who asks us the question, and a journey of self-discovery. This is the first level of our relationship with Jesus – as a teacher.

I once asked the Dalai Lama, “Who do you think Jesus is?” Immediately, without hesitation, he said, “A Bodhisattva, a fully realised human being.” A Buddhist could not say any more than that. And I’ve never met anyone who has not recognised Jesus as a teacher. I’ve met many people who have left the Church, but I haven’t met anyone who has left the Church because they have rejected the teaching of Jesus. So Jesus is universally recognised as one of the great spiritual teachers of the human family. That is the first level. This is the beginning, this is the first level. This is where we are caught by his teaching and by his authority. And the early people who listened to Jesus in the gospel, we hear that they listened to him with great attention because he spoke to them with authority.

Take that question again: “Who do you say I am?” If I had started this morning with that question to you, “Who do you say I am?” you might not have said anything but you might have thought, “Who the hell does he think he is?” This question “Who do you say I am?” might suggest a very, inflated ego, a megalomaniac, as some people thought Jesus was. But for others, what they heard in his question was humility, not pride. All real authority is based on humility, and it is this humility of Jesus that is the secret of his identity.

What do we mean by humility? Humility doesn't mean putting yourself down all the time and saying: I'm a sinner, I'm no good at anything, I'm hopeless. That can be a subtle form of pride too. Humility means knowing yourself. Actually the word humility comes from the word humus which means earth. "Humility" describes somebody who is grounded, who knows themselves, is in touch with themselves. Jesus could ask this question in all humility because he knew who he was. He wasn't asking this question in order to find out who he was. He was asking it because he knew who he was. He knew who he was in relationship to God, which is the deepest form of self-knowledge: Knowing ourselves in God. That's where we come from; that's our origin.

To really know yourself then, you've got to know where you've come from, where you're springing from. Later in the Gospel of John Jesus actually says, "I know where I have come from, and I know where I am going." (John 8:14) This is his humility and his authority. And this is why we can relate to Jesus as a teacher, because he has authority. His authority shines through in every one of his words and teachings, and also in his life, the story of his life. He was true to his teaching. He embodied his teaching. He didn't preach one thing and do another. He lived his teaching. He was his teaching. So we can relate to Jesus as a teacher because of his authority. Just think of the teachers you had in your life who have really helped you to get where you are. They may be teachers at school, or friends, or people in your family, or mentors. If you can call them to mind, the teachers who you really value in your life, you're really grateful to, you'll begin to get a sense of what it means to say that Jesus is our teacher.

The first thing about any teacher is that they have to know more than we do. It has to be a useful knowledge, a knowledge that is useful to us. A teacher is somebody who knows what is necessary for us, and a spiritual teacher is therefore

somebody who knows who they are, who has self-knowledge. And if you want to grow in self-knowledge, then it's a very good idea to get close to people who know themselves better than you know yourself. People of self-knowledge, these are the people we call wise, they stimulate you to grow in self-knowledge yourself. And we believe that it is possible for us to come into the presence of Jesus, now.

**T**he second characteristic of a teacher is that they want to transmit what they know. They're not hanging onto their knowledge as if it were a valuable commodity. If I know something that you don't, and I let you know that I know it but you don't know it, then I've got power over you. So, knowledge can become power. We pay for knowledge today. But a teacher doesn't hoard knowledge, doesn't hang on to it. A teacher just wants to transmit it, let it go, communicate it. We see that in Jesus when he said to his disciples just before the Last Supper, "You call me Lord and Master, and rightly so, for that is what I am. [But] I call you friends. I call you servants no longer. I call you my friends because I have shared with you everything I have learned from my Father." (John 13:13, 15:15) Everything.

So Jesus is a teacher of some remarkable knowledge, and he wants to transmit that knowledge to us, not in a dominating way but through friendship. He's a teacher whom we can also say is a friend. And a friend is somebody who is truthful with you.

A friend is somebody who only wishes you well. "I call you friends because I have shared with you everything learned from my Father." What he is describing here is transmission of his Spirit.

A teacher also wants to train students and then to commission them to go out and teach what they have learnt. That is exactly what Jesus has done. He empowers his disciples, his students. "You will do even greater things than I have done," he says, "because I'm going to the Father." (John 14:12)

Then, a teacher also withdraws, gets out of the way, disappears, because you can become very dependent on a teacher. Because you recognise how much they have taught you, how great they are, you can very easily just get dependent on them and never stand on your own feet. So a good teacher also knows when to withdraw and let you stand on your own. This is what Jesus did. He said, "It is good for you that I am going away, because then I will send the Spirit." (John 16:7) His death and his ascension are the signs of his withdrawing from us, but not his deserting us. "I will come back to you", he says. But he comes back to us in the Spirit.

So this is our first level, our first contact with Jesus, as a teacher, and maybe that is as far as we go. Many people, many non-Christians, have deep respect and deep love for Jesus, and deep reverence for the gospel, but they don't go any further into a personal relationship with him. ✕

## Think of prayer as a great wheel:

The wheel turns our whole life towards God. Prayer is an essential part of a fully human life. If we do not pray we are only half alive and our faith is only half developed.

The spokes of the wheel represent the different types of prayer. We pray in different ways at different times and according to how we feel. Different people have preferred ways of prayer. The spokes represent, for example, the Eucharist, the other sacraments, scriptural prayer, petitionary and intercessory prayer, charismatic prayer, devotions, the rosary, etc.

But what makes all these different forms of prayer Christian is that they are centred in Christ. The spokes are the forms or expressions of prayer which fit into the hub of the wheel which is the prayer of Jesus himself.

Laurence Freeman

*Christian Meditation: Your Daily Practice*

# Jesus Christ Saviour "I AM" Pantokrator Ruler of All, Lord of the Universe

by Fr Peter Murphy



The icon of "Our Lady of Tenderness" was commissioned by St Paul's Parish in Massey, Auckland, and at the same time, the icon of "Christ Pantokrator". This was commissioned in memory of the three meditators from St Paul's who died within six months of one another in 2009.

It was they, especially Mark Clay and Frank Fagan, who kept the meditation flame alive during a time when little was happening. They began meditating at 7.00pm every Tuesday in the church in 1989. They had a group of five or six during the first year and then the others left. For about four years it was just the two of them meditating on their own, with the occasional visitor. In 1995 Diana Halloran joined them. For her, discovering meditation was literally coming home. When I began meditating with children at St Paul's School in Massey, Diana was my assistant. She became very

passionate about the necessity of this. We did a seminar at the Catholic Education Convention in 2009 and Diana was determined to make it even though suffering from terminal cancer. She was dead within two months.

I joined the Meditation Group in the beginning of 1998 and returned in 2004. It is primarily thanks to those early dedicated meditators that we have a vibrant meditating community today.



"Eleousa"  
Icon of "Mother of Tenderness"

The following information has been prepared by the Studio of John the Baptist, Auckland. Phone 021 935 020. Email info@sacredart.co.nz. Web www.sacredart.co.nz

## What the Gospel says to us in words

The word "Icon" is derived from the Greek "Eikon", meaning "Image". Icons can be of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of Angels and of Saints. Icons represent their prototype's likeness, and as such are not represented realistically to our eye; unlike modern art, they do not aim to draw us to emotion but rather into deeper spiritual communion. When we venerate an icon we are honouring the person it represents, the one whose name it bears. Icons are a doorway to a meeting place of prayer, a window into the transcendent world of the heavenly kingdom.

The gold in an icon represents the uncreated light of God, the eternal eighth day wherein the saint is present at this moment. Its qualities of being, both luminous and opaque, make it a perfect metaphor for the Mysteries of God, which are full of splendour and enlightening, whilst at the same time infinite and impenetrable.

Icons are said to be "written", not "painted", because they present the Revelation of God to us, as does Scripture. They are written according to ancient traditional methods and only the best materials are used, such as 23.5kt gold leaf.

## Praying with Icons

Firstly, approach the Icon with the eyes of faith; approach with the expectation of an encounter. As you would when spending time with a friend, give the one depicted in the Icon your full attention. Allow their stillness and silence to slow you down, to calm you, and to redirect your heart to the Lord. Let them speak, listen. Converse with them, you may like to recall aspects of their life, their sayings, their charity, or ask their intercession in your own present needs and those of others. Reflect on Scripture with them, in their presence, for they love the Word and are present before Him now.

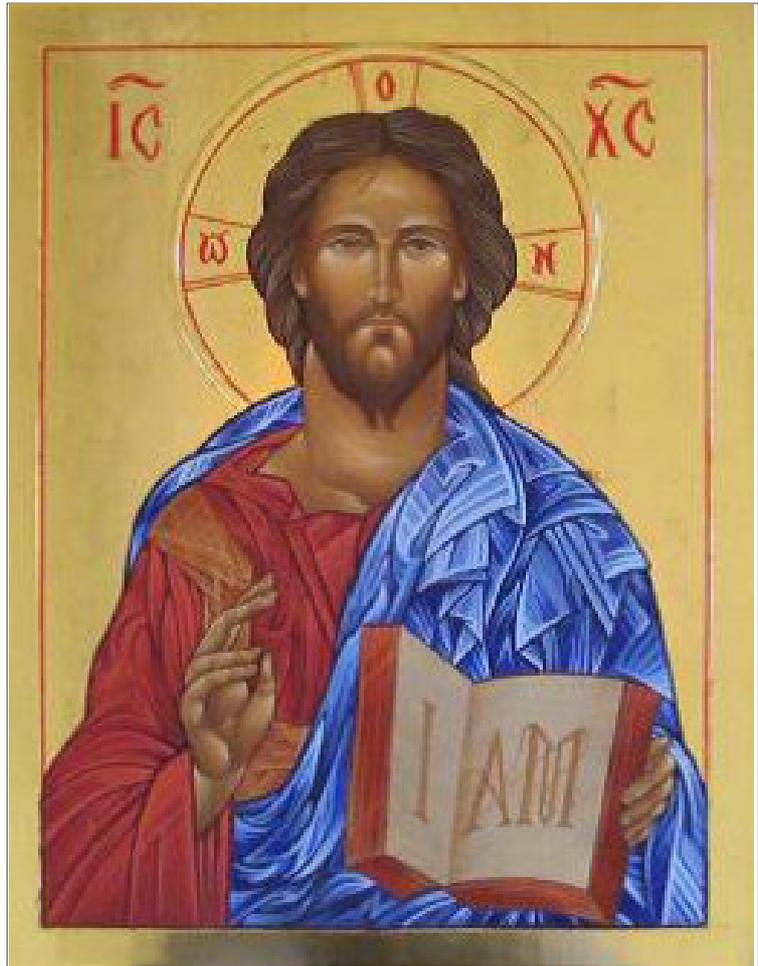
Throughout your day whenever you pass by, acknowledge them, even if only with a fleeting Ave. This helps refocus us on the Lord and fosters our awareness of the great treasure we have in the Communion of Saints.

# Historical Significance

After the Council of Nicaea confirmed in 325 that Christ was the visible image and perfect image of the Father, there followed three centuries of struggle against the heresies that denied either the divine nature of Christ (Arianism) or his human nature (Monophysitism).

It was finally established that the person of Christ embodied the union of two natures, human and divine. The icon of the Pantokrator became the symbol of this dogma. During the Iconoclastic period, icons became targets of destruction and their supporters were persecuted. In defending the image of Christ, the man-God, they were defending the very principle of the incarnation and, by extension, the reality of salvation.

The Pantokrator icon became an important bulwark in defence of the true faith and had its share of martyrs, until the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (787) and the Triumph of Orthodoxy (843) put an end to the strife.



## The Icon



- The letters IC XC are the Greek abbreviation for Jesus Christ.
- The O W N in His halo declare Him “The Being”, the great “I AM”: He is identified therefore with the God of Moses and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- His right hand gestures in blessing. The extended fingers remind us of His two natures, human and divine, united in one Person, while the remaining three digits unite to form one circle – a sign of His participation in the Holy Trinity.
- He holds the Gospel in His hand; in opening the Word to us He reveals Himself - the Word and leads us to the Father, with whom He and the Spirit are one.
- His deep red robes indicate His divine royalty, with the gleaming golden band showing wisdom and priestly authority. His outer garment shines in a transcendent heavenly blue.
- His gaze is penetrating. The strong nose stands as a great temple pillar, with eyebrows forming the arches above, wherein the presence of God dwells. The lips are closed; in iconography their sublime purpose is to receive the Eucharist, to give the kiss of peace, and to be in silent contemplation before the Word of God.

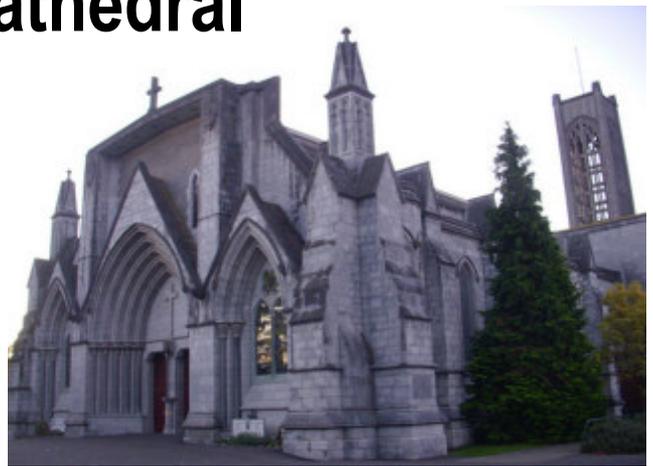
*Icon commissioned in loving memory of Diana Halloran, Frank Fagan, and Mark Clay - RIP 2009  
Foundation members of the New Zealand Community for Christian Meditation. AMDG ET DGH  
Icon written in 2010 at the Studio of John the Baptist, Takapuna, Auckland, New Zealand  
Rimu Panel, Italian Gesso, Wet Gilding 23.5kt, Egg Tempera. 42 x 60cm*

# Meditation at Nelson Cathedral

a report from the Nelson Cathedral Meditation Group

A Christian meditation group has been held in the chapel of Nelson Cathedral every Tuesday evening for eight years. So, what is this group about and what does it do? There are typically 8-10 of us, foundation members, core members, who have attended for considerable time plus others who are new. Visitors, tourists and students increase our numbers at times. All are welcome.

We belong to the NZ Community for Christian Meditation. It is affiliated to the World Community for Christian Meditation which was set up in 1991 to communicate Benedictine monk John Main's teaching of meditation. Each week we listen to a short inspirational message from audio resources of John Main and other teachers. Our opening prayer says "Lead us into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call." Music takes us into a period of silent stillness for 20 or 30 minutes; "Be still and know that I am God". The process is simple and requires simplicity. The format is repeated each week, takes less than an hour and is the same in Christian meditation groups around the world. We are all learning. Daily practice, using a prayer word or mantra, and coming together each week, makes the experience more meaningful.



There is a wide variety of meditation practices in different cultures and contexts around the world. Christian meditation is an ancient form of prayer rooted in Christian tradition. Essentially the stillness and silence allows God's loving presence within to become more real; silence enfolds us in peace. This is quite different from prayers of asking for our long list of needs! God is always with us but constant daily chatter in our minds floods our awareness.

Research reveals benefits from meditation in areas of physical and mental health. People in prisons, schools and families meditate. Walking the labyrinth is a form of meditation. Christian meditation is not about emptying the mind, it touches the heart. It makes space to sense the presence of God so that we can live in this turbulent world in a better way. It helps us manage imperfections when things go wrong so that we are connected to a loving peace. Much has been written about meditation and there is plenty online, try [WCCM.org](http://WCCM.org)

Meditation is in the chapel, 6.00pm every Tuesday. All are welcome. ☩

## Be silent, be still and be with Him, in His presence

To learn to meditate it is necessary to meditate every day: every morning and every evening. Learning is a discipline and we have to be generous with our time, with our energy, with our attention. We have to be generous. We can never learn to enter into the supreme self-giving generous love of God without that generous commitment to the Way and to the discipline of the Way.

It is not good enough to talk or read about religion or spirituality. It is not good enough to study or have a spiritual director. We must enter personally into the basic Christian experience and we can only do so with childlike simplicity. This connection between simplicity and discipline explains why it is important to say your word from the beginning to the end. All of us have such an appalling hunger for self-analysis, for self preoccupation which often masquerades as spirituality, that if we used the time of meditation to satisfy this desire it would be entirely counterproductive. We would fail to meet our deepest need which is for unity. The essence of meditation is taking the attention off ourselves and looking forward, beyond ourselves, into the mystery of God; of travelling beyond ourselves into His love, into union.

So let me stress to you the importance of saying the word. Do not think about God, do not think about yourself. Do not analyse God, do not analyse yourself. Be silent. Be still and be with Him, in His presence.

*The Way of Unknowing*

From *Silence & Stillness in Every Season* (9 September) Daily Readings with John Main





Camaldolese Benedictine Oblate Community of Australasia  
in conjunction with the  
New Zealand Community for Christian Meditation



# Spirit Soul Body

A presentation by Fr. Cyprian Consiglio OSB Cam.  
Prior of New Camaldoli Hermitage, Big Sur, California.

**Whangarei: Wednesday 21st Sept 2016 at 7 30 pm.**  
**St Francis Xavier Catholic Church,**

Chr. Kamo Road and Park Avenue, Kensington, Whangarei.

Inquiries: Michael 09 4365663, email [md1@ihug.co.nz](mailto:md1@ihug.co.nz)

Phillip Saunders 09 405 9249, email: [phillipsaunders@xtra.co.nz](mailto:phillipsaunders@xtra.co.nz)

**South Auckland: Thursday 22nd Sept 2016 at 7 30 pm.**  
**St Mary's Catholic Church,**

52 East St; Papakura 2110.

Inquiries: Charmaine Tolich 09 226 7651 email: [ctolich@me.com](mailto:ctolich@me.com)

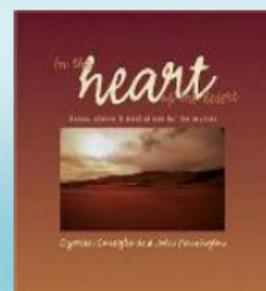
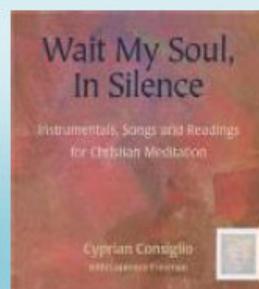
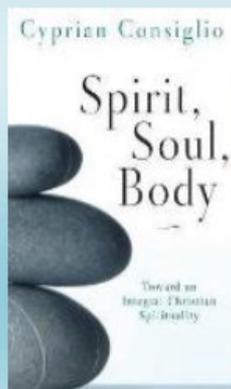
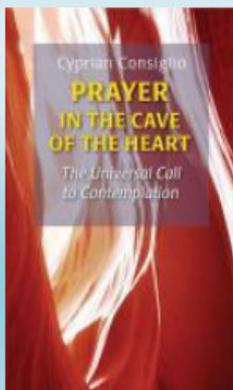
Fr. Cyprian Consiglio, a contemplative Camaldolese monk, is an internationally known author, performer, recording artist, and composer. He has published numerous collections of sacred, world and liturgical music. A student of the world's spiritual traditions, he has offered retreats and conferences around the globe.

Fr. Cyprian will combine music, prayer, and contemplation to draw his listeners into a meditative experience.

A koha would be appreciated to contribute to travel costs. All welcome.

## Books

## Music CD's a selection of titles



[YouTube Music Fr. Cyprian with Br. James - Every Stone Shall Cry](#)

# Images of Meditation: Bikes and Boats

by Liz Watson

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.

When we try and speak of God, we are trying to speak of something that we can never fully understand or properly describe, so it is paradoxical that when we are thinking about the spiritual life, the best metaphors are often the ones which are drawn from the concrete experiences of our daily living. And that was very much the case with John Main when he was trying to explain what the saying of the mantra was about.

One of the metaphors he uses is drawn from his time in the Signal Corps. He thinks of the mantra as like the radar bleep which is guiding us safely home. So as we say the mantra, we repeat it and repeat it and repeat it, and it keeps us on a safe and sure course towards the goal.

In another place, he talks of meditation as like riding a bike. Of course, when you are watching someone riding a bike who is familiar with it and very practised with it, it looks easy. Similarly, we hear the instructions about how to meditate for the first time and they sound simple. They are indeed simple, so we expect it to be an easy thing to do. However, very quickly we discover that simple is not easy for us. Just as the first time we get on a bike we discover there is a bit of a knack to balancing on those two thin wheels and even more of a knack to steering it in a straight line on those two thin wheels. Probably what happens is that we fall off and we have to get back on again. Perhaps we need some encouragement to get back on again if we have had a bit of a bump. Maybe we continue to wobble for quite a while before it becomes easy for us and we do it without thinking about it.

And so we start to meditate. It is not as easy as we thought. Perhaps we stop. We think, "Well, this can't be for me!" Maybe we are tempted to start again, and maybe we do some stopping and starting for quite a while. Maybe our progress, to start with, is very wobbly. We are not really sure what we are doing, whether we are doing it properly, whether we are doing it well, whether it is taking us where we want to go.

But if we have some fellow meditators, they can be a great encouragement. They can reassure us that falling off, getting on again and wobbling are absolutely normal and part of the journey, and if we persevere, gradually we will discover that meditating comes to seem natural. It becomes part of life. We do not have to think about it or analyse it, we just do it. Sometimes it feels like an uphill journey. Sometimes it feels easy, as though we are taking off, brakes released, and streaming downhill. Sometimes it is as though we are pedalling steadily along on a plateau.

Another way to think about what it means to meditate, what happens as we sit to meditate day by day, is in the metaphor of a canoe on a river. You can think of meditation as paddling your canoe down a river. The dipping of the paddles into the water vertically, one side and then the other, is very like the saying of the mantra – faithful, steady, rhythmic, repetition of the word, listening to it, giving it your attention. And although the action of paddling is always the same, the river is different every time we enter it. Maybe today the water is calm, maybe it is reflecting the sun, maybe the scenery along the side of



the bank is very pleasant. Perhaps there are trees and spring flowers and the experience seems very easy and enjoyable.

But on other occasions, or even further on during one period of meditation, the water begins to be choppy or muddy. It seems to be very disturbed. Maybe the wind starts to blow up and it becomes rather hard work. It is much more difficult to keep on saying the mantra; we do not seem to be getting anywhere!

Perhaps different things begin to emerge into our consciousness, rather like passing down a stretch of the river where there is a lot of rubbish. But if we keep on paddling, then we shall simply paddle past the rubbish. We do not need to stop and look at it, examine it to see what it is like or to haul it on board. We can simply keep saying our mantra, paddling down the river, letting the disturbances pass by.

What we are aiming for in our meditation is God, and God is rather like the horizon that is always up ahead of us. So, however far we paddle, the horizon is going to be up ahead, and whatever sort of things we happen to pass on the river, whatever is in the river, whatever the

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condition of the river, whatever the weather is like around us, whatever is there on the bank, what we are really wanting is to be continually moving towards the horizon. The way we do that is simply to keep on paddling, whatever is going on around us.

One of the great temptations that we will come across when we begin to meditate arises when we experience a sense of real peacefulness. It feels like the fulfilment of the promise of peace that is made in the gospel. In terms of the river, it is as though it is a balmy afternoon, the sun is shining, flowers are blooming on the bank, everything is very still. It is so tempting to put up our paddle and rest in that balmy stillness. But we have warnings about that from the tradition. The tradition calls this a “pernicious peace”, a dangerous peace. Why is it dangerous? Because it stops us on our journey. Remember, it is the horizon that is up ahead that we want to keep on moving towards. So, if we are wise and follow the wisdom of the tradition, we will lift our heads again, catch sight of the horizon, remember what we want, reconnect our attention to the sound of the mantra, begin to listen again, begin to take up our metaphorical paddle, and paddle onwards towards our heart’s desire, saying our word, listening to our word, giving it our attention, keeping on with it, returning to it every time we realise that our attention has drifted somewhere else.✘

**W**e must meet Christ as the personal presence in ourselves. That is to the most authentic. We will never be fulfilled, we will never be satisfied, we will not have reached our goal until we have met this presence which is within ourselves. It is not enough for us to meet Christ indirectly as it were through the outward signs of our religion, our practice or of our culture. All of these are signs pointing us towards this deepest, most personal encounter with Christ within ourselves.

*The Ego on our Spiritual Journal,*  
by Fr Laurence Freeman OSB

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Best wishes,  
Linda Polaschek  
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