



Stillpoint

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

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NZCCM Directory

Websites to visit:

www.christianmeditationnz.org.nz

www.wccm.org/content

www.wccmmeditatio.org

www.christianmeditationaustralia.org

www.christianmeditation.org.uk

www.theschoolofmeditation.org

The Heart's Journey Through Winter's Stillness

a report on the Christchurch Community Day from Paddy Walker



Our Christchurch Community Day on 28th July was warmed, intrigued and blest during a day themed *The Heart's Journey Through Winter's Stillness*. It was a rewarding time for our largest group ever of over 30 folk. Many were attracted to come by our guest speaker (Scottish - now Kiwi) Rev Dr Hilary Oxford Smith – writer, minister, poet, scholar, and Associate Member of the Iona Community, with a special interest in Celtic Spirituality. Interspersing and enhancing Hilary's words was her friend (English – now also Kiwi) harpist Julie Saraswati. Julie's melodic, gentle plucking and clear singing was haunting and memorable – apt for such a day

Celtic Spirituality is rooted on nature's circle of life, the rhythms of the seasons, God's creation and God's creatures. Some of the thoughts I, and maybe you, grabbed for further pondering – All nature needs a pause, so we too, in winter - We're encouraged to be heart holders for each other - Reflect, and have courage, in this moment of your life - The heart is the archive of memories.

In the afternoon, seated in a large circle, (and in contrast to the morning's silent meditation) we entered into a long guided meditation. While cradling in our hand(s) a stone we chose from a collection gathered on the West Coast, the Otago Peninsula or the Catlins, we were guided to imagine and relate to our stone's journey – its analogy to our own life's journey in its brokenness, its strength, its many colour moods, its endurance i.e. our connection to nature and creation. My pinkish stone, turning deep russet in the warmth of my palm, sits and brings back some of the flavours of this day.

I, and I believe all, left our venue, blessed and calmed, touched in differing ways, out into the warmish winter sun, after a cracking July frost. ❖

NZCCM COUNCIL 2018



Back Row from left to right: Marie Shepherd, Fr Peter Murphy, Elspeth Preddey, Vincent Maire, Hugh McLaughlin
Seated: Damian Robertson, Charmaine Tolich, Linda Polaschek, Jane Hole, Shirley Duthie
Absent: Clare McGivern

Profile:

Clare McGivern

NZCCM Webmaster

My name is Clare and I took on the role of webmaster for the New Zealand Christian Meditation community this year. I teach part-time in a Catholic school in Auckland and like to sing with a choir, play the piano and sew in my spare time. Married to my best friend, Chris, who is an architect, I am lucky to be mother to two energetic children. Catherine loves Irish dancing and playing the piano and flute, while Joseph is mad keen on soccer and Seascouts. I first began meditating about 12 years ago, but like so many others, I found it a challenge and let it go. Prompted to try again I had a number of years struggling to meditate on my own before I discovered the treasure of online meditation. Each day I join with other meditators from around the world to share morning and evening meditation. If time permits, I stay on for the sharing. The group is facilitated by the UK based WCCM

oblates, and while the majority are based in the UK, there are frequently meditators from America and Canada too. I am still astonished at the deep silence which is experienced and the sense of being part of something so much bigger than myself.

Often in the evenings my 9 year old son, Joseph, joins for the meditation which he really enjoys. He loves chatting to the meditators before we begin and finding out where they live so he can check them out on the world map. The sight of a screen filled with the faces of like-minded people is so encouraging and a delight – even at 5.00am in the morning. Having said that, I won't be sorry when daylight saving begins and the start-time shifts to a more reasonable hour!

If you are unable to get to a group, or would like to enrich your practice with a new dimension, you might like to check out the online offerings



Clare McGivern and her son, Joseph

available through the WCCM website: <http://wccm.org/content/wccm-online-meditation-groups> New groups are still being added to the calendar so you may be able to find something that suits your personal schedule. A New Zealand based online group also meets on Sunday evenings. Details of this group are available on our New Zealand website:

<http://christianmeditationnz.org.nz/online-meditation-group-2/> ✕

Bay Of Plenty-Waikato Region Community Day

a report from Co-ordinator Damian Robertson

Our region's mid-year Community Day was held on Saturday 27 July 2018 at St Mary's Catholic Parish Hall in Rotorua. We started off a cool day with morning tea of scones, (and of course strawberry jam and cream), and fruit cake. Heating was non-operational, so two of us crossed the road to my home, where we collected two small heaters and five rugs in an effort to keep everyone comfortable. There were sixteen attendees, including two people who had been meditating for only a month and two who had never meditated but wanted to find out what it was about.

Our theme for the day was Evelyn Underhill. In the morning, after listening to a brief summary of her life and spiritual development, we spent time discussing some extracts

from her radio talks on spirituality. The discussions were so good and meaningful that we managed to get through only five of the eighteen quotes that had been prepared. Despite the fact that Evelyn died in 1941, everything in her talks is as valid today as it was then – perhaps with the exception of inclusive language. Political correctness wasn't invented until later.

We began the afternoon with a wonderful talk by Raymond from Katikati. He explained how his life had brought him to the practice of meditation. Then he surprised us by reporting on his extremely positive experience of the Essential Teaching Weekend he attended recently. We were extra blessed to hear the talk he had prepared for that weekend, explaining the tradition and practice

of Christian Meditation. With two people in attendance for whom this was the first exposure to the practice, Raymond's presentation turned out to be quite perfect. We ended both morning and afternoon sessions with meditation.

The Pleroma Christian Supplies sales table yielded sales of \$190.99. Again, we raffled one title as a fundraiser for Friends. After expenses, we were able to bank \$33.00 koha into the NZCCM General Account and \$19.00 into the Friends Account.

Once again, our little community was able to share a valuable and rewarding time together. We decided to continue consideration of Evelyn Underhill's talks at our next Community Day which will be held in Paeroa on Saturday 27 October. ✕

Meditation, Presence and the Care of the Dying

a report by Anne Ruddy

Vincent Maire, our presenter, began by saying that meditation is like a death to everything else, then a resurrection. Happiness can come from meditation – it's the cheapest medication, psychotherapy! He quoted Michael Watson, a local meditator: Meditation shrinks the ego and allows the soul to grow into the space that's left behind.

When ministering to the dying one needs presence. This is helped by (1) Self Knowledge: We need a healthy relationship with ourselves to progress in the spiritual journey. The Enneagram helps you know yourself. If you search for God, you'll find yourself, but need to give part of the shadow to God.

(2) Self awareness: Watch Yourself. Ask questions in your head then feel the response in your gut. The dying worry about those left behind - let them talk so they hear their words. There can be existential suffering when they are hurting all over. In mindfulness we are present in love to what we are actually doing.

(3) Self Care: Vincent meditates twice a day. Has spiritual direction and a regular retreat. Is part of a weekly meditation group – we become knitted together in God. Writes personal journal. Did postgraduate chaplaincy course from Otago.

En route to a patient, he doesn't carry a prayer book or bible. Just him – offers himself. Has a holding cross in his pocket. Never rushes – while driving, blesses people he passes. Says mantra: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. When arrives, takes in surroundings, gets a feel for a person's life. How are the people there? He has no expectations except what's going to unfold, the rest is up to God. Our purpose - to be loved – continues after we've died into the next life. His work for the local Hospice is to be a spiritual carer, a contemplative carer. ✕



Anne Ruddy with Vincent Maire



Sight Unseen

*Talks for Christian
Meditation Groups*

by Ross Miller

As *Stillpoint* goes to print, this second set of talks from Ross, published by the NZCCM, is with Hilton Press at Templeton near Christchurch, and copies will soon be made available to the New Zealand Community. Having already had the joy of reading this new book, I know that meditators have a treat in store.

These sixty talks, like the first set, are a generous gift from Ross to the NZCCM, bringing us his insight, experience, wisdom, wit and scholarship - and above all his encouragement and reassurance. These short teachings are a trustworthy guide to living faithfully our cherished tradition of contemplative prayer in 21st century New Zealand.

*Thank you again, Ross.
Jane Hole*



Contemplative Care: Healthcare and Meditation 17 & 18th January, 2019

A seminar, *Contemplative Care: Health Care and Meditation*, will be held in the Education Centre at Auckland City Hospital. This *Meditatio* seminar, developed by NZCCM, is aimed at healthcare professionals, to support them in their practice with their patients, but it is open to anyone who is interested. *Meditatio* is the outreach arm of the WCCM, engaging with the wider world beyond the meditation community, about the benefits of meditation in the fields of education, health, leadership, social justice, science, technology and inter-faith. One activity of *Mediatio* is conducting seminars in which current research and practice is shared between professionals in the relevant field. More about the activities of *Meditatio* can be found under the WCCM website at <http://www.meditatio.co.uk/>.

Contemplative care: Health Care and Meditation is the first *Meditatio* seminar to be held in New Zealand. The seminar will present contemplative care as a dimension of healthcare practice based on the traditions of contemplative practice, including Maori and Buddhist, as well as Christian. Drawing on their own meditative orientation and experience, speakers from across the healthcare spectrum will dialogue with participants on the ways contemplative care enables the practitioner to develop better self-care, self-knowledge, inner reflection and intuition that informs their healthcare practice, and enlivens their personal presence with the patient.

The seminar will be led by Fr Laurence Freeman OSB, Director of WCCM, who will give a talk introducing each day, lead periods of meditation and contribute to a panel discussion with presenters at the end of each day. The seminar will be chaired by Dr John Collins, Nephrologist and Honorary Associate Professor at Auckland Medical School.

Fourteen presenters from across the healthcare spectrum will give talks and lead workshops over the two days.

Topics include:

- From cure to healing – the rediscovery of spirit and hope
- ‘Mauri ora’ vs ‘treatment’ and the wairua journey for Maori at the end of life
- The Science of Happiness
- Peace - source of our healing and care of others
- Contemplative care of the dying
- Accompanying the less-responsive person
- The joy of compassionate healthcare
- Contemplative practice: opening to the gift of our own vulnerability.

**More information and registration for the Seminar
can be found at www.meditatio.org.nz**



2019 National Silent Retreat

13th – 16th January, 2019

University of Waikato, Hamilton, NZ

Light and Shade

Led by Laurence Freeman, Benedictine monk
and Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation



Fr Laurence Freeman, OSB

Registration Details:

Register by sending the information below to:
retreat@christianmeditationnz.org.nz or post to NZCCM Retreat,
12 Everest Street, Wellington, 6035.

1. First name
2. Surname
3. Address
4. Phone number
5. Mobile number
6. Email address
7. Preferred name for badge
8. Special Dietary Requirements (if any)
9. Emergency contact name and telephone number
10. Ground floor accommodation needed: Yes or No. (There are no lifts).
11. Which payment option you have used (see options 1, 2 & 3 below).
12. Donations to assist others to attend are very welcome. Please let us know if you would like a tax receipt for your donation. Cost and Payment Instructions Early Bird: \$440 if paid by 16th November 2018. Otherwise \$500 to be paid by 16th December 2018.

Payment may be made in the following ways:

1. Online: From your account to NZCCM account 38-9003-0812910-01 at Kiwibank
2. By depositing your cheque or cash into the NZCCM account above at any Kiwibank branch. Please add your name and 'national retreat' in the reference section for options 1 & 2.
3. By posting your cheque (made out to NZCCM) and registration information to NZCCM Retreat, 12 Everest Street, Wellington 6035.
Numbers are limited so good to book early.

Financial Assistance:

Some financial assistance may be available. If the cost of the retreat is a barrier to your being able to attend, please email retreat@christianmeditationnz.org.nz or write to NZCCM Retreat, 12 Everest Street, Wellington, 6035 and briefly outline your situation and the amount you are seeking.

Retreat Accommodation:

Waikato University student accommodation provides single rooms with shared bathrooms. We will do our best to ensure bathrooms are gender specific, but this cannot be guaranteed. Linen and towels will be supplied and can be changed daily.

Departure:

After lunch Wednesday 16th January. For those travelling to Auckland for the Meditatio Seminar, we may be able to arrange a ride. Please indicate if you will need this.

Cancellations:

Refunds will be made up to 5pm, 7th January less a \$20 administration fee. Refund requests to be made by email or letter only. Send your email to retreat@christianmeditationnz.org.nz or write to 12 Everest St, Wellington 6035.

Meditatio Seminar: Contemplative Care

Following the retreat, Fr Laurence is travelling to Auckland and will lead the seminar on Contemplative Care: Health Care and Meditation at Auckland City Hospital on Thursday and Friday, 17 & 18 January. Details are now available at:
www.meditatio.org.nz

The Silent Retreat will be held on the campus of Waikato University. Shared sessions in the retreat will be held in the campus chapel. Throughout the day there will be a number of periods of shared meditation and several shared liturgical prayer times, but also plenty of time for personal reflection, to quietly explore the adjacent gardens and an opportunity to visit the retreat bookshop. Our silent shared meals will be in the student accommodation cafeteria. Throughout the retreat Laurence will give a number of presentations about contemplation, around the theme of *Light and Shade*. In his fulltime WCCM ministry, Fr Laurence travels widely as a spiritual guide, international speaker and retreat leader. He is the author of many books and articles (see wccm.org). Fr Laurence has conducted dialogues and peace initiatives, such as the historic "Way of Peace" with the Dalai Lama, and he is active in inter-religious dialogue with leaders of other faiths. He encourages the teaching of Christian meditation to children and students and promotes the recovery of contemplative wisdom in the church and in society.

Retreat Theme: *Light and Shade*

The canvas of life on earth is filled with brilliant light but also at times deep darkness. This is reflected in our personal journey. Meditation teaches us how to keep steady through these changes. We also learn that the light shines in the dark and can never be extinguished. This contemplative knowledge is born from experience and changes not only us but the world. ✠



Christian Meditation

Written by Chris Wilson and previously published in the NZ Catholic 18 September 2017. Chris is a member of the Christ the King Meditation Group in Christchurch.

Spirit, along the one way of prayer: Christ Jesus.”

Today CM has much to offer as a simple form of deep prayer and is practised in over 120 countries with around 1,500 weekly groups worldwide where meditators encourage each other in the practice, and enjoy the sense of community that meditation creates. In New Zealand there are currently 86 weekly meditation groups, and it is taught and practised in a number of our schools, as well as in some hospitals and prisons.

What distinguishes CM from other forms of meditation is that its aim is to allow God’s mysterious and silent presence within us to become not only more of a reality but the reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we do, everything we are. To quote John Main:

“In contemplative prayer we seek to become the person we are called to be, not by thinking of God but by being with God. Simply, to be with God is to be drawn into being the person God calls us to be”.

Prayer these days, often dominated by our intellect, can lose its connection with the heart. CM is prayer - not of the head - but of the heart, of the inner most part of us. It is there that we encounter our own spirit, to which we may never have given much attention, and we gradually become aware of God’s spirit that lives within every one of us, and of which our own spirit is part. All forms of prayer have their own particular value, and far from being in competition with any, CM tends to enrich our other prayer practices and our reading of scripture.

It isn’t a theory or a technique; it’s a spiritual discipline that is learnt through practice. Like any form of prayer, we need to give it a time and a place in our life, and we need to do

it daily. CM is based on: stillness, silence and simplicity. The aim is to move closer to union with God and to be attentive to His presence within our hearts.

The stillness of our body encourages stillness of mind; Psalm 46: *Be still and know that I am God.* CM is a prayer of being, not of doing. We also know that ultimately the God of love we worship is a great mystery that is beyond all our thoughts and words, and in this prayer practice, we seek, not to think about God, or to talk about God, or talk to God, but to join God in God’s own silence. “Silence is God’s language; everything else is a poor translation.” (Thomas Keating).

When meditating we try to let go of all our thoughts in order to give our complete and utter attention to God’s presence. Letting go is not easy, but we have the help of a Christian prayer word, our mantra, which we recite silently; it helps keep our mind from wandering. It helps us empty ourselves of all distractions and so open ourselves fully to the love of God; we are trying to leave self behind. John Cassian, the desert monk, described this aspect of Meditation as, “...the practice of using a single short phrase to achieve the stillness necessary for prayer: The mind thus casts out and renounces the rich and ample matter of all thoughts and restricts itself to the poverty of a single verse”.

The spiritual fruits of CM, as of all forms of prayer, show themselves in our lives as we find ourselves gradually gaining a vision of greater love, and learning to live that love in union with God. Those who persevere will inevitably see the results in their lives. Meditation does need to be regular, and it does require discipline. For further information please go to:

www.christianmeditationnz.org.nz
&/or www.wccm.org ☩

The origins and history of Christian Meditation (CM) are intertwined with that of monastic life. The first written record we have of the practice comes from the fourth century. John Cassian, 360 to 435 CE/AD, was a Christian monk and theologian whose writings reflect the wisdom and teaching on prayer of the early Christian hermits and monks. Meditation may have been practised well before then by spiritual giants like St Anthony, an illiterate 3rd Century monk. This is a form of prayer that goes right back to the earliest days of the Christian church. The groups of Christians who, in the 4th and 5th centuries fled from the worldliness of the cities to seek God in the Egyptian desert, came to be known as the Desert Fathers and became early models of Christian monasticism. John Cassian described their life as prayerful and shaped by the contemplation of God. Over the following centuries meditation continued to be nurtured largely in the monasteries, until towards the middle of the 20th century, a Benedictine monk, Fr John Main (1926-1982), saw that this practice was suitable not just for monks, but for all Christians.

For Catholics, the Catechism of the Catholic Church says of meditation:

“There are as many and varied methods of meditation as there are spiritual masters. Christians owe it to themselves to develop the desire to meditate regularly, lest they come to resemble the three first kinds of soil in the parable of the sower. But a method is only a guide; the important thing is to advance, with the Holy

Wellington Region WCCM NZ Silent Retreat Weekend 15-17 June 2018 at Our Lady's Home Of Compassion, Island Bay

a report from Elspeth Preddey, Wellington Region Co-ordinator



Opening the Book of the Heart was a set of six sessions based on talks by Fr Laurence Freeman and recorded on CDs for WCCM. Fr Laurence used six medieval statues in Chartres Cathedral, France, to illustrate that the symbol of the book can be seen as the heart itself, linking the stages of spiritual knowledge to the practice of Christian Meditation. The retreat, for a dozen retreatants, was led by Rev Rosie Dell, Vicar of St Matthew's Anglican Church, Palmerston North.

Friday night was the Introductory session *Getting Ready*. We were shown six photographs of a seated woman with a book. In the first photo, the book is still closed. We took a summary of the talk, with Questions for Reflection, before our Evening Prayer Service and meditation.

Saturday sessions were *Opening the Book, Into the Book* and *Becoming Silent*, each session ended with a summary hand-out that included challenging questions. Discussions of the questions raised ensued during all sessions. In free time some retreatants walked, maintaining silence, around the grounds and nearby streets. Services were held before breakfast and lunch, and after dinner.

Each service was followed by 20 minutes of silent meditation. Several retreatants attended a local Catholic Vigil Mass. We agreed to maintain our silence over the weekend except for two meal times, Saturday tea and Sunday lunch, as several of the retreatants live alone and preferred to have some time for verbal companionship. This mix of silence and sociability was well received by all retreatants.

On Sunday an Anglican Communion service began the day, before breakfast, and a Midday Prayer service before lunch, each followed by meditation. All services followed A New Zealand Prayer Book *He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*.

The photograph for the fifth session, *Ecstasy and Enstasy* shows the seated woman holding the book, once more closed, and so are her eyes. We understand that contemplation is the work of love. The final session, *Teaching from Experience* is about sharing the experience of joy found in the *Book of the Heart*.

In four groups of three, we discussed the five questions Fr Laurence poses at the end of his talks. ✠

New Website:

We are very pleased to announce the launch of the new School of Meditation website. It is now live! Please explore the website and let others know about it too. The School of Meditation website address is:

www.theschoolofmeditation.org

The new website has a fresh approach and provides access to our many resources. We also have a new initiative - Online Courses! We are launching the website with three courses - *How to Meditate*, *Six week Introduction to Christian Meditation* and *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*. We hope that this list of Online Courses will grow in the coming months

and years. We also hope to be able to offer some of the Online Courses in different languages.

The resources on the old website, which were very useful for Presenters, are still accessible via the new website on the Resources page under "Presenters Resources" and you can also access it direct from:

www.presenters.theschoolofmeditation.org

We hope this new website will be an innovative way of sharing the gift of meditation with more people - and that it will indeed bring peace. With prayers and good wishes as we continue our work of love.

Brijji Waterfield, School Committee

www.theschoolofmeditation.org ✠



Much of the daily news in the commercial media describes a world bent on self-destruction. How do we open our hearts and minds to mostly tragic situations – war, poverty, greed, unemployment? The daily practice of meditation helps us to hear and be empowered by another vision, of a world created, redeemed and sustained by Divine Love. We listen with compassion, and find the courage and humility to offer our limited resources and talents in service towards the healing of God's world.

Glenda Meakin, is a retired Anglican minister. A meditator since 1985, she leads retreats across Canada, and the US. She has served the Canadian Christian Meditation Community as a Regional Co-ordinator and National School Co-ordinator. She also serves on the International and Canadian School Resource Team.

This is the third in a series of talks given by Glenda at a Silent Retreat held in Canada, March 2010.

Listening to the daily news with a contemplative heart:

The Power of the Word *by Glenda Meakin*

I want to talk about the power of the Word. Words matter. What we say, what we listen to, has great effect on us and on our life. Words do wound, sometimes very deeply. Words can exclude, words can diminish, words can trivialise. Just as words can also heal, restore, comfort, empower. Words have power.

You might know the story of Don Quixote, Man of La Mancha. That story illustrates the power of words to tear down and to raise up. This funny knight, Don Quixote, decides to be a knight, long after the days of knighthood and chivalry have died; but never mind, he's going to be a knight. And he gets this very beaten-up horse, and off he goes to save damsels in distress and doing deeds of great importance with his sidekick Sancho Panza.

Don Quixote knows that being a knight means that you must have a fair lady for whom you do these deeds of honour. So he finds his fair lady. Unfortunately she is the most unlikely fair lady, because she is the village prostitute, Aldonza. Never mind. Don Quixote begins to court her, to woo her with words of love, telling her how beautiful she is, how fair, how lovely, how good.

Well Aldonza will have none of it. She just shoos him away with his

words of love. In truth on the outside Aldonza is anything but beautiful, fair or lovely, but Don Quixote is determined that Aldonza be his fair lady. He believes she is worth more than anything he could do to win her over, and so his courtship of loving words continues. He will not give up uttering words of love to his sweet lady whom he renames Dulcinea which means, "My sweet little one".

And finally Aldonza has had enough of his nonsense. She storms out of the kitchen and begins a tirade of self-deprecating words. She speaks of the way she sees herself. She is a prostitute of doubtful parentage. She is a common, dirty, worthless person in her own eyes. And Aldonza tells Don Quixote she cannot bear his words of love. She says: "Blows and abuse I can take and give back again, but tenderness I cannot bear." But Don Quixote does not give up. He continues his courtship as if Aldonza, Dulcinea, has never spoken these words about herself. He continues to tell her because he sees her as lovely, as worthy of everything he might do for her and more.

Over time as Aldonza listens to this funny knight, she begins to realise who she truly is. And in the play, claims her true identity as Dulcinea. She says, "From this moment I am

no longer Aldonza, but I am Dulcinea." She has been transformed by love. By loving, healing words.

Words matter. What we say, what we listen to, has great effect on us and on our life. As Christians you and I know the power of words very well. And by "know" I am not talking so much about intellectually, but I am talking about knowing as participation in. So this is about the head coming into the heart and knowing in a very deep way. And what you and I know in a very deep way is that the world, all of creation is an expression, a Word, an utterance of the Divine creator. God said: "Let there be light." And God said: "Let there be a space between the firmament, with the heavens above and the earth beneath." And God said: "Let there be creeping things, let there be green things." And God said: "Let there be human beings made in my image." All of creation is an utterance, a word from God. That is why you and I are able to say everything I look at, and everyone I look at in all of creation, I can see something of the Divine.

Sister Eileen O'Hea used to remind us of that – that when we look at one another, see another person, we can see the Divine within. She used to look at you and say:

“Remember who you are. You are a manifestation of infinite love in finite form.”

So you and I look and see and hear the Word of God in all of creation.

God speaks us into being. Words matter. You and I also know, as people of faith, the power of the word to shape our relationships with God, with one another, with creation. You and I have heard: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength, and love your neighbour as yourself.” And they have shaped our outlook and our actions. Even the fact that you and I are aware of not always loving God, not always loving our neighbour, speaks to the power of these words, because they call us back into the relationships for which we were created.

Finally you and I know, that the ultimate Word of God has been spoken to us in the person of Jesus. The Word made flesh: Jesus, the Word. The word, the expression of God, telling us who God is, and how we come to God. The Word made in human form. And you and I *know* that Word. The true meaning of know: we participate in that Word as the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. Jesus is the fullest expression of Divine love in human form, in his life, death and resurrection. These are all words that are God’s utterance to you and me.

We are invited into a story that is so powerfully spoken in love that Christ brings light into the darkness, healing to our brokenness, sight to our blindness, and freedom from our captivity.

In all that is not of God, by the power of the Word of God in Christ, human life has been transformed, human life has returned to its meaning, its source. So these words of the Christian faith offer you and me not only a certain perspective on the world, but they are the words that have formed us, shaped us, directed us through our lives. ✠

Essential Teaching Weekend

29th June - 1st July 2018

a report from Michael Dougherty



There were eleven participants at the Essential Teaching Weekend 29th June - 1st July 2018 . Two came from Northland, two from the Waikato and the rest from the Auckland area. Peter and I were very impressed with the standard of participation. During our times together for meditation and prayer, one felt a true togetherness of a praying community. Very moving on the Friday evening was listening to each person’s story of how they came to be on the journey of meditation. This set the tone for the whole weekend.

The aim for an ETW is to help participants understand their own experience in the light of a greater tradition, as well as through others with whom they share the journey. The weekend was relaxed and informative and there was time allowed for a sense of community and friendship to develop. Such a weekend also reminds us of the depth and breadth of the contemplative tradition in which we breathe and move and practise. If anyone who may be reading this has not taken part in an ETW, I would heartily encourage you to do so, the benefits can be enriching. ✠

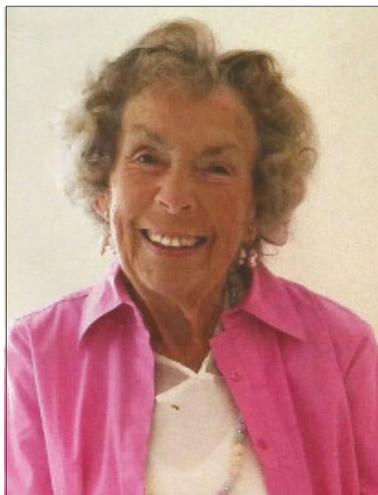
A certain brother came to Abbot Silvanus at Mount Sinai, and seeing the hermits at work he exclaimed: “Why do you work for the bread that perisheth? Mary has chosen the best part, namely to sit at the feet of the Lord without working.” Then the Abbot said to his disciple Zachary: “Give the brother a book and let him read, and put him in an empty cell.” At the ninth hour the brother who was reading began to look out to see if the Abbot was not going to call him to dinner, and sometime after the ninth hour he went himself to the Abbot and said: “Did the brethren not eat today, Father?” “Oh yes, certainly”, said the Abbot, “they just had dinner.” “Well,” said the brother, “why did you not call me?” “You are a spiritual man,” said the elder, “you don’t need this food that perisheth. We have to work, but you have chosen the best part. You read all day, and can get along without food.” Hearing this the brother said: “Forgive me, Father.” And the elder said: “Martha is necessary to Mary, for it was because Martha worked that Mary was able to be praised.”

From: The Wisdom of the Desert

Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century. Translated and introduced by Thomas Merton

Joan Murphy

Meditation Group Leader, Howick, Auckland
Died 19 June 2018



Joan, your simple love was radiant - warm, tender and caring, like a mother. Your silence permeate like a friend - always there, no matter what. Joan, your stillness stays with us like a role model - to lead, to serve and to leave a legacy.

Kitty

We enjoyed regular meditation sessions at Joan's home every Wednesday evening. Joan was always keen to hear our news and celebrate life. She prepared a reading for one of us to read before meditating. Afterwards there were many occasions when we would talk about our families and what everybody was up to.

Joan absolutely made meditation a priority - even her family knew not to disturb from 6.00 - 6:30pm. We miss her and can't believe that the Wednesday before her illness she was a "box of fluffy ducks" meditating with us - and then she took ill. Joan died on 19th June.

We are continuing our regular meditations on Wednesday evenings up at the parish centre. We are appealing for more to join us.

*Sincerely
John Cole*

My Reflection of Joan Murphy

Meditation brought Joan and me together about 10 years ago. Now, Joan will always remain in my memory as the ever gracious lady, unassuming and always exuding cheer and love. She often talked about appreciating nature, looking out into the garden from her balcony, spotting birds in the trees and in due season, watching out for the monarch butterflies coming to lay eggs on the leaves of the swan plant. She would pick the branches with the eggs and stand them in a jar on her dining table and watch the eggs hatch into caterpillars. This way, she would save the caterpillars from the birds, and would delight her when they emerged from the cocoon into butterflies. She would let the newly born butterfly rest on her hand and made sure they were strong enough before she set them free. I have enjoyed numerous exciting moments with Joan counting the number of caterpillars saved and occasionally watching them spin their cocoon. We wondered together the mystery and beauty of God's creation.

The last couple of years did set Joan back physically as she endured unwellness and pain. In spite of that, we continued to meet for meditation at her home. Joan always made light of her physical suffering and would often laugh at herself. I loved her great sense of humour and her hearty laughter. When I did little favours for her, she would say, "You're my angel". Although it did not turn me into one, I loved Joan's simplicity and her gratefulness for the little and big things others did for her.

Joan was such a faith-filled person, always ready to share her wisdom and encourage others to enjoy their blessings. Her kindness and generosity of heart was extraordinary. I am very blessed to have known such an admirable and much-loved person in Joan.

Bernadette Wan ✠

Jesus the Contemplative

Contemplative prayer tradition begins with Jesus the contemplative. If you look back at the New Testament texts, you'll find that Jesus spent his life praying. He prays the Jewish liturgical prayer obviously; the Last Supper, in a certain sense, was something like the Jewish liturgical prayer. He has public prayers that he teaches to others, *The Lord's Prayer* being the example, but then Jesus prayed to his Father privately, apart from others, as a key aspect of his whole life. Let me just cite a few texts.

Matthew 14:23: *After he dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray.*

Mark 1:35: *In the morning while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place and there he prayed.*

Luke 5:16: *He would withdraw to deserted places and pray.*

Luke 6:12: *Now during these days he went up to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God.*

There's a whole series of texts from the New Testament that talk about Jesus' prayer life and his dedication to it, particularly at night, by separating himself from others, by going up into the mountain. So, contemplative prayer goes back to Jesus as the model of contemplation.

Also with regard to the New Testament, there are two key texts that are central to almost every Christian mystic and spiritual writer as they meditated on what prayer means. The first one comes from 1Thessalonians 5:16-18. Paul says: *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, giving thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Jesus Christ for you.*

So what does it mean to pray without ceasing? There is a parallel text in Luke's Gospel 18:1.

Jesus told them a parable about the need to pray always and not to lose heart. So a big problem for Christian writers about prayer is, how can you pray always without ceasing? That's text number one.

Text number two is also from Paul,

1Timothy 2:1. *First of all then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for everyone.*

Supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings - Paul is laying out four different kinds of prayer. The commentators, the students of prayer, will say, "What are those four kinds of prayer? How do we understand them? Are they separate? What do they mean?" et cetera.

You could almost write a history of Christian doctrine of prayer around the interpretation of those passages and then also, of course, with the model Jesus as the 'Prayer', the model of prayer.

from: *Praying with the Masters Today*
by Bernard McGinn ✠

Auckland Silent Meditation Retreat

St Francis Retreat House 10 to 12 August 2018

Meditation - A Path to Wholeness



Back Row: Denis Tutaka, Monica Bryce, Anne Sunde, Monique Le Marque, Marlene Chessum, Fr Peter Murphy, Helen Le Marque, Tyrone Cooke

Middle Row: Meera Pancha, Julia Mullan, Blossom Fernandes, Beverley Neal, Apaula Lautua

Front Row: Paulina Ifopo, Kitty Chiu, Jan Sosinko, Clare McGivern, Martin Lautua. **Absent:** Bernardine Hannon

*Such a blessing to be a part of this.
The silence, the meditation,
the prayerful group, all so inspiring!*

*An experience full of new people and
thoughts, love and exciting ideas.*

*An eye-opener to Christian Meditation and
the value of silence through the inspiring
messages of our Facilitator,
the meditation practices, prayer
and the support of others.*

*I feel relaxed, joyful and contented.
Thanks.*

*Enhancing, humbleness
and sincere gratitude.*

*Thank you for a weekend of hospitality,
kindness and holy connectedness.
I feel truly blessed.*

*A lovely peaceful weekend - so encouraging.
Many thanks!*

*An unexpected joy and experience in peace.
Truly grateful for the sharing
amongst the Community
gathered here this weekend.*

*I have really enjoyed the weekend - meeting
new people, seeing old friends again and
being surprised by inspiration and kindness.
Thank you to all the people
who have made this possible.*

*It was excellent to see the stages
of progression in meditation
- and I feel very motivated.
Thank you to all involved
in the preparation.*

Meditation demystified! Thank you.

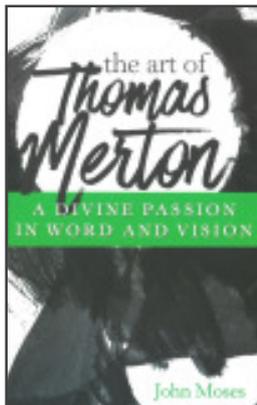
*Father God was surely here
with His grace and mercy.
Thanks.*

*It was a wonderful opportunity
to get into a routine of meditation.
I love that we meditated many times,
to our heart's delight.
Thank you.*

*Thank you.
Structure - excellent
Content - excellent
Delivery - excellent
This is truly a blessing.
Chairs are a bit tight.
I grew up both spiritually and mentally.
Learned a lot about the Holy See's Gloria
and Maranatha.*



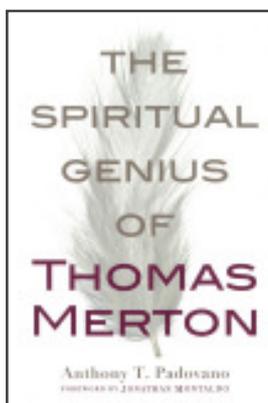
New on Pleroma Shelves: by Shirley Duthie



The Art of Thomas Merton: A Divine Passion in Word and Vision by John Moses is an inspiring anthology that offers both an introduction to Thomas Merton's writings and an aid to private devotion. The author, an Anglican priest based in London, has marked the 50 years since Merton's death by emphasising the contemporary nature of his thinking and writing in an excellent volume that brings together entries from Merton's journals, extracts from his letters, quotations from his books and his countless articles, and lines from his poetry. Ideal for both occasional use and inspiration, or for those wanting a gateway to Thomas Merton's quite revolutionary thinking.

162pp \$31.99

<https://www.christiansupplies.co.nz/product/9781632531841/the-art-of-thomas-merton-a-divine-passion/>



In the previous book Thomas Merton's words speak for themselves. However, in **The Spiritual Genius of Thomas Merton by Anthony T. Padovano**, the author tells the story of Merton's life and explains the thinking behind Merton's writing, and how both these express the spirituality of our age, helping the reader understand more about Merton, about God, and about the effect both can have on our life.

200pp \$37.50

<https://www.christiansupplies.co.nz/product/9781616368029/the-spiritual-genius-of-thomas-merton/>



Meditation with Children: A Resource for Teachers and Parents by Noel Keating

There has been considerable excitement over the content of this book. In his foreword Fr Laurence Freeman OSB gives fulsome praise "This book will help teachers to understand their vocation and make their task easier. They will learn from the child who said *'I sometimes feel like it is sunrise when I am meditating and I feel like I'm not bored with school anymore.'* Parents will be moved and find themselves challenged when they read seven-year-old Helena saying that when you meditate *'you feel like you are where you always wanted to be since you were small.'*"

Noel Keating has spent 40 years of his professional life in the education of children, and having discovered the practice of meditation for himself, he turned his attention to the spiritual life of the child. Here is the distillation of his experience, giving teachers and parents alike a groundbreaking interpretation of what he has discovered. Especially valuable are the detailed instructions on introducing Christian Meditation, the chapter on talking with children about Christian Meditation as a spiritual experience, and the three appendices that analyse the difference between mindfulness and Christian meditation, teachers' comments and how to sustain meditation practice in a school. Bibliography included.

219pp \$32.50

<https://www.christiansupplies.co.nz/product/9781847308009/meditation-with-children/>

Order at www.christiansupplies.co.nz telephone 0508 988 988 (toll free) or email order@pleroma.org.nz ✕

On-line Meditation

Our NZ Christian Meditation group meets every Sunday 7.30pm on Skype. This is an opportunity for YOU to:

- * meditate in the comfort of your home and still be part of a group.
- * join a group if there is no local group for you.
- * get more group support for your meditation practice.

Contact Ken at ken.hutchi@gmail.com

If 7.30pm Sundays don't suit you, there are a variety of other times to choose from during which you can meditate with others from around the world. WCCM has a sacred space at meditationchapel.org. There are functioning chapels and a calendar system. For step-by-step instructions, see: meditationchapel.org/from-wccm

There is also an on-line meditators' Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groupsonline.meditation.chapel> ✕

Questions & Answers: by Shirley Duthie

Q. *I have a question about how the mantra is used. I thought we were to use Ma-ra-na-tha as four sounds, four syllables in rhythm with our breathing, to keep our minds occupied as we sought to come into stillness and silence. However, at a Christian Meditation event I heard a very learned meditator say that she could not detach the meaning from the word, and was not willing to give up the sense of awe she felt at its implication for her.*

A. You are right in your understanding. John Main stresses the importance of being not doing, of the heart being more important than the mind. He recommends a gentle fidelity to saying the mantra, not thinking about it, or its meaning, as a pathway to interior silence in the presence of the Lord.

*The faithful repetition of the word integrates our whole being. It does so because it brings us to the silence, the concentration, the necessary level of consciousness that enables us to open our mind and heart to the work of God in the depth of our being.*¹

However, we can never judge another's journey and it is possible that the other meditator was talking about *onomatopoeia* the English figure of speech indicating that the actual sound of the word indicates elements of its meaning. Or there may be some aspect of her spiritual life where the Aramaic word we use as a mantra, was used as an invitation. You were wise not to simply copy, but to find out for yourself. Said slowly, steadily, carefully, with gentle return when the meditator realises his/her mind is wandering, the mantra becomes surrender.

In the early Christian communities, the word *Maranatha* was a password, it was the verbal key to permit individuals to enter homes for the celebration of the Eucharist. This sense of unlocking the door, or of the door opening, of being taken beyond thoughts and images to the place of silent rest, may be helpful. But we need to remember always that it is not a technique, more a fidelity to the yielding to the now, that will take us to "the silent presence of the Spirit of Jesus".

¹ *Moment of Christ*, John Main.

✠



Q & A - A place for your questions relating 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 Christian Meditation and related subjects.

Send questions to sjmduthie@gmail.com

Sender's name not disclosed without permission

Community Day Report: Hawkes Bay, Manawatu and Taranaki Area

by Noel Bryant - Group Leader, Hastings



We are very fortunate to be able to gather at Southern Star Abbey, and on 30th June we met with, as usual, the option of joining in the Liturgy of the Hours with the monks as part of our day. It was great to see that we are growing with four new groups in the Community and an unprecedented interest in attending which had to be restricted to 18 due to space. Sadly we had to turn away a number of requests to attend.

The program for the day was to focus in mixed groups on our own Meditation discipline lead by the Community's Group Leaders and to provide feedback to the wider group. The morning group session was about the difficulties people experience in the practice of meditation and the afternoon session focused on the changes we have seen in our daily lives as we immerse ourselves in this practice.

This process was found to be very valuable to members as shared knowledge and experience was gained.

Generally it was acknowledged that Christian Meditation was very simple but the daily discipline was very hard. Some of the benefits were: heightened awareness in the moment and a sense of less ego with compassion and heart coming through into our daily lives.

Shirley presented an impressive new bilingual prayer card. Translation efforts from the two Piripi's, Priest and Kaumatua and the beautiful ground design by Chris Gerretzen. This is optional for groups to adopt.

A very positive outcome of the day's success was to book a proposed weekend retreat for our Regional Group Leaders at the Abbey to meditate, discuss their roles and share how they are facilitating their own particular group. Great vision Shirley!

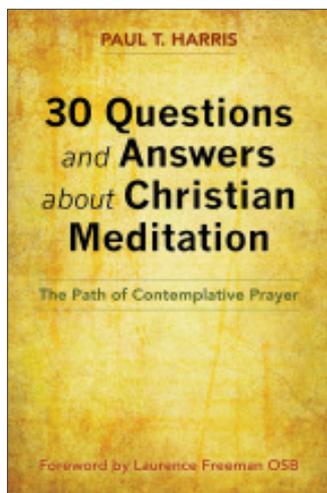
Quote for the day, from Rumi.

*"Silence is the language of God,
anything else is lost in translation"*

✠

30 Questions and Answers about Christian Meditation: The Path of Contemplative Prayer

A new Question-and-answer Book about Christian Meditation by Paul Harris
Novalis Publishing, Toronto, Canada. 125 pages. Foreword by Laurence Freeman
Review by Darrell Taylor



Dear Friends :

Greetings from North of 60! My name is Darrell Taylor, and I lead a Christian Meditation group, north of the Arctic Circle, in Inuvik, North West Territories, Canada, in the famous Igloo Church of Inuvik!

Paul Harris, who resides in Ottawa, Canada, and who is a dear friend and inspiration to many in our worldwide community of meditators, has just published a new book, 30 Questions and Answers about Christian Meditation: The Path of Contemplative Prayer.

Paul is a former Canadian Christian Meditation co-ordinator, a Patron of the World Community for Christian Meditation, and this is his eighth book on Christian Meditation and John Main . This new book has a foreward By Laurence Freeman.

Paul has promised this will be his last book. Well,... perhaps!? We have heard him say that before and were blessed with yet another wonderful volume of teachings on this path of prayer by the irrepressible Mr Harris.

Peace to all

Darrell Taylor

*Christian Meditation Group Leader
Inuvik, Northwest Territories, Canada*

**30 Questions and Answers
about Christian Meditation
\$36.99 + p&p**

available from www.christiansupplies.co.nz
telephone 0508 988 988 (toll free)
or email order@pleroma.org.nz

The question-and-answer approach in this book has a long tradition in the teaching of religion and spirituality. Scripture experts tell us that Jesus asked 183 questions in the gospels to help create dialogue and a response to his teaching. Benedictine monk, John Main, had a custom of encouraging questions at the end of his talks about this way of prayer. Paul Harris continues the tradition in his new book of questions and answers pertaining to the practice of Christian Meditation. Benedictine monk, Laurence Freeman, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, writes in the foreword to this book: *Paul Harris is a teacher of deep faith and humble experience. He is no less an inspiration and model for those who are learning to accept the gift of meditation. By savouring the deeper meaning of these questions and answers, they, like Paul before them, can one day participate in transmitting this precious teaching to others who are, as they once were, at the beginning of the journey of a lifetime.*

Drawing upon 35 years of meditation practice, as well as his experience giving workshops, retreats and conferences worldwide, the author provides a step-by-step explanation of Christian Meditation for the beginner, the curious and the ongoing meditator. He is a former Canadian co-ordinator of Christian Meditation, Patron of the World Community for Christian Meditation, and a weekly meditation group leader. This is Paul's eighth book on the subject. In the preface, the author states: *The approach in this book to the question-and-answer format, revises and updates my 200 Frequently Asked Questions book, but also introduces new questions about the practice of Christian Meditation.*"

The new questions cover such topics as the differences and similarities between Christian Meditation and Mindfulness practice; the current ubiquitous interest in teaching children to meditate; and the inner healing of childhood trauma that takes place during this way of prayer. Other topics include the important role of John Cassian (360–435 AD) in the teaching of contemplative prayer; the significance of the 14th-century author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and his advice on the repetition of a prayer word; an in-depth look at the life of Benedictine John Main and his key role in the teaching of Christian Meditation, in easy-to-understand language for people today.

To assist newcomers, and to offer insights to ongoing meditators, Paul Harris covers the basic teaching of meditation, with replies to questions such as, "What is Christian Meditation?" "Why should one meditate?" "What is the role of the mantra/prayer word?" He also provides practical tips on meditation and discusses the scriptural basis for this form of prayer. In addition, Paul offers answers to the questions of whether meditation is a special call or if everyone is invited; the important role of the weekly Christian Meditation group; how one measures spiritual growth in this way of prayer; and how meditation relates to other forms of prayer.

In tune with the current world situation, the questions and answers in this book articulate the efficacy and relevancy of this way of prayer in a world of fear, distress and anxiety. This increasing level of fear has drawn many people toward deepening their relationship to God. The path of Christian meditation outlined in this wonderful and practical book initiates the reader onto such a pilgrimage of peace, inner strength and divine contact. ☩

2018

- 7th -9th September** **Christchurch:** Essential Teaching Weekend Jane Hole 03.359.9036 holejane66@hotmail.com
Venue: Fourvieres Retreat Centre, Leithfield, north of Christchurch
- 22nd September** **Wanaka:** Community Day; ph Annette Reinheimer, 03 443 7633, 0212075122 annettere852@gmail.com
- 22nd September** **Nelson:** Community Day; Marie Shepherd 03) 538 0128 mlshepherd54@gmail.com
- 8th -14th October** **Ngakura, Waikato:** School Retreat Linda Polaschek - phone 04.479.7955 or 020.479.7955 nandlpolaschek@gmail.com
- 13th October** **Hawkes Bay, Manawatu & Taranaki** Community Day at Southern Star Abbey. Contact sjmduthie@gmail.com
- 27th October** **Waikato/Bay of Plenty:** Paeroa Community Day Damian Robertson - phone 07.347.2087 dae.pete@outlook.com
- 27th October** **Wellington:**Community Day Elspeth Preddey - phone 04.472.3369 or 0274 723 369 elspeth.preddey@xtra.co.nz
- 30th October** **Nelson:** Open Evening at Cathedral Marie Shepherd, mlshepherd54@gmail.com
- 17th November** **Auckland** Community Day at St Mary's Papakura Charmainne 0274800418

2019

- 13th -16th January** **Waikato University:** National Silent Retreat with Fr Laurence Freeman, OSB See our NZCCM website for registration details or contact Linda Polaschek - phone 04.479.7955; 020.479.7955 nandlpolaschek@gmail.com
- 17th - 18th January** **Clinical Education Centre, Auckland City Hospital:** Meditatio Seminar, Contemplative Care. See www.meditatio.org.nz for registration details or contact Linda Polaschek - phone 04.479.7955 or 020 479.7955, nandlpolaschek@gmail.com
- 22-24th March** **Hawkes Bay,** Manawatu and Taranaki leaders and emerging leaders retreat. All bookings and enquiries to sjmduthie@gmail.com

Waikato and Bay of Plenty Community Day

New Zealand Community for Christian Meditation

Saturday 27 October 2018, 10.00 am to 2.30 pm

St Mary's Catholic Church

Normanby Road, Paeroa

Theme for the day: The life and spirituality of Evelyn Underhill
presented by Raymond Eberhard

Meditators and people new to meditation are very welcome.

Please Bring:

Your own lunch. Koha (suggested \$10) to cover costs. \$2.00 for a raffle – all proceeds to be donated to 'Friends'

Credit card, cheque book or cash if you would like to buy from Pleroma Christian Supplies – there will be a sales table and ordering facilities

If you have any queries, please contact Damian Robertson on 07 3472087 or dae.pete@outlook.com.



New Zealand Community for Christian Meditation

Charities Commission Number CC41943

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Stillpoint is sent to you by email, unless you request a posted copy.

I would like to start a meditation group or have someone run an introductory course in my area yes/no

Please return with payment to:

Treasurer - Ngaire McLaughlin
9 Somerset Crescent Kapiti Village,
Paraparaumu, Kapiti Coast 5032
hugh.mclaughlinnz@gmail.com

Stillpoint is the official magazine of the New Zealand Community for Christian Meditation. It is published quarterly to provide a forum for sharing and teaching within the NZ Christian Meditation Community and to keep members informed of events, past and future.

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