



# WCCM

*Newsletter of The World Community for Christian Meditation*

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## *Ever Closer to the Source*

A NEW SERIES OF INTRODUCTORY TEACHINGS BY LAURENCE FREEMAN REFRESHES THE SIMPLICITY OF THE JOURNEY



(Image by vined mind from Pixabay)

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Leavers Friends,

## A letter from Laurence Freeman OSB

The “Essential Teaching” of Christian Meditation, like the Gospel itself, is simple and ever fresh. This is why it can - and needs to be – expressed anew for each generation. We need to use the language of the day so that the words of the sacred texts do not become stale or over-familiar. And we need to address the actual needs and challenges of our time. This letter contains the first of four online talks which attempt to do this. These don't replace former introductions, but I hope they will refresh and renew the way we can all share this great gift.

The response to this series was very heartening - over 3000 people in different time zones listened to each session. The series were translated simultaneously into five languages and each week more people signed up. This testifies both to the dedication and skill of our teams in the community and to the contemporary “hunger for prayer” which John Main identified and to which he knew that our contemplative tradition can powerfully respond. A follow-up series of six sessions called *Feeling the Way* begins in August which will offer deeper support and understanding to the journey that many new meditators began with this introductory series.

## FIRST TALK

Starting to meditate, we all start from where we are. After 45 years of meditating, I can say with authority I am still a beginner. The meditator is always returning to his or her beginning. Why begin in the first place? Even if you only have a superficial feeling of curiosity about meditation, it's a sign to take seriously. Try, take a first step. You have nothing to lose except your limitations and your fears about your limitations. It might just be a milestone on your life's journey. Simply to try, with

an open mind and heart, may itself be a life-changing decision. In fact, you are opening yourself to something new, some dimension of yourself you want and need to know better. You're looking ahead into a new part of yourself.

Beginning the journey of meditation is a journey within a journey - the ever-mysterious journey of your life. You are responding to a call from deep within yourself, beyond thought or explanation. If nothing else, meditation will



give you a new depth and help you live from that depth.

You may be thinking “Everyone is talking about how great meditation is: some see it as prayer and part of the religious traditions of wisdom. Others may do it just to for mental or physical health reasons and it has the scientific seal of approval for that. So, spiritual wisdom traditions and modern science agree meditation is worthwhile. Let's see if it's for me.” John Main put it another way when he said, “We are made to meditate. It's as natural to the spirit as breathing is to the body.”

Whatever motivates you to begin, it is more than just curiosity or even about feeling lost or desperate. The in-

ner force that draws us to meditation is faith. Human beings grow through faith – meaning through relationship, integrity, being true to oneself. Experience will teach you the difference between faith and belief. In meditation, as in all important things, experience is the teacher.

You are beginning a journey to deepen your way of living faithfully – with meaning, hope and love. It's a practice and a journey of human faithfulness.

St. Irenaeus said, “The beginning is faith, the end is love, and the union of the two is God.” If you are not religious and don't have a belief about God, that can be an advantage at first because our ideas about God can be a problem when it comes to reality. But be warned, meditation is not about being focused on ourselves. There is even a real danger you may discover something called God. If you are religious, also be warned: meditation will change your image and beliefs about God. Most people have faith in someone else's faith and so it just becomes belief. Meditation brings you to first-hand faith.

Or perhaps you had an early religious education, but it failed to prepare you

maturely for adult life. It too became superficial, with shallow explanations, guilt drives and infantile fears. Religion can become a form of consumerism, or even oppression, that fails to deliver what it preaches. Leaving that kind of religion behind calls for true faith.

The main motivation for beginning is realising that reality - your life, the world, everything that is or you think is - is more than it first seems. You will discover a new, invisible yet real dimension, by going below the surface of things, beyond what you think and imagine and believe.

We get stuck on surface issues: what we are to eat, what we are to wear, problem-solving, filling out unnecessary forms, surviving in our complex, hectic world. Our social environment is more than a little mad with its materialistic values and same-day delivery culture that promises what it cannot deliver. What we get is instead stress, a feeling of futility and boredom. With all the novelties on offer, it's like realising halfway through watching a film that it's one you've seen before. What is advertised by our present values: leisure, time to be ourselves, a beautiful complexion, happiness, fulfilment, relationship, freedom, is not what we get. We are conditioned by a lie.

To live inside a lie is like being sedated. It's an increasingly depressing existence; it creates frustrated, self-destructive anger. That anger, and the sadness behind it, is expressed even in the way we drive a car or stand in a queue and how we treat those we love. Meditation is taking the first step in getting out of that sedated state and waking up.

What will we find? Depth. Authenticity. A way of being beyond words. At first, it may feel like going under water - but don't panic! You quickly realise you can breathe under water. There is more to life than the surface and there

is more life in the depth.

To begin to meditate is to put your faith in your own intuition that "there is something more to life". Starting to meditate is doing something about finding this "something more" in a way you never can just by reading, watching YouTube or listening to talks.

Meditation is pure action. I can't meditate for you, but we can meditate



together as we will in a minute. In fact, as we will discuss next week, meditating with others is one of the best ways to begin. Another way of putting this is that meditation is learning to be rather than just to do or think. Being is pure action. We don't have to do anything to be. Just be - and we really can, once we stop clinging to the surface of things, the waves of the mind and transient feelings.

So, let's get down to action. How can we meditate? That's like asking someone how to get from A to B. The directions you will get will depend on who you ask. But because people are basically good, whoever you stop and ask will give you the best answer they can, and you're free to trust them or not. So, I will give you the best answer I can. There are

many ways to meditate. I will tell you what I have learned, not because I claim it is the only or the best way. Meditators don't need to compete about their differences. But there are some universals - like silence, stillness, simplicity and, especially, paying attention. One other universal truth is consistency - a form of faith. If you are looking for a spring, it's better to dig deep in one hole rather

than starting a new hole each time you dig.

So, I suggest you give this way a good try over the next four weeks. Beginners need open minds and hearts and a relaxed, alert body. Meditation is not headspace. Meditation is not what you think. It is embodied, and we discover this as we see how much more we are than our thoughts, desires, fears and fantasies. The body can teach us this if we have forgotten it by becoming stuck in our headspace. The body is a spiritual friend, a best friend, even when it is sick or not as beautiful as we would like it to be. It never lies because it is always in the now, the present. How often are our minds in the now? They fly from past to future - and sit most of the day in the transit lounge of fantasy. Meditation is

the journey into the eternal now and discovering that it is without boundaries. The body anchors us in the present moment so that we can sail the ocean of being.

The first step is to sit. Sitting is half-way between standing and lying down, between resting and working. Your physical posture then should be relaxed and alert. If you're on a chair: feet on the ground, back straight, shoulders and facial muscles loose. Or, if you are on a cushion on the ground, give yourself enough support to sit upright. However you sit, don't slouch or be too rigid. You don't have to "look like a meditator". Just be alert and comfortable. Meditation is a middle path, sometimes a razor's edge, between extremes.

Close your eyes lightly and notice your breath coming in and leaving your body, uniting you to everyone else in the world who needs to breathe and with the planet and all its miraculous processes of nature that produce the air we need. Pay attention to the flow in and out. We are receiving the gift of life as we breathe in and we are letting go, becoming poor and un-clinging as we breathe out. All without thinking, like breathing under water. Without even trying too hard. All this is a simple preparation of the body and the mind.

Second step: really start the journey. Deepen the work of attention you have begun. Start to repeat a single word. Say it interiorly, silently, attentively. We know how difficult it is to sustain attention. We're conditioned to have a very short attention span. So, in this phase of the journey, be prepared for frequent, even constant distraction. But learn how distraction can teach you rather than become discouraged by it.

When you find, after a few seconds, that you are not paying attention to the mantra because you're planning something, remembering something,



daydreaming or torturing yourself with negative thoughts - as soon as you are aware of this, drop the thought and return to the word. As soon as you are aware. Awareness is an important word for the new meditator. Meditation is about becoming more aware, more awake. This leads you to become more conscious, and so more accepting and more human. So, becoming aware of the fact you have stopped saying the mantra is something to feel good about – it's not bad, not a failure. Start saying the mantra again as soon as you are aware of it, and you have gained ground on the journey.

This is a journey of faith. You make it by saying the mantra faithfully. Be humble. The ego is not in charge of your meditation. That's why you will feel more free. Essential freedom - liberty of spirit - is freedom from the control of the ego. Say the mantra gently, peacefully, with a light but faithful touch. The mantra is taking the attention off yourself, off the ego, and that's why it feels

liberating even if it isn't easy.

This is a journey - a life-long journey. Every meditation, every time you say the mantra, is a new beginning. We are not gaining mileage points but restoring the beginner's mind, the attitude of a child and the innocence of a child's sense of wonder. Meditation is simple, radically simple.

Sit down, close your eyes, say your mantra. Listen to the word as you say it. Don't visualise it but listen to it. Articulate it clearly. Return to your mantra. Do this at least... once a year. But preferably at least twice a day for between 20 and 30 minutes. How long will it take? How long will it take for what? To achieve what? Enlightenment? We are enlightened but we don't have enough faith to know it.

Choosing the word, the mantra, is important. You will stay with the same word during the meditation and for each meditation morning and evening because your mantra is your little path through the jungle of your thoughts,

out into the open space of your heart. And always stay on your path. The mantra takes us into silence. Silence is healing, restorative and, after all the noise in and around us, an amazing relief. You will look forward to your meditation times like a shower after a noisy, sweaty day. It is an immersion in a non-egocentric world.

When you get distracted or when you stop meditating for a few days or even longer, you are never more than one step away from the path. Just start again - a new beginning but a familiar path you will come to love and recognise. So, stay with the same word. I would suggest a sacred word, not in your own language, and gentle and rhythmic in sound and tone. I personally recommend the word "ma-ranatha". It is Aramaic for "the Lord comes" or "Come, Lord". But we are not thinking of its meaning. It is the oldest Christian prayer. But you don't have to be a believer to say it. Say it as four equal syllables: *ma-ra-na-tha*. Form the word clearly in your mind, in your heart, as you say it gently, faithfully. Listen to it and allow it to lead you simply, in faith, into stillness and silence.

How long will it take to get into a daily practice? I don't know you. I know myself and it took me a few years because I am a slow learner and lack discipline. I even had to become a monk. But I also didn't have a community of

support at the time - although I had my teacher who initiated me, never bullied me and was infinitely patient.

For the week ahead, try to meditate morning and evening. Set your timer: minimum 10 minutes and optimum for now, 20 minutes. You can down-

tired or upset to meditate when the time comes, before you walk away, ask yourself what you really want and don't try to fool yourself. Take a few moments to prepare for meditation: a short physical stretch, breath awareness, listening to some music, taking



load a timer on the WCCM app and choose your meditation bowl sound. Practise some daily exercises that will help to prepare you for the next meditation, especially the evening one: when you are waiting for something - a lift, a light to change - don't automatically look at your phone or read the ads. Remember the mantra, lightly, gently. If you feel too busy,

a 5-minute power nap. We don't meditate to relax. We relax in order to meditate. Find the best place to meditate. This can be your "external cell" where you find it easier to enter the interior cell of your heart.

*Laurence*

### Things you should know about the new Learning to Meditate series with Laurence Freeman:

- \* The talks will be available on the website in the format of a simple online course that anyone can subscribe to (free of charge).
- \* The talks will also be edited for use in meditation groups so that members can invite their friends to come along for the series.
- \* The talks and transcripts will be made available to the National Communities with a step-by-step guide for presenting them as a four-week introductory course. This will be presented as an updated version of the original six-week course.

## News & Articles

# John Main Seminar 2024: Back to New Harmony, birthplace of WCCM, and forward

THE MOST IMPORTANT ANNUAL EVENT OF THE COMMUNITY WILL BE HELD IN NEW HARMONY, INDIANA (US), 8-13 JULY

New Harmony is a special place for WCCM. It was there that in 1991, during a John Main Seminar led by Fr Bede Griffiths, the Community received a name: The World Community for Christian Meditation. For this reason, it is symbolic that a little over than 30 years later, a new John Main Seminar will be hosted there, this time led by Jason Gordon (Archbishop of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago) on the theme "Widen Your Tent". It is like a new beginning and a very special opportunity for the global family to meet (in-person or online) and reflect on what way we can "travel together" in such challenging times. WCCM now is in its thirties. It is time to consider change, growth, and to keep spreading the seeds of hope that meditation gives us as a way of faith.



Fr Bede during Contemplative Eucharist in New Harmony in 1991 (Photo WCCM Archives)

### Memories from 1991

**Bob Kiely (USA):** "We were invited in 1991 to New Harmony in a really hot August week, and the speaker was Fr Bede Griffiths. I had never met him before. Each morning, we had meditation, he gave a talk. He was in his saffron robes, but he was such an Oxford Englishman. He

spoke about the Cosmic Christ. There were people from the USA, Canada, UK, also from Singapore and the Philippines. The general agreement was that the Community would continue, that Laurence would continue teaching and that he should get support. He also needed a base and at that time he went to Cockfosters (London). It

was decided that we should have a newsletter and a publishing house (Medio Media). Little by little, it began to take shape."

**Magda Jass (Canada):** "We had our real first meeting of WCCM in New Harmony. That was the moment when the community was established, its birth. We thought it was just a little community,

### Jason Gordon: "We will gather to seek God's wisdom for the WCCM"

"John Main recovered the teaching on Christian Meditation from John Cassian and in that recovery brought contemplative gifts to our modern age. The community has taken these gifts and spread them throughout the world. This year, in our John Main Seminar, we are taking the gifts that John Main has brought and pairing

them with another contemplative gift: conversation in the Spirit, Synodality, which Pope Francis has brought to the worldwide Church. Many traditions of Christianity have had this Synodal gift brought within them. This is a biblical gift in which we listen to God through listening to one another. This year, we gather to seek God's wisdom for the

WCCM, and we want you participating with us as we seek God's wisdom and where God wants the community to go in its next stage so that we can bring the fruits of contemplation and contemplative life to all of God's people."

Watch the message by Jason Gordon here:

<https://wccm-int.org/jgms24>

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fragile, almost like a baby is fragile. And we were so happy that it was happening, that there was a new community and a new beginning. But at the same time, we had no idea where it was going to go.”

**Peter Ng (Singapore):** “We just wanted to start, but we did not know where it was taking us. Our gift to the world was the teaching of meditation which had been sort of developed by John Main. We hoped that what we do would be global in reach. That’s why we called it the ‘World Community’. And we were very clear that it was going to be a community and that the heart, the centre of

our community, would be the individual meditator. And the key operating unity would be the weekly meditation group.”

### Expectation in the USA Community

The WCCM USA Coordinator, **Matt Reeves**, speaks about the general feeling among its members for this seminar: “The U.S. community is full of expectation that a return to New Harmony will be similarly momentous. With Archbishop Jason Gordon’s talks on ‘Widen Your Tent’, a process for listening and dialogue on the Spirit’s work

among us now and the spiritual energy and community that silence creates, we are hopeful that in the 2024 John Main Seminar, the Spirit will release fresh vision and vitality for the WCCM.”

**Widen Your Tent - John Main Seminar 2024**  
8 – 13 July 2024  
New Harmony, Indiana, USA  
Led by Jason Gordon  
IN-PERSON & ONLINE  
**For more information:**  
<https://johnmainseminar.org>

## A message from the Guiding Board

THE 2024 GUIDING BOARD MEETING WAS HOSTED AT BONNEVAUX SHORTLY BEFORE HOLY WEEK

We have just concluded the meeting of the Guiding Board at Bonnevaux and want to give you a brief summary of what was discussed and agreed. The Board meets to reflect on what is happening in WCCM – challenges and celebrations as well as new ideas and opportunities. This helps us identify direction and give guidance to the National Communities and WCCM Trustees.

Challenges this year have included strong demands put upon our small Bonnevaux core community which provides the spirit of hospitality and service, but which has also felt the stress of doing so. We made rapid progress in the past four years and have decided we need to slow down till August to review how we manage and do things. This coincides with a general review of WCCM organisation and governance, a time of reflection and consultation for which we are grateful for your prayer and support.

We also discussed the need to encourage volunteers to assist in our work. People like to be asked to help. When the London Centre asked for



volunteers, twenty people stepped forward! The Board advises trying this everywhere. We celebrated the work of Tainā Malaspina, our Director of Young Adult Programs and the youngest member of the Board, especially in developing a Spiritual Intelligence course for schools and universities. We listened to Jim Green, who heads our Earth Crisis Forum, and responded enthusiastically to his ideas for spreading awareness of a contemplative engagement with climate change. The WCCM Academy has completed the first of its two-year programmes of Contemplative Living with excellent feedback

from students and teachers. The students had spent a week at Bonnevaux just before our meeting.

We heard from Kath Houston, Director of Liaison with National Communities, about growth in the number of groups with examples of flourishing initiatives as well as tough challenges for renewal in older communities. A new four-week online Introduction to Meditation course in April/May and will be circulated for national communities to use.

A major discussion concerned consulting the grassroots of the WCCM in a “synodal” process. We agreed to try this

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further at the John Main Seminar (8-13 July at New Harmony, IN) and launch it later this year throughout the community.

There is more to do than time or people to do it, but our priorities (each led by a Board member) are:

- 1) Synodal Process
- 2) Earth Forum
- 3) Young Adults

4) Implementing our Governance Review

5) WCCM Programme  
6) Meditatio Outreach  
7) Communicating our message to new audiences

8) Raising awareness of Stewardship needs.

Being comes before Doing. Action needs deeper commitment to stillness.

Be with us and do what you can. Please send your thoughts or suggestions to: [GuidingBoard@wccm.org](mailto:GuidingBoard@wccm.org).

We are happy to be on this journey sharing this mission with you.

With our love,

**All of us on the WCCM Guiding Board**

## The Vision of Beauty: Laurence Freeman invitation to a Contemplative Pilgrimage in Italy

Italy will be the location of this year's WCCM Pilgrimage led by Laurence Freeman, from 26 September to 4 October - just before the Monte Oliveto Retreat. Read Fr Laurence's invitation: "This year's Pilgrimage expresses the WCCM theme, the essential goodness and beauty of the world: 'And God saw that it was very good'. All pilgrimage involves moving from place to place with the enjoyment of good company. But the true

destination is spiritual not physical, which means the whole person in harmony with others and their surroundings.

Our goal is the 'vision of beauty'. Beauty heals us personally so we can heal the world. This pilgrimage has to have a significant financial cost, but I believe that if each of us truly sees beauty in new ways, we will be better healers of the world. We will be in beautiful places and contemplate

beautiful art, not as tourists rushing from one thing to another, but as contemplatives, taking time to be truly present to the divine gift of beauty as part of God's own being. Each day will give priority to prayer, finding the beauty within, sharing our response to the gift of enrichment and peace.

I look forward to being in this time of beauty and healing with you for the sake of the world."



Pilgrims will see the "Two Birds" from Ravenna, inspiration for the WCCM logo (photo by chatstz from Pixabay)

### The Vision of Beauty 26 September to 4th October

**Highlights:**

- Milan
- Como
- Lake Garda
- Verona
- Venice
- Ravenna
- Arezzo
- Sansepolcro
- Fiesole
- Florence

Monte Oliveto Maggiore

**For more information and registration:** <https://wccm-int.org/ITPilg24>



## News & Articles

# Spiritual Intelligence: the need for reconnection

TAYNĀ MALASPINA SPEAKS ABOUT A NEW PROJECT WHOSE GOAL IS TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE FACE THE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES

### Can you explain a little bit what Spiritual Intelligence is?

**Taynā** - This year, within the youth programme, the Spiritual Intelligence project is our priority. This is because we believe that this is one of the ways in which WCCM contributes to enriching the wellbeing of young people in the face of the challenges of modernity.

Lisa Miller, professor of psychology at Columbia University, explains how we humans are hard-wired for spirituality, but we've lost the connection. Faith-based traditions once connected most of us to something larger than ourselves, and without that, we've entered a self-centred age of widespread depression, addiction, and suicide. Dr Miller has insight into how to awaken our brains and reconnect to the deeper force in life, even if you don't believe in a God.

Although spirituality has been studied for years, "spiritual intelligence" is a relatively new term. Howard Gardner, known for the theory of multiple intelligences, did not include spiritual intelligence in his list of intelligences. He found it challenging to codify quantifiable scientific criteria for spiritual intelligence. Instead, Gardner suggested an "existential intelligence" as a viable alternative.

Danah Zohar coined the term "spiritual intelligence" and introduced the idea in her 1971 book *ReWiring the Corporate Brain*. According to her, spiritual intelligence involves understanding and integrating the spiritual dimensions of life with practical aspects. It encompasses awareness of our relationship to the divine and the ability to act beyond selfish motives.



(Image by StockSnap from Pixabay)

For Danah Zohar, spiritual intelligence (SQ or SI) transcends the conventional measures of intelligence. While IQ focuses on rationality and emotional intelligence (EQ) emphasizes understanding and managing emotions, SQ operates at a deeper level—the realm of meaning, purpose and values. According to Cindy Wigglesworth, SI is the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the situation.

### What are the status and perspectives of this project?

**Taynā** - This is what we can call a medium- and long-term project. This year, we organised a survey of two audiences:

- \* young adults (18 to 45 years old)
- \* education professionals (schools and universities)

The aim of this research is to understand the behaviour of young people with regard to the topic of spirituality today and also how educational institutions integrate spirituality into the curriculum. With the results of this research, we will design a Spiritual Intelligence programme for schools and uni-

versities. In addition, we intend to build an app for young people to nurture their spiritual dimension. And more: we plan to organise an online symposium on Education & Spirituality with speakers such as Lisa Miller, Cindy Wigglesworth and Laurence Freeman.

### Can you recommend material for those who want to learn more about Spiritual Intelligence?

**Taynā:** There is a lot of information on the topic at <https://spiritualityineducation.org/>. In addition, there are some books that can help those who want to delve deeper:

*The Awakened Brain: The New Science of Spirituality and Our Quest for an Inspired Life*, Lisa Miller (Random House)

*The Spiritual Child: The New Science on Parenting for Health and Lifelong Thriving*, Lisa Miller (St. Martin's Press)

*SQ21: The Twenty-One Skills of Spiritual Intelligence*, Cindy Wigglesworth (Select Books, Inc)

*Spiritual Intelligence: Beyond the different religions, every human being can develop the spiritual intelligence*, Francesc Torralba Roselló (Plataforma Editorial)

## News & Articles

# Flooding, Contemplation, and Reawakening Our Capacity for Solidarity

BY LEONARDO CORREA



Rescue operations for residents of flooded neighborhoods in Porto Alegre, Brazil. (Photo: Alex Rocha/PMPA)

In early May, South Brazil faced one of the worst climate disasters in its history. Torrential rains destroyed roads and bridges, and rivers engulfed entire cities. Many lives were lost, and many people lost everything. I live in Porto Alegre, the capital of the southernmost Brazilian state, and was fortunate that my home was not directly affected. However, the city was flooded by Guaiaba Lake, and we experienced blackouts and misinformation, leading to panic and a rush to supermarkets as if the end of the world had arrived.

As I walked through a supermarket, I reflected on how, in situations like this, human beings tend to exhibit predictable collective behaviour. Each person primarily focuses on saving their own life, loved ones, and home. The needs of others become almost invisible, or even an obstacle to our survival. For instance, someone might be more concerned about securing a gallon of water before someone else. This realisation annoyed me because I know I too can act selfishly, prioritising my own survival and ignoring the suffering of others.

We understand that this behaviour is common, but it doesn't have to be the norm. We can resist the crowd and put our own comfort or safety at risk to help others. Moreover, if we have a contemplative practice, such as meditation, we should be better equipped to be more other-centred. As Ramana Maharshi once said, "There are no others." We are all one.

Extreme weather events are now the "new normal". We must adapt not only to save ourselves but also to generate a transformation, a metanoia. In this new normal, kindness and solidarity would be the spontaneous responses to such tragedies. We need each other, but if we don't have a genuine experience of unity, such as we can know through meditation, then all our lovely words will be empty. I believe that a contemplative revolution is possible, where the experience of community and love becomes the "new normal".

If you're interested in exploring the connection between meditation and the Climate Crisis, visit our special page with resources and events relating to this topic at:

[https://wccm-int.org/med\\_eccm](https://wccm-int.org/med_eccm)

## Where has the Joy gone? Reconnecting with our True Selves

**Retreat for adults from 18 to 45 years old at Bonnevaux (and online) 30 July - 4 August**

Led by Laurence Freeman, Taynã Malaspina, Patricio Lynch Pueyrredon and Giovanni Felicioni - More information at: <https://wccm-int.org/ymr24>



# In Focus

## João Correia

NATIONAL COORDINATOR, PORTUGAL



My journey of Christian meditation began during what might be termed a “mid-life crisis” when, in 2014 and after 38 years of secular life devoid of any religious or spiritual experience, an inner questioning arose about the life and its meaning which I have experienced in its most mental and materialistic aspects: as paradoxes and contradictions, words without roots, actions without direction. In a very naive way, I felt the need to find a purpose, a meaning, a direction for who I “wanted” to be.

In this state of “soul”, life introduced me, firstly, to a search for self-knowledge, to contacts with meditation and Buddhist teachings, and then to a secu-

lar perspective of mindfulness. At the same time, in a family context, I was led to begin a two-year course of adult Christian catechesis in the local parish.

During this four-year period, meditation, self-knowledge and the knowledge of God and Christ were simply revolutionary. The understanding of God the Creator, who is above all things, and of Jesus Christ - his life, death and resurrection - God who became man to save us, beings created in his image, worthy and deserving of his love, despite how fragile we are, is continually transforming my whole being and doing.

From the faith and hope I have received, from listening to the word and the sacred, from the journey of personal and spiritual conversion, naturally arises the desire to establish a deeper personal relationship with Christ, which began with researching the words “Christian meditation” and consequently led me to WCCM.

From 2019 onwards, my journey in Christian meditation began with the weekly online group, which played a key role during the Covid-19 pandemic; a first experience in Bonnevaux, which I have repeated on an annual basis; learning from Oblates in the community; with the teachings of John Main and

Laurence Freeman; with the creation of a face-to-face group in the local parish; with the growth, albeit inconstant, in individual practice; and, more recently, with a more active role in national coordination, accompanied by a strong feeling and evidence that humanity yearns for a more harmonious Christianity between being and doing, between contemplation and action, between the spoken word and the lived word.

I am and always will be a novice disciple of Jesus Christ, who seeks, through Christian meditation and, to paraphrase John Main, to allow God’s presence in me to be the reality that gives meaning, shape and direction to everything I am and do. And my experience, witnessed and shared by those closest to me, is that I have improved in many aspects of my life, my behaviour, my being, especially in my attention and relationship with others, in better knowledge and mastery of my frailties, seeking daily to reinvent myself, for a better version of myself and a more intimate relationship with Jesus; and as the Spirit floods me with his love, so, naturally and like for many others who are on the path, grows the commitment to share this discipline of prayer to strengthen Christian unity.



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**Would you like to contribute to the WCCM Newsletter? Our next deadline is 15 July.**

## Events & Resources

# Annual Appeal: “Embracing Change: Emerging Stronger”

The WCCM Annual Appeal week will be happening this year from 10 to 17 June with the theme “Embracing Change: Emerging Stronger”. Fr Laurence says: “May I thank you for your generous response to last year’s Spring Appeal which has helped immensely and been a powerful encouragement? Raising £250,000 uplifted me and filled me with hope - thank you!

It helps us do many things, from our retreat program in Bonnevaux, to giving scholarships and covering operational costs, to supporting the online series of talks and providing multiple translations of key texts. We are essentially a volunteer community which is supported by a small, paid group of skilled and highly motivated meditators.

Can you help us to continue in this



work? Any amount you give towards what it costs to share the gift of meditation across the globe will help and inspire us.”

To help you decide what you can give, here are some categories for support. A regular donation, of course, allows us to plan more effectively:

- \* A recurring monthly gift
- \* An annual gift
- \* A one-time donation
- \* Remembering the WCCM in your will

Information about the Annual Appeal 2024 will be available during the appeal week at [wccm.org](http://wccm.org)

## Feeling the Way - A Six-Week course online

Continuing the Journey of Meditation, discovering new ways of seeing ourselves, our neighbours, the planet and God. Please join us for this six-week online course with Laurence Freeman. The sessions will be on: 26 August; 2, 9, 16, 23 September; 2 October. This course will be in English with French, Spanish, Italian, German and Dutch interpretation.



Scan the QR code above for more information and registration or visit: <https://wccm-int.org/ftw24>

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