

Christian Meditation

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY



FALL 2024

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THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MYSTIC: THE DIVINE FEMININE, IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

by Darrell Taylor

Spiritual Care Counsellor – Meditation Facilitator

Thomas Merton called the Gospel of John “the mystical heart of Christianity.” John stresses Jesus’ divinity. Christ has come down from “above.” He is the Logos—the Word of God. But John also portrays Jesus’ humanity. In this Gospel, there is a very human story about Jesus, and it involves his mother, Mary. It is a story that has always puzzled me.

Not much is written about Mary in John’s gospel. Ever present behind the scenes she makes her appearances at critical moments. She is never far from her son. What has this relationship to do with Christian Meditation?

In John’s Gospel, Mary makes her first appearance at a wedding party (John Ch. 2). The party takes place in a small village called Cana of Galilee. A problem arises. The wine has run out and the party isn’t even over yet.

Jesus’ ministry is about to begin. Something mysterious is going on in the brief conversation between Mary and Jesus. Mary knows something that Jesus doesn’t. This is a contradiction. In the Gospel of John, everyone misses the point about Jesus’s identity. His disciples are often out in left field. Jesus constantly chides them for their inability to see through the eyes of faith. At Cana, the disciples recede into the background. Mary comes to the fore. Unlike the others, Mary understands Jesus completely.

At the wedding party, the conversation between mother and son takes few words. They know each other intimately. More is happening in their silence than meets the eye.

The wedding host is in a panic. Mary speaks her first words to Jesus, “They have run out of wine.” Surprisingly, Jesus’ reply is something like, “Not my problem.” Jesus and Mary know, once Jesus openly reveals himself by performing a miracle, the “cat is out of the bag.” This is a dangerous move. His timing must be right before he goes public.



Darrell Taylor

Jesus tells his mother it’s not his time to go public. But Mary knows it is his time. When Jesus says the wine is not his problem, Mary makes it his problem. With barely a word, Mary compels Jesus. He must act now. Jesus then turns water into wine.

Jesus surrenders to his mother. Mary surrendered to God when he spoke to her through the angel Gabriel. The angel told her she was chosen to be the “God-bearer.” She willingly consents. Mary becomes Theotokos, the God bearer. When we meditate, we are like Mary. We sit in intimate silence with the Lord. We speak only one word. We surrender. We consent to becoming vessels of God’s Spirit, bringing his presence into the world just as Mary brought Jesus into the world at Christmas and then she presents him to humanity at Cana.

Mary consents to being the human bridge between heaven and earth. She is positioned between time and eternity. She is the universal symbol, or Jungian archetype, of the “Great Mother.” And she embodies the divine feminine. The divine feminine is often symbolized as a cup or vessel, the Sacred Chalice. This archetype illustrates the divine feminine as the

Continued on page C8



How to Respond to Injustice

Last March, I vacationed in Florida with my family and two other families enjoying the sun, sand, and soccer (with Messi playing against Montreal). The material wealth, the opulence, the waste, and the concern of many residents for their physical and social appearance (“the selfie” attitude) were evident. This stood in stark contrast to what was happening just 700 miles away.

Haiti was in chaos. The unelected Prime Minister had been forced to resign the week before, as the country fell further into chaos. Nine gang leaders had taken over a country that hadn’t held elections in 10 years. They were (and likely still are) causing terror and were responsible for many killings. Poverty and hunger reign.

So, how do we respond to such injustice, inequality, and differences in our world?

I thought about it and came up with a basic framework: responses based on judgment vs. responses based on contemplation, as shown in the diagram below.

In either case, there is an emotional trigger. The news is on 24/7, constantly triggering our emotions. Who doesn’t feel unease, sadness, or revolt in the face of blatant injustice?

But then the paths diverge. We can choose the “judger route” leading to an “us vs. them” attitude. We may feel culpable or victimized depending on which side we identify with. This leads to a fight-or-flight response and a desire to take refuge in materiality, power, busy-ness, anger, indifference or addictions.



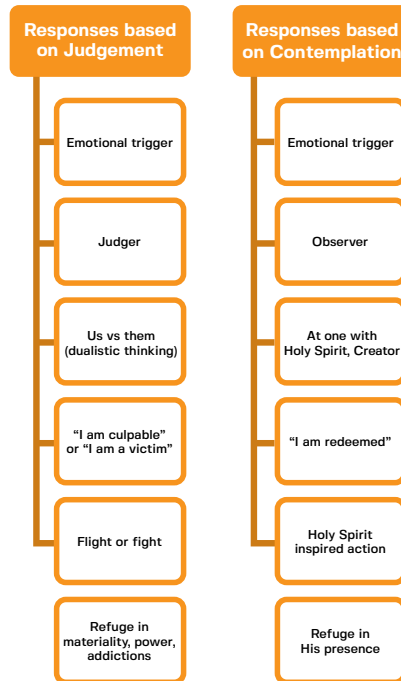
André Choquet

Contrast this with a response based on contemplation, where we adopt an observer attitude. Not an indifferent or aloof observer, but one grounded in the Holy Spirit, the Creator. An observer who understands that we have been redeemed by Jesus Christ and we are recipient of

undeserved gifts. The natural thing to do (and logical) is to extend to others the same gifts of life, love, and compassion. Our refuge is not in the material world. Refuge is in God’s presence, found in meditation, and in our everyday lives.

I still find myself responding from the judgment side of the diagram, but I believe I’m on my way toward more and more responses based on contemplation. I know I, alone, can’t impact injustices in the world, but if my example influences others to respond with a contemplation mindset, that’s how meditation changes the world.

May you celebrate a Holy Christmas with your loved ones!



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échos du silence and the French version of *Meditatio* are available from Méditation chrétienne du Québec, 105 ch du Richelieu, bureau B, McMasterville, QC J3G 1T5, 450-446-4649. info@meditationchretienne.ca.

Page design and layout: www.katemcdo.com



The Canadian Christian Meditation Community National Appeal

It is the time of year for our CCMC National Appeal. This is our second year operating as a National Federal Charity. We have made progress in strengthening our governance procedures, our financial processes and our support for the Bonnevaux Centre for Peace (Bonnevaux).

1. With the help of our legal counsel, we have signed a new agreement which will allow us to grant funds on a project-by-project basis towards funding gaps from running retreats at Bonnevaux that are aligned with our purpose as a charity.
2. We have started creating a Safeguarding code of conduct and policy which is highly encouraged by WCCM for national communities.
3. We have created tools and links nationally, such as a Facebook group, to support Group Leaders and to allow members from across the country to access online meditation sessions.

4. The national conference and Fr. Laurence's four events in Montreal and Toronto in July 2024 were highly successful in renewing spirit in our community and raising the visibility of Christian Meditation as a healing practice for the world.

I would like to thank all of you who contributed time and money.

These are difficult times with many budget choices to make, but we need your continued support. I encourage you to donate to the Canadian Christian Meditation Community in the best way you can. Please make a tax-deductible donation to our National Appeal. Listed on page C7 are four ways you can donate.

May God bless you and your families.

Have a lovely Christmas Season!

André Choquet, National Coordinator

What Does Your Financial Support Do?

Your donations are used to support various important activities and initiatives offered by CCMC, such as:

- **The National Resource Centre:** Provides support to the Canadian Christian Meditation Community through mail, telephone and internet communications, maintaining a database of community memberships, managing the financial and legal affairs of the registered charity, accepting donations, and issuing tax receipts.
- **The School of Meditation:** Guides and supports those called to share the gift of meditation, be it one-on-one, as a group leader, or giving talks to newcomers. A resource team organizes and conducts Essential Teaching workshops across the country, where participants deepen their knowledge, understand more fully the experience of meditation, and gain confidence in their ability to share the gift.
- **Teaching Meditation to Children:** Produces and distributes multimedia materials, introductory workshops for educators, and provides ongoing support through our website.
- **The WCCM Newsletter and the Canadian Newsletter:** Publishes four times a year in print and electronic formats. The Canadian Newsletter includes news and events from meditation communities across the country, plus reflections by meditators on their experiences.

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements for the Year Ended December 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Receipts		
Donations – Newsletter	\$ 787	\$ 914
Donations	31,319	18,278
Grants	2,034	2,662
Program revenues	4,996	37,008
Publications	4,817	7,519
Royalties	43	47
Bonnevaux Scholarship Fund	434	1,179
National Conference Surplus	0	6,395
Interest from Endowment	3,613	2,373
Total receipts	\$ 48,043	\$ 76,375
Disbursements		
Newsletter	\$ 17,151	\$ 24,778
Donations Disbursements	2,339	1,300
Programmes	3,626	29,648
Travel & Conferences	4,758	8,916
Publications Purchases	3,127	2,069
Bookstore Rent	3,720	3,720
Shipping and warehousing	755	1,144
Office	707	609
Telephone and communications	783	362
IT	2,578	1,185
Legal	4,141	2,093
Insurance	1,426	1,361
Interest and bank charges	1,356	1,310
Miscellaneous disbursements	188	36
Total disbursements	\$ 46,655	\$ 78,531
Excess of receipts (disbursements)	\$ 1,388	\$ (2,156)
ASSETS		
Current		
Cash	\$ 8,247	\$151,783
Accounts and miscellaneous receivables	840	0
Investments – Term GIC	7,744	5,722
Pledges receivable	14,413	5,180
Prepaid expenses	264	275
Inventory	32,130	30,714
	\$ 63,638	\$193,674
Long-Term Investments		
Fixed Income Endowment Fund	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,710
GICs	125,427	0
Total assets	\$229,065	\$234,384
LIABILITIES – Current		
Accounts payable	\$ 3,287	\$ 9,110

NOTES

Full financial records for the past ten years can be found on the Revenue Canada website under the Charities Division.



Canadian Christian Meditation Community Bookstore

SERVING NORTH AMERICA

www.mediomedia.ca
mediomedia@wccm-canada.ca

514-485-7928

Orders can be placed using the website,
or via email, or by phone.

If you are holding an event and would like to order publications on sale or return, an order form is available on request.

Short talks for Groups. From 2005 to 2023, The Singapore Meditation Community distributed CDs of short talks to meditation groups around the world. These talks continue to be available for download at <https://meditativetalks.wccm.org/>.

The Bookstore has many of these original CDs in stock for those who prefer physical CDs. These are available at \$10—postage included, or at \$8, plus postage, for multiple CDs. You will find the list of titles on the above-noted website. Please send enquiries and orders to: mediomedia@wccm-canada.ca

Corrections and Apologies

Regarding the article *Fr. Laurence Freeman's Stop-Over Visit to Toronto: The Ever-Present Origin* published on page C6 in the CCMC summer newsletter, we offer our apology to the reporter and writer, Rev. Julie Meakin. In the article sign-off, we mis-spelled her first name as Julia rather than Julie.

Regarding the article *Honouring the Legacy of Fr. Charles Brandt* published on page C12 in the CCMC summer newsletter, we offer our apologies to Elaine Mills and Jason Brown. A miscommunication resulted in the article being attributed to Jason Brown, whereas the reporter and writer was Elaine Mills. We regret putting words into the mouth of Jason Brown and not correctly crediting the reportage and writing of Elaine Mills. To further set this straight, the starting line which read as "My personal interest" should have read as "His personal interest".

Ora et Labora - Prayer and Work

“Prayer and Work” is the name given this space as a regular feature devoted to sharing information and news about the **WCCM Benedictine Oblates**. It comes from the balance between prayer and work (and reading) that St. Benedict stresses in his Rule and that Oblates strive to follow in everyday life. You can now expect to see a new article in each newsletter. Enjoy!

If you would like more information about the Oblates, please contact Dorothy Wood at dorogeo50@gmail.com.

Winter is Coming

In my last article, I shared my experience of becoming an Oblate at our national conference in Vancouver in early July. What I did not share was a recent diagnosis of bladder cancer. My surgery was in July with follow up immunotherapy in September for six weeks. The assessment of the treatment’s success won’t be known until after the deadline for this article.

As we live about an hour away from my doctor’s office where I attended my treatments, the required post-treatment protocol had to be improvised. It required me lying in a prone position for 15 minutes on my left and right sides, followed by my back and stomach. Sheila, my spouse, drove us to a nearby shopping centre parking lot. The back seat was ready with blankets and pillow. The protocol required rotating every 15 minutes for an hour.

The picture below was taken from the back seat of our vehicle and inspired the title of this article: “Winter is Coming”.

It was not an ideal setting for reflection and meditation, but I had to do something. As I rotated in the back seat, ranges of thoughts and emotions raced through my mind. It was frustrating, tiresome, and complicated by doses of anxiety. This was not the context I imagined for cancer treatment in the 21st century. Having a foreign substance injected to treat invasive cancer seemed paradoxical. Often, my thoughts wandered to an unknown future.



Rev. Dr.
G. Wayne Short

The maple leaf on my windshield was a gentle reminder of the rhythm of nature. Yes, “winter is coming”, regardless of where we live in Canada. The exact nature of a winter that lies ahead is not entirely predictable or guaranteed. The weather scientists offer us forecasts. It occurred to me that my immunotherapy for bladder cancer was similar. It has a rhythm that will play out and its success revealed in time.

My twice daily practice of meditation provides another rhythm that has been instrumental in walking with this latest health challenge. I mean, not just in the sense of surviving or getting by, but living fully with joy and gratitude for all I have. My weekly treatment was quick and painless. The follow up protocol and evening hours were more difficult. There were times I could not meditate. I accepted my limitation knowing that my condition would probably improve.

My meditation, like the seasons and many other things, offers a discipline for living. Living abundantly even in challenging conditions. The future, like winter, will come. My meditation lets me know that, in stillness and simplicity, I have a centre, a still point that is internal. Returning there daily and often enables me to breathe deeply, feel loved and know that with Jesus at my center, I am ready for winter.

Rev. Dr. G. Wayne Short (Oblate)



Final Notification of a New Policy for Distribution of the CCMC Print Newsletter

We thank all donors who contribute to the cost of paying for the print publication of our CCMC newsletter. As mentioned in the last newsletter, due to the rising costs for print publication and the reality of our situation as a charity, we need to introduce a new publication policy.

Print newsletters are distributed to people who have registered to receive it and have donated a minimum of \$30 to CCMC in the last 12 months.

If you were a print newsletter recipient and:

- You wish to continue receiving the newsletter in print or
- You wish to switch to an email version

please complete the form to register for the Canadian Christian Meditation Community newsletter below.

If you have questions, please reach out to us at info@wccm-canada.ca.

Respectfully yours,

The CCMC National Council Members

TO REGISTER FOR THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER:

I wish to receive the WCCM & CCMC Newsletters, aim of 4 issues per year:

Electronic version (suggested annual donation \$25). • Print version (minimum annual donation \$30).

Name _____

Address _____

Municipality _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

I wish to make a donation to The Canadian Christian Meditation Community of: \$ _____

A tax receipt will be issued for donations of over \$25.00

Please make cheques payable to The Canadian Christian Meditation Community. Mailing address on page C8.

Or by electronic transfer to info@wccm-canada.ca. Or through www.canadahelps.org — search 'Christian Meditation Community'
Or visit www.wccm-canada.ca and click the donate button

By credit card: _____ / _____
number expiry CVC



Mary continued from C3

cosmic womb; the silent, dark emptiness that brings forth the creation. She is also the Holy Grail that holds the blood of Christ. Jesus and Mary shared the same sacred blood in her womb for nine months. The divine feminine is also related to the element of water: the dark ocean where life begins. Water turned to wine.

When we meditate, we empty ourselves. Like Mary, we surrender to God and become vessels. In the dark silence of unknowing, we create a space within our hearts. God then fills that emptiness with His Spirit. Like Mary, we become a bridge between heaven and earth, between time and eternity. Like Mary, we become bearers of God. Like Mary, we bring Jesus into the public space.

The story of Cana is the first of “seven signs” in John’s Gospel. These signs reveal Jesus’ identity as the Son of

God. The waters of earthly existence are transformed into the wine of eternal life. The Cana wedding also foreshadows the great wedding feast at the end of time in John’s other book, the Apocalypse (Revelation Ch. 19)

We don’t think of these things while we meditate. They are done in secret, in the silence of an opened heart. We simply say our mantra, our prayer word, Maranatha, which means, “Come Lord.” The mantra helps us empty ourselves. We make room for this miracle of transformation. As Fr. John Main says, we are not trying to make anything happen. We are not trying. We are trusting. It is the work of the Spirit. Like Mary, the divine feminine, we simply surrender. God does the rest.

Darrell Taylor

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www.mediomedia.ca

Publications Mail Agreement No. 44128019