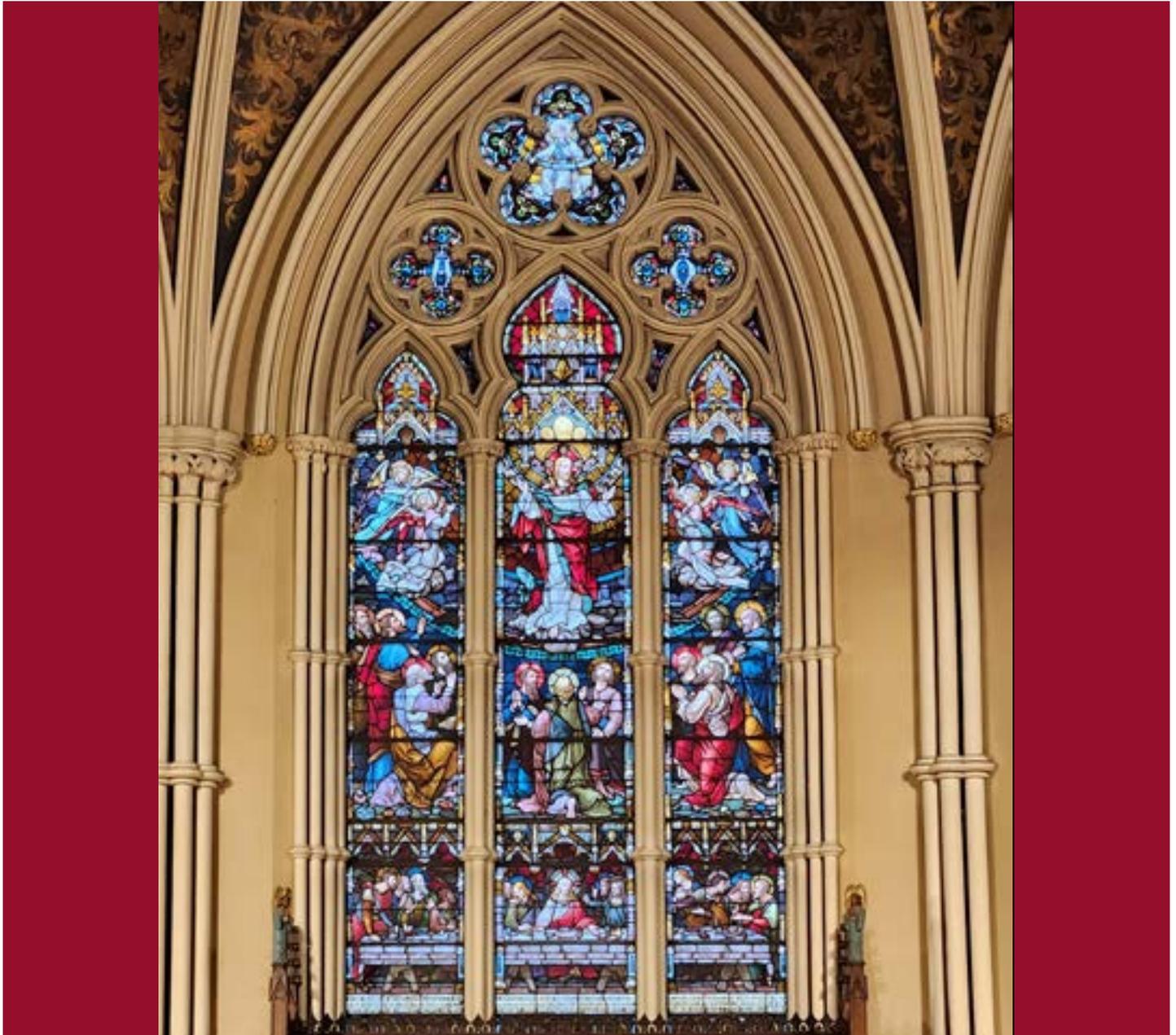


# Christian Meditation

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN MEDITATION COMMUNITY



Window at The Cathedral Church of St. James Anglican, Toronto

## WINTER 2026

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# WCCM-Canada National Coordinator Invites You Come to Toronto this summer!

Join us at our Biennial CCMC National Conference on July 24-26, 2026,  
at Victoria Chapel, Victoria College in Toronto.

The theme is:

## *Transforming Together in Peace*

*Reconnecting humanity and the living Earth*

It is an extension of the 2025 WCCM theme,  
"The Risk of Living Together," and is still topical.

Living together is not just about human-to-human relationships. It is also about living with our environment. One cloud on the horizon is the entrenched belief in modern society that our economy and our financial systems are separate from nature - that GDP and other metrics of economic growth can continue their upward trajectory while ignoring planetary boundaries. We have entered the **Anthropocene** era, a term coined by scientists to define an epoch when human activities are altering the Earth's systems.

As with human-to-human relationships, if we don't pay attention to our silent neighbours - our trees, for example - we will feel more separate from nature. This contributes to a perverse belief that nature is to be exploited or polluted.

There is a group of trees in my Beach neighbourhood in Toronto that I like to visit daily. I feel their bark and appreciate their age and resilience to extreme weather. When I embrace their trunks, I feel the life energy in them and visualize it circulating in their roots and branches. When I see melted snow around the base of their trunks, it is a visual proof of that life energy.

Our conference keynote speaker, **Tom Mustill**, is a conservation biologist turned filmmaker and writer, specialising in stories where people and nature meet. He devoted his life to paying attention to and studying the fascinating ways that whales speak to each other. At one point in his address, he will lead us into a meditation accompanied by whale "voices." You will get to know this neighbour of ours in a whole new way.

Parts of our world are dangerously reverting to isolationism. The darker side of our capitalist system is that it tends to create division, one against the other—to the point where human-to-human relationships are often based on "what can I get out of you?" or "what's in it for me?" **Chief R. Stacey LaForme** is the former Chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation near Toronto. By sharing his lived experience and his poetry with us, he will speak to reconciliation and reconnection with one another, from the heart, among the people of this beautiful land.



**André Choquet**  
WCCM-Canada National  
Coordinator

How can you and I, meditators and truth seekers, help our fellow human beings pay more attention to one another and to our ecology? Who better than **Fr. Laurence**

**Freeman, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation**, to expand on this topic with his lifetime of experience as an author and teacher of Christian Meditation in the tradition gifted to us by John Main.

Meditation is about being in the presence of, and abiding in, the One. By sitting down and practicing an activity that is universal in nature, we are led towards dialogue, listening, and paying attention to others' stories and the way they view the present and the future. By agreeing on what we can agree on, and by bringing different perspectives, we can arrive at a fuller, more complete picture. We avoid mercantile-based relationships (what can I gain from him/her?). Meditation allows us to level the playing field. No one is better than or superior to the other. We all depend; we all belong.

*Transforming Together in Peace*  
Reconnecting humanity and the living earth

The Canadian Christian Meditation Community (CCMC) invites you to attend its biennial NATIONAL CONFERENCE RETREAT JULY 24-26<sup>th</sup> 2026 VICTORIA COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, 91 Charles St. West, Toronto, Ontario

Can contemplative practices help us pay closer attention, to not only our human neighbour, but to nature, to which we are inextricably bound? Might this timeless discipline, shared by so many religious traditions, hold the key to addressing the profound ecological and geopolitical challenges of our epoch?

**Attend in person or Online**  
The conference will include:  
\* Engaging talks \* Life-giving Meditation \* Insightful workshops  
\* Uplifting Tai Chi \* Praise and worship in song  
Everyone is welcome—no prior meditation experience needed  
Student discounts available.  
Don't miss this chance for growth and connection!

Register Online at <https://bit.ly/CCMC-NC2026>  
Reserve your accommodation by FEBRUARY 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Keynote speaker Tom Mustill**, Emmy-nominated filmmaker and author of *How to Speak Whole*, creates award-winning stories where people and nature meet, collaborating with Greta Thunberg and David Attenborough.

**Chief R. Stacey LaForme**, poet and storyteller, led the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, advancing reconciliation, culture, and community through leadership, literature, and bridge-building across Canada.

**Laurence Freeman OSB**, Benedictine monk and Spiritual Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, teaches worldwide and has authored many books on meditation and contemplative practice, fostering peace and dialogue.

For more information, Visit: [wccm-canada.ca](http://wccm-canada.ca) or contact Lise Babin : [info@wccm-canada.ca](mailto:info@wccm-canada.ca) Phone: 416-522-8488




But of course, this Metanoia (change of mindset) is not easy.

In addition to our fantastic speakers, we will offer practical workshops.

CCMC member **Sandra Vandervaart** will lead a workshop on non-violent communication: how our tone, body language, words, and non-verbal elements impact our communication with others.

**Louise Hébert-Saindon**, president of Méditation Chrétienne du Québec et des régions francophones du Canada, will lead a meditation workshop on “battling our inner demons,” or how to build resilience on our meditation journey.

We will, of course, have several opportunities to meditate together and go outside in nature.

So, register now for our conference; you won't regret it.

Key features include:

- **Renew friendships, create new ones**
- **Attend in person or online** (if live-in, reserve your room on campus by February 24)
- **Special 50% discount for students** on commuter and online rates
- **Everyone is welcome**—no prior meditation experience For more details, visit [www.wccm-canada.ca](http://www.wccm-canada.ca)
- To register and reserve your accommodation, visit <https://bit.ly/CCMC-NC2026>

Finally, I wish to thank my fellow Planning Committee members for their effort and enthusiasm (Mona Agia, Lise Babin, Gordon Davies, Martin Malina, Zeenat Remtulla, Andrea Siqueira, Sandra Vandervaart). I am grateful for the Holy Spirit's support and guidance during our planning!

## We look forward to seeing you at Victoria College on July 24!

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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](mailto:info@meditationchretienne.ca).

Page design and layout: [www.katemcdo.com](http://www.katemcdo.com)

## *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** (<https://oblates.wccm.org/v2019/>). 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. Enjoy!

If you would like more information about the Oblates, please contact **Dorothy Wood** at [dorogeo50@gmail.com](mailto:dorogeo50@gmail.com).

## MY TRIP TO *Bonnevaux*

It was a sunny September day when I arrived at the Bonnevaux Center for Peace. I travelled from Ottawa to attend the International WCCM Oblate retreat. The taxi driver who drove me from Poitiers airport told me I was in for a treat. He was right. As we entered the grounds, I was immediately struck by the serene beauty of the surrounding countryside, grassy slopes encircled by thick forest. The medieval abbey of yellow stonework was beautifully refurbished. I proceeded to check in at the “stables.” The renovations were impressive. The old blended with the new. Simple designs, spacious and naturally lit with the sun streaming through the many windows. It was to be a silent retreat. The peace and beauty of the countryside were amplified by our quiet contemplation.

The old barn was transformed into a conference center. This created a large space perfect for meditation, sacred chant and communal celebrations. It was here Fr. Laurence enlightened us with daily talks on Benedictine spirituality. In the afternoon, we spread out in small groups, occupying cozy nooks inside the various ancient buildings. We shared what we had learned. Oblates had come from all over the world. There were three Canadians, including myself. The staff were warm and friendly. The food was healthy, basic fare and very tasty.

Coming from Paris, it was a challenge adjusting to the silence. As often happens at such events, my personal demons made their usual appearance. My shadow self, born from past wounds, voiced the usual doubts. My inner critic was saying, “It’s all religious ego. Turn in your Benedictine cross and go home.” Ha!



**Darrell Taylor**

It is easier now to notice the voice of my shadow side. But there is another voice. It is the voice of inner wisdom gained from years of meditation practice. It calmly whispered, “Wait, be patient, stay open.” If there’s anything I’ve learned from John Main’s teachings, it is not to take any thoughts too seriously. Even good thoughts can be distractions from the path if they feed our religious egos. We are not our thoughts. By the end of the retreat, I had one of the most transformative experiences of my spiritual journey.

I made my final oblation in 2020 at the first post-Covid, Canadian Christian Meditation conference in Ottawa. Paul Harris was my sponsor. In his humorous way, he admonished me, “Becoming an Oblate doesn’t mean you’ll meditate any better.” How true. But the promises of stability, fidelity, and obedience do keep me a little more on track.

After my reception as a full Oblate, I continued my daily meditation, prayer, scripture reading, and study of the Rule. I also continued to participate in my local church community, attended services, volunteered, and led a small meditation group. In many ways, becoming an Oblate confirmed what I was already doing. Going to Bonnevaux further affirmed my Oblate path. Although I could also see room for improvement, the practice was bearing good fruit. But bearing good fruit often involves painful pruning. (John 15)

As I approach the final stages of life on planet Earth (I’m soon turning seventy-one) Christian Meditation is even more imperative. The path does become a bit clearer at times, and I become a little freer of life’s encumbrances. It also becomes a bit easier to let go of

distractions. Let go. Let go. Let go. Simple, wise advice. But on some days, I wonder where this path is leading me? Where will it all end? What will become of me? Is it worth it? My spiritual growth swings between poles of darkness and light.

On the last day of the retreat, I sat in our meditation circle. Things came to a head. During the retreat, I felt my own spiritual poverty. John Main teaches meditation is simple, and it simplifies us. But how simple does it have to get? How many things must I let go of? What about friends, family, children? At the retreat, the silence became thick and heavy at times. It was as

though I were dissolving into nothingness. I sensed my inner emptiness. Am I losing myself?

It is a paradox. The retreat at Bonnevaux invoked beauty, peace, serenity, and provided much-needed supportive fellowship. St. Benedict's teachings conveyed by Fr. Lawrence were like a protective blanket. At the same time, I was touching into my own existential dread and experiencing my inner barrenness. What to do? The answer is to trust the teaching. Focus on the prayer word. Say the Mantra.

***Maranatha. Come, Lord. The Lord comes.  
And the Lord indeed came as always.***

# YOU

I sometimes see your face in unlikely places  
Both where they said You would be found  
But, surprisingly where no one looks.

There You are  
In the small and weak  
The simple and earthly  
The broken and the backward

Everywhere I look  
There You are.  
Both in the darkness and the light  
In the sorrow and the joy  
In the noise and the silence  
All are gifts from You.

All my life I have been looking for You  
And now I have found You.  
In the silence.  
Touching the hem of Your garment.

*We share a poem by Freda Hanbury Allen, who lived in the early 20th century. She speaks of the holy calm bestowed by God through our silence. The poem was requested by a member of the oblate community.*

## ***Wait Only Upon God***

Wait only upon God; my soul, be still,  
and let thy God unfold His perfect will,  
thou fain would'st follow Him throughout this year,  
thou fain with listening heart His voice would'st hear,  
thou fain would'st be a passive instrument  
possessed by God, and ever Spirit-sent  
upon His service sweet – then thou still,  
for only thus can He in thee fulfill  
His heart's desire. Oh, hinder not His hand  
from fashioning the vessel He hath planned.

Be silent unto God, and thou shalt know  
the quiet, holy calm He doth bestow  
on those who wait on Him; so shalt thou bear  
His presence, and His life and light e'en where  
the night is darkest, and thine earthly days  
shall show His love, and sound His glorious praise.  
And He will work with hand unfettered, free,  
His high and holy purposes through thee.

First on thee must that hand of power be turned,  
till in His love's strong fire thy dross is burned,  
and thou come forth a vessel for Thy Lord,  
so frail and empty, yet, since He hath poured  
into thine emptiness His life, His love,  
henceforth through thee the power of God shall move  
and He will work for thee. Stand still and see  
the victories thy God will gain for thee;  
so silent, yet so irresistible,  
thy God shall do the thing impossible.

Oh, question not henceforth what thou canst do;  
thou canst do nought. But He will carry through  
the work where human energy failed,  
where all thy best endeavors had availed  
thee nothing. Then, my soul, wait and be still;  
thy God shall work for thee His perfect will.  
If thou wilt take no less, His best shall be  
Thy portion now and through eternity.

## **Community Corner**

### **Ottawa Area Group Meets and Reflects**



On Saturday, January 31, 2026, Ottawa area group leaders met to reflect on what is going well in our groups and how we would like to expand our work in sharing the gift of Christian Meditation. Given the challenges we all face, most online and in-person groups currently active are thriving. We shared announcements about current and upcoming WCCM and CCMC events in our region and beyond. Besides housekeeping updates about communications, particular discussion around expanding our reach in the community, especially among children and in the public forum, was robust. This leadership group plans to meet again in May 2026. The area coordinator for Ottawa is Beth Smith.

## Community Corner



### Brockville Advent Retreat



Beth Smith  
Ottawa & Area  
Coordinator

On Saturday, November 29, the Brockville Meditation Community held its first Advent retreat at Wall Street United Church. There were 38 meditators from the Seaway area, Kingston, Ottawa and Prescott. Rev. Wendy MacLean led the event, reflecting on an Advent poem she had composed, “In the Holding, In the Rocking.” She elaborated on the dual nature of the verbs to

rock and to hold. Rocking and holding can be consoling gestures, but they can also be destructive actions, such as being rocked by an earthquake or holding something in a harmful way. It was these opposing notions that fuelled the lively small-group discussions that followed.

The sung chant *Ubi Caritas* accompanied by harp and guitar, led us into meditation. Lunch was provided by church members and Rev. Wendy’s cheerful husband: delicious soups and homemade buns were served as we sat at small tables, getting to know each other or reacquainting ourselves. In the afternoon, a creative writing exercise was introduced based on the structure of verses in Habakkuk 3:17-29, focusing on the reality of negative events in the world, “though” bad things happen “yet” I will rejoice and trust in GOD’s love,

which gives hope. Based on the “though-yet” structure of verses, we spent about 20 minutes writing our own versions. Beautiful results were shared. I offer a part poem verse written by the youngest attendee, Rachel Buchner, and read out loud:

Though the homeless sleep in the cold  
With nowhere to lay their heads

Though the bombs continue to fly  
And it feels like we are out of time

Though the environment is destroyed  
And fires rage, and floods roar

Yet even when we are full of despair  
Gratitude can shift us elsewhere

Yet even when the candle seems dim  
God’s light shines through all time

The day closed with Allan Boesak sharing an Advent Proclamation by *Bread of Tomorrow: Prayers for the Church Year* (published by the World Council of Churches).

The day was excellent, well-organized, and full. Special recognition to Robin Lane, who did the major organizing.

## Community Corner



**Rev. Canon Julie Meakin**  
*Installation of Honorary Canons  
at the Cathedral Church of  
St. James Anglican  
January 11, 2026*

On Jan. 11, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. in downtown Toronto, long-term member of the CCMC and meditation group leader, Rev. Julie Meakin, was one of twelve clergy to be installed with the title of Canon (Anglican Church of Canada).

The title of canon is honorary and granted to a senior priest or an outstanding lay person. To be named a Canon of the Cathedral is an honour bestowed by the bishop in recognition of exemplary service to the Diocese and the Church.

To be “installed” means to have a seat or stall in the Cathedral. In this case, The Cathedral Church of St. James in the Diocese of Toronto.

A long road of service to others coloured the trajectory of the Rev. Canon Julie’s journey, leading to this honorary title.

She comes from a priestly family, with paternal grandfather, uncle, and mother all Anglican priests. And in the late 1990s, it was through an invitation from her mother, Rev. Glenda Meakin, to a Christian meditation retreat that she got hooked on meditation. Together they attended retreats and Essential Teaching Weekends (where her mother was often a speaker and Rev. Canon Julie cites this as a blessing).

Rev. Canon Julie was not always an Anglican priest. Her professional background started with earning a Hon. B.A. in Philosophy and Religious Studies (Trinity College). After graduating, she lived in Japan for two years. Returning to Canada, she taught English as a second language at Thornlea Secondary School in Thornhill for twenty-two years. She helped new

students and families settle into Canada. In 2001, she married her husband, Giorgio.

For seven years she studied part-time at Trinity College and graduated with a Master of Divinity in 2012. She was ordained a deacon in 2012 and a priest in 2013. Rev. Canon Julie served at Christ Church Deer Park, Toronto, and has been the priest at the Church of the Holy Family in Brampton for the past eleven years. Since 2022 she has been a Regional Dean and is co-chair of the Bishops Committee for Interfaith Ministry, and is also on the Interfaith Council of Peel.

Throughout Rev. Canon Julie’s journey, she has loved the practice of meditation and sharing it with others:

***Meditation has been a wonderful gift in my life, and I am so grateful to my mother for introducing me to meditation, to Fr. John Main, Fr. Laurence Freeman, and my fellow pilgrims on the journey. I am always eager to share this gift with people of all ages!***

And she has done just that. Rev. Canon Julie has been a meditation teacher, leading workshops, retreats, and Essential Teaching weekends. She has presented workshops on Christian Meditation with children at the Toronto Children’s Ministry Conference, workshops to parishes and clergy in the Diocese of Toronto, and currently leads a weekly Zoom meditation group.

Congratulations to The Rev. Canon Julie Meakin for a title well earned!

# SACRED SILENT SURRENDER

## Let Go and Let God

Andrea Siqueira

CCMC Regional Coordinator Alberta & Saskatchewan

*“To everything, there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.”*  
– Ecclesiastes 3:1

Welcome to a scenic view of the Hong Kong skyline, where buildings rise between hills and the South China Sea, and fishing boats dance on its glistening waters. This is the view from my sister’s 20th-floor apartment in South Horizon, where my father, Joseph Anthony D’Silva, along with my mother, Ruby, until she passed, resided for the last 10 years.



Our father suffered a massive stroke with multiple complications nearly four years ago. He is now ninety and under the loving, meticulous care of my sister Valerie, who is a nursing officer at a Catholic hospital here in Hong Kong.

Valerie has trained two full-time helpers to assist with Dad’s care in her heavenly abode.

This January 2026, I visited my father and sister to share in this caring environment. I was inspired by the experience and the Holy Spirit to write about our dear father’s journey of faith and humble acceptance of God’s will.

Before his stroke, our dad was a man of many words! He loved meeting people and engaging in meaningful discussions about current events, history, religion, and music.

After retiring as a senior manager at Tata Motors in Jamshedpur, India, where he had worked for forty

years, he enrolled in a Bible study course in Mumbai. This experience truly transformed him. He was inspired to explore his faith more deeply. He regularly shared his reflections on the Sunday Gospel readings with his Bible study group in Mumbai.



Valerie, Joseph, Andrea

One of the reflections that he shared with us on his 87th birthday was on “The Good Shepherd” gospel reading found in John 10:11-18. It related to what my dad was going through — a trying time in his life.

Dad said to us, “It is an honour to be called ‘The Good Shepherd.’”

He explained that a shepherd possesses the quality of responsibility. There is mutual understanding between the shepherd and the sheep; it is a relationship of trust. Dad then expanded on this theme. He spoke about the path along which the sheep are led. It isn’t one they wanted to follow. But the shepherd who is responsible for them leads, and they must follow. And in following the shepherd’s path, they are led home.

*Continued on page C10*

## *Let Go & Let God* continued from page C9

Dad took a step further when he shared, “The PATH of going home is also a PART of HOME, so that’s what Jesus wants us to understand. The part of going home is really about living heaven now - today, not sometime in the future - that heaven is in what we are doing now. You can make it heaven according to your own decision.”

Later in life, both my parents became Benedictine Oblates under the guidance of my dad’s older sister, Mother Audrey Teresita D’silva, a Benedictine nun in Bangalore, India.

My dad was the one who encouraged me in the practice of Christian meditation, alongside my aunt and godmother Audrey (OBS). This connection aligned me deeply with the World Community for Christian Meditation.

My dear father, at eighty-seven, regularly attended my online meditation sessions from afar, joining us on Zoom each Friday evening in Okotoks, Alberta, which was Saturday morning in Hong Kong. These sessions started with family and friends during COVID. Dad often led these wonderful discussions, reflecting on topics we covered each week. He spoke highly of Fr. John Main and our Christian Meditation Community. I feel my dad’s presence with me as I facilitate each of my sessions.



Witnessing my dad today facing with grace this huge setback since 2022 is truly remarkable. Thanks to my professional nurse-sister Valerie’s care, Dad has been a real champion. He takes each day in stride, teaching us lessons in resilience, inner strength, and trust in “God the Almighty,” as he often says with reverence.

*Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks, they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. You also must be ready, because then the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. – Luke 12:35-40*

Our dad—the faithful sheep of the Good Shepherd—perfectly exemplifies being ready and waiting for Christ. He keeps his lamp of his life in Jesus burning brightly, embracing discomfort with faith and purpose. My dad, who is completely dependent on others caring for him, teaches that surrendering to Divine Providence brings peace when we trust in God’s plan for us.

So, thank you, Dad, for wisdom that continues to inspire. It is an extension of your blessing on all who know and love you.

Our meditation practice of silently surrendering our thoughts, our words, and our actions is an expression of trust that can’t be put into words. It is the same trust the sheep put in the shepherd who leads them. This indwelling spirit we all possess is God living and breathing in and through us. My dearest father humbly waits in sacred, silent surrender to His will... letting go and letting God call him home in His time.

I share a verse and refrain from an old hymn, one that we hum on the Google playlist from Our Lady of Guadalupe station that Dad listens to during his care in the scenic 20th-floor apartment where he lives:

***All to Jesus, I surrender,  
all to Him I freely give,  
I will ever love and trust Him  
in His presence daily live,  
I surrender all, I surrender all,  
all to Jesus, I surrender, I surrender ALL.***

St. Paul to Timothy:

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

– 2 Timothy 4:7-8

**Andrea D’silva-Siqueira**  
January 10, 2026, Hong Kong

# WILL THIS ONE BE MY LAST?

As time passes, we become more aware of our mortality. Particularly at this time of year, a question arises: Will this be my last?

However ominous it may sound, it shouldn't be. Let it serve as a wake-up call to live full, honest, loving, and meaningful lives. Sounds good? But getting there is one of the greatest challenges of our lives. The question becomes: Are we willing to do what we need to reach the self-imposed goal? Will our motivation last long enough to propel us "up the hill" even when we inevitably slide backwards?

Fortunately, many avenues are at our disposal; we choose the one that fits. Like a finger and a ring. Both



Lorena Claudia Vicente  
(Oblate)

may be perfect in themselves. But if one does not fit the other, nothing is gained by forcing the issue.

What spiritual tools help you the most? Is it meditation, a walk in the woods, looking at a starry sky on a cold winter night, helping at a food kitchen, bringing groceries to a home-bound neighbour, listening to a favourite piece of music, rejoicing in the pure and innocent smile of a toddler...? Do you get

the point? All it takes is awareness; mindfulness on our part. Instead of living on "remote control," let us take command of the precious time we have and live consciously every minute and every hour, in the presence of He who gave us the precious gift of our lives.

## Spiritual Indigestion

At this time of year, when many of us are confined to home by nature, our main physical activity to assuage the boredom seems to be frequent trips to the fridge where we indulge in leftovers, etcetera. This often results in physical indigestion, only relieved after a short period of abstinence or fasting. Things seem to get "unstuck" by themselves with the rest, and later we resume our usual feeding pattern.

But today I do not talk of a familiar seasonal event. Today, I reflect on an experience many may have experienced, but few acknowledge: "Spiritual Indigestion."

It seems to come from pushing down the throat of our souls too many things, like prescribed prayers, readings, meditations, lectio Divina, etcetera. The performance of which feels more like duty, discipline, and commitment, rather than love. The spiritual tools that are supposed to help in our journey to God become "spiritual shackles" instead.

I know no one forced me or you to commit to anything. Maybe the time to leave the raft behind has arrived because the river is crossed? Carrying the raft longer only hinders rather than helps. A challenging thought, but one that crosses our minds now and then if we are honest.

As in the case of physical indigestion, it might be wise to pause and "disconnect" from prescribed duties. Turn instead to what nurtures one's spirit, whether nature, a picture of the many galaxies in this immense and magnificent universe, an aurora borealis, service to others without any expectations, and so on. Whatever draws our awareness to the presence of God right now is the best instrument while experiencing a period of "rebellion."

And let us remember that this too shall pass. Peace be with all of us, now and always.

– Lorena Claudia Vicente

## Meditation: A Place of Light



Ma-ra-na-tha

In a weekly online meditation group, the facilitator posts a PowerPoint slide of a burning candle. It remains there for the 20-minutes of meditation.

Brenda Jenkins of Orillia, who attends this group, shares her reflection on this experience:

*I had this vision a couple of times as I was looking at the candle above the word Maranatha. The dark sides on either side of the candle are like curtains bunched up halfway up the curtain and sweeping down. Meditation is a journey going behind the curtains into the light. All one can see from the outside is a place of light in there. It's a good place, a safe place, and one of love.*

# Retreat at Bonnevaux Centre for Peace



Jo Ann and I were fortunate to attend a five-day silent retreat at Bonnevaux in September 2025. This was our second visit to the home of the World Community of Christian Meditation in the southwestern part of France, halfway from Paris to Bordeaux.

From the moment you pass the gatehouse and enter onto the property of the rural Benedictine monastery that was established in the 12th century, you realize that you have reached a special place of spirituality and beauty. The centuries-old monastery buildings have been beautifully renovated and are situated on a 160-acre property with its own lake and many walking trails through peaceful woodlands and meadows. The setting is perfect for an enriching meditation retreat.

At the centuries-old monastery, the spirit of silence is always present within the daily rhythm of meditation, prayer, silence, work, talks, and leisure time. Meditators present from around the world support a 1,000-year-old contemplative practice.

A pilgrimage to Bonnevaux, no doubt, deepens your experience of meditation, as it has done with my practice. I have attended a few silent meditation retreats over the years. Occasionally, I find after a few days of

silence, and perhaps being removed from everyday worries, cares, and duties, an opening to a deeper place occurs.



Leo Cullen and  
Jo Ann Ferreira

For me, it was an event where bodily and mental tension, of which I was not normally aware, were completely released. Tension and worry were replaced with a remarkable sense of clarity, love, gratitude, peace, and well-being. A state in which I believe we were all made to dwell. Looking back to the first time it happened, my life is defined by the life before and after this opening. This may not be everyone's experience, but I am confident you will find a retreat at Bonnevaux beneficial and one you will never forget.

Bonnevaux offers enriching programs, personal retreats, and opportunities for volunteering or internships for those wishing a longer stay. For information, visit the website at [bonnevauxwccm.org](http://bonnevauxwccm.org) or contact [hospitality@bonnevauxwccm.org](mailto:hospitality@bonnevauxwccm.org).

To travel to Bonnevaux, there is a direct high-speed train from Charles de Gaulle Airport to Poitiers, which takes about 2 hours. Then, a 20-minute taxi ride through the countryside to Bonnevaux.

Bon voyage.

– Leo Cullen



# CCMC Needs Your Time & Talent

The sustainability of our Canadian Christian Meditation Community (CCMC) requires many hands to share the load in “paying forward” the gift of meditation.

Do you feel called to deepen the transmission of the Essential Teaching of Christian Meditation across Canada? Would you love to help us ensure spaces for meditation remain safe and welcoming? We’re inviting expressions of interest for the two key volunteer leadership positions within the CCMC described in this brochure.

Please consider, if God is calling you, to take part by lending CCMC the gift of your time and talent to one of the listed positions.

Our National Coordinator, **André Choquet** (achoquet@rogers.com, 647-680-8040) would love to hear from you.

## National School Director

### Key Responsibilities:

- Coordinate with the National Coordinator, the Council and the WCCM International School Director to plan School of Meditation activities, including meditation for children.
- Promote and co-facilitate Essential Teaching Workshops (ETWs) nationwide.
- Encourage national and regional retreats and support Introductory Courses and Community Days.
- Share and promote the School of Meditation website and online resources.
- Co-lead online courses with group leaders and meditators.

Ideal candidates will have participated in an ETW (and preferably co-facilitated one) and bring a collaborative spirit, strong communication skills, and a deep commitment to the contemplative path.

## National Safeguarding Lead

This role is created as part of the upcoming launch and implementation of our new Safeguarding Policy to ensure that our events and meditation groups remain safe, respectful, and inclusive for all – especially children, adults at risk, and vulnerable individuals.

### Key Responsibilities:

- Receive and respond to safeguarding concerns with discretion and procedural fairness.
- Guide meditation group leaders and coordinators in handling concerns appropriately and promptly.
- Liaise with the CCMC Board to report and manage potential claims.
- Promote safeguarding awareness and education across the community.
- Maintain confidentiality and uphold the CCMC’s Safeguarding Procedures and Policy.
- Submit an annual report summarizing safeguarding activity and outcomes.
- This is a vital leadership role for someone grounded in CCMC’s contemplative ethos and committed to protecting the dignity of every participant. Experience in pastoral care, education, or community leadership is helpful but not required.



## Response to: Blessed Sleep and A Yawning Question

In our Fall 2025 newsletter, a meditation group leader asked: Has anyone experienced a participant falling asleep and snoring while the group meditates? How was the disruption managed without embarrassing the snoozing meditator?

One group facilitator responded with:

*We have had a few moments when one of our members snored during our group meditation. It has happened on several occasions. No one in the group expressed annoyance. At first, as group leader, I wondered how I would deal with it, but since no one commented, I ignored it. This person has a very close friend in the group and*

*travels with her; I suspect that the friend may have brought the subject up with her. I don't know as the subject never came up. However, it rarely happens now, and if the person catches herself beginning to snore, she stops.*

*I think our group simply continued with the mantra and left the solution to God.*

Another shared:

*The snoring individual responded to a private talk with the leader after which he enlisted the assistance of a buddy who would sit beside him and touch his arm if he started to snore. It worked!*

***In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety. – Psalm 4:8***

## Group Meditation: A Facilitator's Conundrum

The practice of meditation is challenging. So is the job of a group meditation facilitator when ensuring a peaceful setting for participants.

We come to meditation for different reasons. It is an inclusive practice. But when the silence is not respected, what do you do? How do you manage disruptions caused by a participant facing mental illness challenges?

This is delicate. Without mental health expertise guiding the narrative, it is not within the purview of the CCMC newsletter to offer advice that is potentially inappropriate or, at worst, harmful or exacerbating. There are many variables associated with mental health and other behavioural issues.

That being said, meditation group leaders serving challenging populations (mental illness, drug addiction, homelessness) still must deal with encounters.

The CCMC newsletter reports on several such encounters. In the words of one such meditation group leader:

**The situation:** A mother and her mentally challenged daughter from our Food Outreach program come for

the first time. They sit far apart from each other in our large room. Meditation instructions are given. Silent meditation starts, but the daughter begins to act out, audibly talking to herself, rustling papers in her hands, etcetera. This goes on for twenty minutes. At the end, the mother comes to the leader and apologizes for her daughter's behaviour.

**The situation:** An individual lounges at the back of the hall. When invited to join the meditators, he argued with the group leader, resisted the invitation to join the group even when the meditation practice was explained to him, and declared he would sit there in the comfy chair no matter what.

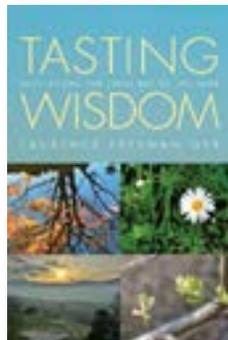
**The situation:** A member from the Food Outreach Program comes for the first time. He had a cellular phone in hand. He was asked to put it on silent mode and away, but did neither. The group leader explains how to meditate. The silent period starts. In the middle of the practice, he begins to mumble to himself, gets up,

***Continued on page C16***

# Canadian Christian Meditation Community Bookstore

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## A Focus on Daily Readings



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Every day, members of the WCCM receive a brief reflection, Daily Wisdom, from Laurence Freeman.

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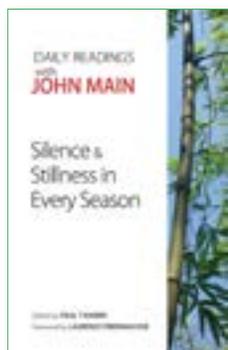
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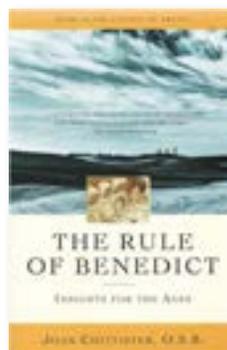
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Joan Chittister, O.S.B.

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## *A Facilitator's Conundrum* continued from page C14

walks and takes cellphone pictures of the room, walls, ceiling, etcetera. The group leader stands up and silently signals him to be silent and quiet. He carries on just the same.

Group leaders understand that meditation is not for everyone. It is one of many ways to pray. But disruptions from challenged individuals make it unfair for the other meditators. The question raised was how to handle such situations should they happen again.

Here is what they came up with:

- The Food Outreach program coordinator recognized that the half-dozen or so plush wing-sofa chairs located at the back of their large meeting room attracted the less committed or transient meditation participants. It made for a comfortable space to hang out and kill time. These chairs were apart from the

hard-backed chairs used by the core mediators to stay alert when meditating. The comfortable chairs were removed.

- Our practice while we set up was to open the hall 45 minutes ahead of the meditation session. To discourage “loungers,” we now keep the door closed and locked, only allowing access 15 minutes prior to the start time.
- To check in on the Meditation Coordinator when she was alone, the Food Outreach program coordinator dropped by several times.

The above are not full solutions. More like creative (and clever) work-arounds designed to dissuade people not truly invested in meditation. And, as we recognize, although mediation is open to everyone, it is not for everyone.

***We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. – Romans 8:28***

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### **CCMC Events:**

#### **In-person Christian Meditation Day**

Saturday, April 11, 2026 from 9:45am CT – 3:30pm CT

St. Paul's Anglican Church, 830 North Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Contact Barbara Bater: [bbater@mymts.net](mailto:bbater@mymts.net)

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### **WCCM Events:**

Visit online: The World Community for Christian Meditation (<https://www.wccm.org>).

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