

Christian Meditation

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“The important aim in Christian meditation is to allow God’s mysterious and silent presence within us to become more and more not only a reality but the reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we do, everything we are.” (John Main)

Christian meditation is complementary to regular service and prayer. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to introduce the reader to our Christian meditation group, based on the approach of Benedictine monk John Main. Each meeting, a short reading is given from the book ‘Silence and Stillness in Every Season’, edited by Paul Harris, which features daily commentaries by John Main. It describes the meditation tradition as drawing “on the ancient wisdom of the Bible, the Hindu Upanishads, and the early Christian Desert Fathers,” the latter being Christian hermits and ascetics who in solitude sought a deeper connection with God. Our group, while recognising that periods of solitude can indeed be vital and beneficial to one’s spiritual journey, considers group practice to be equally necessary and effective.

The meditation takes place in the safe and secure environment of the side chapel, within Bridlington Priory every Monday, after the church closes to the public for the day. All are welcome to participate, although the door is locked at 3.30pm for safety, and to avoid interruption. Such is necessary, for the depths of meditation can place one in a sensitive state, in which sudden or loud noises and other unexpected eventualities can prove somewhat distressing.

One might ask, what is it that drives a person to follow the star (an inner knowing) that leads to deeper spiritual experience and a closer relationship with God? Perhaps they have had inner promptings, brought about by personal spiritual experiences, or perhaps they are simply seeking to confirm and explore a deep-rooted sense that there is more to life than the pursuit of short-lived pleasures and ego-based concerns.

The Beatitudes, Christ’s words at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, include the statement: “Blessed are the meek”. We must ever bear this in mind, and the wonderfully evocative statement by theologian and Christian mystic Evelyn Underhill also reminds us: “Mystical meditation begins not at the Sermon on the Mount, but at the manger in Bethlehem.” She was quite correct, for the manger in Bethlehem can be representative of humility and simplicity – necessary conditions for the mystical birth of the light of Christ to take place within you, at the start of your journey into the inner self and the Divine reality that gives rise to all existence.

The only way to find your true self is to let go of the egotistical self. This can take place through attending church services, developing love and compassion, and undertaking charitable works externally; balanced by looking within, through engaging in meditation and prayer. By doing so, and with perseverance, you may well find something that is not temporal, but which partakes of the infinite divine reality, which leads to illumination and, ultimately, union with God.

Monday meditation at the Church is free to all, and it begins with an opening prayer and a reminder of the meditation method, utilising the internally voiced mantra, ‘Maranatha’ (Come, Lord Jesus). Meditation is by candlelight in silence for 20 minutes, and the peace attained is

quite tangible and profound. It stays with you after the closing prayer, even as you leave to venture forth into the outside world.

Please come and talk to me (alternatively, contact me by phone or email), if you'd like more information, or simply turn up and join in. All are welcome.

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