



Christian Meditation Community Malaysia Newsletter

May 2020

Dear Friends,

Easter blessings and Peace of the Risen Lord be with you.

The year started with our Council meeting on 11th January to plan activities for the year.

WCCM Team 2020



Seated (L- R) Judith Lee (Treasurer), Mike Yong (Penang Coordinator)

Standing (1st row) Alexandra Wong(E.Malaysia Coordinator), Theresa Fernandes (SMC Ipoh, School Team), Patricia Por (Nat. Coordinator) Beth Rozario (School Team)

Standing 2nd row) Fr. Gerard Theraviam (Spiritual Director) Roland Victor(School Coordinator) Matthew Khong (Ipoh Coordinator)

Not in picture : Nicholas Choong (SIC.PJ, School Team), Peter Teh (Leader, Chinese group CDM Pg)

This was followed shortly by a long awaited Introductory workshop in Kuching, the first in East Malaysia appropriately timed after Fr. Laurence's visit last November.

Introductory Workshop, Kuching, Sarawak , 15th February 2020

As a followup to Fr Lawrence Freeman's visit to Kuching on 12th November 2019, An Introductory workshop on meditation in the Christian Tradition (The John Main Tradition) was held at St Joseph's Cathedral, Kuching. The sessions were conducted by the WCCM Malaysia Team led by Rev Fr Paul Cheong OFM Cap with facilitators Roland Victor and Jessie Chin.



Even though there were a few other seminars held on the same day, we had 37 participants, including 4 from Sabah, one of whom expressed interest in starting a meditation group in Sabah. Now that we finally have a contact in Sabah, we look forward to sharing our gift there next with an Introductory Workshop His Grace Rev Simon Poh, Archbishop of Kuching dropped in at the workshop despite his hectic schedule while a few other priests also attended some of the sessions.

The feedback was positive. In general, they felt the peace. Some could better understand the need to meditate. Others could not get the theology aspects but will continue to meditate. Some joined our weekly meditation sessions thereafter



Personal reflection of Joscelyne, Kota Kinabalu

Probably many of us have the same questions but never really taken the time to delve deeper into them. What is the meaning of life? Why am I here? What exactly I am doing here? They may sound cliché but with our ever demanding lives, it is so easy to dismiss these seemingly cliché but essential questions and just live our lives day in day out as it goes. As for me, having been through a lot in my so called young life made me stop and ponder about them deeply.

So, I plunged into meditation, dragging my initially reluctant younger sister, niece and friend along to St. Joseph's Cathedral Kuching, Sarawak to learn more about it, be enlightened and find refuge in it. The workshop lived up to its reputation for the speakers (Fr. Paul Cheong, Ms. Jessie and Mr. Roland) gave deeper insights about God and our relationship with Him through meditation. I was particularly struck by this verse in Psalm 40:10 'Be still and know that I am God.' It encompasses the whole teaching of meditation. What delighted me more was the fact that my initial reluctant sister, niece and friend were very grateful that I made them attend the workshop for they said they found peace and unusual calmness in their short stint of meditation.

Feedback from Zora, Kuching

I've attended non-Christian mind yoga/meditation about 10 years ago with hope to find ways to de-stress. I practiced meditation and chanting "Om shanti" repeatedly a few times at home but alas, it was not my thing. So when my friend asked me to join the workshop in Kuching, I was reluctant as I thought, "What's new? What else is there to learn about meditation other than to sit down quietly and clear one's mind, be focus to find peace?" But I went anyway since my friends flew all the way from KK to Kuching for this, why can't I spare a day for this since I am in Kuching. From this workshop, it's good to know that I can meditate the Christian way whenever I want or ready to do it dedicatedly, and meditation has a long history in our Christian belief. The bible verses such as the one that mentioned about going into your inner room to pray gives new interpretation/meaning – that it is not just a physical room that is quiet but our hearts – praying deeply from our hearts. I'm also reminded of the verse from Psalm 40:10 and that we need to take time off from everything and be still, and remember our Creator. Although the meditation practice was short, I can understand the stillness that we need in our lives. I'm glad my friend persuaded me to attend the meditation seminar/workshop.

Report by Alexandra Wong, Co-ordinator, East Malaysia

Lenten Events - Way of the Cross 2020

WCCM Penang



On the morning of Saturday 7 March 2020, there was an overcast in the sky. However, that did not deter 20 meditators from Penang and Kedah gathering in the grounds of St. Anne's church , Bukit Mertajam to pray the Way of the Cross. It was part of WCCM Malaysia's initiative for the season of Lent. Prayers and reflections for the 1st station started at 8:45AM and ended about an hour later, with each station led by a different person. It was followed by a 25-minute meditation session in the Blessed Sacrament room, which was so conducive for silence and a contemplative time with the Lord amidst the sound of cascading waters in the background.

It was one of the few times a year where the meditators from different groups and states gather in praying, reflecting and meditating together.

The group then adjourned to a nearby restaurant which served buffet style vegetarian food for brunch and fellowship.

Mike Yong
Coordinator /Group Leader, Penang



Group photo of Penang group at Bukit Mertajam

WCCM Perak

On 7th March 2020, a small group of meditators from St. Michael's Church in Ipoh also assembled at 7.30am to pray the outdoors Stations in the church compound followed by attendance at the Christlife session in the hall organised by the Diocese.

WCCM Klang Valley – Event scheduled 8th March 2020

67 meditators from the Klang Valley groups were scheduled to pray the outdoor Way of the Cross at Church of St. Ignatius Petaling Jaya to be followed by meditation, mass, then dinner and fellowship. Regrettably this had to be cancelled following a directive from The Chancery of the Archdiocese to avoid all gatherings, in the light of the then swiftly developing Covid-19 pandemic. So in the interest of safety, the organisers advised cancellation of the event.

Meditation with children.



During this period, when all Sunday school classes have been suspended, we are happy that there is one group of children who continue to meditate daily. One of our meditators from the SFX Group, Anne Khor shares:

“There are quite a number of Chin Refugees (one of the major ethnic groups in Myanmar and are mostly Christians) living in Section 17 Petaling Jaya. These Chin families are registered with UNHCR.

As a volunteer English teacher to the adults I came to know of their children. There are presently 14 children (ages from 4 to 12 years old, a toddler and a two month old baby) from 4 families in this house, that I go to for my classes with them.

The school going children attend classes at the Assunta Children Society, a Learning Centre run by the FMM Sisters from 8am till 12pm (Mon to Fri). The Centre provides the children lunch and they are back in their house by about 2pm. On certain days, some volunteer teachers would coach them in their school work after class.

I noticed that they were quite bored and could get very rowdy, running up and down the double storey link house in the late afternoon and evening (there is no TV or radio in the house). I decided to help them unwind by spending some quiet time together. Apparently, they had been taught how to meditate at the Centre so it was just a matter of ending the day with a 10 minute meditation (so I thought)at about 6pm (after my class with the Adults).

I realized then that only a few were able to sit still while the rest were very fidgety and tried to make eye contact with each other. I had to repeatedly

get them to shut their eyes and be still! After a few sessions they were able to do so.

To my surprise, on a couple of occasions that I was unable to have a session with them, they would (on my subsequent visit) ask why I had not been available. They actually look forward to this quiet time together!

But since the Movement Control Order (MCO) effective from 18 March 2020, I have not been able to visit them daily. I have since delegated one of the mothers, Mary Niang to sit with them nightly after dinner for a 10 minute session. The 2nd picture was sent by Mary a few nights ago, Have asked Mary to encourage all the other parents to also meditate with their children during this time of the MCO. Let's remember them in our prayers, MARANATHA! “

Report by Anne Khor, St Francis Xavier Group, Petaling Jaya

Forthcoming Events

It is difficult to plan events under the current situation which is so fluid but nevertheless should the MCO be lifted, we have scheduled the following:

ETW from 31 July – 2 Aug . Venue : Stella Maris, Penang

We encourage leaders who have yet to attend the Essential Teaching Weekend, to keep these dates free and also identify practising meditators (who have been meditating for more than a year) in their groups to come along to experience this next level in sharing the gift

Annual Retreat 26 – 29 November.

Please keep these dates free . Venue to be announced.

Database Update

We are in the process of updating our database. It would be appreciated if Group leaders can provide us with the contact details of all their group members (Name, email address, contact tel no) and email them to Beth Rozario at wccmnewsmal@gmail.com.

During these difficult times, we would like to share two poems by Liz King, our fellow meditator in Michigan, USA. Liz is a long time friend of our community.

PANDEMIC OR GRACE?

It is the worst of times and the best of time
It is a crucial time and an exciting time.
Time for us to look inward, not outward...
No going out, no driving, no socializing,
No buying, selling or entertaining...
Yet we can chit-chat, call our loved ones
 whom we can no longer see or touch.
Pray and reflect -- prioritize, organize and re-assess
 our lives, our relationships
 and everything we hold dear.

The world has stopped: all are homebound.
 All is quiet and still.
Quiet and still? On the outside and on the inside?
Are we restless, anxious, fearful and disturbed?
What is happening to us?
What are we becoming?
Can we live in the silence and stillness?
Or are we too attuned to all the hustle and bustle --
 the nonstop honking, revving of engines, loud talking
 laughing and swearing...

Has God caused this to happen
 so our crazy world has to halt...
Halt our ceaseless day-to-day, hour-to-hour striving
 for success, wealth, power, pleasure and fun?

Yes, we are in the 21st century,
We are mighty and powerful
 fearless and brave.
We have the internet, 5G,
 signals and connections to everywhere.
We can do all things, we are invincible.

Are we really?
Lo and behold, all in vain.
We are slave to the little microbe, the coronavirus
 which brings all to a STOP.

Are we vulnerable? Are we human?
Are we subject to this tiny microbe?

Where is our power, our might, our superhuman mind?
our invincible intellect?
Can we not defeat this tiny intruder?

Lo and behold, we are all paralyzed --
fearful and cautious...
Don't do this, do that --
to be safe.
Are we questioning our mortality?
Are we afraid that we are after all
'Dust and unto dust we shall return'?

Yes, we are human beings,
not human doings...
But we have lost sight of our humanity...

Please Lord, help us see
Help us look into our hearts
and recognize that this "frenzy",
this dervish dance has to stop
sometime.

Now is the time for us to reflect...
to recognize our humanity and our helplessness
our dependence on His support and love.
Now is the time for us to kneel and pray --
pray for forgiveness, for compassion and for humility.
Now is the time to mend broken promises and relationships,
the time to forgive and to repent,
the time to love and smile,
the time for silence and stillness,
And know that He is God, Our Lord.
Amen.

Elizabeth King
Holy Week 2020

ALL FOR LOVE

Behold the Man
all bloodied and bruised
at breaking point.

His agony at Gethsemani,
spilling sweat, blood and tears...
He shouldered all our burdens – our sins
But He never gave up
and rose up again...

Then the scourging in the dungeon,
the crowning of thorns,
how excruciating that must be.
Yet He never gave up
and rose up again.

As He carried the cross onto Calvary,
the heavy cross, rejected and reviled
while crushed in pain and sorrow.
Three times He fell, yet He got up and went on...

At Calvary, His body was stretched ...
big nails were pounded into His hands and feet.
How devastating painful it must have been
for Him, Who was fully human, though divine.
Yet He bore it all because of His love
for us, for all of us, for each of us.

O Jesus, how you suffered...
and died, for me, for us, for my sins and failures
How you set the supreme example of endurance,
courage and strength...
amidst your pain and suffering,
For what? for LOVE...

Help us to understand during this crisis...
Help those who could no longer function on auto-pilot,
Help those who are cursing the present situation,
Help those who are bitter and angry at what's happened,
Help those who have lost their jobs and have no income at all,
Help those who are suffering from the virus and are fearful,
Help those who have lost loved ones to the virus.

Help us appreciate and value what we have...
all the good things we've always enjoyed.

Yes, we are housebound,
yet we are not destitute...

We have electricity and gas,
our dishwasher, washer and dryer
all the gadgets that modern convenience can provide.

What about those who are poor and destitute...
Those who are homeless with no roof over their heads...
Those who do not know where they could get the money
to buy enough food to feed themselves and their family?
Those who cannot pay their mortgage, their utility bills
because they can no longer go to work and receive a paycheck?
Those who have no savings, nothing in the bank for 'rainy days',
What to do? Whose to help them?

Is it I Lord? How can I help?
Tell me, show me...
Show me how to share our plenty
my abundance and all that I have...
Help me to be compassionate, like You...
For are we not all one family
one in Your Love and Grace?
Yes, each one is my brother or sister...
I have the responsibility -- to ease their pain and want.
Help me, Lord, to understand and to act.
Amen.

Elizabeth King
Holy Week 2020

On Line Meditation – the Way Forward.

As we are unsure when the MCO will be fully lifted and when our physical group meetings will resume, we have started on line meditation sessions for every weekday night. This enables us to connect better , transcending geographical boundaries and it is heartening to note that through technology, we are able to meet members of groups in other parts of the country at every session instead of only once a year at our annual retreat!

The sessions are at 8.30pm from Mondays to Fridays. On Sundays we join the Contemplative mass , live streamed from Bonnevaux at 6pm (local time). The hosts for our weekly sessions are as follows:

Monday : Roland Vistor
Tuesday : Agnes Ooi
Wednesday : Jessie Chin
Thursday : Rita Cho
Friday : Beth Rosario

The links will be sent to Group leaders the day before and members are advised to inform the hosts of their participation so they can be welcomed into the meditation room. We do hope that all meditators will take advantage of these meetings to get to know each other better.

For those of you who do not attend the weekly WCCM group meetings, but would like to attend the online meditation sessions, please send an email to wccmmalonline@gmail.com to indicate your interest in a particular day so that we can send you the relevant link to you via email

The International news with Fr. Laurence's message and the FRIENDS newsletter is attached. Do update yourselves with news around the world.

Peace

Pat Por
National Coordinator