



Christian Meditation Community Malaysia Newsletter

June 2023

Dear Friends

Peace be with you.

Fr. Laurence's Lenten Reflections.

Lent started this year at the end of the first quarter. As in previous years, instead of the CD talks, Fr. Laurence's daily reflections were shared at our weekly in person, and online meetings except for the first time, there was an audio component. So instead of one of our members reading from a transcript, the message came from Fr. Laurence himself. Thanks to Leo and his Communications Team for their ingenuity in this development which made a huge difference during our sessions.

Lenten Programme

Way of the Cross followed by meditation was observed in the individual states. Where available, sessions were conducted at outdoor stations .

Kuching

3rd March 2023

The Kuching Group, led by Alexandra Wong made their Stations of the Cross at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Kuching.

Penang

6th March 2023 at Cathedral of the Holy Spirit

The meditation group at CHS led by Victoria Labrooy reflected on the Lord's last journey at their outdoor Stations of the Cross. They also invited their Seniors Group (Glowing Embers) and 7 other Spirituality Ministries to join them.



Stations at CHS ,
Penang

Ipoh – Praying the outdoor stations at St. Michael's church

Ipoh

11th March 2023 at Church of St. Michael

Members of the Meditation Groups of St. Michael's Church and Church of Mother of Perpetual Help, led by Matthew Khong made their reflections at the outdoor Stations at St. Michael's.

That morning we were blessed with cool and breezy weather after the torrential rain the night before, making our walk throughout the 14 Stations so pleasant. After that, we adjourned to the meditation room and meditated together.

Sharon Chai
Leader, OMPH Group

**Way of the Cross by Meditators from Penang.
Minor Basilica of St Anne, Bukit Mertajam
18th March 2023**



Praying at the life sized stations at Minor Basilica of St. Anne's, Bukit Mertajam

Feedback from participants

Felt the sadness the Lord suffered for us to help to clear our sins

I was hesitant to carry the cross because of my leg and shoulder. I felt the heaviness but as I started to walk along it felt lighter. So as long as I walk along with Jesus I shouldn't fear anything.

I am grateful for this opportunity to actually carry the cross. I had to have another person to help me carry it. What more as I reflected Jesus was scourged first and with open wounds he had to carry the heavy cross for my sins and humanity. It moved me to know how much I am loved.

We are truly blessed to walk the Way of the Cross as a family and to experience the carrying of the cross filled our hearts with humility. Our Saturday morning ended with confessions and a special prayer and blessing of our family by Fr. Nelson.

My family prayed the Way of the Cross with the BM parishioners. It was so hot and I had no umbrella but a kind parishioner lent me hers. God bless her. It was beautiful and touching to see the people taking turns to carry the cross.

I am very blessed and grateful to Christ for an opportunity to join the Stations of the Cross as my travelling work takes me away from my home in Penang. I was

also grateful that despite what appeared to be millions of things to do after I returned from work, somehow God made time for me to participate with a fresh mind and healthy body.

During the walk, I felt a heavy grief that Jesus had to suffer so greatly and unjustly to save us from death caused by sins. His unconditional and merciful love overwhelms me. Although the cross was not too heavy to carry physically, my heart felt a great pain and sorrow. This is because we continue to hurt Jesus today who lives in each of us through our actions, words and lack of love. A sense of repentance came over me and I want to keep trying to live the life that God has planned for me.

At the same time, deep gratitude and thankfulness flooded me knowing that after Jesus died and rose again, He bridged the vast gap between mankind and God, so that we can return and be with God in the kingdom of Heaven for all eternity. I also felt solace and comfort knowing that we can always bring and offer our sufferings to the feet of Jesus to help us carry them for the rest of our daily lives. Thank you Jesus! Alleluia! Praise God!

Sr Mercie Lai
Leader, BM Group

Petaling Jaya/ KL

25 March 2023 at Church of St. Ignatius, Petaling Jaya.



Praying at the outdoor stations at SIC

Meditators mainly from Church of St. Francis Xavier (SFX) Assumption and St Ignatius Church Groups led by the National Coordinator and Nicholas Choong met to reflect at the outdoor Stations in SIC. This was followed by meditation in a prayer room and fellowship at the canteen.

Today was a day of great surprises and thanks-giving to the Lord. As I was waiting with all the WCCM meditators to begin the journey for Stations of the Cross this morning, I was filled with apprehension because I had injured my left bionic knee two days ago and was afraid I would not be able to complete the walk. However to my great relief, I covered all fifteen stations and even helped to carry the Cross between two stations with perfect ease. There was no pain and no stumbling. I am convinced Jesus did help to carry the load and now my injured knee is miraculously healed. Praise the Lord.

Lilian Khoo

This morning Way of the Cross was a wonderful experience and the community meditation was encouraging. Hope that it will spill out to every Sat morning 10.30 am God's Blessings to all.

Francis Khoo

I enjoyed meeting friends new and forgotten ones, so glad to catch up with friends, 'yak yak and yum yum.' Didn't know meditation so liked by modern society.. I first saw my father meditating, that was more than 50 years ago.. wow. I'm glad to be in the meditation group.. in case I get lost some way,. got friends to help.

Elizabeth Tan

I am afraid I was not in the right frame of mind to really experience what was going on. With age and the thought of having to leave everything behind is distressing enough. I arrived at the end of the first station and unfortunately was very distracted with the position I was in.

Having lost Agnes and having to uproot myself at such short notice as the children felt that it would be easier to look after me in US than in PJ. Furthermore the entry permit of my son, who stayed behind to tie all the loose ends was going to expire on 09/04/2023. We went to pray, and that's what we accomplished. He held the rain till the way of the cross was over.

In my confused state of mind, I felt the meditation brought some peace of mind. May God bless all of us.

Cecil Fernandez

I was really happy to join the WCCM, Malaysia in the Stations of the Cross at the grounds of St Ignatius Church on the Saturday morning of 23 March. I would gladly join another session of the Way of the Cross. I would have liked a longer pause for reflection after the reading of each Station of the Cross. What were my thoughts? My mind went back to the Agony in the garden where Jesus saw the vision of his suffering. We must believe that the weight felt by Jesus, Our Saviour for our sins was indescribably heavy. The vision of his impending suffering was so intense that he sweated blood. He showed his human side and frailty when He turned to His Father, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me'. He submitted to the Will of his Father, 'Yet not my will but Thy will be done'.

Our human self cannot fully grasp nor appreciate the excruciating pain and torture that Jesus went through for us.

Dear Lord Jesus, make me understand Your deep love for me and what you went through for my Sins. Oh my Jesus, forgive me my Sins and save me from the fires of hell and lead all souls to Heaven that are most in need of Your mercy.

J.P. Monteiro

Klang/ Shah Alam/Subang Meditation Groups

25 March 2023



This is Maranatha Group from OLL (CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES KLANG) , as part of the Lenten activities, I as the leader organized for OLL members to take part during this season.

We had the way of the cross in all the churches, Divine Mercy chaplet prayers in CDM and rosaries. We even attended mass in 2 churches.

The 5 churches were :

1. Our Lady of Lourdes, Klang where we attended mass for The Anunciation followed by Novena
2. St Thomas More, Subang Jaya where we attended mass at 11.30am
3. Church of Divine Mercy, Shah Alam, where we recited Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3pm
4. Holy Redeemer Church, Klang
5. St Annes Church, Port Klang

An then we returned to Our Lady of Lourdes for sunset mass. Everything went on smoothly. We thank God for this journey with our Lord where we were guided by the Holy Spirit. We were all back home safely.

Julia Jase Rani
Leader Our Lady of Lourdes Group, Klang

Introductory sessions/ Workshops.

Reported in the HERALD
19 March 2023

Cathedral Seniors learn to meditate

Sixty Golden Eagles from the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist were all ears during their parish priest Fr. Gerard Theraviam's Introductory talk on Christian meditation.

Fr. Gerard said meditation is universal to all religions, though each may have its own approach. Christian meditation is not exclusive to Catholics; on the contrary it is inclusive of all Christians. The key to meditation is moving from the mind into the heart in complete silence, staying focused on one word and repeating it throughout, from the heart and not the mouth.

The preferred word to meditate upon is 'Maranatha' (Come Lord Jesus). It is an Aramaic word, the language of Jesus. Other single words may be used but with an even number of syllables. Fr Gerard reminded the Golden Eagles that 'Maranatha' was on the banner hanging across the cathedral's altar at Advent.

During meditation , the challenge is to do nothing about the monkeys in the mind and other distractions but to stay focused. Any effort to stop the monkeys or distractions will break one's focus. Stressing on the importance of silence, stillness and attention, Fr. Gerard quipped : 'So even if a mosquito lands on your arm, leave it alone' He was quick to add' Don't worry, there are no mosquitoes in the parish house'. He was more relenting about falling asleep, saying it was something expected of beginners and even veterans sometimes doze off.

Golden Eagles had their first meditation of 15 minutes. Many shared their experience, eager to know if it was done right. According to Fr. Gerard, peace is attained after and not during meditation.

Responding to the enthusiasm, Fr. Gerard offered to conduct classes. The Golden Eagles are indeed blessed to be taught by the national spiritual director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, Malaysia. Archbishop Emeritus Murphy Pakiam, who was instrumental in promoting Christian meditation in Malaysia, also attended. He blessed all after the talk.

Introductory workshop at Cathedral of the Holy Spirit Penang, 4 May 2023.

Exploring the John Main Tradition of Christian Meditation

On May 4th, a gathering of 85 participants from parishes in Penang and Sungai Petani came together at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Penang to experience the profound practice of the John Main Tradition of meditation. This ancient Christian form of meditation delves beyond words, thoughts, and images, employing the use of a mantra to deepen one's spiritual journey.

The one-day introductory workshop, organized by the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit Meditation Group in collaboration with the World Community for Christian Meditation (Malaysia), aimed to introduce and share the Christian tradition of meditation, while encouraging participants to embrace a deeper spiritual life through the discipline of silent meditation, stillness, and simplicity. The workshop was facilitated by Rev. Fr. Eugene Fernandez CSsR, Roland Victor, Jessie Chin, and Victoria Labrooy, who provided insightful guidance on John Main's meditation practice.

In the morning session, Fr. Eugene and Roland Victor shed light on the value of meditation, emphasizing the cultivation of interior silence, the practice of physical stillness, and the art of being present to God in a state of simplicity. Fr. Eugene expounded on the obstructive nature of the ego in one's relationship with God and stressed the importance of transcending self. He also introduced the concept of the wheel of prayer, symbolizing the perpetual motion of the prayer life that moves us closer to God. The spokes of the wheel represent the different forms of prayer that ultimately converge at the hub, which signifies the prayer of Christ, the mind of Christ.

During the afternoon session, Jessie Chin discussed the pivotal role played by Benedictine monk John Main (1926-1982) in rediscovering the ancient prayer practice of the Desert Fathers and its relevance to modern Christians. This

practice involved the loving repetition of a single sacred word, now referred to as a mantra. Jessie Chin eloquently highlighted the roots of meditation in the Christian tradition and John Main's contributions. Victoria Labrooy succinctly presented the fruits of embracing the daily discipline of meditation.

Throughout the sessions, participants actively engaged in lively question and answer exchanges. Roland Victor guided the participants through two 20-minute periods of meditation, emphasizing the importance of complete silence and the slow, loving repetition of the chosen mantra in the mind. Participants were led to meditate in silence, repeating the four syllables of the Aramaic word ;Ma-Ra-Na-Tha; (meaning Come, Lord) to experience the divine presence of God. Roland reiterated the significance of maintaining good sitting posture, focusing on the mantra, gently and continuously repeating it, returning to it during moments of distraction, and persevering by dedicating twenty to thirty minutes to meditation each morning and evening.

In the final session, a video presentation showcased the international activities of the WCCM, focusing on the role of Lawrence Freeman, the current director of the Community. Roland also shared the initiatives of WCCM in Malaysia, expressing hope that the gift of meditation would be shared with others nationwide.

The participants found the workshop to be both uplifting and enlightening, even within the short span of a single day.

Chris Chin reflected : *'I learned that meditation complements prayers, providing me with an opportunity to empty myself so that God can work within me. It showed me that it is possible to transcend everything and connect directly with the Spirit of God '*

An anonymous respondent affirmed the benefits of meditation, stating, *'John Main's practice is simple yet effective, requiring few words. The entire experience was deeply peaceful'*.

Christine Ho shared her transformative experience, stating *'It was an eye-opener and gave me a glimpse of how to surrender myself like a child to my Creator, my Father, my God!'*

Another anonymous respondent expressed their experience, stating, *'As I relaxed on the chair with my eyes almost closed, repeatedly saying ;MA-RA-NA-THA, I could feel my mind emptying completely and being replaced with serenity and peace granted by the Lord Jesus. Amen.'*

The workshop had provided participants with an opportunity to experience the healing and transforming power of divine love and the presence of God within their hearts through silent meditation. By letting go of distracting thoughts and mental images and embracing the meditative act of repeating the soul-touching mantra; MA-RA-NA-THA; syllable by syllable, participants were able to immerse themselves in the profound practice of the John Main Tradition. The workshop served as a catalyst for personal growth and spiritual enrichment, leaving participants with a deeper understanding of the Christian tradition of meditation and a renewed connection with their faith.

Basil Surin

**Celebrating the 30th anniversary of WCCM Malaysia
Pilgrimage to shrines in France and
a return to our International Retreat Centre at Bonnevaux.
6th to 20th May 2023**

Led by our Spiritual Director Fr. Gerard Theraviam and super efficient tour leader Katie Chan our group of 31 pilgrims included meditators (and few non practitioners) from Brisbane ,Hong Kong and Singapore, commencing our journey in Paris. Every shrine visited along the way had its own relevance, significance and merits.

The daily schedule was that of all WCCM events, incorporating morning, mid-day, evening prayers with meditation. We were nourished by daily eucharist and whenever possible, meditation after communion.

This routine was accentuated during our 4 day 3 night retreat at our International Retreat Centre in Bonnevaux with an additional morning meditation and night prayer, daily talk by Fr. Laurence and yoga sessions by Giovanni, Associate Director and Yoga master. Some chose not to attend the yoga sessions thinking they would be asked to do head stands but in actual fact, they need not have feared as Giovanni merely taught us the correct posture on how to sit in meditation! Some in the group were so besotted by his Italian charm, they even wanted to change their mantra to Gi –o-van-ni!!

For those of us who were there for our 25th anniversary pilgrimage in 2018, the physical transformation was quite amazing – one might say from ‘ugly duckling into a swan’

At that time, we were the first pilgrims to visit shortly after the community had acquired the property, renovations had just started and it was largely a construction site. We had to stay in Poitier, the nearest town, commute daily, had talks and mass out in the grounds. Meals were simple, prepared by meditators from the local community.

This time, the stables had been converted into a retreat house, able to accommodate our entire group comfortably. It also housed the dining room, kitchen and library within which was a little shop from which Bonnevaux memorabilia could be purchased. There is now a resident cook who served delicious nutritious meals. He did make a comment that we were a group with healthy appetites!

The barn has been converted into a multipurpose room where the eucharist is celebrated, meditation, yoga and other sessions are conducted. The main Abbaye had also been beautifully renovated and now houses the resident community. It is certainly thanks to Angeline Chan and DP Architects in Singapore for their magnificent work of love, all given pro bono.

A lot more needs to be done, as the next phase of development will involve the construction of a cloister to include an additional 24 rooms with laundry facilities. As to the funding, Fr. Laurence mentioned that from the onset, it has been a journey of faith – the property was purchased, renovated and operationalised purely from donations. There are no bank loans. Even financing of the last phase has been undertaken by the Jurt (Swiss) Foundation. This is quite remarkable and nothing short of miraculous! Now it is up to the community to raise funds to support the operations of the centre.

The retreat ended with contemplative mass which was live streamed, shared and attended by our meditators back home.

It was over all too soon. We hope to visit again after the final phase is complete.



Proudly displaying our Bonnevaux T shirts with Fr. Laurence and resident Team



Conference of the fathers.....Is Fr. Laurence giving absolution?

Our last stop was La Sallete in the French Alps, a little known site where Our Lady appeared once to two shepherd children. Unlike Lourdes and Fatima, it is not commercialised, truly peaceful and conducive to prayer. Regretably, this time, the weather was not so kind. Those who were lucky to wake in the early hours between 6 to 7am, were able to see the surroundings in their splendour with clouds beneath them. Then for the remainder of the day we were shrouded in fog and mist! Perhaps it is Our Lady's message to the group that they should come again!



Photo 1: May birthday buddies with cake baked by La Salette sisters
Seated : FrGerard, Cecilia Chow
Standing :L to R : Regina Savrimuthu, Carol Pereira, Ann Khor

Photo 2 : Fr Gerard resplendent in birthday chasuble, , embroidered with motif inspired by the one that his favourite Saint, St. Therese of Lisieux painted on a chasuble made in her mother's wedding dress

The pilgrims are still gathering their thoughts and we will follow up with more feedback in our next issue...

Rest in Peace, Mother.



It is with deep regret that the Pure Life Society announced the passing of Datin Paduka Mother Mangalam (who is a patron of WCCM) on 10 June 2023.

Fr. Gerard represented WCCM Malaysia in expressing our condolences and was asked to say a prayer during the wake. She will be sorely missed as she was our living link to Fr John Main and WCCM had a special place in her heart. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and the perpetual light shine upon her. May she Rest in Peace.

Enclosed is the International news with F. Laurence's message.
Happy reading.

Pat Por
National Coordinator.