



The World Community for Christian Meditation

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[Home](#) > [Weekly Readings Newsletter](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#)

Readings for 25/12/2011



A selection from Laurence Freeman OSB, **JESUS: THE**

TEACHER WITHIN (New York: Continuum, 2000) pp. 226-227.

Christmas 2011

The mantra . . . is recited continuously whatever we may be feeling: ?in times of war and times of peace,? as The Cloud of Unknowing puts it; ?in times of prosperity and adversity,? as John Cassian puts it; ?from the beginning to the end of each meditation,? as John Main said in his turn.

With practice the mantra pushes its roots deeper into our being, establishing harmony between the conscious and the unconscious. Imperceptibly and gradually it sinks from the head to the heart. Over time we say the mantra, then sound it, then listen to it with less effort and more attention.

Naturally, there are stormy days or dry periods of meditation when it seems next to impossible to say the mantra. We look for every justification not to sit and meditate. When we do, the mantra is immediately washed away by waves of thought and emotion. But if we do persevere or start again then, like the seed in the parable, which grows in the dark womb of the earth (how we do not know, Jesus said), the mantra faithfully guides us ever deeper. And with depth comes clarity, stillness, self-knowledge, the great gift of compassion and the inner stillness needed for ever-more complete attention, more generous transcendence. The mantra imperceptibly progresses through the interspace of stillness, between the waves of thought and of the inner life. [. . .]

With time it brings us to the authentic poverty where we learn simply to be. Experiencing this lovely reality from time to time empowers us to endure many setbacks and disappointments along the way. There will be times of defeat. . . But even when we seem to be regressing, growth is happening if there is faith at work. In the darkest night an invisible light still shines.

After Meditation:

?Christmas Prayer,? from Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1976), p. 146.

Almighty God and Father of light,
a child is born for us and a child is given to us.
your eternal Word leaped down from heaven
in the silent watches of the night,
and now your Church is filled with wonder
at the nearness of her God.
Open our hearts to receive his life
and increase our vision with the rising of dawn,
that our lives may be filled with God?s glory and peace,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

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