



The World Community for Christian Meditation

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Thursday of Lent Week 4



Soon Lent will be transitioning into one of the greatest and deepest of all reflections on the nature and meaning of suffering. Let us hope we are ready for it this year.

There are many forms of suffering, as there many manifestations of love. Maybe in the great cosmic secret they are exactly proportionate.

When the mind is confused, doubt-stricken, divided and agitated we experience a particular kind of suffering. It may not appear ? yet ? on the surface of our lives and in our interactions with others.

That depends on our measure of self-control or on our ability to put on a good face. But, eventually, there is nothing hidden that will not be exposed. Few secrets go to the grave - or stay there long.

Mental suffering is often said to be worse than merely physical pain; although comparing degrees or forms of suffering is an abstraction, the luxury of those who observe but don?t experience. Mental anguish, however, may indeed be worse because it is particularly isolating; and to outsiders ? even those who have solutions and solace to give you ? it often seems exaggerated. You feel they will listen with empathy but are secretly thinking (as you may be too), ?why don?t you just get on with it and make up your mind??

The problem is that the mind cannot make up itself. Thinking about something doesn?t solve it. To resolve a dilemma and decrease the suffering of confusion we need insight, wisdom, the intelligence that cannot be measured by cognitive tests. It is there, like a pure spring under muddy soil, ever-flowing.

Perhaps we follow politics and show-business so avidly because we see reflected there, at a safe distance, the inconclusive arguments and self-indulgent distractions that beset our own

minds and life-styles.

Yes, it's hard to put meditation into such a confused picture. The laying aside of thoughts. Faith in the pure spring. The patience of regular practice that itself involves suffering of a kind ? but of a redemptive kind.

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