



The World Community for Christian Meditation

Published on *The World Community for Christian Meditation* (<http://www.wccm.org>)

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

Weekly Readings 17/2/2013



An excerpt from Laurence Freeman OSB, *Meditation, JESUS*

THE TEACHER WITHIN (New York: Continuum, 2000), pp. 212-213.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus identified material concerns as our main source of anxiety. How can we make ourselves more comfortable and reduce personal suffering?

This is the major preoccupation that obscures the present moment and disrupts true priorities.

Therefore I bid you put away anxious thought about food and drink to keep you alive, and clothes to cover your body. Surely life is more than food, the body more than clothes. Mt 6:25

When he tells us not to worry Jesus is not denying the reality of daily problems. It is anxiety he is telling us to abandon, not reality. Learning not to worry is hard work. . . . [Yet] despite its *attention-deficiency disorder*, even the modern mind has its natural capacity to be still and to transcend its fixations. In depth it discovers its own clarity where it is at peace, free from anxiety. Most of us have half-a-dozen or so favorite anxieties, like bitter sweets we suck on endlessly. We would be frightened to be deprived of them. Jesus challenges us to go beyond the fear of letting go of anxiety, the fear we have of peace itself. The practice of meditation is a way of applying his teaching on prayer; it proves through experience that the human mind can indeed choose not to worry.

This is not to say we can easily blank the mind and dispel all thoughts at will. In meditation we remain distracted and yet are free from distraction. This is because---however minimally at first---we are free to choose where to place our attention. Gradually the discipline of daily practice strengthens this freedom. It would be childish to imagine that this is fully realized in a short time. We stay distracted for a long time. We soon get used to distractions as traveling companions on the path of meditation. But they do not have to dominate. Choosing to say the mantra faithfully and to keep returning to it whenever distractions intervene exercises the freedom we have to pay attention.

It is not a choice in the sense in which we choose a particular brand off the supermarket shelf. It is the choice to commit. The way of the mantra is an act of faith, not a movement of the

ego's power. Within every act of faith there is a declaration of love. Faith prepares the ground for the seed of the mantra to germinate in love. We do not create the miracle of life and growth by ourselves, but we are responsible for its unfolding. Coming to peace of mind and heart—to silence, stillness, and simplicity—requires not the will of a type-A high-achiever, but the unconditional attention, the sustained fidelity of a disciple.

After meditation: Olivier Clement, THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM (London: New City Press, 1993), p. 172.

A woman who is asleep can remain impervious to the uproar of a storm, but will be woken by a sigh from her baby in the next room. A sleeper who is indifferent to the noises in the street immediately hears the light footsteps of the one he loves. Lighter still are the footsteps of the One who comes. But the heart wakes. . .

Carla Cooper - cmcooper@gvtc.com

Weekly Readings Newsletter

Source URL: <http://www.wccm.org/content/weekly-readings-1722013>