The World Community for Christian Meditation

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

May 15 Readings

From John Main OSB, "Growing in God," THE WAY OF UNKNOWING (NY: Crossroad, 1990), pp. 79-81.

What is the difference between reality and unreality? One way we can understand it is to see unreality as the product of desire. One thing we learn in meditation is to abandon desire, and we learn it because we know that our invitation is to live wholly in the present moment. Reality demands stillness and silence. And that is the commitment that we make in meditating.

As everyone can find from their own experience, we learn in the stillness and silence to accept ourselves as we are. This sounds very strange to modern ears, above all to modern Christians who have been brought up to practice so much anxious striving: "Shouldn't I be ambitious? What if I'm a bad person, shouldn't I desire to be better?"

The real tragedy of our time is that we are so filled with desire, for happiness, for success, for wealth, for power, whatever it may be, that we are always imagining ourselves as we might be. So rarely do we come to know ourselves as we are and to accept our present position. But the traditional wisdom tells us: know that you are and that you are as you are.

It may well be that we are sinners and if we are, it is important that we should know that we are. But far more important for us is to know from our own experience that God is the ground of our being and that we are rooted and founded in God . . . This is the stability that we all need, not the striving and movement of desire, but the stability and the stillness of spiritual rootedness. Each of us is invited to learn in our meditation, in our stillness in God, that in God we have everything that is necessary. [....]

Meditation is the supreme way into faith, into commitment. All action must be shallow, mere immediacy, if it is not based on this commitment to what is real, which must also be to what is eternal. Our invitation as Christians is to know now, with direct personal knowledge, what is real and eternal and, knowing it, to live our lives inspired by love. This call lies behind these words of Jesus. . .: "If a person aims at honour of Him who sent me he is sincere and there is nothing false in him," (Jn 7:18). The purpose of our meditation is that there should be nothing false in us, only reality. Only love. Only God.

Meditate for Thirty Minutes. Remember: Sit down. Sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly, begin to say a single word. We recommend the prayer phrase "Maranatha." Recite it as four syllables of equal length. Listen to it as you say it, gently, but continuously. Do not think or imagine anything spiritual or otherwise. Thoughts and images will likely come, but let them pass. Just keep returning your attention ? with humility and simplicity to saying your word in faith, from the beginning to the end of your meditation.

After Meditation, from Julian of Norwich, Ch. 54, REVELATIONS OF DIVINE LOVE (London: Penguin, 1966), p. 157

How greatly should we rejoice that God indwells our soul! Even more that our soul dwells in God! Our created soul is to be God's dwelling place: and the soul's dwelling place is to be God, who is uncreated. It is a great thing to know in our heart that God, our Maker, indwells our soul. Even greater is it to know that our soul, our created soul, dwells in the substance of God. Of that substance, God, are we what we are!

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