The World Community for Christian Meditation

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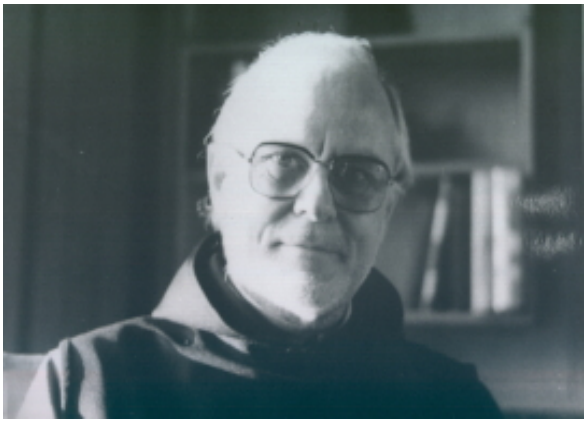
Opening and Closing Prayer



Opening Prayer of Dom John Main

"Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the silent presence of the spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call, 'Maranatha…Come, Lord Jesus'."

In 1976, shortly after he had begun his public teaching on meditation, John Main composed this prayer for his first set of tapes. Later it was published in his first book “Word into Silence”.

In few words it expresses both the essence of the Christian understanding of prayer and the sense that we do not pray in isolation but also as members of the community of the Body of Christ.

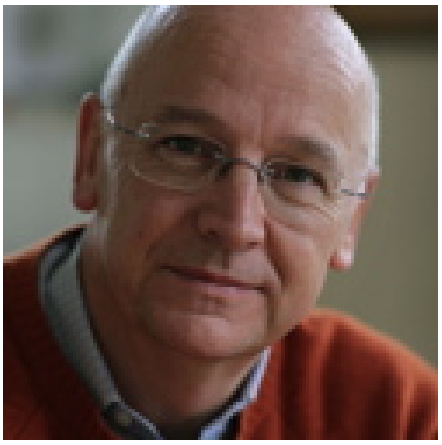
Having at first been introduced to meditation through its universal tradition in the East many years before he had become a monk, he was experientially prepared to recognize the essential Christian expression of the teaching when he encountered it in the Conferences of John Cassian and the Christian medieval tradition in the late sixties.

It was not, however until a few years later that he realized how deeply enriching and universal this approach to contemplation could be in the church at large. At first he had seen it as a way of monastic renewal. But through his experience of teaching lay people of all ages and walks of life at his monastery in London he understood that here was a simple yet transforming practice of the prayer of the heart that could be followed as a gentle and daily discipline by all disciples of Jesus.

John Main’s theology of meditation is both Christocentric and profoundly Trinitarian as this

prayer shows. He has been well called a ‘Trinitarian mystic’. Many individual meditators and meditation groups around the world today begin their silent meditation that takes them beyond all words with this short prayer which comprehends the mystery of silence in the experience of the God who is communion in love.

The mantra ‘maranatha’ that was John Main’s preferred recommendation to people beginning meditation is the oldest Christian prayer (it means ‘come, Lord’), in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, used by St Paul at the end of the First Letter to the Corinthians (16:22) and found in the earliest Christian liturgies.



Closing Prayer by Laurence Freeman OSB

"May this group be a true spiritual home for the seeker, a friend for the lonely, a guide for the confused. May those who pray here be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to serve all who come, and to receive them as Christ Himself. In the silence of this room may all the suffering, violence, and confusion of the world encounter the Power that will console, renew and uplift the human spirit.

May this silence be a power to open the hearts of men and women to the vision of God, and so to each other, in love and peace, justice and human dignity. May the beauty of the divine life, fill this group and the hearts of all who pray here, with joyful hope. May all who come here weighed down by the problems of humanity leave giving thanks for the wonder of human life. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. AMEN."

At the opening of the first Christian Meditation Centre in London in 1984 Laurence Freeman composed this prayer a few minutes before the people attending the blessing of the house arrived. It has often been adapted by meditation groups and other communities both in The World Community for Christian Meditation and elsewhere.

The prayer grew out of this particular Community’s experience that meditation, the practice of contemplation, creates and nurtures the growth of community into the full human maturity of peace and justice. Although it is a solitary practice it reveals solitude as the recognition and acceptance of each person’s eternal uniqueness and the eternal and unique value we share with every creature in the cosmos.

From this naturally flows the power of compassion that is the pure fruit of meditation and the most powerful force in the world for the transformation of darkness into light, for the healing of human wounds and the relief of suffering.

John Main

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