The World Community for Christian Meditation

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“The Christian Crisis"

John Main OSB, THE PRESENT CHRIST (New York: Crossroad, 1991), pp. 74-76.
The call to the modern person, the call to all of us, is to become spiritual, and to become spiritual we have to learn to leave behind our official religious selves—that is, to leave behind the Pharisee that lurks inside all of us—because, as Jesus has told us, we have to leave behind our whole self. All images of ourselves coming as they do out of the fevered brain of the ego, have to be renounced and transcended if we are to become one with ourselves, with God, with our brethren—that is, to become truly human, truly real,truly humble.

Our images of God must similarly fall away. We must not be idol-worshippers. Curiously, what we find is that they fall away as our images of self fall away, which suggests what we always guessed anyway, that our images of God were really images of ourselves. In this wonderful process of coming into the full light of Reality, of falling away from illusion, a great silence emerges from the center. We feel ourselves engulfed in the eternal silence of God. We are no longer talking to God or worse, talking to ourselves. We are learning to be—to be with God, to be in God. [. . . .]

On the spiritual journey it takes more energy to be still than to run.. . . .Most people spend so much of their waking hours rushing from one thing to another that they are afraid of stillness and of silence. A certain existential panic can overtake us when we first face the stillness, when we first enter into this state of pure being. But if we can once find the courage to face this silence, we enter into the peace that is beyond all understanding. No doubt it is easier to learn this in a balanced and stable society. In a turbulent and confused world there are so many more deceptive voices, so many calls for our attention. [. . . .]

We trivialize ourselves if we set limits to the energy available to us for this inner journey—the journey to our own heart, to the presence of Christ within us. . .The power source from which we draw our dynamism for this journey is inexhaustible, as St Paul tells us, “It can be measured by nothing less than the power that God exercised in raising Jesus from the dead.”

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...

“Infinite Silence,” Fr. David Maria Turoldo (born 1916, Servite order), from UDII UNA VOCE, Mondadori, 1951.

INFINITE SILENCE

Lord, for You only do I sing,
that I may ascend
to where only You are,
infinite joy.

To joy turns my weeping
when I begin to invoke You.
Only in You do I rejoice,
awesome vertigo.

I am your shadow.
I am deep disorder,
my mind the faint firefly
in the deep darkness

who goes looking for You, inaccessible light.
For you this heart faints,
this shell that is full of your Echo,
O infinite Silence.

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