

WCCM Asia Pacific Regional Coordinators Meeting

Malaysia: February 10-13 2011

Meeting Summary

Opening Session

Fr Laurence opened the meeting by inviting us to use the time to strengthen our experience of Community, share our own experiences, get to know each other, create new links and networks and gather learnings and priorities to take back to our Communities. He used the metaphor of bees: working in community and communicating from their own experience. He spoke of contemplative consciousness: when we are more in tune with the mind of Christ we can cooperate from this common place in our hearts rather than merely doing what we are told to do.

A period of sharing followed: participants introduced themselves and shared a little of their journey in the Christian Meditation Community.

Meditatio

The session commenced with sharing by Coordinators about their Communities. Growth in the Communities was evident, common challenges were communication and translations

Fr Laurence gave a brief overview of the Meditatio outreach in the UK. He explained how it was a new program but with really nothing new in it. The roots of the Community have gone deep into the Christian world and they need to be nurtured. As roots go down branches go out and these branches have moved into a world hungry for meditation. Some areas know only secular meditation eg addiction, health, business etc. We are already in these areas through our meditators so Meditatio is a way of organising the teaching through these branches. Where the Spirit will take us we can't tell if we stay rooted we will serve the Kingdom of God.

Discussion in small groups followed on the themes: "How do I feel about Meditatio", "What elements are most relevant to my Community", "What suggestions do I have for development."

The feedback was very positive and all could see that there would be relevance of the program for their Community. Teaching children was the main priority for most. There was a suggestion that seminars be introduced on a regional basis. Technology was a concern and it was agreed that this was a particular challenge for this region, not everyone has computers or up to date technology.

Fr Laurence pointed out that there was no intention to transport Meditatio immediately elsewhere. It would be naturally shaped and formed for regional Communities. There was no pressure for countries to take it up. One country in the region may choose a seminar and that region could support it. He also emphasised the importance of keeping in touch with the familiar structures of the Community.

The mental health seminar and survey was discussed and participants were encouraged to complete the survey. Fr Laurence pointed out the emphasis on health through a good practice.

The Meditatio section of the Pilgrimage DVD was shown.

The Essential Teaching Weekend: New ways of giving this workshop.

Before presenting on the ETW Kath spoke briefly about the newly named "School of Meditation" and the components of the School. She then spoke about the ETW, its basic elements and in particular how the focus was on a personal communication and sharing the experience. Powerpoint

presentations have been developed so that the teaching can be presented personally and the talks by participants can be prepared by in small groups during the workshop.

Discussions in small groups followed and from the feedback it became clear that there was confusion about the elements of the School and the difference between Introductory Courses and the Essential Teaching Weekend. Fr Laurence gave a presentation on the programs of the School: the Introductory Course, Essential Teaching Workshop, Deepening Events including the Roots Course and the National School Retreat.

Teaching Christian Meditation to Children

Kath presented the powerpoint presentation that had been prepared for meditators to present to teachers in schools. She emphasised that a meditator, grounded in their own practice was the best person to present the powerpoint.

There was much positive feedback and countries generally agreed that the time had arrived to introduce Christian Meditation to children. Some countries had already started. There was discussion about countries where schools were mainly interreligious and it was suggested that Sunday Schools and religious programs were good places to start. There was also some discussion on Christian Meditation in prisons

Meditation Groups

The beginning of the weekly groups by Fr John Main at Ealing was discussed. The basic elements of the group: teaching, meditation, and sharing were each explained; and the place of short readings, music, opening and closing prayers was mentioned. The talks on CD's were discussed and an explanation of the Weekly Teachings (which are different to the Weekly Readings) was given. The need for translations of the Weekly Teachings was discussed.

Feedback was given on the need to support groups and Group Leaders and the need for Group Leader's days.

Translations and Resources

There was a common need for more resources and translations. There was discussion on the principal kinds of media for communicating the teaching. Priorities were print, books, internet, CD's, DVD's. Each country has individual requirements.

Countries had their own group discussions to come up with the priority list of resources for translation. For most countries the top two priorities are the Weekly Teachings and Your Daily Practice.

Meditation and the Poor

Fr Laurence gave a presentation and opened up discussion on what does poverty means: Poverty of Spirit, Social Poverty, Material Poverty.

Countries had group discussions. The feedback showed most countries had issues in all three areas. There was a different emphasis and a different focus for each of the different kinds of poverty but all countries identified serious needs.

Fr Laurence led a discussion focussing the group on who are marginalised and what can be done. We can raise consciousness and respond in particular circumstances to reach out to these groups. The Web page has a Peace and Justice page to communicate the work of meditation and the marginalised – send a story or reflection.

20th Anniversary Celebration Discussions.

A focus will be around the visit by Fr Laurence to Hong Kong and other countries in the region in December.

There could be something during the JMS for all countries to join in around the world. Celebrations don't have to be all on the one date. The months leading up to the JMS could be used for group and National events. A special edition of the magazine was discussed.

Each country will take back ideas for further discussion.

Panel Discussion

Panel members were asked to share their views on questions regarding challenges for the world, the vision and growth of the Community and their own personal journeys.

Closing Session

The DVD from the UK Seminars on Teaching Christian Meditation was shown and enthusiastically received.

Other resources including the CD with Powerpoint presentations for Teachers, and the Pilgrimage DVD were discussed.

Fr Laurence spoke about the Newsletter, the Website, Friends and Oblates. He also went through the proposed changes to the Constitution.

Countries broke into their groups for discussion of future priorities.

Main Future Priorities

Indonesia

- Improve communication with members
- Prepare for visit by Fr Laurence in December
- Translations – Weekly Teachings
- Meditation with children – this new direction to start in December

Malaysia

- Regular meetings of National body
- School Coordinator to be appointed
- At least one ETW per year in region
- Teaching to children

Singapore

- Develop School of Meditation – appoint a Coordinator and strengthen structure
- Teaching to children
- Interreligions event

Hong Kong

- Strengthen resources for leaders – pilgrimage DVD
- Translations – teaching cards and Weekly Teachings
- Teaching to children – Sunday School
- ETW next year

Fiji

- Translate your Daily Practice
- Continue work in schools

Phillipines

- Renew and deepen commitment – weekly materials, Fr L visit, visit other regions, visit parishes
- New members coordinator
- Translations'

New Zealand

- More sharing with other countries
- Further develop teaching in schools and prisons
- Structure succession and isolated groups

Australia

- Share understanding of region
- Grow relationships and networks (Fiji)
- Expand teaching to children
- Regional ETW's