

APPENDIX 4

THE TRADITION TIMELINE CARDS

Quotations from  
Masters in the Christian Contemplative Tradition

*Be still and know that I am God.*

**PSALM**

**46:10**

*Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give.  
Set your troubled hearts at rest and banish your fears...  
I have spoken these words to you so that my joy may be in you and your joy  
may be complete.*

Blessing from

**JESUS**

Gospel according to St John **14:27, 15:11**

*The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. When we cannot choose words in  
order to pray properly, the Spirit expresses that plea in a way that could  
never be put into words.*

**ST PAUL**

Letter to the Romans **8:26**

*It is better to be silent and real  
than to talk and be unreal.*

**ST IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH**

**35–108**

An Apostolic Father, he was the third Bishop of Antioch and was a student of John the Apostle. Tradition says that he was one of the children Jesus took in his arms and blessed. He was sentenced to die at the Coliseum.

*A man's life is short when measured against the time to come... Let us persevere in our acts of asceticism, that we may not become weary and disheartened.*

St Anthony also known as  
**ANTHONY THE GREAT**

**251–356**

Christian hermit and monk, a prominent leader among the Desert Fathers. He was over 100 years old when he died.

*The mind should unceasingly cling to the formula\*. Until strengthened by continual use of it, it casts off and rejects the rich and ample matter of all kinds of thought, and restricts itself to the poverty of the single verse. Those who realise this poverty, arrive with ease at the first of the Beatitudes: Blessed are they who are poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

\* Cassian's 'formula' is known today as a 'mantra'

**JOHN CASSIAN**

**c. 360 – c. 435**

Ascetic, monk and theologian, whose works, Institutes of the Monastic Life and Conferences of the Egyptian Monks, reflect the teachings of the Desert Fathers and have influenced Western monasticism.

*Just as it is impossible  
to see your face in troubled water,  
so also the soul,  
unless it is clear of alien thoughts,  
is not able to pray to God in contemplation.*

**A DESERT FATHER**

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century

*The nature of water is yielding and that of a stone is hard. Yet if you hang a  
bottle filled with water above the stone so that the water drips drop by drop,  
it will wear a hole in the stone.*

*In the same way the word of God is tender and our heart is hard. So when  
people hear the word of God frequently their hearts are opened to the fear of  
God.*

**DESERT FATHER ABBA POEMAN**

c. 340 – c. 450

*Listen and attend with the ear of your heart.*

**ST BENEDICT**

480–547

Founder of Western Christian monasticism,  
influenced by the teachings of John Cassian.

*May the memory of Jesus be united to your breathing, and then shall you  
know the usefulness of silence.*

**ST JOHN OF THE LADDER**

**c. 525 – c. 606**

Christian monk and author also known as  
St John Climacus

*The rest you will learn with the help of God,  
by practising watchfulness of spirit and by keeping Jesus in your heart, for sit  
down in your cell  
and it will teach you all things.*

**ST SYMEON**

The New Theologian

**949–1022**

Orthodox saint and poet who embodied the mystical tradition.

*The soul is like an unopened parcel. It is not only  
God who is a mystery; we are a mystery to ourselves. There is something  
unknown at the core of our being.*

**ST BERNARD of CLAIRVAUX**

**1090–1153**

Cistercian mystic. Promoted a mystical vision of rhapsodic love, in which the Church is described in erotic terms as the bride of Christ. His love mysticism has the tendency to be anti-intellectual.

*Contemplation –  
The simple enjoyment of the truth.*

**ST THOMAS AQUINAS**

**1225–1274**

Italian Dominican priest, considered to be one of the Church's greatest philosophers and theologians.

*There is nothing so much like God  
as silence.*

**MEISTER ECKHART**

**1260–1328**

German theologian, philosopher and Christian mystic.

*The very best thing one can ever do is  
fix Jesus in one's heart and never want anything else.*

**RICHARD ROLLE**

**1290–1349**

English religious writer, bible translator and hermit

*For in human souls is God's true dwelling... utterly at home he lives in us  
forever.*

*God is the still point at my centre.*

**JULIAN OF NORWICH**

**1342 – c. 1416**

English Mystic who wrote Revelations of Divine Love after a mystical experience when she was close to death.

*Use this little word and pray not in many words  
but in a little word of one syllable.  
Fix this word to your heart,  
so that it is always there, come what may.  
With this word, you will suppress all thoughts.*

**THE CLOUD OF UNKNOWING (Chapter 7)**

14<sup>th</sup> century

book by unknown English author

*Few souls understand what God would accomplish in them if they were to  
abandon themselves unreservedly to him.*

**ST IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA**

1491–1556

Founder of the Jesuit order and known for the Spiritual Exercises (contemplative practices of prayer and meditations that assist one's faith to become fully alive)

*All things must come to the soul from its roots, from where it is planted.  
The tree that is beside the running water  
is fresher and gives more fruit.*

**ST TERESA OF AVILA**

1515–1582

Spanish Carmelite nun, who formed the Discalced [barefoot] Carmelite Order with St John of the Cross. A Doctor of the Catholic Church, she is important for her description of the stages of the mystical journey, influenced by St Augustine's Confessions.

*God is hidden in the soul.  
You yourself are his dwelling and  
his secret chamber and hiding place.  
God is never absent.  
In order to find Him you should  
forget all your possessions and all creatures and  
hide in the interior, secret chamber of your spirit.  
And there, closing the door behind you,  
you should pray to your Father in secret.  
Remaining hidden with him,  
you will experience him in hiding, and  
love and enjoy him in hiding.*

### **ST JOHN OF THE CROSS**

**1542–1591**

Spanish mystic, friar and priest of the Carmelite Order, founder of the Discalced Carmelites along with Teresa of Avila. His poetry and studies on the growth of the soul are considered the summit of mystical Spanish literature.

*Sitting in your cell, collect your mind...but do not  
leave it silent, instead give it the following prayer:  
'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.'  
Let this be its constant occupation, never to be abandoned.  
It leads to Divine desire and love.*

From the  
**PHILOKALIA**

**1782**

A collection of texts by the masters of the Eastern Orthodox Church on Christian prayer and life dedicated to God.

*We are what we do with silence*

**FRIEDRICH von HÜGEL**

1852–1925

Austrian Catholic religious writer and Modernist theologian

*We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.*

**TEILHARD de CHARDIN**

1881–1955

French philosopher and [Jesuit priest](#) who trained as a palaeontologist and [geologist](#) and took part in the discovery of [Peking Man](#)

*The continuous interior Prayer of Jesus is a constant uninterrupted calling upon the divine name of Jesus with the lips, in the spirit and in the heart.*

From

**THE WAY OF A PILGRIM**

1884

An anonymous Russian work detailing the author's journey in discovering and saying the Jesus Prayer devoutly

*Prayer is the practice of the presence of God*

**BEDE GRIFFITHS**

1906–1993

A Benedictine monk, and leading thinker and author in the development of dialogue between the Western and Eastern traditions. He said John Main was the greatest spiritual guide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



*Solitude is not something you must hope for in the future. Rather, it is a deepening of the present, and unless you look for it in the present you will never find it.*

**THOMAS MERTON**

**1915–1968**

20<sup>th</sup>-century Christian mystic, and one of the most influential Catholic writers of our time, with contemplation being the explicit theme of nearly everything he wrote

*We need silence to be able to touch souls.*

**ST TERESA OF CALCUTTA**

**1910–1997**

Mother Teresa had a deep understanding of the relationship between continuous prayer and action, and ensured that times of twice-daily silent prayer were an integral part of the schedule of her sisters.

*Prayer then is the life of the Spirit of Jesus within our human heart... We are praying when we are awakening to the presence of the Spirit within our heart.*

**JOHN MAIN OSB**

**1926–1982**

Benedictine monk who recovered a way of prayer that links with the early desert tradition and taught it to modern people seeking a way to a deeper spiritual life

*The ancient wisdom is that the distance between God and me is me. We must seek God in the right places: within the sanctuary of the centred self.*

**JOAN CHITTISTER OSB**

**b. 1936**

Founder and Executive Director of Benetvision: a Resource Centre for Contemporary Spirituality, and a prolific writer on spirituality for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

*Jesus says to us 'don't worry about tomorrow'.  
In meditation we stop thinking of the past and future  
and learn to live fully in the present moment.*

**LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB**

**b. 1951**

Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM)