Reflection: Cultivating the soil of the mind 16th June 2021 – prepared by Martin, our guest contributor for this week.

Preparing for meditation as a method to commune with God, Christ and Soul.

Opening words: This week, we have a transcript. We have attached some pictures/ resources to help you in your meditation. If you are meditating alone but would like to feel 'with us' we meditate at 7.30pm on Wednesday in our homes during this time of pandemic. The tradition we meditate in is Centring Prayer which is fully inclusive of all traditions of Christian Meditation and welcoming of World Traditions.

Welcome to Christian Meditation in the Centring Prayer Tradition: A very warm welcome from Fiona, Marie, Rob, Hazel, Paul (and Martin) the leaders of the Christian Meditation group at Wisdom Centre, Romsey. The whole session is about 50 minutes. We meditate beginning with an opening prayer followed by reflections and then 25 minutes of silence. We hope you enjoy your meditation with us.

Opening Prayers: Eternal God, through our meditation may the ears of our hearts be attentive to your Word. May we seek and find You. Awakened to Your presence may we be joyful, embodying peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-awareness. May we follow Your teaching, seeking also, the wisdom of the Holy Fathers and Mothers. May we, therefore, commit to community, love of earth, stability, peace and justice making. **Amen**

Full of bliss, bestowing joy transcendent, Essence of wisdom, untouched by duality, clear as the taintless sky, the utterer of Thou art That, the One, eternal, pure, immovable, the omnipresent Witness, free from Nature's three qualities, beyond the reach of thought – my Divine Preceptor, I bow to Thee…Aum…**Amen.**

Introduction: Hello. My name is Martin and I would like to give a very warm and humble thank you to Fiona and the Wisdom Centre team for inviting me to write a transcript for your meditation community. I have visited the centre many times for meditations, workshops and offering counselling. I might have met some of you already. This is my first meditation I offer to you all. It is a big thing for me to do this and to follow in the footsteps of other meditation leaders who write such inspiring and dedicated transcripts. I look forward to meeting you all in person once we can move out from this lockdown. Maybe I will meet some of you at my first workshop day in August: Discover Your Personal Myth: Introductory Workshop Day.

I was turning the soil this week and preparing a trench for my potatoes. Cultivating the soil is hard work. It takes time and effort and it feels great to know that my seed potatoes are going to find a new home, sprout strong roots and give life to new creations for our enjoyment and nourishment. I was also thinking about how to introduce my first meditation and realised I was doing it right then and I thought of the metaphor for cultivating the soil of our earth was precisely the same for cultivating the soil of our minds when we prepare for meditation so we can commune with God and Christ. Where we cultivate the soil of the mind, so we cultivate communion with God in meditation. Meditation is such a wonderful practice for cultivating a strong connection and bond with our Creator.

Here I offer three techniques from over 22 years of my own exploration and spiritual cultivation. Each technique builds on the one before it – two short meditations followed by the 25 minute deeper, longer one all with the intention of helping you deepen your communion with God, the Divine Presence, All That Is.

Continues/

Three Meditations

The mind can be restless and frustrating to say the least. But when it is calm it is the most wonderful vehicle for aligning one's consciousness towards God. The uncontrolled mind is like untilled soil: cloggy, compressed, and full of weeds. The calm mind is easy to turn, free of weeds and well-aired with the consciousness of God's Presence, inspiration, guidance and help in times of difficulty.

In order to calm and till the mind I use affirmations to help the mind focus and concentrate one-pointedly.

1. Affirmations – concentration of will power (10 min)

Method:

1. Sit comfortably with the spine straight, palms up resting on your thighs.
2. Take some long deep and calming breaths.
3. Affirm in your mind that you want to let go of all worldly thoughts and worries for a few minutes.
4. Allow a state of relaxation to manifest in this moment.
5. Breathe in, clench your fists and tense all the muscles in your body for a count of 5 and then exhale with a double exhalation (huh-huhhh) and release and relax the muscles again. Repeat this two more times.
6. Repeat this affirmation out loud for three minutes:

I possess the creative power of Spirit.

The Infinite Intelligence guides me

To solve every problem

7. Repeat this affirmation for 3 minutes as a whisper.
8. Repeat this affirmation for 3 minutes mentally.
9. You can extend this exercise for longer if you want to and conclude when the process feels complete.
10. End the exercise with just normal conscious breathing and by gently moving and tensing the muscles in order to ground you.

2. Speaking to God in the Language of Your Heart (10 min)

The second technique takes your consciousness deeper still to a calmer and more God-centred place for you to commune in. Speak to God in the language of your own heart. He wants to hear you call His name. He desperately wants you to talk to Him. It reminds me of the return of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). We all play in this world, absorbed in its dramas and crises, pleasures and habits, distractions and

entertainments. But there comes a time when we are so tired of them and desperately want deeper sustenance and relationship that is eternal and unconditional. We may have been hypnotised by all this material creation but there is deeper relationship, deeper love, unconditional love in God. This is the time to cultivate this relationship in the soil of a calm and undistracted mind. Talk to God. Tell Him you love Him. Tell Him you want Him and wait for His reply. It comes in a feeling of peace and unconditional positive regard. When His peace and love descends upon you He is there. If it takes a long time for His answer don't feel discouraged. How long have we been ignoring Him? Persevere. Deeply tell Him you love Him more and more, deeper and deeper. He loves us unconditionally. Wait patiently. Persevere. Speak to Him and ask Him to show you His love so you can feel it. If you have that then you have everything and all the worldly tasks you have to do are just easier to manage when you know you have His love and grace. Take as much time as you like in this state of God consciousness. This is meditation.

3. Meditation on the Name (25 min)

The final technique is meditation on the Name. It is simple but deepens one's consciousness of God. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' (John 1:1). The name is God so chanting the name internally in a deep state of meditation is communion with God. In this place is everything, there is nothing that does not exist or is not present. Allow the feeling and thought of merging with everything just happen. Everything in all worlds and all creation: manifest and unmanifest. Chant the name within. It can be any name: God, Christ, Jesus, Mother Mary, Buddha, Krishna, Maranatha, Moses, the Jesus Prayer. Like water has many names: Pani, Agua, Water, eau, wasser; they all point to the very same thing.

Use the word for God that represents the communion you want to have with Him (Her/ Them). If your mind wanders bring it back to the Name. Dedicate the next 25 minutes to this practice. Dwell with the peace and love for His own sake, nothing else. The world will be there when you are done. Don't let the world distract you. It is impermanent. God is permanent. Cultivate your communion with Him whenever you can. Everything else is not important for a few minutes. Love God. Receive His grace in communion with His divine Name.

Closing prayers

O Spirit! Teach us to consider no other duty to be more important than our sacred duty to realise Thee, since work of any kind is possible only because Thou hast given us the power for its performance. May we love Thee above everything else, because, without the grace of Thy life, Thy love, we could not live or love at all…Aum…Amen.

Loving and Eternal God, we thank you for the gifts of prayer, meditation and contemplation. We thank you for being with us and for this community. May we, therefore, pray with all others, as one community, one world and one spirit to One God…Moments of your personal prayer follow…Amen.

Thank you for meditating with us, please join us again soon. Stay safe and well.

Resources overleaf/

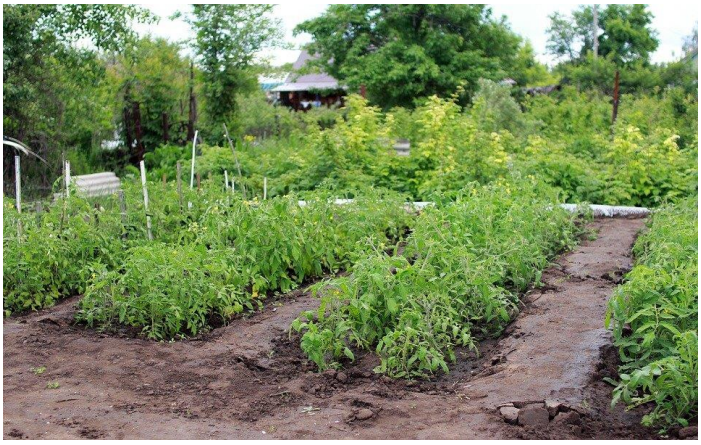
Resources:



Mandala Image: Martin's own









Images: Pixabay.com – Free to use resources



Our peaceful outdoor spaces promote wellbeing and are open to all, free of charge.