

# BE THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD

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*(Peter Ng was the keynote speaker at Holy Family's 2014 Parish Assembly. He shares how his discipline of meditation on prayer anchors his life in Christ dwelling within. This is essential experience for every Christian who seeks the fullness of life and thereby attracts others to the Joy of the Gospel. "Living our faith in the city" means to become no less than an incarnation of Christ in the world. To evangelise, we must first be rooted in Christ through prayer.)*

Recently, I gave an interview to the CFA Institute who has over 100,000 members around the world in investment banking, stock broking, investment research, fund management, private banking – on how meditation can help the investment professional. But I had to warn them that meditation is not about going in for a bit of relaxation, it was much more than that. I would talk about my practice of meditation as prayer – as my relationship with Jesus, with God in Jesus. After the interview, they were interested in recommending meditation to their members, provided, God was taken out of it and the focus was on meditation as a way of helping investment professionals to be more successful in their work. That's the state of the city. My response, "You are short changing your members by taking God out of meditation. Why deny yourself the wisdom there is in all great religions, by filtering God out, by filtering out religion? Give your members a choice". I also said, "You are short changing your members if you present meditation as a means to make more money. Instead present it as a way to come to personal wholeness; it will result in a more balanced, stable, ethical investment professional, who not surprisingly will end up becoming more successful in the long run".

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, spoke about three steps in evangelisation – Jesus, Prayer, Testimony and three groups to evangelise to – practising, lapsed and non-Catholics. We have to talk about Jesus to all of them. Everyone in the world is looking for happiness but most people are looking for happiness in the wrong places. That's the whole purpose of Lent – to remind us about conversion and repentance. Lent is not about feeling miserable about our sins, but to change the direction in our lives, the way we are looking for happiness. For us happiness is eternal life – life in God, in Jesus – that is happiness. Experience in life will tell us that we will not find true happiness in money, power or control. We can find the fullness of life in the source of life itself which is Jesus. Therefore the process of finding direction in our life and sharing the joy of the Gospel with others must begin with our own intimate relationship with Jesus. Keep in mind what Jesus says "I am in vine, you the branches.. If you dwell in me as I dwell in you, you will bear much fruit; for apart from me, you can do nothing".

I went into meditation to develop an intimate relationship with Jesus. I meditate every morning and evening for twenty five minutes. My meditation is my way of praying in which I seek this intimacy, this union with Jesus. My understanding of my Christian faith is that Jesus is the revelation of God – the God that we cannot see reveals himself in the human person of Jesus. What is our mission? Our mission as Christians is to be no less than the revelation of Christ in the world; to be the Incarnation of Christ in the world, so that when anybody sees us, they see Christ. How do we come to that state of union with Christ so that in the words of St Paul, "I live, no longer I who live but Christ lives in me"? Obviously, only if you experience Jesus. But where is Jesus? Jesus is alive and present in our hearts, not a historical figure that came two thousand years ago. The spirit of Jesus dwells in my heart and in your heart. In our Christian faith, we refer to that as the indwelling Holy Spirit – God is dwelling in my heart.

When I sit down to meditate, I sit as still as I can, with my back straight, on a chair, or cushion, in a posture that is awake and relaxed at the same time. I bring my mind to pay attention to the presence of Christ within me through the simple recitation of a prayer word – mantra – the Aramaic word – "Maranatha" – the language that Jesus spoke which means "Come Lord". I sound this word quietly within me without moving my lips; I listen to the word as I sound the word quietly within me, and I let go of all the distracting thoughts in my mind. I have been practising this for twenty five years. All the changes in my life have been the result of my being transformed in the presence of the Lord, allowing the Lord to love me, to change me into the person he wants me to be, so I can go out into the world and hopefully radiate his presence that is in my heart.

Three years ago, I had the great privilege of sharing meditation with Mr Lee Kuan Yew. He rang me up one day and asked me, "I heard that you are doing meditation, can you come and help me with my meditation". I said, "Of course, Sir. The best way is for me to share what I do and we do it together". Next day I found myself at the Istana with my cushion. The security guards were amused because usually I bring my brief case. I shared with Mr Lee how to meditate, and said, "Let us do it together for twenty minutes". I recommended he could say any mantra he liked, for example, a Buddhist mantra. He asked, "What about you"? I replied, "Since I meditate as a Christian and am a disciple of Jesus, I use the Christian word 'Maranatha'". Mr Lee said, "I will use 'Maranatha'". He has been using 'Maranatha', not because he believes in Jesus, but by the grace of the Holy Spirit, he can see meditation as a way to serenity and tranquillity. When Fr Laurence Freeman enquired, Mr Lee said he practised it regularly and found it rather good. He continued, "I don't have the same religious formation that both of you have, but it has given me serenity". We Catholics call it the peace of Christ. ■