



Dear Meditators

Reflection by Fr Eugene Vaz our Spiritual Director

Our Monthly Online Meditation event on Monday, 7 December, was special. Fr Eugene Vaz, our Spiritual Director, graced the occasion and gave a reflection on the meaning of Advent for us as meditators: a time of waiting and of hope. An edited transcript of Fr Vaz's address is attached. The audio clip of the talk and the full transcript are available at the link below.

<https://tinyurl.com/yxwuux9j>

It was a special occasion also because our community presented a donation of \$30,000 to the Society of St Vincent de Paul, and on the morning of the same day, we presented \$20,000 to the Church of the Holy Family.

WCCM Singapore donates to SVDP and Holy Family Parish

The COVID-19 pandemic has strained the financial resources of many business and social organisations. For the St Vincent de Paul Society and Holy Family parish, the regular collection of offerings at weekend masses was not possible because of the restriction on gatherings. This is why our WCCM committee in Singapore decided to render financial assistance.

The donations have been made possible by the small profits of WCCM's publishing company Medio

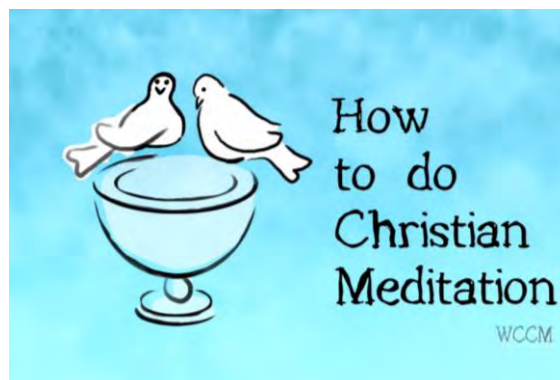


Media, which is based in Singapore. Medio Media produces and distributes books and other media resources related to our teaching of Christian meditation. Medio Media has been operating in Singapore since 2006. The revenues and profits fluctuate depending on sales, but we have been able to generate a profit each year because of the loving service and selfless generosity of Medio Media's management and volunteer workers.

In the first eight years, from 2006-2013, the team was led by Dominic and Bernie Heng assisted by volunteers from the Church of Our lady of Perpetual Succour meditation group led by Albert Cheah who helped to pack the orders and bring them to the post office. In 2014, Cecilie Dee came forward to succeed Dominic and Bernie and she has managed the company for the past seven years. Daulet and I help with the editing and the production work of the publications. We all feel very happy to do this work of transmitting the teaching through books and the media, and now we are able to donate the company's profits to help the poor and for the upkeep of Holy Family parish which is the headquarters of WCCM Singapore.

Animation Video on Meditation

WCCM has produced a helpful, lively animation video, *How to do Christian Meditation*, which I encourage you to watch. The film is a good introduction to meditation, especially for Christians who think meditation is not part of the Christian tradition. The video shows how simple and natural the practice is. It explains how to do it, how often you do it, and the resistances you may have so that you are aware of them. The film is a generous gift from Paul Demeyer, a meditator and an animation film director based in Los Angeles. You can watch it at the link below.



<https://www.wccmsingapore.org/updates/how-to-do-christian-meditation>

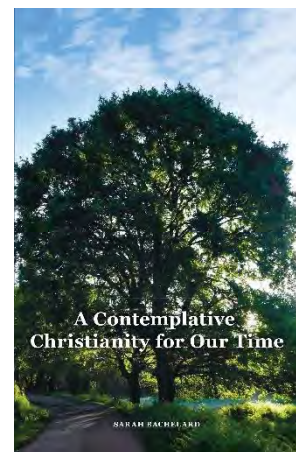
A Contemplative Christianity for Our Time

A Contemplative Christianity for Our Time, just published by Medio Media, is an excellent book on the meaning of meditating in a faith tradition. If meditation is widely available in the secular world and its benefits are well documented, why do we need to meditate in a faith context? What is the point of a faith identity? The book offers a renewing vision of the connection between contemplation and faith and the gifts of this path for a world in travail. For more information on the book click on the link below.

<https://mediomedia.com/collections/recent-titles/products/mtcnt2>

A Contemplative Christianity for Our Time is also available as an online course from the WCCM School of Meditation. For more information click on the link below.

<https://www.theschoolofmeditation.org/all-courses/contemplative-christianity/>



The WCCM Singapore committee join me in wishing you and your loved ones a blessed Christmas filled with joy, peace and love.


PETER NG



Contemplation and Action and Compassion

FR EUGENE VAZ

In this second week of Advent, as we move closer to Christmas, it's a beautiful moment to spend some time as meditators to go deeper into the meaning of Advent. What are we really waiting for? And how do we spend our time in this waiting?

What is Advent preparing us for?

I think the first thing is to put ourselves together with our brothers and sisters of yesteryear – what were they waiting for, longing for? They were waiting for God's promise to be fulfilled. They were waiting for the Messiah that God promised he would send them. They were waiting for that moment when they would be able to be free from whatever was keeping them away from God, from one another, and from good relationships with creation. They were waiting, and that wait was hope that God would be faithful to his promise. Making the comparison, we can find deeper meaning in our period of waiting.

We are not waiting for the Messiah anymore because he has already come some two thousand years ago, and this time of Advent offers us that opportunity to be grateful to God. He has been good to us. The whole Old Testament is the story of how God has been continuously good to his people. They had their own story of weakness and sinfulness or whatever you may want to call that, but God never let them go. God was always loving them, true to them. God was always faithful to them. And that is what God still is with us. And this time of Advent is an opportunity for us to meditate, to contemplate, and to be grateful to God. So, what is it in your life and my life, dear friends, that we really need to be grateful to God for? All his goodness becomes yet another element for reflection in our waiting. So, the waiting is not passive, the waiting is actually growing deeper into that person of the Messiah.

Why did God send the Messiah?

Why did God promise to send the Messiah? What did he want for the world that nobody else could do except he, through the Messiah who we know now is his Son, Jesus?

The first reading of yesterday's mass, the beautiful passage from the prophet Isaiah, says God wanted to console these people: "Console my people, console them," says the Lord. Tell them 'your time of service is over', because he is referring to the Exile. Isaiah chapter 40 is deuterio Isaiah, second Isaiah, which was written in the time of the Exile and the people were in trauma, the people were in pain. and there was a longing, a yearning to go back home and rebuild the city, their home, their life, their faith, to rebuild that life with God which, they came to realise in the Exile, they had not been faithful to. And God says to them: I'm so happy with you, you have realised this, and now I want to console you, to comfort you, to assure you that you are going to go back home. And then we have the beautiful image, 'make a highway across the desert', make a 'straight way'. They had come into exile in chains, struggling across across the desert – a very painful experience. But now they would have a highway to go back home to the Promised Land.

How is God consoling us today and how are we sharing it with others?

And so, Advent is a time to see how that consolation is taking place in our life today – not just how God is consoling and reassuring us but how we are extending that consolation of God to people around us. Meditation always leads to action as we contemplate the wonder of that consoling, loving God, and drives us to be more and more like him. So meditators can be the channel through which God continues to be consoling and comforting to his people today.

How are we growing in the way of Jesus?

The gospel passage of yesterday's mass, shows the depth of recognition in John the Baptist of the wonder of Jesus. And I think Christian meditators are offered, every time we meditate, to get into that wonder of Jesus. Yes, we are not even fit to undo his sandal straps, and yet he recognises us and he says 'come follow me, be my disciple, come be the one who can witness to this way that I have come to show you and to express, not just by talking and lecturing but by the example of my own life.' And that is a big area for us as meditators to reflect on at this time of Advent.

How are we learning from Jesus? How are we becoming more and more like him? And if we are learning from him and becoming more like him, what are we being actually? We are being that consolation of God to our family, our brothers and sisters, our fellow men and women. We are being that love, that joy that Jesus was always bringing to people. So, Advent is a time to see how there is so much in our life that we need to do.

And the reason why we are given this time is that we may grow in holiness, that we can live lives that are really rooted in God to grow in the deeper connectivity, to become more and more one with him. As Jesus was with the Father, we have to be with him. As he chose to remain in the love of the Father, we are invited to remain in his love. And this is the wonderment, this is the excitement, this is the joy of living in this in-between time.

How are we contributing to building the new heaven and the new earth?

St Peter says we are waiting for the new heavens and the new earth. The old heaven and the old earth are in problem because of one thing, there is no righteousness. God never made the earth and the world for that. So the Messiah was sent to create the new heaven and the new earth. But that new heaven and that new earth is not going to just drop from the sky. That's the project in our everyday life. And Advent is a time for us therefore to contemplate, what we are doing in this time of waiting? How do you and I spend every day in the great project of building the new heaven and the new earth where 'righteousness prevails'?

And what does it mean to be righteous? To live with love. And therefore this is the great thing that you want to do today, dear friends, you want to, in your love, think about the poor, there are so many poor all around us today.

Thank you for your generosity, your attention, your kindness and concern for the poor in Singapore by offering that lovely gift that you want to make today to the Society of St Vincent de Paul. I think it's part and parcel of a little effort in building the new heavens and the new earth in recognising our friends who are in all kinds of need. Little ways that we can reach out to them and touch them I think go a long way in changing this world from a hard and cruel, painful kind of world into a world of joy, of receiving and being affirmed, encouraged and recognised in our value and dignity as human persons. And that again is a never-ending element of contemplative living that we are disciples of Jesus bringing new life and joy into our world.