

WCCM-USA

UPDATE AND NEWS

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Meditation With Children Forum held in Ohio, August 1-3

On August 1-3, 2023 eighty-five people from the United States and around the world gathered at the Jesuit Retreat Center in Parma, Ohio for an online and in-person event sponsored by the World Community for Christian Meditation: *The Peace of Childhood: Introducing Meditation to Children*.

This Meditatio Seminar was for educators and counselors, campus ministers and pastoral staff, church staff and youth ministers, parents and grandparents — all who care for the spiritual and mental health of children today.

The program included practical instruction and best practices for teaching meditation to children, what children say about meditation, small group discussion, time for meditation together and how and where to find support in the next steps of implementing meditation in your particular situation.

Keynote speakers included Patricia Moore-Pastides, *The Many Fruits of Meditation with Children*; Noel Keating, author of *Meditating with Children: a Resource for Teachers and Parents*; Fr. Laurence Freeman, OSB, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation (live from World Youth Day in Lisbon), and a video presentation by Dr. Jean Clinton, Professor and Child Psychiatrist on *Building Resilience and the Role of Meditation with Children*.

A follow-up zoom session is planned and the recordings will be made available on the WCCM-USA website in the near future.

This seminar was testimony to the growing interest of passing on the gift of meditation to the next generation.

Cynthia Comiskey: cynthcom@gmail.com



We welcome Patricia Moore-Pastides into the role of Meditation with Children Coordinator for WCCM-USA. Patricia has served as director and planner of public health organizations, is an author and speaker. Her interests include promoting wellness and meditation, cooking for family and friends, gardening, and creative writing.

Your MWC suggestions and questions are welcome:
moorepastides@gmail.com

From Our US National Coordinator



A joy of serving as National Coordinator is hearing from those who would find or start a meditation group. When I receive these inquiries, I try to say, “Thanks be to God,” and to remember my beginnings with Christian meditation and the WCCM. My early conversations with Oblate Coordinator, Mary Kelly Robison, and participation in her online group made meditation easier and more communal. Saying the mantra felt different knowing I was in a silent chorus of meditators.

Our groups are the core of our community’s life, and it is a gift to have Regional Coordinators to support them.

In August, our Regional Coordinators met online for the first time since the start of the pandemic. These leaders from fourteen regions across the country support new and existing groups, encourage activity within their region, and help group leaders to nurture meditation in their groups. Our Regional Coordinators are: Paul Dunn & Carl Vilella (NJ, PA); Tim Kelly & Dennis McAuliffe (South East); Pat King (South Central); Nona Lehmkuhle & Betsy Spiering (Mid West); Claire La Scola (N. California); Patrice Jones (S. California), and most recently, new coordinators for the Southern US, Linda Broadfoot and Barbara Moffitt. (We are seeking Regional Coordinators for New England, New York, South West, North West and North Central US.)

Some groups, including the one I lead, continue to meet with patterns changed by the pandemic. Adaptability is part of the way the Spirit is strengthening our community! If you are a group leader contacted by your Regional Coordinator, you might say, “Thanks be to God,” share what’s happening in your group and know that they will support you.

Wishing you peace,

Matt Reeves

mbreeves75@gmail.com

We hope you will visit the WCCM-USA website for upcoming events and news of happenings in the US.

www.wccm-usa.org

Sharing The Gift: An ETW in Chicago

July 21-23 about 20 of us in the Chicagoland area were blessed with a lovely Essential Teaching Workshop at the beautiful Portiuncula Center for Prayer in Frankfort, Illinois. I've been a regular meditator for eight years, yet attending this weekend gave me the spiritual boost needed to be so much more enthusiastic about my practice.

Meditation is caught, not taught. — John Main

How true this description is of our weekend! Sr. Cynthia Comiskey, Joan Binder, and Laura Bauhof presented the basic tradition of Christian meditation to us. During seven sessions, we heard how the tradition came to be, listened to the story of its origin from the Desert Fathers and Mothers. John Main's devotion to this practice was essential in its continuing to today. It's largely due to his efforts that Christian meditation is a Vatican approved form of prayer.

Building Resilience in Children and the Role of Meditation, by Dr. Jean Clinton as well as *How To Do Christian Meditation* became an essential part of our day viewing as well as exercises of sharing the gift with a group of potential meditators. Many resources were given, such as books, brochures, and websites to keep us well immersed in the world of WCCM, as much or as little as we wish.

There was time for small group sharing and a casual question and answer segment. If this wasn't enough time to bond, with the exception of breakfast, there were mealtimes to enjoy each other's company and perhaps make a new meditation friend, or two. At breakfast, we practiced silence carried over from the night before.

Our weekend was graced with group meditation in the morning, at mid-day, and in the evening. With each group meditation, I felt my heart open more and more. My mind, body, and spirit were grateful! I'm now curious to see how God works in me and in each retreat attendee. Whether it is a deepening of a personal practice or a branching out to share the gift with others, God brought each of us to the weekend for a reason. In this complicated world where we all have our own unique set of problems, we now know to listen with the ear of the heart. We listen for the all knowing voice of God as we gently, lovingly keep on keeping on with our Christian meditation practice. We remain content to just be. We let go of analyzing, outcomes, roles and identities. We let go of self, in order to find our true selves. And we wait to see how the fruits of the spirit will show up for each of us. Maranatha, come Lord Jesus!

Rasa Narbutaitis

St John's Meditation Group, Western Springs, IL

WCCM-Chicago and Contemplative Outreach-Chicago celebrate Hildegard of Bingen, 12th Century Christian Mystic

Amidst tables set with bouquets of sage, mint, basil, thyme and Sweet Annie from a local meditator's garden, we gathered at St. John of the Cross Church in Western Springs, Illinois, to learn and celebrate



St. Hildegard of Bingen. As a Benedictine abbess, composer, and Christian mystic, she is recognized for her immense knowledge of all things faithful, music and natural science, with knowledge of herbs and medicinal arts, despite never having any formal education. Hildegard may be best known for her spiritual concept of *Viriditas*, greenness, the cosmic life force infusing the natural world.



Photo above: Betsy Spiering, Chicagoland regional coordinator and WCCM host of the event, and Susan Lincoln, musician, meditator and storyteller.

A collaborative effort between WCCM's St John of the Cross Christian meditation groups and Chicago Contemplative Outreach, the daylong event was attended by over 75 persons.

We began the day by meditating together, with each organization sharing guidelines of

their meditation teachings. Our hosts were Susan Lincoln and Craig Toungate, teachers, singers, story builders, who each had traveled to Hildegard's monastery in Germany. Their experience became a powerful desire to share insights: *Embodying the Mystic: St. Hildegard of Bingen*.

Meditating together, learning of this remarkable nun's life in the 12th century, hearing and singing her compositions as well as movement and sway to the Aramaic Lord's Prayer...all of this formed a community of togetherness and appreciation. Thank you to all who helped bring this together, fed us graciously and nurtured our spirits.

Sharon Nicks

Sharon@wccm-usa.org



15th Anniversary Celebration Neptune Beach Christian Meditation Center

The 15th anniversary of the Center was a joyful celebration that began with locals gathering for a British Afternoon Tea, later joined by fellow travelers around the globe.

A poem was shared telling the history of the Center, followed by a video message of encouragement and blessing from Fr Laurence with meditators around the globe leading the meditation that began with *How to Meditate* from the UK, readings across the US, Closing Prayer from New Zealand concluding with singing along with music *The Mystery of Love*.

To watch Father Laurence's blessings and greeting for the 15th Anniversary celebration, visit: <https://www.wccmneptunebeach.org/>

The experience becomes Fr. John's words 'meditation creates community' — the reason for the season of celebration!

About the Neptune Beach Christian Meditation Center

Our root tradition of the teaching is Christian, as taught by the Benedictine monk John Main OSB (1926-1982), who opened the riches of the monastic tradition of prayer for Christians whose daily lives are transformed by the practice of contemplative prayer.

The best way to learn meditation is to meditate with others.



**“The greatest strength is that
the journey attracts fellow travelers.
One who begins alone will be joined by others ...
rekindled in many quiet corners of the earth.”
— John Main**

Meditation is practiced as common human wisdom and a path for the common good of humanity. Members of all faiths as well as seekers on the journey are welcomed to share in the silence and peace with those who meditate.

We are an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, supported solely by donations.

WCCM Silent Retreat Weekend held in St. Augustine, FL

A silent retreat weekend was held September 8th – 10th at the St. Joseph Renewal Center in St. Augustine, Florida. The retreat was organized by the Christian Meditation Center in Neptune Beach, Florida, led by the Holy Spirit listening to talks from Fr. Laurence *Aspects of Love* series. Seven pilgrims (and Jesse) journeyed together in the wheel of prayer in silence and simplicity.

John Main reminds us “meditation can be practiced by anyone, wherever you are on your life's journey. It is only necessary to be clear about the practice, and then to begin.”

A silent retreat can be offered by anyone! An afternoon, a day, a weekend or longer all it takes are two or more friends with a desire to share the silence together, follow a simple retreat schedule that has worked for others .. and then to begin! There is a treasure trove of talks available on the WCCM website. (www.wccm.org)

Linda Kaye,
Director and Founder of
WCCM's Neptune Beach Meditation Center



UPCOMING & CURRENT EVENTS

Save the Date!

WCCM-USA Fall Community Day

Via Zoom — Let us all gather!

October 21, 2023

More Info: Pat King (patrickking50@gmail.com)

WCCM-USA End of Year Christmas Party

Via Zoom — Time to Celebrate

December 3, 2023

More Info: Pat King (patrickking50@gmail.com)

More information to come!

Fr Laurence in the US

July 8-14, 2024

New Harmony, Indiana

(where in 1991, WCCM was formally begun)

Currently Meeting Online

Monthly Monday Compline

via Zoom

Every First Monday of the Month

For your convenience, there will be a zoom group on the east coast and also a zoom group on the west coast.

Times: 8:00 PM Eastern and 7:00 PM Pacific
(You will need to translate to your time zone!)

See the e-invitation and register at this link:

<https://conta.cc/3r0cEWO>

for information:

Bill Hobbs (bhobbs@jesuitretreatcenter.org)

8:00 PM Eastern time

Patrice Jones (pvjharris1@gmail.com)

7:00 PM Pacific time

Watch your emails for invitations and more information

Contact Us: WCCM-USA

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NEWSLETTER
For article submissions,
please contact Sharon@
wccm-usa.org

**We appreciate your support of the publication of
this newsletter. Online donations are welcome.**

<https://wccm-usa.org>

ADVENT 2023 WCCM - Join Us!

For centuries the Church has observed the season of Advent as a time to ponder, await, and contemplate the Incarnation, Christ's birth. It is a counter-cultural way of being when the rest of the world is overwhelmed with activities. It is a time of choosing repose during perhaps the most stressful time of the year.

To help us live in wonder, repose and contemplation, WCCM-USA is offering two daily practices, inviting you re-engage your spirit toward an Advent season of inward preparation.

Both practices will be offered online, Monday through Friday, December 4th-22nd. Each will offer a meditation time in addition to a spiritual practice as described below.

Our first daily opportunity will be **Advent Lectio**. We will join together for scripture based lectio using texts which are thematically appropriate to Advent.

Advent Lectio and Meditation: 8:00 AM EST

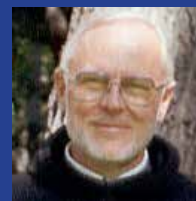
Our second opportunity will be **Communion with the Mystics**. We will gather each evening for a worship experience which includes music, scripture, a reading from the mystics, meditation and the Sacrament.

Communion with the Mystics: 4:00 PM EST

These opportunities are offered free of charge to the WCCM community and our friends. Those of you who are able to send a donation to WCCM-USA are encouraged to do so.

An email invitation to register will be sent in early November. Watch your email!

God's peace,
Kathleen Weller,
WCCM-USA School Resource Coordinator
bronagh.oblsb@icloud.com



“Meditation begins with a call that awakens us out of the coma of self-preoccupation. We are called, we are chosen. Meditation is our response to that call from the deepest center of our awakened consciousness...by letting go in meditation we learn how to love.”

JOHN MAIN OSB

Our Hearts Burned Within Us