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Committee on

Contemplative Spiritual Formation

Online Meeting Program

Theme: The Truth of Our Experience

**26 March 2021**

**9 am (Eastern Time) /1 pm London/2 pm Hamburg/ 9 pm (Philippines)**

[**Wisdom Room**](about:blank)**, Meditation Chapel**

**Checking In:**

As a ground rule for our gathering today - for the check-in and for the rest of our gathering today - only share what you are comfortable to do so. In addition, I ask everyone to remember that this is a spiritual space of confidentiality and trust.

God is present in all parts of our lives – not just the easy or serene moments. Acknowledge how you are feeling in this moment. This could be up or could be down. If being calm is hard, acknowledge it. If you find yourself frustrated or stressed, acknowledge it.

As our check-in, I invite you to take up to 3 min. to:

* state your name,
* state what county you live in,
* share with us how you are feeling now, and
* share what you are most grateful for today.

Please note there will be ample opportunity after our meditation time to discuss Vatican news.

**Opening Prayer**

Please turn to next page.

**+ Christian Meditation – Silent Prayer**  **+**

We’ll now move from spoken prayer to 20 min. of silent prayer. It will be an opportunity to stop our repetitive thinking and become more aware of the present moment and the Divine indwelling in us.

I have some suggestions for what to do during the silence, as most persons are not accustomed to this state. Please note that this is not the only way.

First, when your eyes are closed, pay attention to your breathing. It’s something we do from birth to death, normally without any awareness. To become grounded in the present, notice your breathing during the 20 min. of silence.

Second, select a sacred word or phrase, such as “Yahweh” the Hebrew word for God, saying “Yah” as you inhale and “Weh” as you exhale. Another mantra word is “Maranatha” meaning “Come Lord Jesus.” Recite it as four syllables of equal length: “Ma-ra” as you inhale and “Na-tha” as you exhale. Whatever word you select, gently repeat it over and over during the silence. Do not try to think or image anything – spiritual or otherwise.

Third, during the silence, addictive thought patterns and obsessive ways of feeling will circle by, again and again, saying “Think me! Think me! Feel me! Feel me!” as they try harder to be noticed. In 90% of our thinking, our monkey brain rehashes the past and worries about the future. However, God is only to be found and experienced in the present. Use the imagery of some small boats lining the shoreline next to a stream or river that is nearby. When one of these repetitive thoughts arises, gently name the thought or feeling, put it in one of the waiting boats and push it gently into the moving water, letting it flow downstream away from your present consciousness. If you choose, you can deal with it after our session today.

So, we’ll start our 20 min. of silence. Sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Take two or three deep breaths. Feel yourself supported in whatever position you’re in. Sink into that space where silence awaits you. Rest in the Divine who is resting in you. You are consenting to God’s presence and action in your life. So, I invite you to be silent, still and aware. Listen and learn, being open to heart wisdom and grace.

**Discussion**

At previous gatherings , we have watched a video or read a reflection. However, for today’s gathering, you are invited to share your initial feelings and/or your present feelings (11 days after the release), about the two-page document released by the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on Monday, March 15 [*Does the Church have the power to give the blessing to unions of persons of the same sex?]*

**Spoken Prayer**

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| ***A Prayer for Our Earth***  All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe  and in the smallest of your creatures.  You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.  Pour out upon us the power of your love,  that we may protect life and beauty.  Fill us with peace, that we may live  as brothers and sisters, harming no one. [next page]  O God of the poor,  help us to rescue the abandoned  and forgotten of this earth,  so precious in your eyes.  Bring healing to our lives,  that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  that we may sow beauty,  not pollution and destruction.  Touch the hearts  of those who look only for gain  at the expense of the poor and the earth.  Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  to be filled with awe and contemplation,  to recognize that we are profoundly united  with every creature  as we journey towards your infinite light.  We thank you for being with us each day.  Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle  for justice, love and peace.  [Pope Francis. ***Laudato Si*** (Encyclical Letter: Praise be to You – On Care for Our Common Home), para. 246, 2015] | ***Evolving Spirituality: Mysticism***  We celebrate  our common origin  with everything that exists.  We celebrate  the Divine Presence,  the Ground and Sustainer  of everything that exists,  in whom we live and move and have our being.  We acknowledge  this awesome mystery  embodied  in every human person,  aware that  each gives the Divine Presence  unique and personal expression.  Here,  now,  the Divine Energizing Presence is everywhere present,  visible in every human person  who loves.  Here,  now,  this Presence comes to visible expression  in each of us.  We give thanks for men and women  throughout human history  who sought to articulate  human connectedness with the Divine  and with all of creation.  We give thanks especially for Jesus of Nazareth.  He inspires us to name ourselves  as “temples” of the Divine Spirit  and challenges us to live and act accordingly.  Jesus challenges us  to look into our hearts,  to examine the way we are neighbor,  to overcome our prejudices,  to put an end to divisions,  to stretch our generosity,  to overcome our fear of the mystery,  to see the Divine present in our everyday loving,  to make the “reign” of love visible  throughout our world.  We believe  the same Spirit of Divinity  that came to visibility in Jesus  yearns for visible expression in us.  This is our common dignity  whatever our race or creed,  whatever our place or time.  We long to see our common dignity  proclaimed  honored  and celebrated by all religions.  We pray that the one Spirit all people share  may be given free and generous expression  for the betterment of humanity  and our world.  Amen.  [Adapted from: Morwood, Michael. ***Praying a New Story***. Orbis Books.] |