****

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****, 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**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***A Prayer for Our Earth***All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universeand 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 heartsof those who look only for gainat 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 unitedwith every creatureas we journey towards your infinite light.We thank you for being with us each day.Encourage us, we pray, in our strugglefor 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 celebrateour common originwith everything that exists.We celebratethe Divine Presence,the Ground and Sustainerof everything that exists,in whom we live and move and have our being.We acknowledgethis awesome mysteryembodiedin every human person,aware thateach gives the Divine Presence unique and personal expression.Here,now,the Divine Energizing Presence is everywhere present,visible in every human personwho loves.Here,now,this Presence comes to visible expressionin each of us.We give thanks for men and womenthroughout human historywho sought to articulatehuman connectedness with the Divineand with all of creation.We give thanks especially for Jesus of Nazareth.He inspires us to name ourselvesas “temples” of the Divine Spiritand challenges us to live and act accordingly.Jesus challenges usto 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 visiblethroughout our world.We believethe same Spirit of Divinitythat came to visibility in Jesusyearns for visible expression in us.This is our common dignitywhatever our race or creed,whatever our place or time.We long to see our common dignityproclaimedhonoredand celebrated by all religions.We pray that the one Spirit all people sharemay be given free and generous expressionfor the betterment of humanityand our world.Amen.[Adapted from: Morwood, Michael. ***Praying a New Story***. Orbis Books.] |