

May the word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through his power.

May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self abasing,
This is victory!

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

Meditation is what the early Christians called **'pure prayer'**. It is a gift of such depth that we must learn it gradually. At first we cannot understand its full meaning. But each time we meditate we enter into reality more deeply. Because it leads us into the love at the centre of our being, it makes us more loving people in all our relationships. Meditation is the basis for good behaviour and well-being.

Today, we urgently need to recover the contemplative dimension of life that reveals peace already present at the core of our being. So, the daily practice of meditation is not just for ourselves. By making us makers of peace, meditation benefits the whole of the human family.

'May the Lord give us peace'

Christian Meditation



'Be still, and know that I am God'

[Ps 46.10]

'Be still, and know that I am God'

Meditation is about coming to stillness of spirit and body. Despite all the distractions of the modern world, this silence is perfectly possible for people today. But to reach this stillness we have to devote time to the work of silence.

The way we do this work is to recite a short phrase, or prayer-word, that today is commonly called a *mantra*. The mantra is simply a faith-filled way of turning our attention beyond ourselves, a method of drawing us away from our own thoughts and concerns. The practice of meditation then develops harmony of body, mind and spirit.

This is the aim given us in Scripture: '**Be still, and know that I am God**'. In meditation we turn the searchlight of consciousness off ourselves. We are not thinking about or talking to God at all. We seek to be with God, to be in the mind of Christ [Phil 2.5]. We go beyond thoughts, even holy thoughts. Meditation is concerned not with thinking but with being. The aim in our Christian prayer is to allow God's mysterious and silent presence that is already within us to become the reality which gives meaning, shape and purpose to everything we are and do. The first task of meditation, therefore, is to bring our distracted mind to attention in stillness, silence and simplicity.

Practical and Simple

To meditate find a quiet place, and take a comfortable upright sitting position. Close your eyes gently. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly, begin to repeat a single word, your *mantra*.

We recommend the mantra '**maranatha**'. Say it simply — **ma — ra — na — tha** — as four equally stressed syllables.

You can say the word in rhythm with your breathing, fairly slow, fairly rhythmical.

Maranatha is an Aramaic word from the language Jesus spoke. It means, 'Our Lord, come!' It is probably the most ancient Christian prayer. Both St Paul and St John use it: to conclude I Corinthians and the book of Revelation respectively [I Cor 16.22; Rev 22.20]

Listen to the mantra as you say it, gently and continuously. You do not have to think or imagine anything, spiritual or otherwise. Meditation is not quiet reverie or passive stillness, but attentive wakefulness. When thoughts or images come at the time of meditation [they are distractions] return simply to saying your word. Don't try to dispel or repress distractions. Simply let them go by saying the mantra. Meditate each morning and evening for between twenty and thirty minutes.

'When you know you are praying you are not totally praying. When you do not know you are praying, you are truly praying.' [St Anthony of the Desert, 4th Century]

The Pilgrimage of Prayer

Meditation is a direct pilgrimage to your own centre, to your heart. To enter the simplicity of it means learning a discipline. So we need to become childlike [cf Mk 10.15]. With faith and patience meditation leads into deeper and deeper realms of silence. It is in this silence that we enter the mystery of God. The invitation of Christian prayer is to lose ourselves and to be united with God. Each of us is called to this goal as it is the fullness of human life. All we need is the humility to practice faithfully so that the mind of Christ becomes the grounding experience of our whole lives.

May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
By his love and power controlling
All I do and say.