

WCCM-USA

NEWS/JOURNAL

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Gathering with Others...Reflections and Thoughts



A Meditation Retreat Day in Jacksonville, Florida led by Carol Hope Whitefield, Velma Davis and the Jacksonville Oblate Group

Over 30 of us gathered late February for a deeply meaningful and transformative experience. I felt my understanding of Meditation expand in ways I had not expected. Gathering with others who share the same longing for peace, silence, stillness, and God's presence created a sacred sense of unity and grace. Being part of such a community was a blessing.

Every moment of the retreat bore fruit. Each part of the program offered its own light and insight. Dr Kathleen Weller led us through Lectio Divina and the Eucharist and Gene Bebeau began the retreat with defining meditation and teaching how to meditate! The group asked many questions and were engaged throughout the retreat with many participants never having experienced Lectio Divina or walking meditation.

We experienced walking meditation at St John's Cathedral, surrounded by sacred art, radiant stained glass windows inscribed with scripture, and the presence of pipe organs. The entire sanctuary felt alive with God's Glory. As we walked slowly and prayerfully in silence, the peace of God seemed to enfold and settle upon all of us. It was a sacred and holy experience.

I had never realized how deeply one could encounter God's word using Lectio Divina — by listening rather than analyzing. Letting go of the urge to interpret or explain allowed me to receive scripture in a quieter more contemplative way. In the stillness, I felt a deeper calm and a gentle insight arising from within.

I am truly thankful and extremely grateful for this retreat. The Quietness, the Stillness and the Peace of the day nourished my spirit. It helped me grow both personally and spiritually.

Grace and Peace, Velma and Carol

The John Main Seminar 2026

Healing the Breach: Finding Faith, Meaning and Dignity in a Season of Contempt
Led by Tim Shriver



September 17-20, 2026
Washington, DC

(An in-person and online event!)

Save the Date!

Registration will open very soon! Tim Shriver is a husband, father, grandfather and Chairman of the Special Olympics. As a meditator and teacher he has helped to pioneer the Dignity Index — a tool to help Americans disagree without demonizing each other. We are pleased to welcome him to JMS 2026.

WCCM-USA Meditation with Children Benefits from Our International Community

Patricia Moore-Pastides

February 27, 2026: As *Meditation with Children Coordinator* for the United States I've had the great pleasure of meeting other national coordinators from around the world during meetings when we've shared approaches to meditating with school-aged children. All of the individuals I've met have been an inspiration to me which is the reason I invited several of them to address a US series for meditators interested in sharing the gift of Christian meditation with children. For the last couple of years I've tried to highlight good ideas I learn about in our newsletter in an effort to reignite the flame of passion for meditation with children in the US. As I was planning this six-part series I thought, let's share the stories and successes from within our greater WCCM International community. The program concluded on February 10th and judging from the feedback from participants, we are inspired!

Our 100 Zoom participants represented school teachers, school counselors, religious education and faith formation leaders, parents and grandparents. We had long-time meditators as well as people who were new to the practice. Some of us participated because we have a desire to introduce a spiritual path to children who are being reared without religion, others because of grave concern for the mental health needs of children today. Some affiliated with Catholic schools wanted to share meditation as a central prayer practice and others saw it as a way to comfort children in need of peace and focus in their lives.

During each session we listened to one of the Meditation talks in the Meditation with Children series and while these were recorded a decade ago, they still hold valuable insight for us today.

We meditated as a group each week before listening to a presentation by an invited speaker and then had time for discussion before closing with prayer. We highlighted the WCCM recommended opening and closing prayers as well as our mantra, Maranatha and shared resources recommended by the speakers in addition to the ones we've offered here in the US.

Sandy Bengochea (Trinidad and Tobago) highlighted the role of meditation in combatting the pressures of global digital influences which are associated with creating anxiousness, reactivity and restlessness in children. She shared that these stressors have culminated in depression, misery and even violence among young people. I found

hope in the fact that her youngest children expressed that they felt safe in the silence of meditation. This would seem a very important starting point for meditation with young children—a foundation that can support psychological, physical and spiritual well-being.

In previous workshops in the US we have widely distributed Noel Keating's (Ireland) book, *Meditation with Children, A Resource for Teachers and Parents*. This work, based on his PhD dissertation captures children's impressions of the benefits and fruits of meditation in their own words such as, "It helps me let go of all the drama," "It calms and restores me," "It gives me confidence," "It helps me make better decisions." And, "I feel the goodness deep inside," "I can be myself," "I'm a kinder person," "I'm closer to God." After a long career in education and in-depth and vast experience in meditation with children, Noel has developed new lesson plans for meditating with children for both religiously based and less God-centered approaches with second level students. He generously shared these resources with participants and offered to provide another workshop to support the implementation of these approaches.

Andy Burns (Canada) helped reinforce the importance of being invited into schools. Unfortunately, impatience is a human tendency. We want to spread the good news now. But learning to plant seeds and allowing time for them to germinate is critical to cultivating acceptance for a new practice. Andy also shared how providing overnight retreats for teachers to help sustain their personal practice and faith formation is central to maintaining meditation as a priority in his school district. Participants were fortunate to receive material resources that Andy has used to support the meditation practice in classrooms.

Lisa Leonard, a School Counselor in Columbia, SC shared that her students with ADHD, Autism, and anxiety crave the quiet time and come voluntarily to meditation. Her students repeatedly spoke of feeling less stress and having greater attention for their school work. I loved that the students proudly announced during morning school announcements the number of students who attended before-school meditation sessions. Lisa also introduced us to her colleague, a youth minister working with middle-school age students which sparked an idea for another target audience for our message.

From Mexico, Maria Guadalupe Ramirez Inurrigarro

shared the data she's tracked over the course of four years to show that with a consistent practice of meditation in school, students' grades consistently progressed while the frequency of serious disciplinary notices sent home to parents declined.

Program participants received recordings of each session as well as the material resources that were shared by our speakers. They were also encouraged to share these with their colleagues and friends. I heard many encouraging ideas during the course of the six weeks, such as: reaching out to counselors and youth ministers in school systems, rather than only teachers; offering programs to help grandparents introduce mediation to their grandchildren, especially when there is no religious exposure in the home; and developing interactive programs for teens which afford them the skills to lead their peers in group meditation for health and wellness, but also as a spiritual practice.

Our International Six-Week program was revelatory on many levels. The best for me was feeling part of a beautiful life and love-giving community that's carrying on an ancient form of prayer so needed by our children, young adults and entire world today.

We will continue to assist one another in sharing the gift of Christian meditation with children. I thank you all for contributing to our WCCM community and for bringing peace into our world through your faithful practice.

Patricia Moore-Pastides

WCCM-USA MWC Coordinator

For more information or to share good ideas, please reach me at moorepastides@gmail.com

BOOK STUDY Reflections

**The Mysterion: Rumi and the Secret of
Becoming Fully Human**

by Kabir Helminski



We Walk the Path Together

Learning from Thich Nhat Hanh and Meister Eckart

by Brian Pierce OP

Six-week book studies led by Rev. Dr. Kathleen Weller, WCCM-USA Teaching Resources Coordinator

This book called the *Mysterion: the Secret of Becoming Fully Human* has enlightened my understanding to the work of the soul. It is very deep and I need to re-read it contemplatively. It is a mystery not to be solved but to enter into and to connect with the divine at the depth of my soul. As I read this book I was able to connect certain parts to my own Christian tradition. It surprised me how connected we are as one humanity and we can walk this path together. —Susan G.

"To see Joseph's coat, it is necessary to look at all its colors; clear white light is made up of all the colors in the rainbow; and to see a forest, one must look at the trees as a composite." Personally, I feel that garnering awareness of "Love" through awareness of God's various religions is similar. Kathleen's recent book studies: "We Walk the Path Together" and "The Mysterion", as well as her past online retreats, have helped me with my awareness of "Love". Our local WCCM prayer group is currently studying "We Walk the Path Together". I very much appreciate Kathleen's help on my journey! —Dick W.



Exploring the new WCCM meditation timer / resource

Meditating in groups as well as alone is often a challenge. "Our mind just loves going off on flights of fancy, down memory lane, or listing all the tasks we have to do after meditation. We just need to be patient and gentle with ourselves...the more you practice, the easier it gets and soon instead of saying the word, you seem to be listening to it and finally it will sound by itself in your heart." (Kim Nataraja).

Guided by the teachings of John Main and Laurence Freeman, Silentium helps you build a daily rhythm of meditation and reflection—bringing calm, clarity, and connection to your spiritual life.

This delightful digital resource developed by WCCM International brings a simple tool to aid us in timing our meditation period, listen to Fr Laurence and Fr John Main in prayer and pray with them, read daily or weekly wisdom teachings before or after meditation. The resource is an App downloadable to our phones — easy to use and gentle to be with.

You can download the App through Google Play or Apple Store onto your phone, tablet, iPad or computer. To explore further, go to <https://wccm.org/news/introducing-the-silentium-app/>.

UPCOMING & CURRENT EVENTS

WCCM-USA Foundations of Christian Meditation

Nazareth Retreat Center, Bardstown, KY

April 17-19, 2026 (in person)

Register on our website: www.wccm-usa.org

A few openings still exist!

SPRING BOOK STUDY:

Earth: Our Original Monastery

by Christine Valters Paintner

Sundays, April 26 - June 3, 2026

On Zoom

More information to come

WCCM Essential Teaching Weekend

Ruah Center - Houston, TX

July 17-19, 2026 (in person)

Registration to come

John Main Seminar in Washington DC

Sept 17-20, 2026

Speaker: Tim Shriver

Registration to begin soon

WCCM-USA Silent Retreat

Ruah Center - Houston, TX

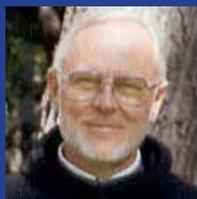
Oct 19-25, 2026 (in person)

Registration to come

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Visit our website and check your email
for registration for the above events.

Sharon@wccm-usa.org



“We need only to become aware of
the mystery within us, the silence
in which we see our own spirit.”

JOHN MAIN OSB
Word into Silence

The Future of Religion

An online series featuring nine speakers throughout
the year on a theme central to humanity's future
<https://wccm.org/events/the-future-of-religion/>

February - December 2026 monthly

Since human beginnings, religion and culture have been intertwined. At its best this means that the eternal can be felt in all the ordinary passages of human life. But too often religion has become over-absorbed in this-worldliness, in power-elites, resistance to change and even actively opposed to true human liberation. As we deal with the intense changes of the third millennium and struggle against our technological hubris even to remain human – what, if any, is the role of religion? Is it just the promotion of ‘self-development’ or merely a temporary escape from the stresses of a malfunctioning society?

Can the great religious families of humanity be true to their perennial wisdom and unite in their essence to realize human potential in transcendence? Are we in a new ‘axial age’ where religion itself is changing and expressing the next step in human evolution? Can the three elements of religion – intellectual, institutional and mystical – be rebalanced to birth a new world in which the best potential of humanity is celebrated and realized?

Come and explore with us!

Join us for Compline

via Zoom

Every First Monday of the Month

Two Zoom Groups to join.

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

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

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NEWSLETTER
For article submissions,
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<https://wccm-usa.org>