

## MEDITATING IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

### *An Inner Journey of Silence*

Meditation is an inner journey of silence, stillness and simplicity, and is the missing contemplative dimension of much Christian life today.

Meditation is a pilgrimage to our own center, to our own heart. To enter into the simplicity of it demands discipline, even courage. We need faith and simplicity; we need to become childlike.

If we are faithful and patient, meditation will bring us into deeper and deeper realms of silence. It is in silence that we are led into the mystery of the eternal silence of God. The invitation of Christian prayer is to lose ourselves and to be absorbed in God. Each of us is summoned to the height of Christian prayer, to the fullness of life. What we need however is humility to tread the way very faithfully over a period of years, so that the prayer of Christ may indeed be the grounding experience of our lives.

### *The Tradition of the Mantra*

The mind has been described as a mighty tree filled with monkeys, all swinging from branch to branch and all in an incessant riot of chatter and movement. When we begin to meditate, we recognize this as a wonderfully apt description of the constant whirl going on in our mind. Prayer is not a matter of adding to this confusion by trying to shout it down and covering it with another lot of chatter.

The task of meditation is to bring our distracted mind to stillness, silence, and attentiveness. In order to assist us to come to stillness, we use a sacred word or mantra.

### *The Mantra and the Practice of Meditation*

There are various mantras which are possible for a beginner, but a good choice might be a word that has been hallowed over the centuries by our Christian tradition. Some of these words were first taken over as mantras for prayer by the Church in its earliest days.

One of these words is "MARANATHA". This Aramaic word means, "Come Lord Jesus". It is the mantra recommended by John Main (1926-1982), a Benedictine monk who has put into contemporary language this ancient teaching of prayer.