

10 June 2024

WCCM Annual Appeal – 10-17 June 2024
‘Embracing Change: Emerging Stronger’

Dearest Friends,

This year is a significant watershed for us, a year of opportunities and challenges.

We opened the Bonnevaux retreat center two years ago having grown rapidly online during Covid and by means of outreach through our national communities. It has been good and energizing but we felt the need to pause, take stock and reduce events until after the summer. Work on the Contemplative Cloister starts next year, which allows for economies to be made and designs updated. We have just completed a detailed review of the WCCM organization because, after 30 years, it needs to be simplified and improved. I feel truly inspired by the commitment of faithful members of our community everywhere. I know this has been a wise decision, taken collectively, and I would like to thank you for all your input, support and understanding.

Can I thank you too for your generous response to last year's Spring Appeal which has helped immensely and been a powerful encouragement? Raising £250,000 uplifted me and filled me with hope - thank you! It helps us do many things, from our retreat program in Bonnevaux, giving scholarships and covering operational costs to supporting the online series of talks and providing multiple translations of key texts. We are essentially a volunteer community which is supported by a small, paid group of skilled and highly motivated meditators.

The upcoming generation of leaders and teachers who will spread the gift of Christian Meditation around the world in years to come inspires and reassures both me and the many others who have laid the foundations over four decades. The new 'Learning to Meditate' series, which was presented recently, surprised us all by attracting about 3,000 participants, who joined the sessions live or recorded, with translations available in five languages. Although it costs us to provide the series, we offered it for free.

During the past year, I visited several of our communities to speak at events or lead retreats, including France, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Portugal (with our young adult meditators), Spain and the UK. You may not know, but Indonesia is one of our communities which is especially thriving, with many new local meditation groups fulfilling the tradition and spirit of WCCM. As in many other countries, they are witnessing a revival of post-pandemic in-person meditation groups.

The community in the Caribbean has also been very active. Cooperation with the Catholic Church Board in Trinidad has brought meditation to 157 primary and secondary schools who are now commencing each day with meditation. A development project which includes meditation has started with refugee women from Venezuela. Leaders facilitate meditation in a center for addiction and in prisons. A course has been developed for young lawyers. And, importantly, our intensive silent retreats (like the one at Monte Oliveto this October) are increasingly in demand.

Here at Bonnevaux we hosted the first cohort of the WCCM Academy as they concluded their first year. Nearly thirty students started their second year in April. In March, Bonnevaux hosted our Guiding Board as it met with renewed dedication to make the necessary operational and structural changes to allow the Spirit to guide us into a fuller sharing of peace in our disturbed and violent world.

Contemplatives should put silence first, but we must also be contemporaries in touch with the needs of our time. I visited our meditators in Ukraine again in May and our regular Earth Crisis Forum continues to raise consciousness about the change of mind and heart needed to save our planet.

Can you help us to continue in this work? Any amount you give towards what it costs to share the gift of meditation across the globe will help and inspire us.

How You Can Support Us

To help decide what you can give, here are some categories for support. A regular donation, of course, allows us to plan more effectively:

- A recurring monthly gift
- An annual gift
- A one-time donation
- Remembering the WCCM in your will.

Thank you! Please donate what you can <https://wccm-int.org/appeal2024>

Laurence Freeman OSB and the 2024 Summer Appeal Team

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