

Could I Walk with You on this Journey?

Jesus wants to walk with me

by Dominic Lim

Two years ago, when I planned to do the Camino Walk in 2023, my younger son prompted me to consider a retreat at Bonnevaux. But that didn't happen as I sprained my ankle. So when I saw the retreat notice this year, I quickly signed up for it even though I was not familiar with many people in WCCM Singapore. Now I thank God for the friends I made at the retreat.

Before the retreat I found my prayer times especially my meditation periods were very distracted and attending mass was becoming routine. The retreat was a good time to recapture the meaning of dwelling in God. The daily structure provided and installed in me a discipline that helped me to focus on God together with the community. I learnt that every prayer/meditation time is a new beginning with God. That means I need not worry about progress; I only need to be committed and faithful to my time with God.

When the retreat leader showed us Jyoti's powerful painting of Jesus' embrace, the Holy Spirit blessed me in a special way. Initially I cringed somewhat as I reflected on the painting. My



first insight was, 'Would you take this cup of suffering and abide in me?' But in the end, when asked to share my takeaway with the group, I said it was 'to abide in Jesus always'. Pain and suffering are a given in this imperfect world.

One morning, as I looked out from my window, I saw a loving couple, Katherine and Andrew, walking along the path towards the woods. As I sketched the scene, a question popped into my mind, 'Could I walk with you on this journey?' It was as if Jesus wanted to remind me that he walks with me on life's journey, enlightening me, enriching me, but am I aware of it or am I so engrossed in my activities that I miss seeing him? The pine trees in foreground speak of how he allows me to grow as an individual yet with strong roots deeply intertwined with his love for me. The darker pine trees in the background tell of my burning desire to grow deeper in our relationship as we journey together into life's unknown forest in the background. I pray that my practice of silent meditation will give me the courage to move from the familiar shore into the deep ocean of his love.



God is calling me to walk with him

by Katherin Ho

Thank you, Dominic, for that surprise you gave Andrew and me of a drawing of us on the path. The garden is in Bonnevaux, our retreat centre. I felt God had called us to follow him on the path of Christian meditation. The retreat enabled us to meditate longer and more times in the day – 7.00 a.m., 7.45 a.m., noon, and evening, for half an hour each time. Fr Peter encouraged us to wake up early and meditate as a group, which we did faithfully daily. During one session, he led us on the labyrinth walk while we followed him chanting the mantra. After the walk, he asked us what our experience was. I felt God was guiding me as I walked, and as I came nearer to the centre the path grew wider and easier to walk. When I reached the centre, I felt a bright light shine on me and in my heart I knew that God was acknowledging me, telling me he loves me.

There, I found my answer to why I came to the retreat. I

was healed of the trauma of my septic shock experience in Vietnam in April 2024, when 90% of my organs failed and I almost passed on. Fr Lucio, a Brazilian Catholic priest, gave me the sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist. He reassured me that Jesus is with me and I have to ‘fight a good fight’! He came weekly to give me the Eucharist during my three weeks in hospital. During that time, many friends in Singapore prayed for me, and through God’s mercy I



recovered and was able to fly home accompanied by a doctor and a nurse. But I had to stay one week at Tan Tock Seng Hospital for further tests. I was miserable but also thankful to God. I asked him what his purpose was in saving me; I also spoke to a priest about it. Gradually it dawned on me that God wanted me to follow him on the path of Christian meditation. My heart deeply desires to be one with God, and through the discipline of Christian meditation I am learning daily to open myself to him to connect with him.

Ask God for a closer walk with him

by Andrew Chong

The drawing by Dominic of Katherine and me walking along the garden path in Bonnevaux inspired us to reflect on our journey in Christian meditation, especially on the caption, 'Could I walk with you on this journey?' After some pondering, I have come to the realisation that it is not God who is asking whether he can join me on the journey of Christian meditation. Rather, it is we, Katherine and I as a couple, asking God whether we can walk with him on this journey. The drawing is his affirmation, his 'yes' to being our guide on this journey of meditation. The journey is long and never ending but we take comfort in knowing that God is always with us, holding our hands, heart to heart, guiding and guarding us through this journey.

Our journey in Christian meditation began in April 2024 when we invited James Loh to introduce Christian meditation during the Consecration Day of the 33 Days to Merciful Love retreat. His talk helped Katherine and me to realise that this is another dimension of prayer, contemplative prayer. We were attracted to Christian meditation by its simplicity – just keeping silent, being still, and repeating the mantra. We were very excited and keen to form a meditation group for the participants of the HeartsAfire programmes. With James' help, the Christian meditation and HeartsAfire group was

born on 3 July 2024 with our first meditation session. The group meditates fortnightly on Wednesdays on Zoom.

Then God led us to the next step of our journey. He gave Katherine and me the opportunity to go to Bonnevaux to experience a silent meditation retreat and go deeper into the journey. My experience in Bonnevaux was awesome. I had been struggling with my meditation, often unable to sit still and silent. I was trying too hard. However, in Bonnevaux, the discipline of meditating four times a day helped me to realise the simplicity and discipline of meditation. All I had to do was to keep still and silent, repeat the mantra, and set my heart free without thinking of anything. I understand now that the essence of meditation is simplicity. I have learnt to be childlike and trust completely in the Lord.

I particularly liked the one-to-one sessions with Janet Robbins. They were very helpful and a great learning experience for Katherine and me. As we are new to Christian meditation, we raised many questions and shared our doubts and difficulties. Janet's guidance and advice were encouraging and invaluable. Realising that many of us were new to meditation, she recommended the book by Paul T. Harris, *30 Questions and Answers about Christian Meditation*. The book is very helpful for new meditators. It addresses many of the issues and difficulties we face on the basics of the teaching of Christian meditation, on the



practice of Christian meditation, and on the relationship of meditation to our Christian faith.

Before we signed up for Janet's one-to-one sessions, we asked whether we could see her as a couple. She commented that she had not done that before but it would be all right. She was happy to see us when we went for our session later in the day, asked us to sit on the sofa, and took a photo of us. Then she told us that we were in Fr Laurence Freeman's study and sitting on the very sofa where he conducts his teaching and meditation sessions. We wondered, 'Why such a privilege?'

Finally, Katherine and I would like to thank Dominic for his friendship and for journeying with us in Bonnevaux. We treasure the many discussions and the long walks together, especially along the Camino trail. Dominic's drawing is a reminder that our meditation journey is long and we need to remain steadfast, faithful, and disciplined in our



daily practice. Like on the labyrinth walk, we will reach our destination finally to be in the presence of God. We just must walk in faith and trust. We don't walk this journey alone but with the support and guidance of the WCCM community. Together we take comfort that God is always with us, guiding us and taking care of us in good times and difficult times, even when we are in spiritual darkness. For he says:

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. (Jn 15:16)

