



Christian Insight Meditation: Following in the Footsteps of John of the Cross

By Mary Jo Meadow

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The practice of Christian insight meditation can enliven one's entire prayer life. It can prepare our hearts to hear God's word in new ways, set the stage for new insight into the deeper meaning of the words and symbols we celebrate in Christian worship and practice, and help us to grow in the purity of heart, poverty of spirit, and emptiness of self that dispose us for God's work in our lives. The practice is particularly valuable for taking prayer beyond discursiveness, petition, and thinking. Christian insight meditation is nothing short of a powerful way to "pray always" and practice loving presence to God.

Drawing heavily on the teachings of St. John of the Cross, and also drawing from the illuminating writings of Teresa of Avila, the authors here offer a masterful explication of a practice and path firmly grounded in the meditative technology of Eastern wisdom, yet wholly and vividly Christian in spirit.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Christian Insight Meditation* is intended to give meditators a greater familiarity with the spiritual theology of St. John of the Cross and draws out points of convergence with Theravadan Buddhism. The authors are qualified to speak to both traditions [and] their writing is informed and sensitive, and valuable for both Buddhist and Christian meditators. It is logically presented, each section building on the previous one, and the entire book is written in a way that makes it accessible to beginners and proficients alike. [. . .] This book would be a worthwhile addition to the library of every parish and retreat center, religious community, and meditator. It is not a book that you will read once and consign to the shelf, but one that will be a guide as you grow in the practice of insight meditation." (*Monastic Interreligious Dialogue*)

"A wonderfully clear explanation and a very practical guide." (Tom West, O.F.M., Ph.D., Associate Prof. of Pastoral Theology, The Franciscan School of Theology, Berkeley, CA.)

"This book lucidly shows us how much Christian insight meditation supports the purifying path to God and self-knowledge taught by the great Carmelite Christian contemplatives, John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. Such detailed and practical wisdom, steeped in both personal experience and classical Christian and Buddhist spiritual writings, can be of great help to the serious meditator. I highly recommend this book for anyone seeking a serious contemplatively-oriented meditation practice aimed at a truer, freer life available to God's grace moment by moment." (Tilden Edwards, Founder and Senior Fellow, Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation)

"The author's perspective is pastoral and practical, primarily for skeptical Christians, and their message is clear: the simple Buddhist practice of contemplation is compatible with Christian prayer, and Christians who apply themselves to it will discover the benefits of inner peace and healing. Students of Buddhist-Christian dialogue will find this essential reading." (*Inquiring Mind*)

"*Christian Insight Meditation* may have found the way for many Christians to take advantage of Eastern meditative practice in a meaningful way with an undiluted Christian awareness." (*Arkansas Democrat Gazette*)

About the Author

A Sister for Christian Community, Meadow is also vowed to the Theravadan Buddhist nun's precepts. Mary Jo has studied with Joseph Goldstein and Sayadaw U Pandita. She is a retired university professor in psychology of religion, and has been teaching vipassana since 1987. In addition to simple vipassana instruction, Mary Jo offers vipassana as a method for Christian meditators and those working 12-step recovery programs. She teaches through Resources for Ecumenical Spirituality.

Kevin G. Culligan is a leading scholar of spirituality and a founding member of the Institute of Carmelite Studies.

Fr. Daniel Chowning is a Carmelite friar and priest who studied theology at The Catholic University of America, Washington DC, at the University of Salamanca, Spain, and at the International Centre for Teresian / Sanjuanist Studies in Avila, Spain. He has led Silence and Awareness retreats since 1989. He is an authority on the teachings of John of the Cross as well as other Christian mystics such as Teresa of Avila.

Joseph Goldstein has been leading insight and loving-kindness meditation retreats worldwide since 1974. He is a cofounder of the Insight Meditation Society (IMS) in Massachusetts, where he continues as one of the resident guiding teachers. In 1989, together with several other teachers and students, he established the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and, later, The Forest Refuge. A seminal figure in the emergence of Buddhism in the West, Joseph is the author of numerous books including *One Dharma*. He lives in Barre, Massachusetts.

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