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# A Reminiscence of the spiritual renewal at Bodhini



## **A Reminiscence of the spiritual renewal programme at Bodhini**

Bodhini: *The School of Christian Meditation* is situated at Vythiri, the tourist hub of Wayanad district. The pleasant and cool climate, the beautiful nature surrounded by tea and coffee estates, the clean and green campus and the building surrounded with beautiful garden and the homely atmosphere make it a conducive place for meditation and God-experience. There are several programmes of varying durations organised at Bodhini. All the programmes are based on Bible texts and focus on experiential learning of mindfulness meditation. The programme as whole is well organised with a relaxed time table which includes prayer, Practice of meditation, classes, household chores and gardening which help us to be in touch with mother earth and nature.

I had the opportunity to attend one-month Mindful Contemplative Retreat and six months Mindful Contemplative Experiential Learning Programme. The seven months learning and practice was a transformative, life changing experience for me. Dr. James Manthra OCD, the programme director conducted sessions based on various Bible passages and parables relating to our life today. Every Bible text that was interpreted was connected to different aspects our mind and thus connected to our daily life. Through the various texts and parables, he taught what is mindfulness meditation, stages of meditation, what are the obstacles to

meditation, prerequisites for meditation, and the tools to overcome these obstacles to attain theosis, the ultimate purpose of our life. Some of the tools are **CR** (Cognitive Restructuring), **RCA** (Root cause analysis) , **Track -out-Serpent Exercises, practice of proactive mindfulness, observation, halting, slaughtering oxen and fat calf ,disturbing the Lord, whip discipline, up to the brim exercise etc.**

Though I found all the tools are very helpful for my spiritual life, I would like to make a special mention on **CR. Cognitive Restructuring** is a spiritual technique that could be used to shift our mind set. Whenever I felt upset due to a problem caused by – negative thoughts, misunderstanding or a judgemental attitude towards persons or situations, I became aware of my thoughts and emotions and without being judgemental tried to replace the negative thoughts with a positive one using counter talk. This is a continuous process as I encounter situations, people and events that cause unrest and negative thoughts in my daily life. I found this technique helpful in my day-to-day life as it helps me to change my mindset, and experience inner peace, which has a direct impact on my spiritual journey.

The lessons on **Noetic reading** of scriptures helped me to understand the hidden spiritual meaning in the Bible and its relevance for me today in my current life and it created in me

curiosity and love for word of God. I realized the treasure that is in the Bible. The daily practice of mindfulness mediation using the formula and device is very helpful to overcome the distractions and scattered thoughts and keep our mind alert, free, peaceful and to prolong the meditation. Through practice of mindfulness, I learned to observe my mind and scrutinize my thought and be more mindful in my thoughts and actions in my daily life. It had been a graced journey where I realised what I was seeking is within me. I really appreciate the deep reflections given by Dr. James Manthra which is inspiring and challenging. On the whole the course was very helpful, practical, enriching and rejuvenating for my spiritual journey and I have become more relaxed, calm, peaceful, confident, courageous and able to face life and mission with more positive outlook and with renewed vigour and zeal.

I am grateful to my Province Leader Sr. Pushpa Louis and her Team for giving me this opportunity to have this life changing experience in Bodhini. I am deeply indebted to Dr. James Manthra OCD, the Programme Director who single handedly steered the programme effectively, whose life and actions are exemplary and takes keen interest in keeping Bodhini clean and green and providing a conducive place for God experience.

***Sr. Mercy George RGS, CEIN***