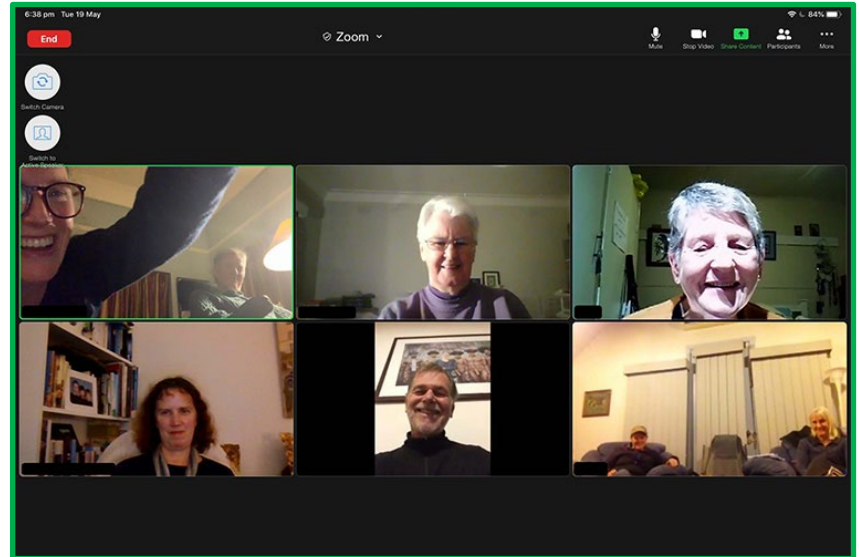




UNLIKELY COMPANIONS: COVID-19 LOCKDOWN, ZOOM AND MEDITATION

A completely unforeseen and surprising outcome of COVID-19 is our Zoom Christian Meditation Group. A dream of mine for some time now, I only became brave enough in March this year to ask a few people in my town of Gordon whether they'd be interested in being part of a Christian Meditation Group. One friend in particular – Sr Kathleen Moran rsm – joined me immediately in sorting times, having our first meeting in our local church and designing a few words to describe ourselves in the parish newsletter. Suddenly, though, we were in lock-down and our first meeting became also our last.



With some trepidation three of us held our first meeting on zoom and despite interference that sounded like chattering canaries, we managed to maintain twenty minutes silence together after listening to the voice of John Main address us from the World Christian Community for Meditation. Since then we have grown in numbers to nine members and have twice weekly meetings. Our members are mostly locals, yet we represent all denominations and have a couple of members who join us from Torquay and Adelaide.

We are still refining our format but members agree that there are a few essential elements that have become loved by all of us. These include the centrality of twenty minutes silence, the focus on the experience rather than theorising about it and the fact that the meetings are over in about forty minutes. Most surprising to all of us is that fact that we are not at all sure that we will ever want to move to being a group that meets 'in the flesh' even when restrictions on meetings loosen. We love the freedom and ease of meeting through zoom and will probably maintain this format even if we gather occasionally for longer, possibly more social meetings.

Spiritually speaking, we all bring different experiences and backgrounds to our group. Some of us are new to the John Main tradition and some are more experienced meditators. What we all find though, is that the support and motivation of belonging to a group brings new consistency and perseverance to our prayer life. There is a lovely delight in the feeling of sharing this intimate, often private part of our lives with other people in our community and to know that we are taking the journey with companions who are all searching for a way of finding a deeper connection with God.

A final note to say that our group is just one of many World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) Groups, some of which meet in other places in our diocese. For more information please go to <https://wccmaustralia.org.au>

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