

April, 2009

To those considering the practice of Transcendental Meditation,

In the late 1970's, I was directing a boarding school in southern Louisiana; Saint Paul's at the time was a boarding school owned and operated by our Roman Catholic Religious Order, The Brothers of the Christian Schools. I am a member of that order and at the time I was serving as Principal of St. Paul's. I became acquainted with Transcendental Meditation (TM) at that time. Through the efforts of Paul Marechal and David Cook I was initiated into the practice and interested several of our teachers in the practice; with time, a number of our students began TM also.

In those days, boarding schools often dealt with students who were having difficulties with their studies and with life in general. Home life often left much to be desired for their peaceful development and the pressures of school often challenged their balance, as they negotiated their ways through the turbulent years of adolescence.

In a short time, it became evident that the practice of TM was having a clearly good effect on the lives of all of us who were faithful to its daily use. A new calmness and a new focus were evident and we all attributed it to our new practice. Some of the adults began the courses available through the Transcendental Meditation Center in New Orleans and our understanding was broadened by the videotaped lectures of Maharishi and the follow-up of the Center Staff.

Since our boarding school was a Catholic School and since I am, myself, a religious Brother, there were many questions about how Transcendental Meditation fit with these facts. Was Transcendental Meditation a religion? Was the mantra assigned to each practitioner an invocation to a "false god"? Were we compromising our faith and that of our students? Did Transcendental Meditation fit in a Catholic School? These and many other questions came from parents, other staff members, and from the public when they heard of our practice.

Some asked the questions in a genuine effort to understand and were put at peace by our answers and our credibility. Others asked the questions in an aggressive manner which indicated that they had their minds already made up and that Transcendental Meditation was, in their opinion, an Indian religion which would compromise our faith. They had the mistaken view that mantras were evil invocations to "false gods" and would cause us to become estranged to God, as we understood God. Those of us who practiced the technique knew from our own experience that this was simply not true. In fact, the opposite was true because the TM practice, by dissolving stress and increasing mental clarity, helped us to more fully appreciate our own Catholic tradition.

As principal of the school and a Brother, I answered the questions, assuring people that Transcendental Meditation did indeed have its roots in ancient India, but that it was

what it proclaimed itself to be: a natural and universally applicable technique which produced physical and mental well-being in those who practiced it. As such it was no more opposed to our religious beliefs and convictions than physical exercise or mental activities that help to sharpen the mind. It was, in fact, something to be desired. TM is not a religion and no one is ever asked to change their personal beliefs, practices, or lifestyle.

I am happy to say that over time my answers were accepted by those who were asking the questions with good hearts. In time, the good effects of the practice of TM could be seen and felt in the lives of those who were part of our school community and who daily did the practice morning and evening. The many benefits to mind and body that come from TM are not only validated through personal experience, but have also been documented over the last 38 years by over 600 research studies, many of which were published in top peer-reviewed, scientific journals.

Transcendental Meditation remains a very important part of my life. In my current work in Australia, at age 69, I continue its practice and reap the benefits promised. I cannot recommend it except with enthusiasm and gratitude.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bro. Jeffrey L. Calligan, FSC". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Brother Jeffrey L. Calligan, FSC
Lasallian Education Services
1318 High Street
Malvern, VIC 3144
Australia