

**European Network for Buddhist-Christian Studies (ENBCS)
12th Conference**

**Meditation in Buddhist-Christian Encounter: A Critical Analysis
29 June – 3 July, 2017**

**To be held at the Abbey of Montserrat, near Barcelona, Spain
Letter from the President**

The theme of the 12th ENBCS conference concerns the role of meditation in Buddhist-Christian Encounter. An impressive line-up of invited speakers (see programme) will address five themes from Buddhist and Christian perspectives: the place of meditation in Buddhism and Christianity from a critical historical perspective; Buddhist-Christian encounter and the Zen tradition; the hesychastic tradition and Buddhist meditation; Mindfulness and Buddhist-Christian encounter; meditation and action in Buddhist-Christian encounter.

In addition, a Call for Papers has been issued for parallel sessions on the Sunday morning and evening (see Call for Papers). These are designed for postgraduate research students and recognised researchers. Papers for these sessions need not be on the theme of the conference but should relate to Buddhist-Christian Studies.

ENBCS conferences are an opportunity to meet and to greet others. Conversation is important – during coffee breaks and meals (lunch has been extended to include a siesta – we're in Spain after all), and in the evenings after formal sessions. So also is spiritual practice - we have an optional guided meditation session each morning before breakfast. Then, the culture of the place where we meet is also significant. Montserrat is a wonderful and evocative place. It is mountain, sanctuary and monastery. 'Montserrat' means 'sawn mountain' in Catalan and the mountain looks, from a distance, almost as though it has been carved. Beloved of rock climbers and walkers, it is full of interest. Saturday afternoon is free to enable you to explore it, by cable car or on foot. Or you could delay your departure on Monday to savour some more of it. And then there is the sanctuary and monastery. There were probably hermits on the mountain as early as the 8th Century but it was in the middle ages that Montserrat became a famous place of pilgrimage because of the miracles that happened there, attributed to Mary. The image of St Mary of Montserrat, one of the black Virgins, still presides over the more modern basilica. We will meet some members of the monastic community and will enjoy an organ recital from one.

Academics involved in Buddhist-Christian Studies, independent researchers and all who are committed to building understanding between Buddhists and Christians are welcome to attend the conference. The focus is academic but we do not limit attendance to those in academia. We also hope to offer some bursaries for research students to help with the cost of the conference.

Whether you are new to ENBCS or have long been involved with the Network, I hope you will consider coming to Montserrat. I can assure you it will be an enjoyable and thought-provoking conference.

Dr Elizabeth Harris, President of the ENBCS, Associate Professor, Liverpool Hope University. July 2016