

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 4

For 30 April 2017

Dear Friends

It's all so simple. At the same time it's so profound. I'm making Silence and Stillness the theme for this issue. Most of the material comes from poets, artists, mystics, meditators, spiritual teachers and people like you and me—who have discovered the power of silence and stillness. Let's start with the poets.

- * *“What is this life, if, full of care
We have no time to stand and stare?
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows ...”*
As a boy I grew up in the country among cows and sheep. W H Davies in this little poem called “*Leisure*” asks a simple but profound question of us. The image is vivid in my memory of country life, and the stillness and silence animals dipped into day after day.

- * Now I live in the city and on clear sunny mornings I find myself reaching out to use Wm Wordsworth's poem about walking on London's Westminster Bridge one sunny morning:
*“ ... Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning: silent, bare ...
... Ne'er saw I never felt a calm so deep!
.. Dear God! The very houses seem asleep;
And all the mighty heart is lying still!”*
A scene of outward beauty and harmony and also a deep inner sense of silence and stillness.

- * And the wonderfully simple words of NZ poet Hone Tuwhare's poem “*Rain*”:
*“I can hear you
making small holes
in the silence
rain ...”*

Silence gives us the freedom to see, to hear the beauty around us and within us.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 1 May:	119:1-8	Isa 30:15-21	John 14:1-14
Tuesday 2 May:	31:1-5,16	Acts 7:51-8:1a	John 6:30-35
Wednesday 3 May:	66:1-6	Acts 8:1b-8	John 6:35-40
Thursday 4 May:	66:7-8, 14-end	Acts 8:26-end	John 6:44-51
Friday 5 May:	117	Acts 9:1-20	John 6:52-59
Saturday 6 May:	116:10-15	Acts 9:31-42	John 6:60-69
Sunday 7 May <u>Easter 4</u>			
Ps 23; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 8 May:	42:1-2; 43:1-4	Acts 11:1-18	John 10:11-18
Tuesday 9 May:	87	Acts 11:19-26	John 10:22-30
Wednesday 10 May:	67	Acts 12:24-13:5	John 12:44-end
Thursday 11 May:	89:1,2,20-26	Acts 13:13-25	John 13:16-20
Friday 12 May:	2	Acts 13:26-33	John 14:1-6
Saturday 13 May:	98:1-5	Acts 13:44-end	John 14:7-14
Sunday 14 May <u>Easter 5</u>			
Ps 31:1-5,15-16; Acts 7:55-60; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 15 May:	15	Acts 1:15-26	John 15:9-17
Tuesday 16 May:	145:10-end	Acts 14:19-end	John 14:27-end
Wednesday 17 May:	122:1-5	Acts 15:1-6	John 15:1-8
Thursday 18 May:	96:1-3,7-10	Acts 15:7-21	John 15:9-11
Friday 19 May:	57:8-end	Acts 15:22-31	John 15:12-17
Saturday 20 May:	100	Acts 16:1-10	John 15:18-21
Sunday 21 May <u>Easter 6</u>			
Ps 66:8-20; Acts 17:22-31; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21			

We need Silence ...

However not everyone likes or wants silence. See how we name silence as a negative, even scary, experience. We can have uneasy silence, or awkward silence, embarrassing, stony, hostile and even a deathly silence. For many silence is just a hole to plug with chatter, busyness, loud music. It can be boring or a waste of time, or just a meaningless gap in the flow of daily life.

- ⊙ Graham Turner in his book *“The Power of Silence”* indicates that after an intense voyage around the world interviewing actors, prisoners, monks, musicians, mystics, meditators and spiritual teachers called silence “a deep and mysterious realm—perhaps the most underused of all resources, and a doorway to the riches that lie within.”
- ⊙ An anonymous poet wrote a poem after spending time in the presence of an Eastern mystic. The following are just a few lines from this poem.
*“The gap between the breaths is stillness
The space between the thoughts is silence ...
Hear the silence amidst the noise of ideas.
See the stillness of the canvas, upon which the figures dance.
Know the unwavering awareness of ‘I AM’.”*
- ⊙ Thich Nhat Hanh from Vietnam is now a world-renowned writer, poet, scholar and monk who founded a community in France and back in 1967 was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize—has written a book called *“Silence”*. (2013)
- ⊙ A current teacher (Eckhart Tolle) writes about *“Stillness”*. He links stillness with silence, and reminds us that when we are still, really still, then silence within seems to follow.
That leads us to some biblical examples:
 - 1) Elijah the prophet and mystic was fleeing from the anger and death threat of Queen Jezebel. In the wilderness he sat under a broom bush and was depressed, wanting to die—but was driven up to a cave in the mountain. He expected God to speak a message of power to boost his low self confidence. But the natural forces of power raged—a howling wind, an earthquake, then a fire. “... and after the fire a sound of sheer silence” (1 Kings 19:12) - usually translated “a still small voice”. It’s the stillness and silence out of which every sound, every object emerges. It is the infinite source which never dries up. It is the source of our bodies, and our undying Being—the I AM, which we all are.
 - 2) No wonder Jesus loved the silence—weeks in the wilderness alone, under the stars in a night of prayer before sunrise outside the soon-to-be bustling village. His was a life which shows us clearly how to “be still and KNOW”. Ps 46

MOVING—TOWARDS GALILEE

This is Eastertide

It’s always Eastertide,
Always has been,
Always will be.
It’s more than a date
on a calendar,
More than a season of
ebb and flow,
It waits inside us for
the eternal knowingness
to awaken to the newness,
to blink at the brightness
to say “Yes—Yes!!”

I went to Jesus’ tomb and the
stone was rolled away. I found
a message:

“Sorry I’m not here.
I’ve gone to Galilee—
For a picnic, and wedding feast.
I’m in Galilee, mending nets
and pruning olive trees.
I might be back again some day
Back to this stone tomb.
You may wait for me if you wish
But I need to warn you
If I come this way again
It will not be to stay
I’m alive!
And I will stay that way.
Why don’t you meet me
in Galilee?”

(by Geo Miller in “Alive Now”)

Moving towards Inner Silence Peace and Presence

Easy

- ⇒ no equipment
- ⇒ no weekly fee
- ⇒ no special shoes or clothing

Just do it

- ⇒ Sit still
- ⇒ Relax
- ⇒ Close your eyes
- ⇒ The world disappears
- ⇒ Thoughts come
- ⇒ There’s space between each thought
- ⇒ Stillness welcomes silence
- ⇒ Silence speaks.

- Breathing in, I know I am,
Breathing out, I know I am.
(In—Out—enjoy it)
- Breathing in I see myself as a mountain
Breathing out I feel solid and calm.
(Mountain/Solid)
- Breathing in, I see myself as still water,
Breathing out I feel a freshness
(Seeing more deeply, feeling refreshed)
- Breathing in, I see myself as space
Breathing out I feel free
(Vastness/Being more than this frail body)

This breathing exercise is suggested in the book *“Silence”* by Thich Nhat Hanh