

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 17

For 9 October 2016

Dear Friends

There is a question: How do we find joy in a world filled with so much suffering? It is a timeless question. There has never been an era or century in human history when we have not seen suffering because of ‘man’s inhumanity to man’. The main difference today is not a lessening of conflict, greed, fear, leading to destruction and death. It is mainly an escalation in the sophistication of means and methods that cause the suffering.

But ... that is only one aspect of life. The beauty and compassion of people is the deeper reality, the enduring component, the foundation of our togetherness, and the root of our hope and joy.

Some time recently two well known leaders who breathe hope and joy into the world around them met for a week. The two are the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. They had these days together in Darussalam having conversations on their experiences and philosophy of how we can find inner joy.

Joining them was Douglas Abrams who listened-in and made notes on their conversations—which were lively, sharp and went so deep at times that Abrams suggested they speed it up. Tutu joked as he suggested that the Dalai Lama should shorten his answers, saying “I am brief!” The result of the week is a book woven out of the talking entitled “*The Book of Joy*”. (More on this theme on page 2.)

I want to note that some may feel uncomfortable at this meeting of the Christian Archbishop and the most significant Buddhist leader in the world. Does it imply that Jesus’ importance and significance is being down-graded and that Buddha is No. 1? Were the two leaders ignoring the differences in the two religions or having fun in discovering the deep down common ground they share? Is this what G K Chesterton called “Religion gone to pot” or is it a refreshing awareness that they (the 2 individual leaders and the 2 religions) belong within a vast Oneness, and flow from one infinite Source of Life and Love—and enlightenment?

Sincerely - Lester

| | Psalm | Epistle/OT | Gospel |
|--|--------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Monday 10 October: | 113 | Gal 4:21-24,26,27, 31; 5:1 | Luke 11:29-32 |
| Tuesday 11 October: | 119:41-48 | Gal 5:1-6 | Luke 11:37-41 |
| Wednesday 12 October: | 1 | Gal 5:18-end | Luke 11:42-46 |
| Thursday 13 October: | 98:1-4 | Eph 1:1-10 | Luke 11:47-end |
| Friday 14 October: | 33:1-6,12 | Eph 1:11-14 | Luke 12:1-7 |
| Saturday 15 October: | 8 | Eph 1:15-end | Luke 12:8-12 |
| Sunday 16 October Pentecost 22 | | | |
| Ps 119:97-104; Jer 31:27-34; 2 Tim 3:14—4:5; Luke 18:1-8 | | | |

| | Psalm | Epistle/OT | Gospel |
|--|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Monday 17 October: | 100 | Eph 2:1-10 | Luke 12:13-21 |
| Tuesday 18 October: | 147:1-7 | Isa 35:3-6 | Luke 10: 1-9 |
| Wednesday 19 October: | 98 | Eph 3:2-12 | Luke 12:39-48 |
| Thursday 20 October: | 33:1-6 | Eph 3:14-end | Luke 12:49-53 |
| Friday 21 October: | 24:1-6 | Eph 4:1-6 | Luke 12:54-end |
| Saturday 22 October: | 122 | Eph 4:7-16 | Luke 13:1-9 |
| Sunday 23 October Pentecost 23 | | | |
| Ps 65; Joel 2:23-32; 2 Tim 4:6-8,16-18; Luke 18:9-14 | | | |

| | Psalm | Epistle/OT | Gospel |
|--|--------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Monday 24 October: | 1 | Eph 4:32-5:8 | Luke 13:10-17 |
| Tuesday 25 October: | 128 | Eph 5:21-end | Luke 13:18-21 |
| Wednesday 26 October: | 145:10-20 | Eph 6:1-9 | Luke 13:22-30 |
| Thursday 27 October: | 144:1-2,9-11 | Eph 6:10-20 | Luke 13:31-end |
| Friday 28 October: | 119:89-96 | Eph 2:19-22 | John 15:17-end |
| Saturday 29 October: | 42:1-7 | Phil 1:18-26 | Luke 14:1,7-11 |
| Sunday 30 October Pentecost 24 | | | |
| Ps 119:137-144; Hab 1:1-4, 2:1-4; 2 Thes 1:1-4,11-12; Luke 19:1-10 | | | |

DIGGING DOWN WITHIN

About a decade ago there was a surge of attention on the importance of compassion to outrun the anger and hatred being expressed in so many corners of the world. Books and articles, study groups and lectures put the spotlight on the need for, and the nature of, compassion. For many the feeling grew that it was just another attempt for us to lift ourselves by pulling on our boot laces.

It is easy to slide from a vision of compassion to making it another list of 'oughts' and 'shoulds'. The same is true when it comes to being happy and full of joy.

The mother took her 8 year old son to the beach. It was stressful making their lunch and getting there. The mother was tired and the boy didn't like the place. He was grumpy. Eventually his mum shouted at him "Enjoy yourself—or I'll make you!"

The two long-time friends seem to have had a joyfully serious time identifying the mental attitudes which lock:- our sense of perspective, a healthy humility, a lively sense of humour, a wide acceptance of people and our differences. In addition Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama noted the heart qualities that are often blocked:- forgiveness, gratitude, compassion and generosity.

The difficulty for most of us is how to get rid of the attitudes and desires and fears that block our daily persistence in looking for peace and joy. To aim for joy is a lot like aiming for happiness. The more we try to capture it, the more it slips through our fingers. The more we try to hold the butterfly, the more we are likely to kill it.

The Bible has a wealth of references to joy. And like all the other great world religions joy along with happiness, peace, hope and love, is almost entirely an inside rather than an outside development. There is no denying that we do get joy from outside ourselves, from objects, from meeting people and achieving goals, just as a child can be filled with joy by a new toy.

These usually short-lived joys never satisfy for as long as we hoped. So the long lasting joy must have its source within us and be an aspect of our true nature.

So getting to know our true nature involves discovering the infinite, the divine, the sacred energies of the Spirit, the inner essence of the Christ presence.

The Good News Theme - I am here with Good News for you, which will bring great joy to all the people.

The Prophet says:-

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked,
The self-same well from which
your laughter rises was
oftentimes filled with
your tears.

How else can it be?
The deeper that sorrow carves
into your being, the more joy it
can contain.

Is not the cup that holds
your wine the very cup
that was burned in the
potter's oven?
And is not the lute that soothes
your spirit the very wood that was
hollowed with knives?

When you are joyful look
deep into your heart and
you shall find it is only that
which has given you sorrow
that is giving you joy.

When you are sorrowful
look again in your heart,
and you shall see that in truth
you are weeping for that
which has been
your delight.

- You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is
fullness of JOY.
Ps 16:11
- Tears may flow in the night, but
joy comes in the morning.
- You have changed my sadness
into a joyful dance;
You have taken away my sorrow
and surrounded me with joy.
Ps 30:5 & 11
- Let those who wept as they
sowed their seed, gather the
harvest with joy!
Ps 126:5
- Look to Jesus the pioneer of
our faith, who, for the joy set
before him endured the shame
of the cross.
Heb 12:2

Do you get the sense that joy is very
often buried beneath pain, loss, grief
and sorrow?

Note the quotes from Kahlil Gibran
in "*The Prophet*" (opp column)