

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 10

For 3 Sept 2017

Dear Friends

It never ceases to be a magic moment for me. It is only a moment. Sitting at the concert venue with a thousand others. The chatter and hum of voices, and the warming up of the instruments of the orchestra—a great smorgasbord of sound. Suddenly the lights go down, the noise fades and the orchestra is ready and the conductor is poised with his baton. We are ready? Not quite. We wait until the silence has spread into every corner. The stillness is such that it seems we are all holding our breath.

It's like the moment of silent gratitude before the family begins eating dinner and the stories of the day take over. It's like visiting a dear friend who has just lost a loved one. The silence seems right, partly because words seem so inadequate. It is very significant that when Job was overcome with deep grief his three friends visited him and saw his condition and his sorrow *'they sat with him on the ground for seven days and nights and no-one spoke a word to him, for they saw his suffering was very great'*. (Job 2:13)

Have you noticed that silence and stillness seem to belong together—like a horse and carriage? Our society keeps on multiplying the words through the electronic gadgets that flood our daily life, and at the same time turning up the volume on the sound. No wonder people long for the weekend at the beach, or the bach in the bush. Deep within us there seems to be this longing for a taste of silence and stillness. Brief openings to some dimension of awareness that points to vastness, infinite space, a calming peaceful harmony in the universe—these are the possible gifts we long to experience when we get the hang of silence and stillness.

The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh begins his book on “Silence” with these words: *“The basic condition for us to be able to hear the call of beauty and love and respond to it, is silence. Our heart is calling us, but we don't listen.”*

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 4 September:	96	1 Thess 4:13-end	Luke 4:16-30
Tuesday 5 September:	27:1-8	1 Thess 5:1-6,9-11	Luke 4:31-37
Wednesday 6 September:	34:11-18	Col 1:1-8	Luke 4:38-end
Thursday 7 September:	98:1-5	Col 1:9-14	Luke 5:1-11
Friday 8 September:	89:19b-28	Col 1:15-20	Luke 5:33-end
Saturday 9 September:	117	Col 1:21-23	Luke 6:1-5
Sunday 10 September <u>Pentecost 14</u> Ps 149; Ex 12:1-14; Rom 13:8-14; Matt 18:15-20			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 11 September:	62:1-7	Col 1:24-2:3	Luke 6:6-11
Tuesday 12 September:	8	Col 2:6-15	Luke 6:12-19
Wednesday 13 September:	15	Col 3:1-11	Luke 6:20-26
Thursday 14 September:	98:1-5	1 Cor 1:18-24	John 3:13-17
Friday 15 September:	16	1 Tim 1:1,2,12-14	Luke 6:39-42
Saturday 16 September:	113	1 Tim 1:15-17	Luke 6:43-end
Sunday 17 September <u>Pentecost 15</u> Ps 114; Ex 14:19-31; Rom 14:1-12; Matt 18:21-35			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 18 September:	28	1 Tim 2:1-8	Luke 7:1-10
Tuesday 19 September:	101	1 Tim 3:1-13	Luke 7:11-17
Wednesday 20 September:	111:1-5	1 Tim 3:14-end	Luke 7:31-35
Thursday 21 September:	119:65-72	2 Cor 4:1-6	Matt 9:9-13
Friday 22 September:	49:1-9	1 Tim 6:2b-12	Luke 8:1-3
Saturday 23 September:	100	1 Tim 6:13-16	Luke 8:4-15
Sunday 24 September <u>Pentecost 16</u> Ps 105:1-6,37-45; Ex 16:2-15; Phil 1:21-30; Matt 20:1-16			

BEYOND AND WITHIN SILENCE AND STILLNESS

A focus on Silence and Stillness is mainly a way of looking at life and our own individual lives. These two words are not an end in themselves. As with all words they are signposts pointing beyond themselves. Eckhart Tolle explains— “that to which they point is not to be found within the realm of thought, but a dimension within yourself that is deeper and infinitely vaster than thought. Whenever you feel inner peace arising from exploring these signpost words, it is a reminder of who you are, and pointing the way back home.”

A little side panel on this quote! In Psalm 61:1-4 the songwriter has three images:

- (1) His plea that God will listen to his prayer ... and without a hint that he could (or should?) listen to God!
- (2) “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I ...” A powerful symbol of finding a rock (solid, dependable, not crumbling) that lifts his life to a higher dimension, and vaster vision, an awareness that is more refined, clear and subtle.”
- (3) “Let me dwell in your tent forever.” — A desire to find his way to his true home. The image of the tent has two aspects—a symbol of moving, pulling up the pegs and journeying on; — ‘dwell’ — permanent, to abide as in (Ps 23:6) - in the house of the Lord forever. But it is more. It is the ‘abiding’ that Jesus refers to when he uses the word in John’s gospel, especially Ch 15:4,5-7. “Those who abide in me, and I in them bear much fruit.”

To find this silence and stillness does not mean that we should rush off to a silent monastery. We are rightly busy with life on the level of getting and spending, taking responsibility for our part in society, and being a caring citizen. However some disciplined pattern of practice is essential. It takes time getting used to silence and some people can’t be still for a minute.

So it can be hard giving attention regularly to going into ever deeper silences and stillness. It can be as simple and easy as sitting in a comfortable position and closing your eyes—for 2 minutes, 5 tomorrow, and for the week, each day as close as possible to about the same time.

If you do something like this on a daily basis you will soon have a spiritual practice that allows you to begin plumbing the depths of space, stillness and silence.

Namely, an experience that opens us more and more to our true inner being.

LET AWARENESS BE NOURISHED

Whenever we act, whether it’s going to the supermarket or as simple as standing up, or taking a step, we have an intention, an energy that gets us moving in the morning. We may not be aware of this but we all live out of intentions.

“To fully experience this life as a human being, we all need to connect with our desire to realise something larger than our individual selves.

This can be motivation enough to change our ways so we can find relief from the noise that fills our heads.”

– Thich Nhat Hanh

When we sit still and silent—and close our eyes, then usually our mind tosses around a thousand thoughts, or our tiny ego gets afraid because it fears losing control, or we may feel this is a waste of time—I could be weeding the garden.

Don’t panic, don’t dismiss what is happening. Just watch it from a space of stillness and silence that you already have within—shift the balance of attention.

A lover of nature has written:-

Look at a tree, a flower, a plant. Let your awareness rest upon it. How still they are and how deeply rooted in Being.

Allow nature to teach you stillness.

When we “see” the stillness of a tree we become still within. We can connect with it at a very deep level.

We can feel a oneness with whatever we perceive in and through stillness.

Feeling the oneness of yourself with all things is true love.

Breathing

At the point when we have drawn in a breath—there is a momentary stillness. Enjoy it. It is from that part of us which abides in infinite stillness and silence. When we have breathed out, there is a tiny glimpse of the stillness that is an undying source of the peace which is beyond words,

- * noise
- * busyness
- * feelings
- * thoughts