

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 15

For 11 Sept 2016

Dear Friends

This is about the art of being present.

Maybe the easiest way to start is to give an example of someone skilled in being truly present with people. Dr Larry Dossey in one of his books on healing and medicine tells of a feisty coronary care nurse who in his eyes was one of the most skilful “practitioners of presence” he knew. She used the term “bed rail leaning” to describe what she did. He asked her what she meant. She explained: “If you are actually leaning against a patient’s bed rails, you naturally want to touch them and give them your undivided attention.” Then with a smile, she said it is the opposite of the 20 second U-turn at the end of the bed that you doctors are so good at.

When we are genuinely present with someone, we support them with a ‘helping hand’ towards what is infinite real and healing. The word PRESENCE comes from words (in the Latin) that mean “to be” and “before”, and is related to “essence”.

I like that background. It takes us back into what is timeless, infinite and the most fundamental within us. It is like we become an extension of “underneath are the everlasting arms” - that wonderful Biblical image of God that is powerful, profound and full of presence.

Here is another insight. A volunteer chaplain had intense training for her hospice work and discovered some deep learnings about the ministry of presence:- to be present to the pain of another without needing to fix it or to flee from it; to listen without judgment; to not impose her own spiritual path on another; to meet the other person where they are.

I put top of her list her learning that to be the presence of God is far better than just talking about it.

Amen to that! However that takes time **Sincerely** - **Lester**
and attention.

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 12 September:	40:7-11	1 Cor 11:17-26,33	Luke 7:1-10
Tuesday 13 September:	100	1 Cor 12:12-14, 27-end	Luke 7:11-17
Wednesday 14 September:	98:1-5	1 Cor 1:18-25	John 3:13-17
Thursday 15 September:	118:1,2, 17-20	1 Cor 15:1-11	Luke 7:36-end
Friday 16 September:	17:1-8	1 Cor 15:12-20	Luke 8:1-3
Saturday 17 September:	30:1-5	1 Cor 15:35-37, 42-49	Luke 8:4-15
Sunday 18 September <u>Pentecost 18</u> Ps 79:1-9; Jer 8:18-9:1; 1 Tim 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 19 September:	15	Prov 3:27-34	Luke 8:16-18
Tuesday 20 September:	119:1-8	Prov 21:1-6,10-13	Luke 8:19-21
Wednesday 21 September:	119:65-72	Prov 3:13-18	Matt 9:9-13
Thursday 22 September:	90:1-6	Eccles 1:2-11	Luke 9:7-9
Friday 23 September:	144:1-4	Eccles 3:1-11	Luke 9:18-22
Saturday 24 September:	90:1-2, 12-end	Eccles 11:9-12:8	Luke 9:43b-45
Sunday 25 September <u>Pentecost 19</u> Ps 91:1-6,14-16; Jer 32:1-3a,6-15; 1 Tim 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 26 September:	17:1-11	Job 1:6-end	Luke 9:46-50
Tuesday 27 September:	88:14-19	Job 3:1-3,11-17, 20-23	Luke 9:51-56
Wednesday 28 September:	88:1-6,11	Job 9:1-12,14-16	Luke 9:57-end
Thursday 29 September:	103:19-22	Gen 28:10-17	John 1:47-51
Friday 30 September:	139:6-11	Job 38:1,12-21; 40:3-5	Luke 10:13-16
Saturday 1 October:	119:169-end	Job 42:1-3,6,12-end	Luke 10:17-24
Sunday 2 October <u>Pentecost 20</u> Ps 37:1-9; Lam 1:1-6; 2 Tim 1:1-14; Luke 17:5-10			

NOURISHING THE ART

Somewhere in all of this is the need for stillness, silence and solitude. These dimensions are not easy to find in a world that is rushing, active and often frantic; that is constantly noisy, full of sound, deliberately pouring it into gaps of silence, and where we avoid a healthy contented solitude.

The monk Thich Nhat Hanh points us in another direction when he writes:

*Real solitude comes from
a stable heart that does not get
carried away by the pull of the crowd,
nor by sorrows about the past,
worries about the future,
or excitement or stress about the present.*

The dimension he hints at goes to the heart of being able to develop the art of being present. Could it be that this is a way of understanding the significance of Jesus using the image of the vine? In John 15 in the first few verses there are four times a repeat of the phrase ... “abide in me”. We shrink its importance when we fail to see that the ME is not some human being no longer around. It’s a deliberate Yes we give to the vast ocean of love and giftedness that is our source and sustenance—daily, personally, consistently. It never wavers or dries up. It is here, now. But it is only real when we take the plunge, when we taste and discover that God is good. Then that mysterious ME becomes my ME. Separation evaporates, and words of definition crumble into dust as we experience what they tried to point to like drunken signposts. (Somehow ‘abide in me’ catches the spirit of blending and union than the more prosaic ‘remain’ and ‘stay in me’.) So go on exploring the invitation to ‘abide in ME as I in you’.

Opposite is a so, so simple exercise—you’ll probably dismiss it. It is one pathway to nourishment of our essence.

The Most Precious thing we can give to one Another is our Presence.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Here is a meditation that helps cultivate your essence, the presence you want to be, with freshness, solidarity, clarity and spaciousness. Do it slowly. Be relaxed. Sink into it.

- * Breathing in. I know I’m breathing in. (count of 2)
Breathing out. I know I’m breathing out. Hold 3 (count of 4) (Repeat)
- * Breathing in. I see myself as a flower. (In –2 Flower)
Hold to see colours shape—scent—essence)
Breathing out. I feel fresh—(Out 4)
(Repeat)
- * Breathing in. I see myself as a mountain. (In 2)
Hold—see the mountain
Breathing out. I feel solid, firmly grounded (Out 4 solid)
- * Breathing in. I see myself as still water. (In 2)
Hold—reflections in water
Breathing out. I reflect things as they are. (Out 4)
What is reflected of your inner beauty?
- * Breathing in. I see myself as space (In 2)
Hold—in stillness, silence and space.
Breathing out. I feel vast and free. (Out 4)

NB! This is child-like in its simplicity—
until you use it, play with it,
go beyond the rules and allow
yourself the freedom to make it your own—
repeating it, and adding fresh sections.