

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 18

Dear Friends

For 23 October 2016

It is 21 years since I met Allan (a Canadian) in India at the International Meditation Institute (IMI) up in the foothills of the Himalayas. During my 2-3 months there we met often as he lived close by. He was a good listener. Even more his warm, accepting and open manner was so attractive. I enjoyed when he called in. His presence was such that it drew me like a magnet and touched something deep within me.

One evening I asked him about his day. He told me he had been up the mountain. He set off in the morning, climbing through the giant cedars until he came to an open space. He settled in the shade and meditated. I realised he meditated for nearly seven hours. When he came out of meditation he found food had been placed silently by his feet. He gave a little chuckle as he said “They must have thought I was a god.” Who knows! But actually it may be near the truth. The mountain people would appreciate a meditator with Allan’s sustained time and obvious depth of practice. They may not meditate themselves but they know that someone who does brings a quality of harmony and light into their environment. So bringing him food was a way of silently saying thank you for the god-like spirit of the divine you bring to us.

Since that incident I have often reflected on it. It is one of the many milestones that mark my long journey of discovery. Seldom has there been any moments of spectacular enlightenment; mainly little significant “Aah!” moments. I could call it a slow realisation of who I am, and who I am not.

The other day a friend sent me a poem—wonderful! It ends with these lines:-

*A light comes on to shine a path
 Through woods the world forgot
 And I realise ...
 It's not a case of who I am
 But finding who I'm not.*

That’s beautiful and true. I want to explore it more. I have a hunch, now I know Allan a lot more, that his meditation is less about ‘finding who I’m not’ and more about the deep peace and bliss of enjoying who he is.

Sincerely - Lester

| | 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 <u>Pentecost 24</u> | | | |
| Ps 119:137-144; Hab 1:1-4, 2:1-4; 2 Thes 1:1-4,11-12; Luke 19:1-10 | | | |

| | Psalm | Epistle/OT | Gospel |
|---|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Monday 31 October: | 131 | Phil 2:1-4 | Luke 14:12-14 |
| Tuesday 1 November: | 22:22-27 | Phil 2:5-11 | Luke 14:15-24 |
| Wednesday 2 November: | 23 | Rom 5:5-11 | John 5:19-25 |
| Thursday 3 November: | 105:1-7 | Phil 3:3-8a | Luke 15:1-10 |
| Friday 4 November: | 122 | Phil 3:17-4:1 | Luke 16:1-8 |
| Saturday 5 November: | 112 | Phil 4:10-19 | Luke 16:9-15 |
| Sunday 6 November <u>Pentecost 25</u> | | | |
| Ps 145:1-5,17-21; Haggai 1:15b-2:9; 2 Thes 2:1-5,13-17; Luke 20:27-38 | | | |

| | Psalm | Epistle/OT | Gospel |
|---|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Monday 7 November: | 24:1-6 | Titus 1:1-9 | Luke 17:1-6 |
| Tuesday 8 November: | 37:3-5, 30-32 | Titus 2:1-8,11-14 | Luke 17:7-10 |
| Wednesday 9 November: | 23 | Titus 3:1-7 | Luke 17:11-19 |
| Thursday 10 November: | 146:4-end | Philemon 7-20 | Luke 17:20-25 |
| Friday 11 November: | 119:1-8 | 2 John 4-9 | Luke 17:26-end |
| Saturday 12 November: | 112 | 3 John 5-8 | Luke 18:1-8 |
| Sunday 13 November <u>Pentecost 26</u> | | | |
| Isa 65:17-25; Isa 12; 2 Thes 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-19 | | | |

WHO I'M NOT — TO — WHO I AM

It's not possible to journey far on a spiritual path (or whatever you want to call it) before we realise that the question we face is "Who am I". The ancient Greeks put it in a phrase that translates as "know thyself". To work seriously on that we find we have to start clearing away much of who we think we are. Again we find that down the ages people who wonder who they are—truly, deeply at the core of their being—have to drop many assumptions. Number One on the list is realizing "I am not my body." This is very difficult to grasp and accept. Why?

From the moment we are born our body needs attention. It becomes the central focus of our life. It is fed, clothed, protected, sheltered and hopefully loved. Our body enables us to see, hear, touch, taste—it is the means to move, to interact, communicate. We spend endless attention to its fitness, health and strength as well as how it looks and what others think of it. Our days are filled with attention to it. However we often get to wonder—is there more to life than tending to our body? Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount opens up this issue when he challenges people to realise that the body is more than food or clothing—and implies that life is more than the body. The Gospels indicate he also pointed out that if you focus on saving the small self of body, mind, ego, name and fame then you lose the true and greater Self. Jesus was saying what is common knowledge among true sages and saints.

As an example here is one teacher from our era:-

"Once you know that death happens to the body and not to you (the true Self), you just watch your body falling off like a discarded garment. The real you is timeless and beyond birth and death."

And from a current enlightened teacher you may know (ie Eckhart Tolle):

"Death is not the opposite of life. Life has no opposite. The opposite of death is birth. Life is eternal."

Jesus was making this same point when he responded to the religious teachers who picked up stones to throw at him when he said:

"Truly, I tell you before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:57-58)

Is this not a reminder that our true being, namely 'who I AM' is unborn? Your deepest essence is therefore undying, eternal.

I am NOT the body.

The Journey and the Exploring

We shall not cease
from exploration.
And the end of our exploring
Will be to arrive
where we started
And know the place
for the first time.

(Extract from
"Little Gidding" by T S Eliot)

Come and find
the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead.
Find the room for hope to enter,
Find the frame where we are freed:
Clear the chaos and the clutter,
Clear our eyes that we can see
All the things that really matter,
Be at peace, and simply be.

(Shirley Murray)

Life does not bring us
inevitably towards light.
Without a conscious
decision to move towards
light and love our
road ends in a pit.
(- unfortunately too often).

(Morton Kelsey)

Through Muddled Words

Through muddled words and
half formed thoughts
That end in trains derailed
I push and pull, and futilely
search for a ship already sailed.

I come across a stained glass heart
suspended by a dream
Glue-held shards in a foggy field,
of my own imagining.

Further I delve into myself
To find a cosy inn
A cinnamon scented place
that oozes
'Please do come on in.'

So deceiving one could waste
Hours while dreams do fade
To end their lives still but troubled,
Regretting they had stayed.

A light comes on to shine a path
through woods the world forgot
And I realise ...

It's not a case of who I am
But finding who I'm not.

(Anna Wise)

Anna is the granddaughter of my
generous friend who shared with
me this unpublished poem.