

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 5

For 17 April 2016

Dear Friends

Right now, I'm sitting at my desk and looking at an empty white page. It is very quiet and the only sound is the soothing beautiful flow of a Mozart piano concerto. They say that Mozart's piano music has a measurable effect on our inner calm, harmony in our soul and increases our sense of well-being. I can believe that, but I can't measure it in my own life.

My attention moved to other sounds I could hear: cars on the rough bitumen, a bus pulling away from the curb, children calling (it must be play-time at the school), the wind in the giant chestnut tree with its brittle autumn leaves. The sounds of life surround us. Sometimes they overwhelm us, yet on the whole they reassure us. They are signs of life. We don't feel isolated or alone.

So what about silence? Is it just a pleasant contrast to a noisy world? We use many negative words about our experiences with silence. We talk about uncomfortable silence, an awkward silence, an embarrassing silence, a stony silence—even a deathly silence. Well that's only one side of the story of silence.

Let's go back to the age-old story of Job. He was a rich farmer with plenty of servants, cattle, sheep, camels, plus a wonderful bunch of children. Suddenly disaster struck—Job lost the lot, including his loved sons and daughters. To complete the tragedy Job was afflicted with loathsome sores from head to toe. He had three friends. They decided to go together to console and comfort him. When they saw him they wept. "And they sat with him on the ground 7 days and nights and no-one spoke a word to him for they saw that his suffering was very great." (Job 2:12-13) That's worth pondering. Who of us haven't visited a friend or family after a death, or a trauma and felt "I don't know what to say!" We don't need to fill the silent space with words. Our love and deep compassion is beyond words. One writer puts it well by saying "silence is really a higher form of speaking—speaking without words".

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 18 April:	42:1-2; 43:1-4	Acts 11:1-18	John 10:1-10
Tuesday 19 April:	87	Acts 11:19-26	John 10:22-30
Wednesday 20 April:	67	Acts 12:24-13:5	John 12:44-end
Thursday 21 April:	89:1,2,20-26	Acts 13:13-25	John 13:16-20
Friday 22 April:	2	Acts 13:26-33	John 14:1-6
Saturday 23 April:	98:1-5	Acts 13:44-end	John 14:7-14
Sunday 24 April <u>Easter 5</u>			
Ps 148; Acts 11:1-18; Rev 21:1-6; John 13:31-35			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 25 April: (ANZAC Day)	118:1-3, 14,15	Acts 14:5-18	John 14:21-26
Tuesday 26 April:	119:9-16	Acts 15:35-41	Mark 13:5-13
Wednesday 27 April:	122:1-5	Acts 15:1-6	John 15:1-8
Thursday 28 April:	96:1-3,7-10	Acts 15:7-21	John 15:9-11
Friday 29 April:	57:8-end	Acts 15:22-31	John 15:12-17
Saturday 30 April:	100	Acts 16:1-10	John 15:18-21
Sunday 1 May <u>Easter 6</u>			
Ps 67; Acts 16:9-15; Rev 21:10,22– 22:5; John 14:23-29			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 2 May:	119:1-8	Isa 30:15-21	John 14:1-14
Tuesday 3 May:	138	Acts 16:22-34	John 16:5-11
Wednesday 4 May:	148:1-2, 11-end	Acts 17:15,22-18:1	John 16:12-15
Thursday 5 May:	93	Acts 1:1-11	Luke 24:44-53
Friday 6 May:	47:1-6	Acts 18:9-18	John 16:20-23
Saturday 7 May:	47:1,2,7-end	Acts 18:22-end	John 16:23-28
Sunday 8 May <u>Easter 7</u>			
Ps 97; Acts 16:16-34; Rev 22:12-14,16-17,20-21; John 17:20-26			

THE POWER OF SILENCE

Remember the incident of Jesus being brought before Pilate? There are accusations flying in all directions from the Jewish authorities. The three gospels indicate that when Pilate questioned Jesus, Jesus was silent. He didn't answer. The same thing happened when Herod met Jesus. Herod was hoping to see a miracle performed and questioned Jesus at length and Jesus said nothing. Truth lies buried in the silence—not in some superficial curiosity.

⇒ Laurence Freeman is a Benedictine monk and a leader in renewing the importance of silence, stillness and meditation (contemplation) in the church of the West. He expressed his disappointment in a comment:-

“Yes we have spent centuries mapping the outer world and talking about God but we don't take a break to actually be with God and that is why going to church is often so boring. We need a far more balanced diet of the Spirit, because in the Western church we have gorged ourselves on the carbohydrates of words and the greasy, fatty foods of dogmas and doctrines.” Strong words!

⇒ With a lighter touch we do well to listen to Thich Nhat Hanh the monk writing in his book “Silence” about the power of quietness in a world full of noise.

He writes: *“There is a radio playing in our head. Radio N.S.T. (Non-Stop Thinking). Our mind is filled with noise, that's why we can't hear the call of life, the call of love, the call of light. Our heart is calling us, but we don't hear. We don't have (or make) time to listen.”*

⇒ And now to conclude this page here is a reflection from Hymie Wise who was a priest before being a counsellor.

For him silence is *“wonderfully humble, it never interferes, never interrupts, never makes promises. You can't see it, touch it, taste it, smell it and yet its greater than all the things which you can taste and smell. My task is just to be present in the silence.”*

THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE & STILLNESS

The Bible begins with the reminder that God created the world and saw that it was good. That is what we can “see” when we look from within our silence and stillness.

When we look at a tree and notice its silence and stillness we become still. We connect with it at a deep level.

We feel a oneness with whatever we “see” in and through silence.

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

(Based on writings of Eckhart Tolle in “Stillness—Speaks”)

On my wall as a child there was a picture of an owl sitting on a branch, eyes closed. It looked at me every night before I went to sleep.
(Hymie Wise)

Under the picture were these words:

*A wise old owl
lived in an oak.
The more he saw
the less he spoke,
the more he heard.
Why can't we be like
that old bird?*

Hymie added:- That burnt itself into my soul.

“There are so many people young and old who are afraid that if they tried silence they would see or hear things they don't want to hear or see.”

- Carl Jung

*Only when you drink from the river
of silence shall you indeed sing.
And when you have reached the mountain top,
then you shall begin to climb.
And when the earth shall claim your limbs,
then shall you truly dance.
- Kahlil Gibran*