

**Lectionary**  
**Readings for every day**  
**You Select!**



in the HCUC

**No. 6**

**For 1 May 2016**

**Dear Friends**

Since the hour of our birth it has been part of our life. Every day, every night, hour after hour, we have been breathing. This process of breathing is a must in our life. We survive without food for weeks, and about 10 days without water. Our whole existence would be in danger of collapsing if we don't breathe for only a few minutes.

Luckily the body has a built-in mechanism which looks after the process. However we can choose to control it. It must be important when we are given 2 channels for in and out breath—the nostrils and the mouth.

Experts tell us that most of us do not have very good patterns of breathing. Our rhythms and the depth of our breath are the usual weak parts. If we think we are doing OK, we would soon find out if we tried to sing opera solos, or play an oboe, or train to become a champion swimmer.

Our life-style influences our breathing patterns. I well remember a cold winter's night when a neighbour banged on our door and asked me to come. His wife had collapsed on the kitchen floor and was only just conscious. When the ambulance arrived the medics got her to take deep breaths—calmly and evenly. Soon she was sitting up. Her collapse was the result of stress. Her body was telling her 'stop pushing yourself—calm down—your body has run out of energy'.

All this is not meant to be a scientific medical paper. Instead I want to underline the wonder of the intricate essential process by which breath brings the life force into our lungs, then into our bloodstream on a journey to every cell in the body. It's a gift built into our body. The more we learn about it and appreciate it the more it links us to the very source of life, the absolute, undying essence of who we are, and what we can be. This can add a truly beautiful and calm, alert freshness to your life.

**Sincerely - Lester**

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
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
<b>Sunday 8 May <u>Easter 7</u></b>			
Ps 97; Acts 16:16-34; Rev 22:12-14,16-17,20-21; John 17:20-26			

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 9 May:	68:1-6	Acts 19:1-8	John 16:29-end
Tuesday 10 May:	68:9,10,18,19	Acts 20:17-27	John 17:1-11
Wednesday 11 May:	68:27-28, 32-end	Acts 20:28-end	John 17:11-19
Thursday 12 May:	16:1,5-end	Acts 22:30;23:6-11	John 17:20-end
Friday 13 May:	103:1-2, 11-12,19-20	Acts 25:13-21	John 21:15-19
Saturday 14 May:	11:4-end	Acts 28:16-20, 30-end	John 21:20-end
<b>Sunday 15 May <u>Pentecost</u></b>			
Ps 104:24-34,35b; Gen 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-21; John 14:8-17 (25-27)			

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 16 May:	19:7-end	James 3:13-end	Mark 9:14-29
Tuesday 17 May:	55:7-9,24	James 4:1-10	Mark 9:30-37
Wednesday 18 May:	49:1,2,5-10	James 4:13-end	Mark 9:38-40
Thursday 19 May:	49:12-20	James 5:1-6	Mark 9:41-50
Friday 20 May:	103:1-4, 8-13	James 5:9-12	Mark 10:1-12
Saturday 21 May:	141:1-4	James 5:13-end	Mark 10:13-16
<b>Sunday 22 May <u>Trinity</u></b>			
Ps 8; Prov 8:1-4,22-31; Rom 5:1-5; John 16:12-15			

## THREE FACES OF SPIRIT

Let's take a quick look at three (3) key passages in the Bible.

### No. 1 Genesis 2:7

It's the second creation story. "... then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

- ⇒ Our current emphasis on the things we can see, touch, measure, weigh, bend and shape can lead to a lessening of the central part, the unseen immeasurable importance of forces, energies and qualities that create life. Scientists of the invisible world, like mystics and saints, often use strange (to us) names for the breath such as 'chi' or 'praan'. This doesn't mean it is different from our usual word namely 'spirit', or Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God.
- ⇒ Every human being receives this breath of life. No religion, no spiritual group, no country, church or denomination can claim the spirit as belonging to them alone.
- ⇒ The process of breathing—the gift of life has been here since the beginning of human beings. It's not a recent invention or discovery by Christians. It is this gift which enables the body to move, the heart to beat, the eyes to see, the lungs to fill.

### No. 2 Ezekiel 37:9ff

This wonderful word picture highlights that when the spirit leaves the body there will be eyes but they won't see, ears unable to hear, then only dry bones scattered and unable to even come together, let alone stand or walk. Yes this is very obvious! But does it turn us towards a less mechanical view of our bodies, and recognition of two things: (a) that being alive is to be linked to the Source and dependent on it for every moment of day or night; (b) the material body-form is continually marinated with breath of God. Namely body and spirit are not two separate things—they are always a wholeness of body-mind-spirit.

### No. 3 John 20:22

When Jesus met his disciples on that special evening and breathed on them and said "Receive the Holy Spirit" - this obviously is not the beginning of the Spirit's presence in the universe or in their lives. It seems like a new dimension, a different awareness, a deeper experience is presented to them. It's as if Jesus is giving them a taste of FM after only knowing AM radio. Interestingly the word praan is a very ancient Sanskrit word which means a more refined spirit. This more refined, subtle and more powerful state of experience is still a gift. However it doesn't fall on us like an acorn from a tree. We need to want it and we need to prepare for it. And that preparation involves stillness, silence and learning a way to meditate, in which breathing is a special feature. Practiced, it opens into a deeper awareness, more love and a growing expansion of divinity.

## IT IS SIMPLE, PROFOUND AND REAL

It is time to wake up!

We tend to be unaware of how often the stories Jesus told had the punch line of "Awake!"

This is less about opening our eyes and more about being aware.

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Being more aware results in an expanded consciousness.

Listen to how Eckhard Tolle expresses this:-

"The transformation of human consciousness is no longer a luxury—available only to a few—but a necessity of humankind is not to destroy itself."

Being more aware, or more conscious involves:

- ◆ A desire to be more awake to life, love, light.
- ◆ Finding the way to increase, refine, and expand our awareness.
- ◆ Being committed to using a pattern that works for us (me—you).

From past experience this has always involved stillness, silence and a balanced breathing pattern.

Opening the door to the vast spaces and sources within is as simple (and difficult) as:-

Sitting quietly, comfortably and spending 10 minutes:

- Breathing in
- Holding the breath
- Breathing out

A pattern of 'in' breathe count 1,2.

Hold until you feel the pressure to breathe 'out'- count 1, 2, 3, 4.

Controlled and double the time of the 'in' breath.

As this pattern becomes easy, relaxed, enjoyed, changes begin to happen—the space between the breath becomes a doorway into new awareness, greater clarity, subtle healing and unexpected calm. You change and so the world around you begins to change.

For more than 2000 years sages and spiritual teachers have found and agreed:-

There is something beyond our mind, which abides in silence within us.

It is the supreme mystery beyond thought.

Let your attention and spirit rest upon that.

-An ancient scripture from 2500 BC