

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 2

For 26 March 2017

Dear Friends

There is a paperback on my book shelf. I often pull it out and re-read some of the stories written by Dr Rachel Remen. The book's sub-title is "*Stories that heal*" - and they do! The main title is intriguing too, ie "*Kitchen Table Wisdom*".

Hold it—before you read more turn your mind to an incident in your life when you had an important kitchen table conversation—maybe you heard a friend share an event that changed their life, or a story that opened a door in your heart to let in more wonder or compassion. Perhaps it is a family gathering which acknowledged the good things you have shared—the love, laughter and your togetherness. Whatever! But of course kitchen tables are more and more of the past. However we do have TV dinners without the conversation. People still love getting together— “let’s have a coffee!” The essence of the attraction is the meeting to hear new stories (not just gossip) - to be with people who really listen to my story, my fears, my loneliness, my hunger for more. Such encounters can be healing—of a troubled mind, or a wounded spirit, or an unwell body.

Part of my liking Rachel Remen’s title "*Kitchen Table Wisdom*" is because in my first parish (late 1950’s) I visited mainly farms, and meeting with family members was often a one-on-one over a cup of tea at a large kitchen table. The table is a great symbol—including food shared, stories told, young and old together on a level playing ground. It was part of our daily lives—and out of that common down-to-earth environment sprang wisdom, insights, stronger bonds of trust.

One day at a farm the farmer invited me to join him over a cuppa before he started his afternoon milking. He and I were alone and we chatted, until we reached an easy silence and sipped our tea. I sensed he was weighing up whether he would say something—and I felt a slight tension in him. At last he took a risk and said “Can I tell you something?” I nodded “yes”. He began. It was the first time someone shared with me his near-death-experience (NDE). I now know that his powerful experience was a classic description of a NDE, long before they were called that. He looked at me as he finished. I saw and felt his fear that I might laugh, or contradict or dismiss his story for some reason. Then he relaxed and smiled when he sensed he had been heard and listened to.

I still feel the sense of healing that he conveyed without words.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 27 March:	30:1-5,8, 11-end	Isa 65:17-21	John 4:43-end
Tuesday 28 March:	46:1-8	Ezek 47:1-9,12	John 5:1-3,5-16
Wednesday 29 March:	145:8-18	Isa 49:8-15	John 5:17-30
Thursday 30 March:	106:19-23	Exod 32:7-14	John 5:31-end
Friday 31 March:	34:15-end	Jer 26:8-11	John 7:1-2,10, 25-30
Saturday 1 April:	7:1-2,8-10	Jer 11:18-20	John 7:40-52
Sunday 2 April <u>Lent 5</u>			
Ps 130; Ezek 37:1-14; Rom 8:6-11; John 11:1-45			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 3 April:	23	Josh 2:1-14	John 8:1-11
Tuesday 4 April:	102:1-3, 16-23	Numb 21:4-9	John 8:21-30
Wednesday 5 April:	55,(124)	Jer 22:20-23:8	John 12:12-19
Thursday 6 April:	105:4-9	Gen 17:3-9	John 8:51-end
Friday 7 April:	18:1-6	Jer 20:10-13	John 10:31-end
Saturday 8 April:	121	Ezek 37:21-28	John 11:45-end
Sunday 9 April <u>Palm Sunday</u>			
Ps 31:9-16; Isa 50:4-9a; Phil 2:5-11; Matt 21:1-11			

Holy Week	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 10 April:	36:5-11	Isa 42:1-9	John 12:1-11
Tuesday 11 April:	71:1-14	Isa 49:1-7	John 12:20-36
Wednesday 12 April:	70	Isa 50:4-9a	John 13:21-32
Maundy Thursday 13 April:	116:1-2, 12-19	1 Cor 11:23-26	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Good Friday 14 April:	22	Isa 52:13-53:12	John 18:1-19:42
Holy Saturday 15 April:	31:1-4, 15-16	1 Peter 4:1-8	John 19:38-42
Sunday 16 April <u>Easter Day</u>			
Ps 118:1-2,14-24; Jer 31:1-6; Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18			

TABLE CONVERSATIONS

A word about the author. Dr Rachel Remen gathered the stories from ‘the tree of life’. Her own life has been pioneering in training doctors and medical staff in relationship-centred care. Like so many great artists in any field she has the ability to see our world and our lives with fresh eyes. She captures a lost sense of wonder, and recognizes the mystery lying within the observed material world. Her stories deal with loneliness, fears, pain and suffering, life and death. On reflection many of the great stories in the Bible are also like the stories in *Kitchen Table Wisdom*. There aren’t many that have their origin at a kitchen table, or a coffee table, however there is a few:-

- * The best known Psalm has a surprising little image—the poet writes or sings of discovering that God has ‘prepared a table before me’ - and for me—in the presence of my enemies. (Ps. 23:5) Who are the enemies? Soldiers with swords, a crowd with stones? Perhaps they are inner enemies, real but invisible—fears, the sense that the world is against me, feeling overwhelmed or isolated. Into that situation comes the astonishment that God is present, more real than any enemy of my body or soul. What do you find in this image? Note that it is not merely God being present—it is a banquet that is prepared. A gift, a celebration, nourishment.
- * Now move to the night Jesus gathered with his friends—the inner circle. Jesus shared his inner feelings about wanting to celebrate the Passover with them. The Passover—the great escape, the risk of moving out into the unknown, the long journey to freedom. This was not just a little word of shallow wisdom. This was about the passion for discovering who we are. Not about living in captivity—not slaves—but being free to be alive with a new vision. This is deep stuff. This is truth. Verily, verily I say to you ...! So the bread is broken, the cup shared. Then comes the ‘but’ ... There is a betrayer at the table. This is also a daily aspect of life. The dark side is lurking, sitting beside us, or more disturbing, sitting within us. Table conversations are not always comfortable. (Luke 22:14ff)
- * Last, but not least, the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-25). Confused, puzzled, disappointed and voicing their ‘we had hoped...’ two of Jesus’ disciples were trudging home when this stranger joined them. They shared their story and he challenged them to see a deeper and different awareness of events. Something was happening in them and they didn’t want it to end. “Stay and eat with us—please”. He did and their inner eye opened to “see” who he is. Something within them had sparked into a flame. They said ‘it was like a fire burning in us.’

KITCHEN TABLE TALK—AND PRAYER

Rachel Remen’s rare gift is to help us see beyond the veil of our beliefs and our judgments of ourselves and others and see the world with wonder and wisdom, as if for the first time.

Weldon Johnson—a black American poet has a poem called “Listen Lord” - it’s a prayer for the beginning of worship. At one point the focus is on the preacher—here is that section:

⇒ Most books try to lead us out of mystery in mastery. Her collected stories lead us towards the mystery that is in everyday life.

“And now O Lord, this man of God who breaks bread this day—Shadow him in the hollow of your hand. And keep him out of gunshot of the devil.

⇒ Moving into the unknown is often where we find the healing, not by running away from it into a quick fix.

Take him Lord this morning. Wash him with hyssop inside and out, hang him up and drain him dry of sin.

⇒ Because our lives are unique our stories highlight our differences. Yet in the telling of stories we also learn what makes us similar, what connects us all, what helps us transcend the isolation that separates.

Pin his ear to the wisdom post, And make his words sledge-hammers of truth, beating on the iron heart of man.

(All quotes from the Foreword by Dr Dean Ornish)

Lord God, put his eye to the telescope of eternity, and let him look upon the paper walls of time.”

Thanks to all those who have sent in their contribution towards the compilation, printing and distribution of Shalom.

\$5 for the year—when collected in local congregations
\$20 suggested for a year’s sub—when printed and posted to you.

Footnote: It looks as if Shalom will come out on a 3-weekly basis (not fortnightly).