

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 17

For 18 October 2015

Dear Friends

When I was a student there was a very influential Archbishop of Canterbury—Dr William Temple. He was a great teacher and humble spiritual being. I noted a comment he once made. He said “When I am active in my practice of prayer I notice coincidences happen more often in my life.” He didn’t explain, and I often wondered what he experienced. Just a year or two later I understood. My first parish was a widely scattered country area. I was forever in the car, and my spiritual practice was very uneven with few regular bright spots. In spite of that something opened my life to some coincidences and I thought of Wm Temple.

In my visiting I would select an area and call in at the farms on a certain road. Some days I would get to the road where I planned to visit and an inner nudge would result in me turning into another road and a farm I hadn’t intended to call on. That’s when the coincidences happened. Some are as fresh in my memory as yesterday, as the day I made an unplanned call and I was greeted with something like “I knew you would call in here today!” On other occasions it was “How did you know I wanted you to call? — I need to talk to you.”

Over the years some simple and important things have become clearer to me.

- In prayer I reach out beyond my small isolated self.
- In prayer my life extends into another dimension; a dimension beyond the visible, ever-changing and limited, into the subtle, invisible and the ultimately real.
- In prayer we are responding to the attraction that our deepest self has to reconnect with its source.
- This connection touches, enriches and expands the peace, wholeness, love and hope we each carry within ourselves.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 19 October:	4; 131	Rom 4:20-end	Luke 12:13-21
Tuesday 20 October:	40:7-12	Rom 5:12,15,17-end	Luke 12:35-38
Wednesday 21 October:	124	Rom 6:12-18	Luke 12:39-48
Thursday 22 October:	1	Rom 6:19-end	Luke 12:49-53
Friday 23 October:	119:65-72	Gen 33:1-11	Matt 13:53-58
Saturday 24 October:	24:1-6	Rom 8:1-11	Luke 13:1-9
Sunday 25 October <u>Pentecost 22</u>			
Ps 34:1-8,(19-22); Job 42:1-6,10-17; Heb 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 26 October:	68:1-6,19	Rom 8:12-17	Luke 13:10-17
Tuesday 27 October:	126	Rom 8:18-25	Luke 13:18-21
Wednesday 28 October:	119:89-96	Isa 28:14-16	John 15:17-end
Thursday 29 October:	109:20-26, 29-30	Rom 8:31-end	Luke 13:31-end
Friday 30 October:	147:13-end	Rom 9:1-5	Luke 14:1-6
Saturday 31 October:	94:14-19	Rom 11:1-2,11-12, 25-29	Luke 14:1,7-11
Sunday 1 November <u>Pentecost 23 (All Saints)</u>			
Ps 146; Ruth 1:1-18; Heb 9:11-14; Mark 12:28-34			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 2 November:	23	Rom 5:5-11	John 5:19-25
Tuesday 3 November:	131	Rom 12:5-16	Luke 14:15-24
Wednesday 4 November:	112	Rom 13:8-10	Luke 14:25-33
Thursday 5 November:	27:14-end	Rom 14:7-12	Luke 15:1-10
Friday 6 November:	98	Rom 15:14-21	Luke 16:1-8
Saturday 7 November:	145:1-7	Rom 6:3-9,16, 22-end	Luke 16:9-15
Sunday 8 November <u>Pentecost 24</u>			
Ps 127; Ruth 3:1-5,4:13-17; Heb 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44			

WORDS — NO WORDS — BEYOND WORDS

“At one time my prayer was mainly wordless: a reaching out that needed to be felt. I’ve no doubt this was in part because I needed to recover from years and layers of ‘prayer words’ that hadn’t worked for me—that had diminished my sense of my self and distanced me from the sacred rather than making it more real. In that potent silence I learned how essential listening is to a life of prayer. ‘Be still and know that I am God’ (Ps 46).” — from Stephanie Dowrick’s wonderful collection of timeless prayers of wisdom and love — *“Heaven on Earth”*

Most people can resonate to ‘prayer words’ that have grown tired, cracked open and lost their inner value for us. It’s true that words have the power to harm—and to heal. Words have always been carriers of our prayers. We all have prayers whose words fit what we want to express. They can often do even more; they create a quality and depth of meaning beyond what we had imagined. We could say that such words actually ‘pray’ us.

The treasury of written or remembered prayers from down the ages are a powerful means of tuning our minds to the subtle harmonies of the spirit of love, purity and trust, the divinity that envelops our lives.

It is important to recognize that prayer needs to take us beyond our ordinary thinking. Our thinking and the words we use to express our best thoughts are usually earth bound no matter how beautiful. The finite can never grasp the infinite. It is not a sign of our failure to know how to pray if we can’t find the right words—or feel stuck for any words. Rejoice, it may mean we are ready to move beyond words and simply be at one with the supreme infinite—lost in wonder, love and praise. To dwell in that space is ‘to pray without ceasing’. It is to be at ‘home’.

None of us has seen God at any time.
Yet if we love one another,
God lives within us,
and love is perfected within us.
(1 John 4:7-8,12)

THIS LITTLE RITUAL ...

Prayer, the little ritual which recognises the inner life and attempts to connect to it. This do-it-yourself ceremony where the mind is on its knees: the small ceremony of words which calls on the soul to come forth. This ritual known simply as prayer. -Leunig

Does God have a set way of prayer? I doubt it. I believe lots of people pray with their lives, in the way they live, the friendships they have, the love they offer people, and accept from people. Since when are words the only acceptable form of prayer?

- Dorothy Day

The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays.

- Soren Kierkegaard

My greatest prayer is that each of us will come to recognise the power we have to contribute to a kinder, fairer, more loving world.

- Stephanie Dowrick

Prayer is the process of opening our awareness to God’s grace.

“The breeze of His grace is always blowing; you have only to raise your sails to catch it.”

- Ramakrishna

In stillness and in staying quiet, there lies your strength.

- Is 30:15 (NEB)

In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.

- Is 30:15 (AV)

Dear God,
We loosen our grip.
We open our hand.
We are accepting.
In our empty hand we feel
the shape of simple eternity.
It nestles there.
We hold it gently.
We are accepting.

Amen

- Leunig