

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 3

For 20 March 2016

Dear Friends

The storyteller begins, “Once upon a time ...” and we are hooked. The comedian comes on stage and says, “Once upon a time there was an Irishman ...”. There is a pause. We wait, and he says: “Now look at how many there are!”

Jesus starts, “Once upon a time there was a man who had two sons ...”. Lately I’ve heard this story at least three times in worship. I’m really hooked on it. I see it happening all around us. It’s not a story about one particular father and two particular sons. It’s a universal story. It’s about any Tom, Dick and Harry, any Mary, Martha and Ruth.

The great storyteller Joseph Campbell made this same point in his famous book “*The Hero With a Thousand Faces*”. Each one of us is on a journey. The details will be different but behind them are universal common elements. Some of those common elements are:-

- A deep urge to see more of life, experience new situations, expand our knowledge;
- To test ourselves in new situations, to discover what we are capable of being and doing.
- To find more satisfaction, more excitement, more happiness, more freedom (to break free from dull, boring restrictions and sameness).

Note that it wasn’t Jesus who called his story ‘The Prodigal Son’. The church gave it that title. It labelled the son who left home a ‘bad lad’, and made it into a morality tale. Beneath his selfish grabbing all the money he could and leaving the father, the family and the farm, was the human urge to find ‘the More’ that he longed to taste. Aren’t we all hungering for something MORE, unless we have felt it is out of our reach and have settled for the bits and pieces we have?

The son in Jesus’ story went looking for the more. He wanted to find its source. When he did he knew he would be home, truly at home.

Sincerely - Lester

Holy Week	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 21 March:	36:5-11	Isa 42:1-9	John 12:1-11
Tuesday 22 March:	71:1-14	Isa 49:1-7	John 12:20-36
Wednesday 23 March:	70	Isa 50:4-9a	John 13:21-32
Maundy Thursday 24 March:	116:1-2, 12-19	1 Cor 11:23-26	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Good Friday 25 March:	22	Isa 52:13-53:12	John 18:1-19:42
Holy Saturday 26 March:	731:1-4, 15-16	1 Peter 4:1-8	John 19:38-42
Sunday 27 March <u>Easter Day</u> Ps 118:1-2,14-24; Isa 65:17-25; Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18			
	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 28 March:	16:1-2, 6-end	Acts 2:14,22-32	Matt 28:8-15
Tuesday 29 March:	33:4-5, 18-end	Acts 2:36-41	John 20:11-18
Wednesday 30 March:	105:1-9	Acts 3:1-10	Luke 24:13-35
Thursday 31 March:	8	Acts 3:11-end	Luke 24:35-48
Friday 1 April:	118:1-4, 22-26	Acts 4:1-12	John 21:1-14
Saturday 2 April:	118:1-4, 14-21	Acts 4:13-21	Mark 16:9-15
Sunday 3 April <u>Easter 2</u> Ps 118:14-29 or 150; Acts 5:27-32; Rev 1:4-8; John 20:19-31			
	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 4 April:	40:5-11	Isa 7:10-14	Luke 1:26-38
Tuesday 5 April:	93	Acts 4:32-end	John 3:7-15
Wednesday 6 April:	34:1-8	Acts 5:17-26	John 3:16-21
Thursday 7 April:	34:1,15-end	Acts 5:27-33	John 3:31-end
Friday 8 April:	27:1-5,16,17	Acts 5:34-42	John 6:1-15
Saturday 9 April:	33:1-5,18,19	Acts 6:1-7	John 6:16-21
Sunday 10 April <u>Easter 3</u> Ps 30; Acts 9:1-6,(7-20); Rev 5:11-14; John 21:1-19			

ON GETTING HOME

- ⇒ There is a wise old saying:- “The shortest way home is often round the world”. The younger son in Jesus’ story is a clear example. Within a few days of cashing his share of the property he was on his way to a far country—as far away from the home he knew as possible. So with money and an exciting sense of freedom he explored fresh new ways of living. We can fill in the picture without own imaginings.
- ⇒ Our own journey usually has a mixture of expanding awareness, satisfying achievements, disappointing downturns, moments of discovery and weeks of disillusionment. The objects we buy seem dull and bland all too soon. Our highest achievements never keep us satisfied for as long as we hoped. The easy friendship needs attention and hard work. Our trusty body begins to show signs of mortality.
- ⇒ The son in Jesus’ story sinks into poverty, hunger and dire need. He’s at his lowest point—but it’s the point when he comes to himself. The self he recognizes is the key to THE MORE that he ran off to find. All the time it was there within.
- ⇒ The writer Marcel Proust is pointing in this direction when he says that ‘the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes.’
- ⇒ There was a powerful and significant moment in the funeral of Martin Crowe when Lorraine (his widow) said that the cancer that ended his life was also what saved him. She indicated that when Martin found that his striving for perfection eluded him and there were no more achievements he could work for he began to ask who he was. He began to discover his real or true Self. He came to himself. Could we say “He reached home”?.?

The poet T S Eliot has three lines in a poem which are worth writing on a card and carrying in your pocket, of fixing on the window sill above the sink.

*And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

There is another son in the story. He didn’t leave home but at the same time he wasn’t at home.

Maybe we’ll meet him in the next issue. (No. 4)

ALL OUR EXPLORING

- ◆ It is not the end of the physical body that should worry us. Rather, our concern must be to live while we’re alive—to release our inner selves from the spiritual death that comes with living behind a façade designed to conform to external definitions of who and what we are.
– Elizabeth Kubler Ross

Here it is again!

- ◆ We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place
for the first time.
– T S Eliot

On your Journey

A prayer for each day:

Dear Lord,

Three things I pray.
To see you more clearly.
To love you more dearly.
To follow you more nearly.
Day by day

Jesus told the story of the Father who had two sons.

- * The church called it “The story of the Prodigal Son”.
- * A theologian and famous preacher called it:- “The Waiting Father”.
- * Recently I saw the story entitled with “Welcome Home”.
- * The great Dutch artist Rembrandt painted part of the story. The scene of the interaction between the son who has been welcomed home, the father, and the other son—all three together.

The painting is in the famous Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg.

Some years ago the Dutch writer and spiritual leader Henri Nouwen spent several days sitting alone with the painting. He reflected on what he saw and felt. Finally he wrote about his experience and called the book “The Return of the Prodigal Son”.

What title would you give to Jesus’ story?