

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 9

For 28 June 2015

Dear Friends

It was a short sentence of six words. But it stopped me like a concrete wall. It said: The key to growth is fragility.

At first I rejected the idea. After reading more in the book, I began to consider it as having some element of truth. I'm now at the stage of accepting this as a very profound truth. Yes, it does seem a bit of a paradox. We tend to assume that growth requires strength, health, and a good balance of our qualities of body, mind and spirit. To be fragile seems an odd, out-of-place component to be a key element in our ability to grow. And the growth we are considering is not just physical growth of the body. It is growth of body, mind and spirit.

The writer, Marilyn Ferguson, puts this in a way I find helpful.

“At first the idea of creating something new and bigger by throwing things into disorder and confusion seems outrageous, like shaking up a box of words and pouring out a sentence. [She gives some examples of how the creative process needs chaos before form, order and beauty emerge]:-

- We know, she says, that crisis often opens up opportunity;
- ⇒ that stress often forces sudden new solutions;
 - ⇒ that individuals are often strengthened by suffering and conflict; and that societies need a healthy airing of dissent.”

One of the insights I gain from this is—bodies, solid attitudes, frozen spirits, and structures that are insulated from disturbance are shut off from change and growth.

We need a bit of a ‘shake up’ — only then can the pieces of our life be brought together into a new form, a fresh vision, a deeper understanding, a wider attitude.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 29 June:	125	Acts 12:1-11	Matt 16:13-19
Tuesday 30 June:	26	Gen 19:15-29	Matt 8:23-27
Wednesday 1 July:	34:1-12	Gen 21:5,8-20	Matt 8:28-end
Thursday 2 July:	116:1-7	Gen 22:1-19	Matt 9:1-8
Friday 3 July:	106:1-5	Gen 23:1-4,19; 24:1-8,62-end	Matt 9:9-13
Saturday 4 July:	135:1-6	Gen 27:1-5a,15-29	Matt 9:14-17
Sunday 5 July Pentecost 6			
Ps 48; 2 Sam 5:1-5,9-10; 2 Cor 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13			
	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 6 July:	91:1-10	Gen 28:10-end	Matt 9:18-26
Tuesday 7 July:	17:1-8	Gen 32:22-end	Matt 9:32-end
Wednesday 8 July:	33:1-4, 18-end	Gen 41:55-end; 42:5-7,17-end	Matt 10:1-7
Thursday 9 July:	105:11-17	Gen 44:18-21,23-29; 45:1-5	Matt 10:7-15
Friday 10 July:	37:3-6,27,28	Gen 46:1-7,28-30	Matt 10:16-23
Saturday 11 July:	105:1-7	Gen 49:29-end; 50:15-25	Matt 10:24-33
Sunday 12 July Pentecost 7			
Ps 24; 2 Sam 6:1-5,12b-19; Eph 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29			
	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 13 July:	124	Exod 1:8-14,22	Matt 10:34-11:1
Tuesday 14 July:	69:1,2,31-end	Exod 2:1-15	Matt 11:20-24
Wednesday 15 July:	103:1-7	Exod 3:1-6,9-12	Matt 11:25-27
Thursday 16 July:	105:1,2,23	Exod 3:13-20	Matt 11:28-end
Friday 17 July:	116:10-end	Exod 11:10-12:14	Matt 12:1-8
Saturday 18 July:	136:1-4, 10-15	Exod 12:37-42	Matt 12:14-21
Sunday 19 July Pentecost 8			
Ps 89:20-37; 2 Sam 7:1-14a; Eph 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-34,53-56			

FIRE AND WATER—AND OTHER THINGS

The wisdom of ages gone by is full of examples that show how people knew from experience that growth in all areas and aspects of life needs some openness to change, some flexibility so life can bend without breaking, some fragility so that weakness and illness may become stepping stones to greater wholeness.

Most of us know the tension of trying to hold onto the unchanging aspects of life—especially when the changing is surrounding us and threatens to disrupt our lives. And yet ...! Yes, there is at the same time deep within us a longing for things to be different—change for the better. We want to experience more transformation.

Transformation is what all the great religions of the world are on about. It's their reason for existing. Jesus said it simply—and he says it for all the great teachers and spiritual guides. "I have come that you may have the fullness of life." (John 10:10)

This is where we bring in the basic elements of fire and water.

- Fire is needed to melt our hard hearts, as well as to burn the rubbish. The ancient alchemists used fire to melt some common base metals together so that some new, precious metal could be poured out and give shape, beauty and great value. The common view was that they were trying to make gold. The Christians who were alchemists (yes there were many) saw it all at a deeper level. They saw it as a spiritual process—creating the Christ spirit within our hearts. The transformation of our lives into the gold of truth, love, compassion, wholeness and beauty.
- Water, like fire, has the ability to clean and purify. It is also used to make a solution—to transform the dry granules of coffee into a liquid that for many is a solution to their need to feel warm, comfortable and awake. So a solution is both a liquid making something solid and unchanging into a flexible, useable something AND a solution which is an answer to a problem or need.

Isn't it significant that the ancient culture of China uses two symbols to form the word for crisis. It puts together as one 'danger' and 'opportunity'. It's like saying 'watch out' and 'be aware'.

TEARS OF TRANSFORMATION

If "suffering" is not a repairing process,
I will make it so.
I will learn the lesson it teaches.
These are not idle words.
These are not the consolations
of the sick.

Life is a mystery.
The fearful pain will fade.
I must turn to work.
I must put my agony
into something,
change it.
"Sorrow shall be changed
into Joy".

It is to lose oneself
more utterly,
to love more deeply,
to feel oneself part of life—
not separate.
Oh Life accept me—
make me worthy—
teach me.
(Katherine Mansfield)

The world is new
to us every morning.
This is God's gift,
and every person
should believe that
they are reborn each day.
(Ba'al Shem Tor)

Life means change
Yippee!

I have put before you
life and death,
blessings and curses.
Choose life!
Choose life so that
you and your
descendants may live.
(Deut 30:19)

The key to growth
is fragility.
While mild upsets are
dealt with by the body,
mind or spirit,
major ones are not;
they have the possibility
of stimulating a
sudden change
towards a more
complex and capable
body or system.
- Larry Dossey

Life itself constantly calls on us
to question ourselves — and by
producing suffering tends to
dissolve the old existing
personality and force us to the
development of a new one.
Water is a symbol of this
dissolving element — as in daily
life every time anyone sheds
genuine tears they have
undergone a little or large
transformation.

- John Sanford