

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 7

For 31 May 2015

Dear Friends

I'll try to avoid being 'a bit over the top'. It was a great triple experience for me. I can't pretend otherwise. On Saturday I had a night at the opera; well it was a dramatised version of the oratorio "Elijah". The story of my favourite prophet, with the music of Mendelssohn lifting it to another dimension. Then I came home to discover the Hurricanes had won yet again. Then Sunday was Pentecost with its celebration of the Holy Spirit.

It gradually dawned on me that these three events all slid together like pieces in a jig-saw. No forcing them—they fitted! They gave a hint of the fuller expanding picture.

The story of Elijah is of a prophet who followed his calling—with boldness and compassion, a lonely path at times, and after a high mountain-top experience there was a dark night of the soul. A deep depression that had him wanting to die. A story of one who was filled with the energy and vision of Spirit. Driven to lovingly lift up the downtrodden, and fearless against those who traded in ignorance and distortion.

As for the Hurricanes? — Here was a team that was more than the sum of the skilled individual players. A team that has a cohesion that reveals an X factor. We sense it is a powerful spirit, though we can't put our finger on it. Why not name it as another example of the reversal of the tower of Babel story? It's like the experience of the disciples when the Spirit imbued them, and separate individuals found themselves understanding each other. Separation, misunderstanding, lack of togetherness evaporated.

The common factor is what holds these very different events and gives them a powerful wholeness. It's a glimpse of Oneness—the demise of Twoness. And if we are touched by it we will probably think and feel— 'this is right', it's how it is intended to be.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 1 June:	113	Rom 12:9-16b	Luke 1:39-49, (50-56)
Tuesday 2 June:	112	1 Pet 1:10-16	Mark 12:13-17
Wednesday 3 June:	25:1-8	1 Pet 1:18-25	Mark 12:18-27
Thursday 4 June:	116:10-17	1 Cor 11:23-26	John 6:51-58
Friday 5 June:	146	1 Pet 4:7-13	Mark 12:35-37
Saturday 6 June:	103:1,8-13	Jude 17,20-25	Mark 12:38-end
Sunday 7 June <u>Pentecost 2</u>			
Ps 138; 1 Sam 8:4-11(12-15),16-20(11:14-15); 2 Cor 4:13– 15:1; Mark 3:20-35			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 8 June:	34:1-8	2 Cor 1:1-7	Matt 5:1-12
Tuesday 9 June:	119:129-136	2 Cor 1:18-22	Matt 5:13-16
Wednesday 10 June:	78:1-4	2 Cor 3:4-11	Matt 5:17-19
Thursday 11 June:	112	Acts 11:19-30	John 15:12-17
Friday 12 June:	99	2 Cor 4:7-15	Matt 5:27-32
Saturday 13 June:	19103:1-12	2 Cor 5:14-end	Matt 5:33-37
Sunday 14 June <u>Pentecost 3</u>			
Ps 20; 1 Sam 15:34—16:13; 2 Cor 5:6-10,14-17; Mark 4:26-34			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 15 June:	98	2 Cor 6:1-10	Matt 5:38-42
Tuesday 16 June:	146	2 Cor 8:1-9	Matt 5:43-end
Wednesday 17 June:	112	2 Cor 9:6-11	Matt 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday 18 June:	111	2 Cor 11:1-11	Matt 6:7-15
Friday 19 June:	34:1-6	2 Cor 11:18,21a-30	Matt 6:19-23
Saturday 20 June:	89:20-33	2 Cor 12:1-10	Matt 6:24-end
Sunday 21 June <u>Pentecost 4</u>			
Ps 9:9-20; 1 Sam 17:(1a,4-11,19-23)32-49; 2 Cor 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41			

FOR ALL—ALWAYS

There is the possibility that the celebration of Pentecost gives the impression that the Holy Spirit didn't really exist until it came with a rush and a roar and licking flames of fire—as reported in Acts.

Note: The Bible opens with the Spirit hovering over the chaos and darkness. The image is like a hen sheltering her newly hatched and as yet partially formed chicks in the warmth and darkness of her wings. The Spirit was there in the beginning. No! — it is before the beginning! There has never been a time when Spirit has not been.

There are plenty of hints, glimpses and references throughout the Bible. It's an exciting journey to follow the trail.

Maybe it's important to look beyond our biblical view and recognize that all the great religious traditions seem to have spiritual patterns which appear whenever and wherever human hearts and minds attempt to know and be in tune with the universe in all its rich and varied dimensions.

This can be a very reassuring thing to see and acknowledge. The vastness and timeless span of the cosmos reveals a consistent awareness of Spirit. The names (labels) given to this dimension vary but point in the same direction.

Here are some of the fingers pointing to common ground:-

- * Spirit by whatever name is real, and is good, true, beautiful and loving.
- * Spirit exists 'out there' and also 'in here'. The difficulty we have experiencing and realizing this 'in here' aspect is because of our separation, brokenness, aloneness—usually called sin.
- * There is a way out of this separation, our disharmony, loneliness and fear. There is a path to liberation, freedom, wholeness.
- * To find our version of the path and to follow it with commitment and consistently is to be on a path within the presence of Spirit.
- * A sign of this presence and liberation is being free to care, to be involved with others in compassion and justice, and to do it across the usual boundaries that separate us.

PS: When Jesus breathed on his frightened tiny group of friends it was a vivid symbol of the emphasis of knowing the Spirit within—within us as gift and wholeness and not just out there somewhere vague and remote from “my” tiny timid life.

AS WE ARE—SO WE SEE

William Blake wrote:-

When the sun rises, do you not
see a round disk of fire something
like a gold piece?

O No, No, I see an innumerable
company of the Heavenly host
crying, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the
Lord God Almighty”.

- ♦ What God does first and best and most is to trust his people with their moment in history.

He trusts them to do what
must be done for the sake of
his whole community.
(-Walter Brueggemann)

- ♦ God accept our prayers,
Let us pray inwardly.
Let us weep outwardly.
This is the breathing of the
soul.
This is the vitality of the
Spirit.
For this we give thanks.
(- Leunig)

The force that through the
green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age ...
The force that drives the
water through the rocks
Drives my red blood.
(Dylan Thomas)

When we try to pick out
anything by itself, we find it
hitched to everything else in
the Universe ...
No particle is ever wasted or
worn out, but eternally
flowing from use to use.
(the great Scottish naturalist --
John Muir)

Who is the Holy Spirit?
The Holy Spirit is a
compassionate outpouring of
the Creator and the Son.
(- Mechtild of Magdeburg)

Celestial light shine inward,
... and there plant eyes, that I
may see and tell of things
invisible to mortal sight.
(- John Milton, poet)