

**Lectionary**  
**Readings for every day**  
**You Select!**



in the HCUC

**No. 8**

**For 5 June 2016**

**Dear Friends**

Everywhere I turn these days there is some new book or magazine article that is referring to what is called “mindfulness”. There are books for colouring in patterns and pictures. My friendly book shop tells me these books have been the No. 1 for more than a year. The latest I saw was titled “Art for Mindfulness”. It was full of intricate and beautiful computer-generated designs waiting to be filled in with colours you choose and use. The same book introduces it with this explanation:- “Although it can be defined in various ways, mindfulness is most simply described as approaching the present moment without judgement, and with curiosity. It offers a break from our incessant, autopilot mind, and provides the opportunity to live a fuller life.”

As I considered this I thought of the writer Annie Dillard who a commentator said is one who ‘has made a career out of transforming the ordinary, the mundane and the domestic into the extraordinary.’

I don’t find it a surprise that her most recent work is called “The Abundance” and is a book brimming with awe. She lives on a small farm with a creek running through it, and not much else. Yet through her quiet silent focused attention and patient solitary observance discovered a world of mystery and wonder.

Back in 2014 TIME magazine had a cover article on Mindfulness. My memory of it centres on the picture of people spending time in the open spaces and parks that were surrounded by skyscrapers. (A fitting symbol of our lives lived in the midst of the hustle and bustle of a rushing technology and complexity.)

Perhaps you are wondering what all this has to do with our religion and/or spirituality. Is mindfulness just a new fad? Does it work? What do we do in order to reap the benefits of mindfulness? What are the benefits?

**Sincerely - Lester**

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 6 June:	121	1 Kings 1:1-6	Matt 5:1-12
Tuesday 7 June:	4	1 Kings 17:7-16	Matt 5:13-16
Wednesday 8 June:	16:1,6-end	1 Kings 18:20-39	Matt 5:17-19
Thursday 9 June:	65:8-end	1 Kings 18:41-end	Matt 5:20-26
Friday 10 June:	27:8-16	1 Kings 19:9,11-16	Matt 5:27-32
Saturday 11 June:	112	Acts 11:19-30	John 15:12-17
<b>Sunday 12 June <u>Pentecost 4</u></b>			
Ps 5:1-8; 1 Kings 21:1-10,(11-14),15-21a; Gal 2:15-21; Luke 7:36-8:3			

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 13 June:	5:1-5	1 Kings 21:1-16	Matt 5:38-42
Tuesday 14 June:	51:1-9	1 Kings 21:17-end	Matt 5:43-end
Wednesday 15 June:	31:21-end	2 Kings 2:1,6-14	Matt 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday 16 June:	97:1-8	Isa 63:7-9	Matt 6:7-15
Friday 17 June:	132:1-5, 11-13	2 Kings 11:1-4, 9-18,20	Matt 6:19-23
Saturday 18 June:	89:25-33	2 Chron 24:17-25	Matt 6:24-end
<b>Sunday 19 June <u>Pentecost 5</u></b>			
Ps 42 & 43; 1 Kings 19:1-4,(5-7),8-15a; Gal 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39			

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 20 June:	60:1-5, 11-end	2 Kings 17:5-8, 13-15,18	Matt 7:1-5
Tuesday 21 June:	48:1-2,8-end	2 Kings 19:9b-11, 14-21,31-36	Matt 7:6,12-14
Wednesday 22 June:	119:33-40	2 Kings 22:8-13; 23:1-3	Matt 7:15-20
Thursday 23 June:	79:1-9,12	2 Kings 24:8-17	Matt 7:21-end
Friday 24 June:	85:7-13	Isa 40:1-11	Luke 3:1-17
Saturday 25 June:	74:1-3, 21-end	Lam 2:2,10-14, 18-19	Matt 8:5-17
<b>Sunday 26 June <u>Pentecost 6</u></b>			

## IT'S NOT A FAD—OR A FALLING STAR

Mindfulness is 'as old as the hills' - as we say in order to emphasize that it is not a recent discovery. It may be called by different names but the essentials of the practice are at least 2,500 years old.

Mindfulness is a major component in all the great religions and spiritual pathways.

The West is only now awakening to the multi-benefits the practice brings to our frantic, noisy culture. The East has been quietly enjoying the practice for age after age. So what we are hearing in the media gives top priority to all the good things that it offers. This sudden and exciting discovery can result in treating it as a quick fix. Another danger is that much of the depth is lost in the rush to promote and practice mindfulness. Things take time! Finding the right practice for you, being committed to it, and actually doing it requires regular practice with small first steps. This is true of all programmes that promise results that benefit and enrich our lives in the areas of the body, the mind and the spirit. (It is important to note these 3 areas are all profoundly inter-related and entwined as one whole.)

The benefits have been tested and listed—no doubt about it. Here is an authentic sample, which is just a taste.

- ◆ Reducing stress, increasing inner calm and harmony.
- ◆ Decreasing anxiety, discomfort and pain (physical and emotional).
- ◆ Increasing clarity (over confusion) and greater creativity.
- ◆ Awakening to higher states of awareness or consciousness.
- ◆ An opening to realizing that my 'I AMness' is constant, ever present and is untouched by any illness to my body, any regret from the past, any fear of the future, any confusion of the mind, any painful emotion—the list goes on!

Note that there seems to be (and is) a gradual greater and more subtle rise in the growth and expansion of our awareness and the benefits mindfulness brings.

Also note that much of what is said here could be said for meditation as well as for mindfulness. Maybe a different label will help some folk to get going!

## SOME WORDS—THOUGHTS—IMAGES FROM TWO MASTERS

Thich Nhat Hanh the Monk from Vietnam lives now in a community he founded in France. He is claimed by many to be the current most revered master of mindfulness.

"We spend most of our time looking for happiness, and all the time around us the world is full of wonder. Yet most of us are running as if there is some better place to go—but we are rarely in a position inside ourselves to "see" and listen.

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"If we don't have silence in ourselves—if our mind, our body, are full of noise—then we can't hear beauty's call."

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"Mindfulness is often described as a bell that reminds us to stop and silently listen. In just two or three seconds of breathing mindfully (ie with awareness) we can awaken to the fact that we are alive."

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"What does 'I am here now' mean? It means I exist! I am!"

For Christians the Master of mindfulness is Jesus.

He knew in a deeply profound way what Moses discovered, that the Source of all life, the Ground of our Being is the I AM awareness. He was conscious that this is his true nature—and he lived from that centre within himself—and that is why he is known as the Christ Spirit.

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This reality is waiting for us to discover, acknowledge and make the centre from which our daily life emerges.

Only in stillness, silence and listening can we hear the invitation to say

I AM.

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He invites us to journey with little steps at first  
⇒ to consider the lilies  
⇒ To see the birds  
⇒ To focus on now and not worry about tomorrow  
⇒ To focus our seeking happiness on the qualities of love, light and life.  
⇒ Until we awake to realise we can say I AM.

(Go to Matthew chapters 5-7)