

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 17

For 9 October 2011

Dear Friends

A friend was telling me about his long slow climb out of a valley of deep depression. As he spoke he used an image that truly grabbed my attention. It was both very simple and very profound. He did mention, but went way beyond, the often used image of the light at the end of the tunnel. He saw his emergence from the tunnel and it was a vision of light, warmth and beauty. He saw children playing in the sunlight and there were gardens full of flowers of different varieties and glorious mixed colours.

When I put the phone down I sat silently pondering his vision. There was the sunlight with its glorious brightness, warmth and healing energy—an essential life source. Then there were the flowers. They seemed to be the reminder of the cycling seasons, of spring that surprises us with newness and summer warmth. They are part of the parade of life forms that spring from the invisible formless life source. They lead us back to the primordial origins of the universe. Most of all I contemplated the children in his vision. I imagined their energy. I heard their laughter. I sensed their unselfconscious delight in being themselves, and in being with one another. Is this a hint of the original purpose of life—of a divine intention—of God’s plan? Do we find this with little children because they are still close to God? They haven’t forgotten their origin and their true home. The poet Wordsworth puts it clearly:-

*Not in entire forgetfulness, ...
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!*

Is it because of this still fresh memory that little children respond so easily, naturally and openly to praying and meditating? Little children know—but they don’t know they know! Hence the importance of fostering the practice of prayer and meditation. On the next page Jane, at my request, shares something of her experience as such a teacher.

Sincerely, Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 10 October:	98	Rom 1:1-7	Luke 11:29-32
Tuesday 11 October:	19:1-4	Rom 1:16-25	Luke 11:37-41
Wednesday 12 October:	62:1-8	Rom 2:1-11	Luke 11:42-46
Thursday 13 October:	130	Rom 3:21-30	Luke 11:47-end
Friday 14 October:	32	Rom 4:1-8	Luke 12:1-7
Saturday 15 October:	105:6-10, 41-44	Rom 4:13,16-18	Luke 12:8-12
Sunday 16 October <u>Pentecost 18</u>			
Ps 99; Ex 33:12-23; 1 Thes 1:1-10; Matt 22:15-22			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 17 October:	71	Rom 4:20-end	Luke 12:13-21
Tuesday 18 October:	40:7-12	Rom 5:12,15,17-end	Luke 12:35-38
Wednesday 19 October:	124	Rom 6:12-18	Luke 12:39-48
Thursday 20 October:	1	Rom 6:19-end	Luke 12:49-53
Friday 21 October:	119:33-40	Rom 7:18-end	Luke 12:54-end
Saturday 22 October:	24:1-6	Rom 8:1-11	Luke 13:1-9
Sunday 23 October <u>Pentecost 19</u>			
Ps 90:1-6,1-8; Deut 34:1-12; Thes 2:1-8; Matt 22:34-46			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 24 October:	68:1-6,19	Rom 8:12-17	Luke 13:10-17
Tuesday 25 October:	126	Rom 8:18-25	Luke 13:18-21
Wednesday 26 October:	13	Rom 8:26-30	Luke 13:22-30
Thursday 27 October:	109:20-21	Rom 8:31-end	Luke 13:31-end
Friday 28 October:	147:13-end	Rom 9:1-5	Luke 14:1-6
Saturday 29 October:	94:14-19	Rom 11:1-2,11-12, 25-29	Luke 14:1,7-11
Sunday 30 October <u>Pentecost 20</u>			
Ps 107:1-7,33-37; Josh 3:7-17; 1 Thes 2:9-13; Matt 23:1-12			

PRAYING AND MEDITATING — NOT ONLY FOR ADULTS

An invited contribution from one of the many teachers who work in church schools in New Zealand, initiating children into prayer and meditation. Thank you Jane.

“Every Tuesday for three years I went to a church primary school in my city for 15 minutes at the start of the school day, to introduce Christian Meditation as part of the Religious Studies programme. I spent around a term with each class, and only stopped this gentle routine when the teachers were ready to take over leading Christian Meditation themselves. Now, I’ve been told the whole school meditates for a few minutes at the same time every week—a silent school united in prayer, a moment of peace shared.

Did I teach the children to meditate? I don’t think so. At most I reminded them of something they already knew, encouraged them to do something that was natural to them. I’ve been sure, for a long time, that meditation is as normal and necessary to us all—of any age or temperament—as breathing, part of universal spiritual wisdom, but nothing has convinced me of this so strongly as seeing five year olds—who come racing into the classroom at 8.50, straight off the playground, bouncing with early morning energy—gladly gather themselves in silence and stillness, eyes lightly closed, repeating a prayer word inside themselves, those beautiful small hands relaxed on their knees or in their laps. They know instinctively that this is right; they know its good for them ... and it is. They like it, they ask for it, and their teachers say the children are calmed and comforted by their few minutes’ meditation.

This gentle practice of meditation within the Christian tradition (our first written records date from around 400 AD) was for centuries nurtured within the monastic tradition. Now it is recognised as a simple contemplative practice suitable for all Christians everywhere; so it is—if you like—our birthright in our faith, an accessible way of deep prayer, a journey to our own heart where we find the Spirit of Love. When we meditate with children, we and they together claim this birthright of peace.”

Jane Carswell is a NZ writer whose book “*Under the Huang Jiao Tree*” is about her experience as a teacher of English in China. The book won a special award. It looks at her experience from an inner and outer perspective.

Jesus said,

**Let the children come to me
and do not stop them,
because the Kingdom of God
belongs to such as these.**

**Remember this!
Whoever does not receive the
Kingdom of God like a child
will never enter it.**

Our birth is but a sleep and a
forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us,
our life’s Star,
Hath had elsewhere its
setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire
forgetfulness,
And not in utter
nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory
do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our
infancy!

- William Wordsworth

It is difficult to be
simple.

Children are not so
complicated as adults
are in our lives.

For them to turn back
to their creating God’s
hand is not such a long
journey as it is for us.

Children are much
closer to the creating
of their loving God.

— so writes Marlene
Halpin—a Dominican
Sister—who taught
children prayer and
meditation in the church
school at the Cathedral of
Kalamazoo, U.S.A.