

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



in the HCUC

**No. 9**

**For 19 June 2011**

**Dear Friends**

We were still in the midst of the trauma caused by the Pike River coal mine explosion when the Christchurch earthquake devastated the city's CBD. The nation was deeply affected. All the major newspapers had banner headlines that in one way or another referred to it as our "darkest day".

Dark days are seldom, if ever, welcome. Darkness is an image we use to refer to unwelcome events. They may involve devastation, ongoing danger, extreme loss, brutal behaviour, tragic events. Those involved may feel confused, shaken to their core, overwhelmed by their loss and fearful of their future.

It's not easy to say a good word about the experience of darkness. However let's try. I think it is true that out of the darkness experienced by the nation there emerged a fresh and positive community spirit. People reached out to strangers and neighbours. Acts of care and compassion are still being talked about. Think of the stories you heard, and note the love and hope that shone through the darkness. Many beautiful things happen in the dark. One writer notes that "Seeds germinate and strike root. Most creatures rest during the hours of darkness. Tender sexual intimacy often occurs in the dark. Our bodies heal and are refreshed in the dark night hours. Mystical spirituality is well aware of the illumination that can emerge from the dark night of the soul." Think of months we, each one, spent in our mother's womb!

You are probably well aware of the interplay of darkness and light referred to in the Bible. (See Genesis 1:1-5; John 1:1-5). The only section I wish to underline here is the quote from Isaiah, poet and prophet (Is 45:7) who dares to tell us that God says: "*I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe. I the Lord do all these things.*" One of the implications of these words is that light and darkness are both included in the oneness of creation. They belong together. It's easy to say Yes to the light. It's very hard to Yes to the darkness.

**Sincerely, Lester**

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 20 June:	33:12-end	Gen 12:1-9	Matt 7:1-5
Tuesday 21 June:	15	Gen 13:2,5-end	Matt 7:6,12-14
Wednesday 22 June :	105:1-9	Gen 15:1-12,17-18	Matt 7:15-20
Thursday 23 June:	106:1-5	Gen 16:1-12,15-16	Matt 7:21-end
Friday 24 June:	128	Gen 17:1,9-10,15-22	Matt 8:1-4
Saturday 25 June:	24	Gen 18:1-15	Matt 8:5-17
<b>Sunday 26 June <u>Pentecost 2</u></b>			
Ps 13; Gen 22:1-14; Rom 6:12-23; Matt 10:40-42			

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 27 June:	103:6-17	Gen 18:16-end	Matt 8:18-22
Tuesday 28 June:	26	Gen 19:15-29	Matt 8:23-27
Wednesday 29 June:	34:1-12	Gen 21:5,8-20	Matt 8:28-end
Thursday 30 June:	116:1-7	Gen 22:1-19	Matt 9:1-8
Friday 1 July:	106:1-5	Gen 23:1-4,19; 24:1-8,62-end	Matt 9:9-13
Saturday 2 July:	135:1-6	Gen 27:1-5a,15-29	Matt 9:14-17
<b>Sunday 3 July <u>Pentecost 3</u></b>			
Ps 45:10-17; Gen 24:34-38,42-49,58-67; Rom 7:15-5a; Matt 11:16-19,25-30			

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 4 July:	91:1-10	Gen 28:10-end	Matt 9:18-26
Tuesday 5 July:	17:1-8	Gen 32:22-end	Matt 9:32-end
Wednesday 6 July:	33:1-4, 18-end	Gen 41:55-end; 42:5-7,17-end	Matt 10:1-7
Thursday 7 July:	105:11-17	Gen 44:18-21, 23-29; 45:1-5	Matt 10:7-15
Friday 8 July:	37:3-6,27-28	Gen 46:1-7,28-30	Matt 10:16-23
Saturday 9 July:	105:1-7	Gen 49:29-end; 50:15-25	Matt 10:24-33
<b>Sunday 10 July <u>Pentecost 4</u></b>			
Ps 119:105-112; Gen 25:19-34; Rom 8:1-11; Matt 13:24-30,36-43			

## TWO SIDES — ONE COIN

Darkness and light are two sides of the one coin. Both belong in the oneness of the universe. Or to use religious language, we might say that both light and darkness are held together in the hands of God. They are complementary energies and they act in a creative tension. To reject darkness or want to exclude it from our view of the universe is to create a world of duality. We live in a world of both light and darkness. Life is not an 'either/or' affair, but an integrative both/and. To enter greater personal wholeness we need to accept and live a both/and integrated approach. This means accepting not only the dark aspects of the world around us—like disasters which hit a whole nation, or crush a whole community—but also the dark bits in ourselves.

If you watch films in the cinemas you'll be familiar with the astonishing number of films which feature dark forces seeking to end our human existence—sometimes in the form of destroying aliens, or a dark destructive individual, or some natural forces which seem to threaten the life of this whole planet. In brief, the creators seem to recognise that we have darkness on our minds and they are giving expression to our fears.

One of the things that happens when we face our fears, or try to cope with our anger, is that we may bury it inside ourselves, or pretend it doesn't exist, in which case it lives inside us and distorts our view of life. This takes us into the world of psychology and we discover a vast field of our inner self, and areas that we are often unaware of—what Freud and Jung called the "unconscious". Too much to deal with here.

This much needs to be said: This darkness within us (or the shadow side of our lives) needs to be owned or else it will own us. Our disowned feelings, fears and the bits we don't like about ourselves can shape our decisions and the directions of our life.

The other thing that often happens is that we hang on others a big black coat—that we don't want to own. The psychologists call it projection. Jesus simply said it is the desire we have to clean up someone's life when it is only a reflection of what needs cleaning up in our own life. Remember the bit about the speck of sawdust in our neighbour's eye and our blindness to the log in our own eye?

## BEFRIENDING THE DARK

It is really hard to  
befriend the dark,  
So often we try to  
split it off.

"We have so  
alienated negative  
forces that we  
eventually  
personalised them into  
a supreme divine evil  
force—called the Devil,  
Satan or Lucifer,  
(the latter,  
ironically, means  
bearer of light)."

"The befriending is not  
merely a form of  
sentimental tolerance.

It is, in fact,  
characterised by a  
passion for justice,  
and solidarity for all  
who are poor and  
oppressed."

- Diamuid O'Murchu

Listen to the poet Rilke.  
He has faith in nights,  
and his love of the dark  
is because he sees it as  
related to the womb of  
our origins.

"You darkness, that I  
come from, I love you  
more than all the fires  
that fence in the  
world, for they make a  
circle of light for  
everyone, and then  
no-one outside learns  
of you.

But the darkness pulls  
in everything: shapes  
and fires, animals and  
myself, how easily it  
gathers them! —  
powers and people —  
and it is possible a  
great energy is moving  
near me. I have faith  
in nights."

- Rilke