

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 7

For 23 May 2010

Dear Friends

It was a very simple article in a coffee-table magazine. It had a list of ‘does’ and ‘don’ts’ when dealing with a common cold. One section said don’t rush to your doctor and ask for antibiotics. Why? Colds are from viruses, not bacterial infections, so antibiotics don’t work to treat a cold. (No charge for this little health tip!) It was the next sentence that really grabbed my attention:- “In fact a study published in 2009 in FAMILY MEDICINE found it was the doctor’s empathy, rather than the medication dispensed, that was more important in speeding recovery.” I have never seen this stated so openly in print. Well, let me qualify that just a bit. You can find the point being made in articles and books by professional doctors and researchers. And for me and thousands of people in the 70’s it was shouted from the housetops by Norman Cousins in his book “*Anatomy of An Illness*”. In case you don’t know, it is the story of his recovery from an illness that many of the doctors near him said was untreatable and fatal. Cousins himself did not accept this prognosis. Instead he enlisted a long-time friend and highly experienced medico and together they formed a flexible and radical procedure and actioned it. Many people know the story vaguely and have talked about only one aspect of Cousins’ treatment. They know that he watched all his old favourite comedy films. He found that after a session of hilarious viewing and belly laughs he could enjoy 2 hours of non-medicated blissful sleep. Many have made his healing simply a one dimensional healing—important as laughter was in the treatment, it was only one factor.

All of this prompts me to set out two important principles, and to put them together so that we see them clearly and allow them to work together in our lives.

Principle 1: Dr Andrew Weil says: “The body has innate healing abilities.” In other words, the body is constantly seeking to bring balance, wholeness and harmony within us. This healing comes from inside not outside. It is built into us, which is a wonderful affirmation that nature/the universe/the cosmos/God/divine creativity wants us to have peace, healing, equilibrium. The cosmos is NOT out to get us. It is always seeking our wellness.

Principle 2: This is encapsulated in the little quote from the magazine—namely a positive relationship of trust and empathy between doctor and patient is more important than the medication. Norman Cousins puts it this way: “I was incredibly fortunate to have as my doctor a man who knew that his biggest job was to encourage to the fullest the patient’s will to live and to mobilise all the natural resources of body and mind to combat disease.”

I think Jesus used both these principles. If so it may alter our view of Jesus.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 24 May:	111	1 Pet 1:3-9	Mark 10:17-27
Tuesday 25 May:	98:1-5	1 Pet 1:10-16	Mark 10:28-31
Wednesday 26 May:	147:12-end	1 Pet 1:18-25	Mark 10:32-45
Thursday 27 May:	100	1 Pet 2:2-5,9-12	Mark 10:46-52
Friday 28 May:	96:10-end	1 Pet 4:7-13	Mark 11:11-26
Saturday 29 May:	63:1-6	Jude 17:20-25	Mark 11:27-33
Sunday 30 May <u>Trinity</u>			
Ps 8; Prov 8:1-4,22-31; Rom 5:1-5; John 16:12-15			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 31 May:	91:1,2,14-16	2 Pet 1:2-7	Mark 12:1-12
Tuesday 1 June:	90:1-4,10, 14,16	2 Pet 3:11-15,17-18	Mark 12:13-17
Wednesday 2 June:	123	2 Tim 1:1-3,6-12	Mark 12:18-27
Thursday 3 June:	25:4-12	2 Tim 2:8-15	Mark 12:28-34
Friday 4 June:	119:161-168	2 Tim 3:10-end	Mark 12:35-37
Saturday 5 June:	71:7-16	2 Tim 4:1-8	Mark 12:38-end
Sunday 6 June <u>Pentecost 2</u>			
Ps 46; 1 Kings 17:8-16(17-24); Gal 1:11-24; Luke 7:11-17			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 7 June:	121	1 Kings 17:1-6	Matt 5:1-12
Tuesday 8 June:	4	1 Kings 17:7-16	Matt 5:13-16
Wednesday 9 June:	16:1,6-end	1 Kings 18:20-39	Matt 5:17-19
Thursday 10 June:	65:8-end	1 Kings 18:41-end	Matt 5:20-26
Friday 11 June:	27:8-16	1 Kings 19:9,11-16	Matt 5:27-32
Saturday 12 June:	16:1-7	1 Kings 19:19-end	Matt 5:33-37
Sunday 13 June <u>Pentecost 3</u>			
Ps 5:1-8; 1 Kings 21:1-10,(11-14), 15-21a; Gal 2:15-21; Luke 7:36-8:3			

HANGING IT ON OTHERS

- * It is well recognized that we all carry a shadow side to our personality. Sometimes it is called 'our dark side'. It consists of bits we don't like about ourselves. We may try to hide them from ourselves, or ignore them, or pretend they do not exist. But most often we hang them on other people like a big black cloak. The result is that we see in other people the things we don't want to see and accept in ourselves. So when we see in other people attitudes and behaviour we dislike or hate, it is usually a pointer to the things we hate in ourselves. In fact we may not only deny we have such bits, we may be unaware or unconscious of them.
- * There is another aspect to all this, and this is what we can link to Jesus. This other aspect is a very positive one. We all carry something of greater importance than the shadow within us. It is the will to live and the power to always be aiming at balance and wholeness, inner peace and harmony. It is Principle No. 1 on the previous page. What often happens is that we see these powers shining from the lives of a few remarkable people and we make them into messiahs and saviours—as if they have what we would like to have, but haven't got. This happened to Jesus.
- * An example: Jesus was asleep in the stern of a fishing boat as he and his disciples cross the lake. A storm threatens to swamp the boat and they wake him not so he can help to bail out the water, but to shout at him with "Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing?" So what happened to all their experiences with storms on the lake, all their knowledge, expertise and courage? It seems they gave away or turned away from what they had and put all their dependency on Jesus, even to the extent of saying he didn't seem to care in this crisis. Jesus, having dealt with the wind and waves, turns to them and says "Why are you such cowards? Have you still no faith?" Faith in what? It would seem that Jesus thinks they could have dealt with the situation themselves, but instead they credited him with all the power and themselves with none. One writer who examines this incident from Mark 4:35-41, sees the disciples projecting all their power onto Jesus and Jesus challenges them to see that they too have the power within them. In effect he is saying "Use your power—use your faith! Next time take care of it yourselves and let me sleep!" is the way the commentator Walter Wink puts it.
- * There are many other gospel incidents we could look at from this perspective, such as Mark 5:34, 10:52. Jesus believes that the healing power already exists in these people, and his presence triggers these inner latent powers. So does this mean that Jesus avoids making us dependent on him as a 'messiah' or 'saviour'? Does he see his work as awakening us to the powers within ourselves which we have been taught not to believe are within our reach?

LAUGHTER — MIND AND BODY

A doctor told one woman patient that his treatment would work best when combined with the natural drive of the body to right itself.

Norman Cousins reflecting on his experience writes:-

"The regenerative force in human beings is at the core of our humanness. Sometimes this force is blocked or under-developed. One of the most important things a doctor can do for a patient is to assess the capacity of each individual to put that force fully to work."

Could this be what Jesus was doing when he asked the man lying by the pool for years —

"Do you want to be well?"
(John 4:1-6)

Cousins also learned never to under-estimate the capacity of the mind and body to regenerate. "The life-force may be the least understood force on earth."

And William James said that human beings tend to live too far within self-imposed limits.

Our body cells are constantly eavesdropping on our thoughts, beliefs and emotions and being changed by them.
- D Chopra

Wherever a thought goes a chemical goes with it.
- D Chopra

To raise or lower someone's spirit is correspondingly reflected in the body.
- D Chopra

Laughter is internal jogging.
- N Cousins

Laughter is a tranquiliser with no side effects.
- A Glasgow

What soap is to the body, laughter is to the soul.
- Yiddish proverb

Jesus said—Whoever believes in me will do the works I do—yes, he will do even greater ones ...
John 14:12

And Charlie Brown in Peanuts put it simply and graphically:-
"Life is like a ten-speed bicycle
Most of us have gears we never use."