

MONDAY**6 JUNE****1 Kings 17:1-6**
Psalm 121
Matthew 5:1-12**TUESDAY****7 JUNE****1 Kings 17:7-16**
Psalm 4
Matthew 5:13-16**WEDNESDAY****8 JUNE****1 Kings 18:20-39**
Psalm 16:1. 6-end
Matthew 5:17-19**THURSDAY****9 JUNE****1 Kings 18:41-end**
Psalm 65:8-end
Matthew 5:20-26**FRIDAY****10 JUNE****1 Kings 19:9. 11-16**
Psalm 27:8-16
Matthew 5:27-32**SATURDAY****11 JUNE****Barnabas the Apostle**
Job 29:11-16 or
Acts 11:19-end
Psalm 112
Acts 11:19-end or
Galatians 2:1-10
John 15:12-17

REFLECTION

The coming week's

New Testament readings start on a reassuring note. Firstly, we have the inclusive, comforting Beatitudes. On Tuesday Jesus

says "You are the salt of the earth"; and encourages us to shine our light.

On Thursday and Friday the message becomes decidedly uncompromising. Beyond obeying the letter of the law, this is about the spirit of the law – even our innermost thoughts and feelings are laid bare: an angry thought is tantamount to murder; a lustful look is the equivalent of adultery. The danger is that we look up from our Bibles feeling entirely inadequate. Because nobody is spotless, and everybody has negative thoughts and feelings at times. So how can we possibly become as perfect as Jesus demands? Well, the clue lies in a little interruption to the week's readings, in the form of Barnabas the Apostle, commemorated on Saturday. Love – and the process of discovering it – cleanses our innermost thoughts and draws us closer to perfection. So rather than trying to force ourselves to be perfect, or change our negative thoughts and feelings, much better to do something positive, and practise ways of loving one another!

PRAYER

Descend on us, Holy Spirit,
ignite our lives with your cleansing power,
transform our thoughts and feelings,
to the glory of God the Father.



Old monastery of St Barnabas, Famagusta, Cyprus.
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SCIENCE AND RELIGION

PART III – GOD THE HEALER – CHRISTIANITY AND MEDICAL SCIENCE

For centuries no distinction was made between theology and science – to study the physical universe and everything in it, was to study God and God's creation. We have seen how science has had its differences with Christianity, in terms of what is considered to be "real". But medical science is also deeply embedded in Christian ethics. Indeed, the words "healing" and "holiness" are linguistically related, both implying something "whole". In obedience to Christ's command to "Cure the sick... cleanse the lepers" (Matthew 10:8) many Christians have been involved in the bodily welfare of their fellow human beings.

Until the thirteenth century, hands-on healthcare was part of a priest's duty – to such an extent that the Fourth Lateran Council saw fit to prohibit clergy from performing surgical operations. As illness was seen as a punishment from God, treatment sometimes involved banishing "evil spirits" from the body in tortuous ways. Many modern healthcare, teaching and research institutions have Christian origins, particularly those founded by religious orders. But Christianity and medicine have often clashed over ethical issues, particularly when the sanctity of life is in the frame. Breakthroughs in stem cell research have been huge news in science, but ethical questions have arisen when obtaining these cells involves the destruction of life.

Some traditions, such as the Christian Scientists, limit or prohibit medical intervention, choosing instead to rely on faith and prayer. Ever since humans started to look towards the heavens, and investigate the world in minute detail, science has made astonishing discoveries, many of which have improved the quality of life. But such advances often come at a price. With its emphasis on love, Christianity is able to challenge science not to put too material a value on life, and not to see things in entirely mechanistic terms.

For despite the wonderful advances science has made, the words of Shakespeare's Hamlet still ring true for many Christians: "There are more things in heaven and earth... than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

LIVE

the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

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Pentecost

Monday 6 June to
Saturday 11 June
2022

WEEK