

Psalms (2)



Although a psalm can have many themes, it is customary to classify them into categories: psalms of praise, penitential psalms, psalms of thanksgiving, messianic psalms, pilgrimage psalms, wisdom psalms, psalms of lament and complaint, and liturgical psalms. In today's *Link* we can only glance at a few of these categories.

Psalms of Praise

We all know one Hebrew word: Alleluia! It means "Praise the Lord". The theme of praise (Hallel) is found everywhere in the Prayer Book of Jesus but the following psalms are especially recognized as Psalms of Praise: 113-118, 136 and 145-150.

The first group (113-118), called "The Little Hallel" are associated with the Jewish feasts of "Tabernacles", "Weeks" and "Passover".

The "Great Hallel" is Psalm 136, so called because it is a song of praise of God for the wonders God has done in creation, in history, and in daily life. Its chorus line is unforgettable: "For his love endures forever".

"The last Hallel" is a collection of psalms which lead up to the final psalm (150) which is a prayer of pure praise. The last line of the whole collection of psalms is a beautiful prayer in itself: "Let everything that lives and that breathes give praise to the Lord!"

Penitential Psalms

There are seven penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130 and 143). When we recall St Paul's words, "where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more", it is easy to appreciate the importance of these psalms of repentance. A well-known penitential psalm is

the "Miserere", Psalm 51, ascribed to David in his repentance for his grave sin against Uriah. Not only an eloquent plea for mercy, it is also a joyful celebration of forgiveness: "... give me again the joy of your help".

Equally well known is psalm 130, the "De Profundis" or "from the depths". A cry of personal anguish and sorrow rises up from the well of grief and becomes an act of hope: "because with the Lord there is mercy and plentiful redemption".

Wisdom Psalms

The Bible contains several books which are classed as "Wisdom Literature". These books are part of a wisdom tradition in the ancient world and a number of psalms are included in this category of biblical writings, which next week's *Catholic Link* will develop.

Psalms 1, 37, 73, 112 and 119 are part of the wisdom tradition which prepared for the revelation of Jesus as the Wisdom of God. An example of this is the very long Psalm 119. In it each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet introduces a cluster of eight verses built around notions of law, teaching, promise, judgement, commandment and testimony. The overriding mood of this long psalm is the love of the Word of God: "Your Word is a lamp for feet and a light for my path". The just person listens to the Word of God, meditates on it, learns it by heart and loves it: "My part, I have said, O Lord, is to obey your word". This psalm is truly a delight for all who love the Scriptures: "O Lord, my portion is to obey your words".

Let us give thanks that the Psalms throw light on our path as we negotiate our way through the extraordinary challenges of 2020!

SUNDAY MASS

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON:

Look to your covenant, O Lord, forget not the life of your poor ones forever. Arise, O God and defend your cause; do not forget the cries of those who seek you.

FIRST READING: 1 Kings 19:9, 11-13.

RESPONSORY PSALM: Psalm 85.

RESPONSE:

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and grant us your salvation.

1. I will hear what the Lord God speaks; he speaks of peace for his people and his faithful. His salvation is near for those who fear him, and his glory will dwell in our land. **R**
2. Merciful love and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have kissed. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth, and justice look down from heaven. **R**
3. Also the Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase. Justice will march before him, and guide his steps on the way. **R**

SECOND READING: Romans 9:1-5.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, alleluia! I long for you, O Lord, my soul longs for his word. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 14:22-33.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON:

O Jerusalem, glorify the Lord who gives you your fill of finest wheat.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Live the Word

Mon 10 Aug St Lawrence, DcnM

2 Corinthians 9:6-10; Psalm 112; John 12:24-26

When you lend something you have to let go of what you are lending, and you never know in what condition the item will be when it is returned. Lending takes trust. It also takes love.

Tue 11 Aug St Clare, V

Ezekiel 2:8-3:4; Psalm 119; Matthew 18:1-5.10.12-14

Little children are not always good little angels. But when they are unkind or unjust with others they are normally humble in asking to be forgiven. They instinctively trust in the power of love.

Wed 12 Aug (Bl. Isidore Bakanja, M)

Ezekiel 9:1-7; 10:18-22; Psalm 113; Matthew 18:15-20

There is a danger in believing that we only succeed when we reach many people (in ministry). Jesus reminds us that he is present with the same passion and power among 2 or 3 as he is with a multitude.

Thu 13 Aug (Ss Pontian P & Hippolytus Pr, Ms)

Ezekiel 12:1-12; Psalm 78; Matthew 18:21-19:1

Maybe Jesus' injunction to forgive not just 7 times but 77 times sounds impossible, because it is for us. Maybe this is the slow work of a lifetime. But perhaps this is not a punishment at all, but a mercy.

Fri 14 Aug St Maximilian Kolbe, PrM

Ezekiel 16:1-15.60.63; Isaiah 12:2-6; Matthew 19:3-12

God is not a security blanket against hardship. Instead, God is a loving presence wherein a loss can be transformed into opportunity, an illness can pass, and grief can give birth to compassion.

Sat 15 Aug Liturgy of the Day

Ezekiel 18:1-10.13.30-32; Psalm 51; Matthew 19:13-15

Jesus relies on us to imagine the kingdom of God – on earth as in heaven – as children would, but many have become disillusioned. Perhaps ordinary human beings sharing their faith regularly will change the world.

Sun 16 Aug ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

Revelations 11:19; 12:1-6.10; Psalm 45; Luke 1:39-56

Today's celebration reminds us that we, like Mary, have been chosen for a special purpose. It might be to help others through the work that we do, or by the way that we live our lives in joy and gratitude.

(KEY: **SOLEMNITY**; **FEAST**; **Memorial**; (Optional Memorial) Dcn=Deacon; M=Martyr; V=Virgin; Pr= Priest

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