THE FIVE BOOKS OF THE PSALMS

The Psalms come from the collections of songs used in the Temple of Jerusalem. Although tradition has it that David regulated the liturgy just as he composed all the psalms, it is more likely that the Levites – the “Sons of Asaph and Yedutun” – who were in charge of the sacred music of the Temple, had a greater role in the writing and selection of the psalms. With the passage of time, the psalms took on an overlay of personal piety, collective lamentations and the expressions of another era.

As the prayer book of ancient Israel, the psalms fed Jewish piety as they did the prayer of Jesus. To this day, they form the foundation of Christian liturgical prayer used by countless religious, priests and deacons as well as an increasing number of laity.

Not all Christians may find in the psalms the fulfillment of their own aspirations, but adapting them for prayer, or better still, allowing them to educate and form one’s spiritual life may prove to be more valuable. If we are to enter into a conversation with God, we would benefit more by listening to Him and meditating his inspired words than by speaking of our own worries.

The Psalms have come through the ages as a powerful means of prayer. If they do not always satisfy our own sense of prayer, it is not necessarily a bad thing. If they manage to unbalance even slightly our ingrained habits of piety, that is not a small gift. These psalms may be capable of renewing our language and symbolism in a world where God is often a stranger and people would prefer to be left alone, to pursue their own interests.

The Psalms have been collected into five books as one can see from the endings of each book (cf Ps 41, 72, 106). Within different collections one sometimes finds nearly identical Psalms and we can consider them as pairs.

The numbering of the psalms is slightly different in the Hebrew and Greek editions. We have used the Hebrew numbering and placed the Greek number in parenthesis – the one most often used in our Latin Liturgy.

The Songs in the Bible

Together with the psalms we should also indicate other prayers which we find in most parts of the Bible and which we usually call “canticles”:

- of Moses: Ex 15
- 2nd of Moses: Dt 32
- of Anna: 1 S 2
- of Isaiah: Is 12
- of Hezekiah: Is 38
- of Habakkuk: Hb 3
- of the three servants: Dn 3:52
- of Tobit: Tb 13
- of Sirach: Sir 36
- of Mary: Lk 1:46
- of Zechariah: Lk 1:68
- of Simeon: Lk 2:29
- Ephesians: 1:3-14; 3:14-20
- Revelation: several passages
- See also 2 S 23; Ne 9:6; Is 26:7; 59; 63:7; Jer 20:7; Jdt 16:13; Wis 9:1; Sir 23:1; 51.
The first psalm speaks of happiness, just as Jesus’ first discourse began with “Happy!” (or being blessed, “Fortunate”).

We often find the theme of two ways in the Bible (Dt 30:15; Jer 21:8; Pro 4:18; Mt 7:13). It expresses our personal responsibility which will be clearly seen on the day of judgment. Whatever the appearances may be at times, true happiness is for those who are faithful to the will of God.

Jesus is the green and productive tree, par excellence. All that is good, great, beautiful and holy in the heart of a person blossoms on the tree of the cross.

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**PSALM 1**

The two ways. What you sow in life you will harvest. Those who keep God’s law will be happy here and in the next life. Whoever refuses it will not prosper.

1 Blessed is the one who does not go where the wicked gather, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit where the scoffers sit!

2 Instead, he finds delight in the law of the Lord and meditates day and night on his commandments.

3 He is like a tree beside a brook producing its fruit in due season, its leaves never withering. Everything he does is a success.

4 But it is different with the wicked. They are like chaff driven away by the wind.

5 The wicked will not stand when judgment comes, nor the sinners when the righteous assemble.

6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous but cuts off the way of the wicked.
PSALM 2

The two kingdoms. This struggle between the kings of the earth and God’s Anointed announces the Book of Revelation. God has come among us. His presence is a challenge to those who would like to be lords of the earth. There will be no lasting peace here below.

1 Why do the nations conspire?  
Why do the peoples plot in vain?  
2 The kings of the earth brace themselves  
and the rulers together take their stand  
against the Lord and his anointed.  
3 They say, “Let us break their bonds!  
Let us cast away their chains!”  
4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord looks at them in derision.  
5 Then in anger he speaks to them,  
terrifying them in the fury of his wrath:  
6 “Behold the king I have installed,  
in Zion, upon my holy hill!”  
7 I will proclaim the decree of the Lord.  
He said to me: “You are my son.  
This day I have begotten you.  
8 Ask of me and I will give you  
the nations for your inheritance,  
the ends of the earth for your possession.  
9 You shall rule them with iron scepter  
and shatter them as a potter’s vase.”  
10 Now therefore, learn wisdom, O kings;  
be warned, O rulers of the earth.  
11 Serve the Lord with fear  
and fall at his feet;  
lest he be angry and you perish  
when his anger suddenly flares.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him!

PSALM 3

How many are my enemies! King David, like all Christians,  
has an ally more powerful than all his enemies together: God.

2 O Lord, how great in number are my foes!  
How numerous are they who rise against me!  
3 How many are they who say of my soul:  
“There is no help for him in God!”  
4 But you are my shield, O Lord,  
my glory, you lift up my head.  
5 Aloud I cry to the Lord,  
and from his holy hill he answers me.  
6 If I lie down to sleep,  
again I awake, for the Lord supports me;  
7 no fear of the thousands standing against me.
PSALM 3

8 Arise, O Lord!
Deliver me, O my God!
You strike all my enemies on the jaw,
you have broken the teeth of the wicked.
9 Salvation comes from the Lord.
May your blessing be upon your people!

PSALM 4

Evening prayer. An evening prayer for those who trust God
in the midst of their difficulties, remembering how many times
God has come to their assistance. Gratitude for favors received
leads us to ask for more; this request will be more trustful; trust
will bring us peace and joy in our difficulties. Evil and misfortune
come in many ways, but prayer always brings strength.

2 Answer when I call, O God, my justice!
When I was in distress, you gave me solace.
Have compassion on me and hear my plea.

3 And you people, how long
will you harden your hearts?
How long will you delight in deceit
and go in search of falsehood?

4 But you must know that the Lord
has shown his kindness to me.
When I call to him, he hears me.

5 Be angry, but don’t offend.
Keep your words to yourself,
when you are in bed, and be still.

6 Offer the sacrifice commanded by the Law
and put your trust in the Lord your God.

7 Many ask, “Who will give us a happy time?
Would that his favor shine upon us!”

8 You, O Lord, have put joy in my heart;
more than by giving me wine and food.

9 I lie down and sleep in peace,
for you alone, O Lord,
make me feel safe and secure.

PSALM 5

Morning prayer. Let us begin the day by asking God to be our
light and our strength; going also to the house of God, his
temple where his light and his strength are within our reach.

2 O Lord, listen to my words and hear
my complaint,
3 give heed to my sighs, my King and
my God.
4 From daybreak you hear my voice,
from dawn I am in your presence
watching for you.
5 You are not a God who delights in
wickedness; evil has no place in you.

6 The arrogant cannot stand before
you. You hate all who do evil;
7 you destroy all who speak false-
hood, who thirst for blood and live on
lies; all of them the Lord detests.
8 But I, by your love and grace, may
come into your house. In reverence I
bow down and worship at your holy
temple.
9 Lead me, O Lord, through your path of righteousness; make your way straight before me, for my enemies lie in wait.

10 Not a word of their mouth can be trusted, for their heart is full of mischief. Their tongue flatters with deceit, but their throat is an open grave.

11 O Lord, make them pay for their guilt. Let their snares trap them. Cast them out for their many sins – for their offense and rebellion.

12 But for those who take refuge in you, let them ever sing and rejoice. Let your deliverance shield them, that they may praise you in gladness – those who love your name, O Lord.

13 You bless all who live in righteousness; your favor covers them as a shield.

**PSALM 6**

| Prayer of the afflicted. | This psalm is the prayer of a sick person. When she asks to be freed of her sickness she reaffirms her unshaken trust and will to have nothing to do with evil. |

2 O Lord, in your anger do not reprove; nor punish me in your fury.

3 Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I have no strength left. O Lord, heal me, for my bones are in torment.

4 My soul also is greatly troubled. How long, O Lord, how long? How long will you be?

5 Come back to me, O Lord, save my life; rescue me for the sake of your love.

6 For no one remembers you in the grave; who will praise you in the world of the dead?

7 I am weary with moaning; I weep every night, drenching my bed with tears.

8 My eyes have grown dim from troubles; I have weakened because of my foes.

9 Away from me, you evildoers, for the Lord has heard my plaintive voice.

10 The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord will grant all that I pray for.

11 Let my enemies fall back in shame, all of a sudden – the whole bunch of them!

**PSALM 7**

| Free me from my persecutors. | A cry that comes from the depth of the soul, demanding justice. |

2 O Lord, my God, in you I take shelter; deliver me and save me from all my pursuers, lest lions tear me to pieces with no one to rescue me.

4 O Lord, my God, if my hands are stained with guilt – if with evil I have repaid good, if I have plundered unjustly my opponent, let the enemy hound me, let him crush me to the ground and lay down my liver in the dust.

7 Arise, O Lord, in your wrath; rise up against the fury of my foes. Awake, O my God and judge the nations, for the time of judgment has come.

8 Let the nations gather around you; and you take your seat high above them.

9 Proclaim, O Lord, my righteousness; you see that I am blameless.

10 Bring to an end the power of the wicked, but affirm the just, O righteous God, searcher of mind and heart.

11 You cover me as a shield, Oh God, for you protect the upright.

12 A righteous judge is God, his anger ever awaiting those who refuse to repent.

13 God has his sword ready and sharpened, his bow bent and arrows aimed.

14 He has in hand, always ready, his deadly weapons and fiery darts.
15 Look at the one who conceived iniquity and is pregnant with mischief; miscarriage will result.
16 He digs a pit and makes it deep, he will fall into the trap he made.
17 His evil intent recoils upon his head; his wicked design comes back in his face.
18 I will rejoice in the Lord for his justice, and sing to the Most High in gratitude and praise.

**PSALM 8**

Glory of God and dignity of humans. The universe reveals the glory and the beauty of God. In becoming one of us, the Son of God has put humans above all material creation and emphasized the fundamental equality of all humans.

2 O Lord, our Lord,
how great is your name throughout the earth!
And your glory in the heavens above.
3 Even the mouths of children and infants exalt your glory in front of your foes
and put to shame enemies and rebels.
4 When I observe the heavens,
the work of your hands,
the moon and the stars you set in their place –
what is the mortal that you be mindful of him,
the son of man, that you should care for him?
5 Yet you made him a little lower than the angels;
you have crowned him with glory and honor.
6 You have put all things under his feet –
sheep and oxen without number
and even the beasts of the field,
7 the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and all that swim the paths of the ocean.
8 O Lord, our Lord,
how great is your name all over the earth!

**PSALM 9**

God, refuge of the oppressed. Recalling the examples of the past, the psalmist affirms: “The hope of the poor will not be destroyed.”

2 Let my heart give thanks to the Lord, I yearn to proclaim your marvelous deeds.
3 and rejoice and exult in you, and sing praise to your name, O Most High.
4 For my enemies fell back in retreat, they stumbled and perished before you.
5 You have upheld my right and my cause, you have sentenced from your throne, O just judge.
6 You have turned back the nations; you have destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their names forever.
7 Your enemies lay in endless ruin, their cities trampled, their memory perished.

- 9 Psalms 9 and 10 of the Hebrew text are only the two halves of the Greek or Latin Bible text. This causes the disarrangement in the numbering of the psalms which begins here. Psalm 9 denounces the enemies of Israel. Psalm 10 denounces the wicked within the community. Those who exploit the widow and the orphan, the foreigner and the traveler, are in fact the enemies of God.
But the Lord reigns forever, having set up his throne for judgment.

He will judge the nations with justice and govern the peoples in righteousness.

The Lord is a rampart for the oppressed, a refuge in times of distress.

Those who cherish your name, O Lord, can rely on you, for you have never forsaken those who look to you.

Sing praises to the Lord enthroned in Zion, proclaim his deeds among the nations.

For he who avenges blood remembers, he does not ignore the cry of the lowly.

Have mercy on me, O Lord. See how they afflict me. Oh, lift me up from the gates of death, that I may declare your praise, that I may rejoice in your salvation in the gates of Zion.

The pagans have sunk into the pit they have dug, their own feet ensnared by the trap they laid.

The Lord has shown his presence, he has judged and the wicked plotters have been trapped by the work of their hands.

To the netherworld the wicked will depart, all the nations that have no thought of God.

For the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor perish forever.

Rise, O Lord! Do not let mortals prevail; let the nations stand on trial before you.

Bring terror, O Lord, strike at them; let these pagans realize that they are but humans.

PSALM 10 (9) Continuation of the preceding psalm.

Why, O Lord, do you stand afar? Why hide from us in times of distress? The wicked are in power; the weak suffer harassment; the poor become victims of evil schemes.

Exploiters boast in their power and greed; the covetous blasphemes and defies God.

In their pride the wicked say, “There is no God.” They see no further.

The wicked prosper in their ways, your laws are far from their minds; haughtily they sneer at their rivals, all of them saying in their heart, “Nothing will trouble me. I am secure, powerful and happy.”

Their mouths are filled with cursing, deceit and threats; spite and mischief are under their tongues.

They lie in ambush near the villages, murdering the innocent and the unfortunate, spying upon their next victim.

The evil one lurks in secret, like a lion in its covert, waiting to seize his prey and drag him off in a net.

Lying prone or crouching, he waits and the unfortunate falls into his power.

He thinks to himself: “God has forgotten; he has hidden his face and will never see this.”

Rise, Lord, O God, raise your hand, do not forget the lowly.

Why do the wicked revile God and say, “He cannot make me account”?

But you see those in misery, O God, and you take it in hand. The unfortunate commits himself to you; the orphan turns to you for help.

Break the power of the wicked – seek out their wickedness till there is none to be found.

The rich and the powerful may think that God is far away, that he is passive, and that perhaps, he does not exist. But God hears the cry of the oppressed. It is very easy to become rich in spirit in a consumer world: every Christian must ask himself to what extent he is not responsible for the injustice and discrimination which we witness.
16 The Lord is king forever and the pagans have vanished from his land.

17 For you hear, O Lord, the longings of the lowly, and you strengthen their hearts; "you give heed to the orphans and the oppressed. Let no human raise from earth and strike terror.

**PSALM 11 (10)**

The just fear nothing. If God is with us, who will condemn us? May he deliver us from fear when we face those who threaten and crush others.

1 In the Lord I take refuge. How, then, can you say to me, “Flee to the mountains like a bird; for the wicked are bending their bows and fit their arrows to the string. They get ready to shoot in the dark, they take aim at the upright of heart.

2 When foundations fall to ruin, what can the righteous do?”

3 In the Lord is his holy place – our God whose throne is in heaven. He looks down to earth to observe the race of Adam.

4 The Lord searches both righteous and wicked. He hates those who delight in violence.

5 Upon the wicked, he will rain coals of fire and brimstone; a burning blast will be their lot.

6 For the Lord is righteous; he loves justice. The upright will see his face.

**PSALM 12 (11)**

Against the world of lies. Lies, propaganda and the false prophets of the easy life conceal the injustice of every day. God’s word is true, and it will judge the world. In the Word-of-God-made-man, there is no yes and no: in him all the promises of God have become a yes.

2 Help us, O Lord, none of the godly are left, the faithful have vanished. 3 Everyone lies; with flattering lips they speak from a double heart.

4 May the Lord cut off insincere lips, every glib tongue that utters deceit.

5 Many say, “Our strength lies in our tongue, we know how to speak, who will lord it over us?”

6 “The poor are despoiled and the needy suffer, now I will save them,” says the Lord. “I will give them security.”

7 The promises of the Lord are sure and lasting – silver refined in the furnace seven times and freed from dross.

8 Hold us, O Lord, in your keeping; protect us always from this generation, for the wicked prowl on all sides, and the basest are exalted.
PSALM 13 (12)  
Look and listen to me. God does not forget his children: he has resurrected Christ.

Personal prayer, persevering prayer will surely be heard.

2 How long, O Lord, will you forget me and hide your face from me?
3 How long must I suffer pain in my soul and grief in my heart all the day long?

How long shall my enemy triumph over me?

4 Look upon me and answer, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;
5 lest my enemy say, “I have routed him,” lest my foes rejoice of my fall.

6 But I put my trust in your unfailing love, my heart will rejoice on seeing your salvation.

I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me!

PSALM 14 (13)  
Without respect for neighbors, without respect for God.

1 The fool says in his heart, “God does not exist.”
All have strayed, all are perverted, there is no one who does good.

2 The Lord looks down from heaven upon the race of Adam, to see if there are any who seek God and act wisely.
3 They have all turned aside: corrupt – all of them alike.
4 Will they ever learn – these doers of evil? For they devour my people, – that is their food – and do not call upon the Lord.

5 But suddenly terror strikes them: God was on the side of the just!
6 You may confound the hope of the poor, but the Lord is their refuge.

7 Oh would that I see Israel’s salvation coming from Zion! When the Lord brings home the exiles, what joy it will be for Jacob, what happiness for Israel!
PSALM 15 (14)

This psalm repeats in its own way the word of the prophet Hosea: “I prefer mercy to sacrifice.” To the question, who will dwell in your tent? he replies with a list of ten virtues of justice: service of God and justice are two facets of a same attitude.

1 O Lord, who will dwell in your tent and reside on your holy mount?
2 Those who walk blamelessly and do what is right, who speak truth from their heart and control their words, who do no harm to their neighbors and cast no discredit on their companions,
3 who look down on evildoers but highly esteem God’s servants; who at all cost stand by a pledged word,
4 who do not lend money at interest and refuse a bribe against the innocent.
Do this, and you will soon be shaken.

PSALM 16 (15)

The Israelites lived among pagan nations, but even among the people, many shared the pagan superstitions while professing their faith in one God. When they took part in sacrifices offered to local gods, they mixed idolatry with the practice of true faith.

The author of this psalm is doubtless a Levite, a priest. In the past when God divided the Promised Land among the tribes, he said to the Levites: “I will be your part of inheritance.” Now he guides this Levite amidst the compromises of a people more unfaithful than faithful.

The commitment of the psalmist is so unconditional that he does not think that even death can sever his relationship with God (vv. 10-11).

You will not abandon my soul to the grave. The psalmist is certain that God can deliver him from this dark, sad place, which, according to the belief of that time, was the dwelling place of the dead. He will place him at his right forever.

From the beginning, Christians took these words as applying especially to the risen Jesus (Acts 2:25 and 13:35).

Loyalty to God does not mean hostility towards those who follow another religion. This loyalty asks of us on the contrary to look more closely at our attachment to all the little gods that encumber our life. Let us not sacrifice our Christian identity on the altar of money.

Lord, who shall dwell in your tent? May the Lord help us to follow his commandments.

The Lord is my inheritance. God is my share of inheritance: I chose him as my only Lord and I will rejoice in him for all eternity.

1 Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.
2 I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord, my only good.”
3 The gods of the earth are but nothing, cursed be those who delight in them.
4 Those who run after foreign gods only have their sorrows multiplied.
Let me not shed blood for them, nor their names be heard on my lips.
5 O Lord, my inheritance and my cup, my chosen portion – hold secure my lot.
6 The best part has been allotted to me. Delightful indeed is my inheritance!
7 I bless the Lord who counsels me; even at night my inmost self instructs me.
8 I keep the Lord always before me; for with him at my right hand, I will never be shaken.
9 My heart, therefore, exults, my soul rejoices; my body too will rest assured.
10 For you will not abandon my soul to the grave, nor will you suffer your holy one to see decay in the land of the dead.
11 You will show me the path of life, in your presence the fullness of joy, at your right hand happiness forever.
Outcry of the innocent.

1 Hear a just cause, O Lord, 
listen to my complaint. 
Give heed to my prayer 
for there is no deceit on my lips.

2 Let my defense come forth from you; 
your eyes see what is right. 
3 You have probed my heart, 
searched me at night, 
tested me by fire, 
and you have seen no wickedness in me. 
4 I have not sinned by my words 
as others do; 
I have kept your word 
and followed your ways. 
5 Hold firm my steps upon your path, 
that my feet may not stumble. 

6 I call on you, you will answer me, O God; 
   incline your ear and hear my word. 
7 For you do wonders for your faithful, 
you save those fleeing from the enemy 
as they seek refuge at your right hand. 
8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; 
under the shadow of your wings hide me, 
9 far from my violent pursuers, 
from the onslaught of the wicked despoilers. 

10 Their mouths speak arrogantly; 
they have shut their hearts to mercy. 
11 Now they surround me and track me down, 
their eyes eager to see me overthrown. 
12 Like lions made fierce by hunger, 
   they want only to kill and tear. 
13 Arise, O Lord, confront them, overthrow them! 
May your sword deliver me from the wicked. 

14 O Lord, strike them with your hand 
and give them no share with the living. 
May their belly be filled 
with what you have stored for them, 
and their children have more than enough 
to leave to their descendants. 

15 As for me, righteous in your sight, 
I shall see your face and, awakening, 
gaze my fill on your likeness.
PSALM 18 (17)

A liberator gives thanks to God. This psalm celebrates a victory. Enthusiasm, fervor, gratitude: God has shaken the universe to come to my help.

1 I love you, O Lord, my strength.
2 The Lord is my rock, my fortress,
3 my deliverer and my God.
4 He is the rock in whom I take refuge.
5 He is my shield, my powerful savior, my stronghold.
6 I call on the Lord, who is worthy of praise: he saves me from my enemies!

A deadly flood surrounded me,
7 devilish torrents rushed at me;
8 caught by the cords of the grave,
9 I was brought to the snares of death.
10 But I called upon the Lord in my distress,
11 I cried to my God for help; and from his temple he heard my voice,
12 my cry of grief reached his ears.
13 Then the earth reeled and rocked;
14 the foundations of the mountains shook;
15 they trembled at his fury.
16 Smoke rose from his nostrils,
17 from his mouth a devouring fire throwing off live embers.
18 He bent the heavens and came down with dark clouds under his feet.
19 He rode on a cherub and flew,
20 borne on the swift wings of the wind.
21 Veiled with darkness surrounding him,
22 he made misty rain clouds his tent.
23 Then from the brightness of his presence hail and fiery embers broke forth.
24 From heaven the Lord thundered;
25 the voice of the Most High resounded.
26 Sending out a hail of arrows, he scattered them;
27 flashing forth bolts of lightning, he routed them.
28 The beds of the seas appeared,
29 the foundations of the world were laid bare at the rebuke of the Lord,
30 at the blast of his breath.

• 18 We find in 2 Samuel 22 a version only slightly different from this psalm attributed to David.

The author thanks God who has given him the victory; he recognizes with gratitude his intervention. This intervention is expressed in a poetic way like a glorious appearance of God in the heights of heaven (see Hb 3).

18:10. He bent the heavens and came down. It is what he did when his own Son came among us to deliver humanity from its enemies.
18:11. In the traditions of the Middle East, the cherubs were the winged monsters charged to escort the gods. For the Israelites they drew God’s chariot or carried his throne.
18:29. Jesus said: “I am the light of the world,” and we repeat with the psalmist: You give light to my lamp.
Reaching down from above,  
he drew me out of the deep waters.  

Too strong for me were my enemies,  
but he rescued me from my adversaries.  
They launched their attack on an opportune day,  
but the Lord was my support.  
He has set me out in the open,  
he saved me because he cares for me!  
The Lord rewarded me for my justice,  
according to my righteousness.  
For I have been faithful to the Lord’s way  
and have not departed from my God.  
All his ordinances are before me,  
I have always followed his statutes.  
Before him I have done uprightly  
and kept myself from iniquity.  
The Lord treats me according to my merits,  
according to the cleanness of my hands.  

With the faithful you are faithful;  
with the blameless you are blameless;  
with the pure you are pure but with the crooked  
you are astute.  
For you raise up the humble  
and bring down the arrogant.  

Lord, you give light to my lamp.  
O my God, you brighten my darkness.  
Yes, with you I charge the armed bands,  
and by my God I leap over the wall.  
This God – his way is perfect;  
the word of the Lord can stand fire.  
He is a shield for those who seek refuge in him.  
There is no other God but Yahweh.  
There is no other rock but our God.  

He is the God who girds me with strength  
and prepares my ways.  
He makes my feet as swift as the deer’s;  
he sets me securely on the heights.  
He trains my hands for war  
and my arms to bend the bronze-bow.  
You give me your shield for protection,  
your right hand upholds me,  
and your help makes me great.  
You enlarge the space before me,  
my step will not falter.  

I pursue my enemies and overtake them,  
I do not turn back till I have destroyed them.  
Thrusting them through,
I do not give them time to rise; they fall under my feet.

40 You give me strength for the battle; you subdue my adversaries beneath me;  
41 you put my enemies to flight and destroy those who hate me.  
42 They cry for help, but no one comes. They cry to the Lord; he does not answer them.  
43 I pulverize them as dust before the wind; like mud in the streets I trample them.  
44 You delivered me from my people’s quarrels and made me head over the nations. They came to serve me – people I have not known.  
45 At the sound of my voice, they rose to obey, foreigners fawned before me.  
46 Staggering out of their fortresses, they came to me cringing and trembling.  
47 The Lord lives! Praised be my rock! Exalted be my savior God –  
48 the God who grants me vengeance and subdues the peoples for me.  
49 He delivers me from my foes; he exalts me above my adversaries; he rescues me from violent people.  
50 For this I extol you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing praise to your name, saying:  
51 “He has given victories to his king; he has shown his love to his anointed ones, to David, and to his descendants forever.”

The Lord, sun of justice. The splendor of heaven gives us a glimpse of the glory of God. We are also aware of his presence when we meditate on his commandments which are light and joy for the soul.

2 The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament proclaims the work of his hands.  
3 Day talks it over with day; night hands on the knowledge to night.  
4 No speech, no words, no voice is heard –  
5 but the call goes on throughout the universe, the message is felt to the ends of the earth.  
6 High above, he pitched a tent for the sun, who comes out as a bridegroom from his pavilion, or like a racer joyfully runs his course.  
7 Rising from one end, it makes its circuit of the heavens, and sets at the other end; and nothing is hidden from its heat.
The law of the Lord is perfect: it gives life to the soul. The word of the Lord is trustworthy: it gives wisdom to the simple.

The fear of the Lord is pure, it endures forever; the judgments of the Lord are true, all of them just and right.

They are more precious than gold – pure gold of a jeweller; they are much sweeter than honey which drops from the honeycomb.

They are a light to your servant, in keeping them they win a great reward.

But who can discern one’s own errors? Forgive the failings of which I am unaware.

Preserve me from willful sin; do not let it get the better of your servant. Then shall I walk blameless and innocent of serious sin.

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart find favor in your sight, O Lord – my redeemer, my rock!

Prayer of the Jews for their king.

May the Lord protect those who struggle to bring about the kingdom of truth, just as he protected Christ, our King.

The people pray to God for his king in difficult times. This psalm invites us not to count too much on our own feats, but much more on the power of God. What the psalm says is doubtless valid for our politicians.

May the Lord answer you in the day of distress; may the name of Jacob’s God give you protection.

May he send you help from the sanctuary and give you support from Mount Zion.

May he remember all your oblations and look favorably on your burnt offerings.

May he grant you your heart’s desire and fulfill all your plans.

In your victory let us shout for joy and raise our banner in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests.

Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed; he has answered him from his holy heaven with victories from his right hand.

Some boast of chariots, some of horses; but we boast in the name of the Lord our God.
9 Their forces will collapse and be crushed, but ours shall rise, and stand firm.
10 When we call, answer us, O Lord, make the king victorious!

PSALM 21 (20)

Thanksgiving for our king. He asked you for life and you have given it: he will live for ever.

2 The king rejoices in your strength, O Lord, and exults in your saving help.
3 You have granted him his desire; you have not rejected his request.
4 You have come to him with rich blessings; you have placed a golden crown upon his head.
5 When he asked, you gave him life—length of days forever and ever.
6 He glories in the victory you gave him; you shall bestow on him splendor and majesty.
7 You have given him eternal blessings, and gladdened him with the joy of your presence.
8 The king trusts in the Lord, and through the love of the Most High, he will not be shaken.
9 Your hand, O Lord, will reach your enemies, and lay hold of all your foes.
10 Your mere appearance will turn them into a blazing furnace. Your wrath will engulf them like a fire.
11 You will wipe their fruit from the earth and destroy their posterity.
12 Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes, they will never win;
13 they will turn back in fear, when you aim arrows at them.
14 Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength! We will sing in praise of your might.

PSALM 22 (21)

The prayer of Christ on the cross.

2 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from me, from the sound of my groaning?
3 My God, I call by day, but you never answer; by night and I find no rest.
4 Yet you are enthroned the Holy One, the praise of Israel.
5 In you our fathers trusted, and you delivered them.
6 They cried to you and they were saved; they trusted in you and were not overcome.
7 But I am a worm and not human, scorned by everyone, despised by the people.
8 All who see me make a jest of me; they sneer and shake their heads.
9 “He put his trust in the Lord, let the Lord rescue him! If the Lord is his friend, let him help him!”

From the beginning, Christian tradition has applied this psalm to Jesus himself. In fact, we find here the passion of Jesus: the bulls, the lions, the dogs are the enemies; only a worm, it is the humiliation of blows and the infamy of the cross; and his clothes were divided just as he said.

Jesus himself made this psalm his own when from the cross he uttered this cry: “My God, why have you forsaken me?” Jesus himself felt he had appealed to God in vain... And yet, in the midst of this terrible darkness, a light in the soul of Jesus does not waver. He knows that in spite of this silence, the Father is always with him and all the second part of the psalm is a song of trust which ends in a cry of triumph.

The Crucified of Good Friday is transformed to the
10 Yet it is you who drew me from the womb and kept me safe at my mother’s breasts.
11 I have been yours from birth; from my mother’s womb you have been my God.
12 Be not far from me for trouble is near, and there is no one to help me.
13 A herd of bulls surround me – strong bulls of Bashan closing in on me,
14 their mouths open, like lions roaring for their prey.
15 I am like water draining away; all my bones are out of joint, my heart melts away like wax.
16 My throat is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue clings to my palate. You have laid me down in the dust of death.
17 Round about me are vicious dogs, villainous rogues encircling me. They have tied up my hands and feet.
18 They can count all my bones, for they are looking and watching me,
19 dividing my garments among them and casting lots for my raiment.
20 O Lord, be not far from me! O my strength, come quickly to my help.
21 Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the powerful grip of the dog.
22 Rescue me from the jaws of the lion, my soul from the horns of the wild bull.
23 I will proclaim your name to my brothers, I will praise you in the assembly,
24 “All you who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him! All you sons of Israel, revere him!
25 For he has not scorned or loathed the afflicted in his misery. He has not hidden his face from me but has listened when I cried to him.”
26 I will praise you in the great assembly, fulfill my vows before all who revere you.
27 The lowly will eat and be satisfied. Those who seek the Lord will praise him. May your hearts live forever!
28 The whole earth will acknowledge and turn to the Lord; the families of nations will worship him.
29 For dominion belongs to the Lord and he reigns over the nations.
30 Before him all those who rest in the earth will bow down, all who go down to the dust.
My soul will live for him. 31 My descendants will serve him and proclaim the Lord to coming generations; they will announce his salvation to a people yet unborn, “These are the things that he has done.”

PSALM 23 (22)

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. The table and the cup of Christ are before me. I have received better than the anointing of holy oil, that of the Spirit (Jn 2:27). It is not the repose of death that I await but the resurrection that brings me to the Father.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters,
3 he restores my soul.

The good shepherd. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. The table and the cup of Christ are before me. I have received better than the anointing of holy oil, that of the Spirit (Jn 2:27). It is not the repose of death that I await but the resurrection that brings me to the Father.

Glorious Lord and his reign will be universal. Jesus had said: “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to myself.”

Christian life is a passage from death to life. What is marvelous is that through Jesus we can always bring good from evil, happiness from suffering and even from death.
22:26. I will fulfill my vows: it is a matter of sacrifices and of thanksgiving.
22:27. It is an allusion to the banquet that God has prepared for his elect: Is 25:6; Lk 22:30.
He guides me through the right paths for his name’s sake.

4 Although I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are beside me: your rod and your staff comfort me.

5 You spread a table before me in the presence of my foes. You anoint my head with oil; my cup is overflowing.

6 Goodness and kindness will follow me all the days of my life, I shall dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live.

The destiny of humankind. God created the universe to display his riches but the world is not completed, until God has visited humankind, and the New Man, the Son of God has revealed himself.

The earth and its fullness belong to the Lord, the world and all that dwell in it.

2 He has founded it upon the ocean and set it firmly upon the waters.

3 Who will ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who will stand in his holy place?

4 Those with clean hands and pure heart, who desire not what is vain, and never swear to a lie.

5 They will receive blessings from the Lord, a reward from God, their savior.

6 Such are the people who seek him, who seek the face of Jacob’s God.

7 Lift up, O gateways, your lintels, open up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may enter!

8 Who is the King of glory? The Lord, the strong, the mighty, the Lord, valiant in battle.

9 Lift up your lintels, O gateways, open up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may enter!

10 Who is the King of glory? The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of glory!
PSALM 25 (24)  

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.  
In you my God I trust; let me not be put to shame, let not my enemies exult over me.  
Those who hope in you will never be humbled; those who turn away from you will suffer disgrace!  
Teach me your ways, O Lord; make known to me your paths.  
Guide me in your truth and instruct me, for you are my God, my savior; I hope in you all day long.  
Remember your compassion, O Lord, your unfailing love from of old.  
Remember not the sins of my youth, but in your love remember me.  
Good and upright, the Lord teaches sinners his way.  
He teaches the humble of heart and guides them in what is right.  
The ways of the Lord are love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and precepts.  
For the sake of your name, Lord, forgive my iniquity, for it is great.  

To those who fear the Lord, he will teach the way to choose.  
They will live in prosperity, and their descendants will inherit the land.  
The Lord gives advice to those who revere him and makes his covenant known to them.  
My eyes are always on the Lord, for he will free my feet from the snare.  
Turn to me and have compassion, for I am lonely and afflicted.  
Free my heart of bitterness; relieve me of this distress.  
See my pain and sufferings, and forgive all my sins.  
See how my enemies have increased and how violently they hate me.  
Deliver me from them; let me not be put to shame, for I have trusted you.  
Let integrity and uprightness be my protection, for all my hope, O Lord, is in you.  
Redeem, O God, redeem Israel from all its troubles!

PSALM 26 (25)  

Declarce me innocent, O Lord, for I have lived with integrity; I have put my trust in the Lord, I shall never waver.  
Prove me, O Lord, put me to the test; examine my soul and my heart.  
For your love is ever before my eyes, and I live in truth and faithfulness.  

I do not associate with the deceitful nor do I go with hypocrites;  
I hate the party of the corrupt and avoid the company of the wicked.  
I wash my hands free of guilt and walk in procession round your altar,  
singing hymns of praise and celebrates this covenant between God and us in the blood of Jesus.

Prayer of the just. Let us make our own the prayer of the just that reaffirms his fidelity. Let us not count on our own merits, like the Pharisee. Let us rather give thanks for this new person that we have become through baptism: Christ has purified and has enriched us.

Calling on God in trials. The Bible does not know despair. We can be broken by sorrow, anxiety, the weight of sin, but there is always an escape. All our paths, even the worst, can finally lead to a love stronger than all the powers of this world.
thanksgiving and proclaiming your wondrous deeds.

8 O Lord, I love the house where you dwell, the place of your Glory.

9 Let me not share the fate of sinners, nor lose my life with the violent; 10 their hands are guilty of crimes, their right hands are weighed down with bribes.

11 But I will walk in integrity, redeem me, O God, be gracious to me.

12 My foot stands firm in the straight path, I will praise you, O Lord, in your assemblies.

PSALM 27 (26)

In the struggles of this life, the believer is not discouraged because she clings to the hope the Lord has in store for her at the end of the conflict.

A trust without limits: Though my father and mother forsake me, yet will the Lord receive me.

To such a God the psalmist can say: One thing I seek... (to) dwell in the house of the Lord. All the struggles, trials and temptations will not let us forget the house of the Lord at the end of the road.

I will place the victor like a column in the sanctuary of my God. I will write on him the name of my God and my own new name (Rev 3:12).

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the rampart of my life; I will not be afraid.

2 When the wicked rush at me to devour my flesh, it is my foes who stumble, my enemies fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart will not fail; though war break out against me, I will still be confident.

4 One thing I ask of the Lord, one thing I seek—that I may dwell in his house all the days of my life, to gaze at his jewel and to visit his sanctuary.

5 For he will keep me safe in his shelter in times of misfortune; he will hide me beneath his roof, and set me high upon a rock.

6 Then my head will be lifted up over the enemies round about me. I will offer sacrifices at his Tent with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music in praise of the Lord.

7 Hear my voice when I call, O Lord, have mercy on me and answer.

8 My heart says to you, “I seek your face, O Lord.”

9 Do not hide your face from me nor turn away your servant in anger.
You are my protector, do not reject me abandon me not, O God my savior!

10 Though my father and mother forsake me, yet will the Lord receive me.

11 Teach me, O Lord your way; lead me along a straight path.
12 Save me from the plot of my enemies, 
for false witnesses have risen against me 
to pin me down in their violence.

13 I hope, I am sure, 
that I will see the goodness of the Lord 
in the land of the living.

14 Trust in the Lord, be strong and courageous 
— yes, put your hope in the Lord!

PSALM 28 (27)

O my Rock, do not be deaf to my call!

1 To you, O Lord, I call; my rock, be 
not deaf to me.
For if you heed me not, I shall go 
down to the pit like the rest.

2 Hear my cry for mercy as I call to 
you for help, as I lift up my hands 
toward your innermost sanctuary.

3 Drag me not away with the wicked, 
with those who do evil, who mouth 
words of peace while they sow mischief 
and confusion.

4 Punish them for their evil designs 
and wicked deeds; give them their due 
reward. Since they have no regard for 
the works of the Lord, he will tear them 
down and never let them rise again.

5 Blessed be the Lord! He has heard 
my cry for help.

6 The Lord is my strength, my shield, 
my heart was sure of him, I have been 
helped and my heart exults, with my 
song I give him thanks.

7 The Lord is the strength of his 
people, the saving refuge of his 
anointed.

8 Save your people, and bless your 
inheritance, be their shepherd and 
carry them forever.

PSALM 29 (28)

The storm: the Lord is passing. God speaks through the 
tempest. It is there that he shows his power and his glory.

1 Give the Lord, O sons of God, 
give the Lord glory and strength, 
give the Lord the glory due his name; 
worship the Lord in great liturgy.

2 The voice of the Lord is over the waters; 
the God of glory thunders, 
the Lord thunders over vast waters.

3 How powerful is the voice of the Lord, 
How splendorous is the voice of the Lord.

4 The voice of the Lord tears up the cedars, 
the Lord is shattering the cedars of Lebanon.

5 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, 
and Sirion like a young wild bull.

6 The voice of the Lord breaks forth with flashes of 
fire,

7 the voice of the Lord makes the wilderness quake, 
The Lord is shaking the wilderness of Kadesh.
9 The voice of the Lord makes the oaks shudder, the Lord strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, “Glory!”

10 Over the flood the Lord was sitting; the Lord is king and he reigns forever.

11 May the Lord give his people strength; may the Lord bless his people with peace!

I will praise you because you have freed me. Nothing is definitive in this life. The Lord alternates joys and sorrows according to what we need for the development of our faith. We are, at times, surprised: the trials discourage us as if God no longer existed, and when God gives favors, we dare not believe them to be true.

2 I extol you, O Lord, for you have rescued me; my enemies will not gloat over me.

3 O Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.

4 O Lord, you have brought me up from the grave, you gave me life when I was going to the pit.

5 Sing to the Lord, O you his saints, give thanks and praise to his holy name.

6 For his anger lasts but a little while, and his kindness all through life.

    Weeping may tarry for the night, but rejoicing comes with the dawn.

7 Once in my prosperity I said, “I shall not be troubled.”

8 Yet it was you, O Lord, who made me stand on the rock; as soon as you hid your face, I wavered!

9 To you, O Lord, I called; to you I begged for mercy:

    “What good would there be in my destruction, in my going down to the pit?

    Would my dust give you praise?

    Would it prove your faithfulness?

10 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy on me; O Lord, be my protector.”

12 But now, you have turned my mourning into rejoicing; you have taken off my sackcloth and wrapped me in the garments of gladness.

13 And so my soul, no longer silent, now sings praise without ceasing. O Lord my God, forever will I give you thanks.

I seek refuge in you, Lord. Into your hands I commend my spirit.

2 In you, O Lord, I take refuge, may I never be disgraced; deliver me in your justice.

3 Give heed to my plea, and make haste to rescue me. Be a rock of refuge for me, a fortress for my safety.

4 For you are my rock and my stronghold, lead me for your name’s sake;

5 free me from the snare that they have set for me. Indeed you are my protector.

6 Into your hands I commend my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

• 30 Verse 10 mentions what had become the scandal of believers. Is it possible that the dead go forever to this underworld (they called it Sheol) and that God who is so faithful might forget them?

• 31 Luke attributes these words to Jesus on the cross. A little further on we find other words, “You are my God,” which are also in Psalm 22, and closely linked to the Passion. It will be our last hope at the moment of death.
7 You hate those who worship worthless idols; but I put all my trust in the Lord.
8 I will rejoice and be glad in your love, for you have seen my affliction, you know the agony of my soul. 9 The hand of the enemy did not grab me; you gave me room to move.
10 Be merciful to me, O Lord, in my affliction; my eyes have grown dim with sorrow, my body emaciated.
11 For my days are wracked with grief, and my years worn out in anguish. My strength fails because of my misery.
12 I have become an object of reproach for my foes, a horror for my neighbors, a fear to my friends. Those who see me in the streets flee from me.
13 I am like the dead, unremembered; I have become like a broken pot, thrown away, discarded.
14 I hear whispering among the crowd, rumors that frighten me from every side – their conspiracies, their schemes, their plot to take my life.
15 But I put my trust in you, O Lord, I said: “You are my God;”
16 my days are in your hand. Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, from those after my skin.

Relief after the confession of sin. Buried sin ruins our conscience. Confession is always a liberation.

Blessed is the one whose sin is forgiven, whose iniquity is wiped away.
2 Blessed are those in whom the Lord sees no guilt and in whose spirit is found no deceit.
3 When I kept my sin secret, my body wasted away, I was moaning all day long.
4 Your hand day and night lay heavy upon me; draining my strength, parching my heart as in the heat of a summer drought.
5 Then I made known to you my sin and uncovered before you my fault, saying to myself, “To the Lord I will now confess my wrong.”
And you, you forgave my sin,
you removed my guilt.

6 So let the faithful ones pray
  to you in time of distress;
  the overflowing waters will not reach them.

7 You are my refuge;
you protect me from distress
  and surround me with songs of deliverance.

8 I will teach you,
I will show you the way to follow.
I will watch over you and give you counsel.

9 Do not be like the horse or the mule –
senseless and led by bit and bridle.

10 Many woes befall the wicked,
but the Lord’s mercy enfolds those who trust in him.

11 Rejoice in the Lord, and be glad,
you who are upright;
sing and shout for joy,
you who are clean of heart.

God’s Providence watches over us always. Happy the
nation that has the Lord for God! The Lord watches over those
who fear him.

1 Rejoice in the Lord, you who are just,
praise is fitting for the upright.

2 Give thanks to him on the harp and lyre,
making melody and chanting praises.

3 Amid loud shouts of joy,
sing to him a new song
  and play the ten-stringed harp.

4 For upright is the Lord’s word
  and worthy of trust is his work.

5 The Lord loves justice and righteousness;
the earth is full of his kindness.

6 The heavens were created by his word,
the breath of his mouth formed their starry host.

7 He gathered the waters of the sea into a heap,
and stored the deep in cellars.

8 Let the whole earth fear the Lord,
let the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spoke and so it was,
he commanded, and everything stood firm.

10 The Lord frustrates the plans of the nations
and brings to nothing the peoples’ designs.
11 But his plan stands forever, and his heart’s design through all generations.
12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord—the people he has chosen for his inheritance.

13 The Lord looks down from heaven and sees the whole race of mortals.
14 From where he sits he watches all those who dwell on the earth—
15 he who fashions every heart observes all their deeds.

16 A king is not saved by a powerful army, nor a warrior rescued by his great strength.
17 Don’t think that a horse will save you; its great strength does not assure victory.
18 But the Lord’s eyes are upon those who fear him, upon those who trust in his loving-kindness
19 to deliver them from death and preserve them from famine.

20 In hope we wait for the Lord, for he is our help and our shield.
21 Our hearts rejoice in him, for we trust in his holy name.
22 O Lord, let your love rest upon us, even as our hope rests in you.

**PSALM 34 (33)**

*Taste and see, etc.* Let our experience be that of the poor and the humble. God is near to those who have no other support but him. When there will be no assurance, God will be obliged to take charge of those to whom he owes fidelity.

2 I will bless the Lord all my days; his praise will be ever on my lips.
3 My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the lowly hear and rejoice.

4 Oh, let us magnify the Lord, together let us glorify his name!
5 I sought the Lord, and he answered me; from all my fears he delivered me.
6 They who look to him are radiant with joy, their faces never clouded with shame.
7 When the poor cry out, the Lord hears and saves them from distress.
8 The Lord’s angel encamps and patrols to keep safe those who fear him.
9 Oh, see and taste the goodness of the Lord! Blessed is the one who finds shelter in him!
10 Revere the Lord, all you his saints, for those who fear him do not live in want.
The mighty may be hungry and in need, but those who seek the Lord lack nothing.

Come, listen to me, my children; I will show you how to fear the Lord.

If you desire long life, if you want to enjoy prosperity,

keep your tongue from falsehood, keep your lips from deceit;

turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are fixed on the righteous; his ears are inclined to their cries.

But his face is set against the wicked to destroy their memory from the earth.

The Lord hears the cry of the righteous and rescues them from all their troubles.

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves the distraught.

Many are the troubles of the just, but the Lord delivers them from all.

He keeps all their bones intact, and none of them will be broken.

Evil will slay the wicked; the enemies of the just will be doomed.

But the Lord will redeem the life of his servants; none of those who trust in him will be doomed.

Prayer of a just person when persecuted.

O Lord, attack those who attack me; fight against those who fight against me.

Come to my aid with armour and shield;

stand with your spear and war ax, halt my pursuers. Say to my soul, “I am your deliverer.”

Let them be shamed and dishonored, those who seek my life. Let them be routed and destroyed, those who plot my ruin.

Let them be like chaff before the wind, when the Lord’s angel drives them away.

Let their escape path be dark and precipitous, with the Lord’s angel always at their heels.

They set their net against me for no cause, they dug a pit for me without reason.

Let ruin come upon them unexpectedly, let them be entangled in their own snare; let them fall into the trap of their own making.

Then will my soul rejoice in the Lord and exult in his salvation.

My whole being will exclaim, “O Lord, who is like you? You deliver the oppressed from those too strong for them, you rescue the poor and the needy from their oppressors.”

False witnesses take the stand, accusing me of crimes of which I am innocent.
12 For my kindness they return evil, bringing my life to despair.
13 When they were sick, I wore sackcloth and fasted; I prayed hard with head bowed,
14 as if I were bereft of a friend or brother; I shed tears in grief, as one mourning the death of his mother.
15 But when I stumbled they gathered in glee and, began to strike me; like strangers they disowned me and accused me falsely.
16 Like an ungodly circle of mockers, they gnashed their teeth and made me the butt of all their ridicule.
17 How long, O Lord, will you look on? Deliver my life, my only one, from these lions. 18 Then I will thank you in the great assembly; I will praise you in the mighty throng.
19 Do not let them gloat over me – those who, unprovoked, have become my foes. Do not let them wink malignantly – those who hate me without cause.
20 Sowing discontent with their tongue and mind, they devise false accusations against the peace-loving people of the land.
21 They open wide their mouths against me: “Aha, aha!” they say, “We have seen it with our own eyes!”
22 But you, O Lord, who have seen, do not keep silent. Do not stand far from me.
23 Stir yourself up, stand up for my rights and my cause, my God and my Lord!
24 Declare me innocent, O Lord, my God, according to your justice.
   Let them not gloat over me.
25 Never give them reason to say, “We have trampled him down!”
26 Let them be utterly disgraced and confounded, who exult over my calamity. Let them be ashamed and dishonored, who rejoice at my distress.
27 But let them be glad and rejoice, who are in sympathy with my cause. And may they ever say, “Great is the Lord, who has justified his servant.”
28 Then will my tongue proclaim your righteousness, and sing your praises all day long.

PSALM 36 (35)  The wickedness of the sinner and the goodness of God. Even the wickedness of sinners urges us to trust in God’s goodness.

2 Wickedness speaks to the wicked in the depths of his heart: there is no fear of God before his eyes. 3 Blinded by conceit, he fails to see his guilt.
4 With mouths full of malice and deceit, they no longer think of doing good.
5 They plot mischief even in bed; committed to a life of sin, they know not how to reject evil.
6 Your love, O God, reaches the heavens; your faithfulness, to the clouds.
7 Your justice is like the mighty mountains; your judgment like the unfathomable deep. You preserve, O Lord, humans and beasts.
8 How precious, O God, is your constant love! Mortals take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
9 In your house they find rich food and they drink from your spring of delight.
10 For with you is the fountain of life, in your light we see light.
11 Bestow on your faithful your love and give salvation to the upright of heart.
12 Let not the foot of the arrogant trample on me, nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.
13 But what! See how the evildoers lie fallen, flung down and never to rise again.

• 36 The first part (v. 1-5) shows us evil as a personified power. The second (v. 6-13) tells us that the power of God is still greater.
Happiness for the just, ruin for the wicked. “Do not get worried when you think of the wicked.” Neither power nor riches give access to the inheritance that God promised to his children.

Do not be annoyed with evil people nor be envious of wrongdoers.

For they will fade as any green herb and soon be gone like withered grass.

Trust in the Lord and do good, dwell in the land and live on it.

Make the Lord your delight, and he will grant your heart’s desire.

Commit your way to the Lord; put your trust in him and let him act.

Then will your revenge come, beautiful as the dawn, and the justification of your cause, bright as the noonday sun.

Keep calm before the Lord, wait for him in patience; do not fret if others succeed when they carry out evil schemes.

Refrain from anger, turn away from wrath; fret not, for it only leads to evil.

Remember this: the wicked will perish, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.

Wait a moment: the wicked are no more. Though you look for them, they cannot be found;

but the humble will inherit the land and enjoy peace in abundance.

The wicked plot against the virtuous and gnash their teeth at them;

but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he sees their day coming.

The wicked draw their swords and bend their bows; they aim at the poor and the afflicted, they get ready to slay the righteous.

But their bows will be shattered; the sword thrust into their own heart.

The little that the righteous possess is better than the abundance of the wicked.

For the arms of the wicked will be broken, and the righteous will be upheld by the Lord.

The Lord watches over the lives of the upright; forever will their inheritance abide.

They are not crushed in times of calamity; when famine strikes, they still are satisfied.

But the wicked will perish; the enemies of the Lord will vanish like smoke, disappear like the wild flowers.

The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous have mercy and share.

They will inherit the land – those whom the Lord blesses; but those whom the Lord curses he will cut off.

The Lord is the one who makes people stand, he gives firmness to those he likes. They may stumble, but they will not fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand.

From my youth to old age, I have yet to see the righteous forsaken or their children begging for alms.

He lends and gives, and his children are blessed. The whole day he succeeds.

Do good and shun evil, so that you will live secure forever.

For the Lord loves justice and right, and never forsakes his faithful ones. The wicked instead will perish and their breed will be cut off.

The righteous will possess the land; they will make it their home forever.

The mouth of the virtuous utters wisdom and his tongue speaks of what is right.

• 37 The psalm is addressed not only to believers, but to a people of God concerned about its land.

Do not be discouraged when others cause you difficulties; or when they multiply little vexations intended to make you leave. Keep calm and have courage. The children of a people who lives in solidarity and believes in God’s promises will be masters one day.

Time works for God; the tree that the Father did not plant will be uprooted. History turns against those who impose their truth.
His steps have never faltered, for the law of God is in his heart.

The wicked spies on the just man and lies in wait to slay him.

But the Lord does not hand him over, or let him be condemned when he is tried.

Hope in the Lord and follow his way, for he will exalt you and give you the land. You will see how the wicked perish.

I have seen an oppressor mighty, towering like a cedar of Lebanon.

But when I passed by again, he was no longer there. I looked for him but could not find him.

Mark the blameless, watch the upright, and you will see that there is a future for the person of peace.

But all sinners will be destroyed; the future of the wicked will be shattered.

The Lord is the salvation of the righteous; in time of distress, he is their refuge.

The Lord helps them, and rescues them from the oppressor; he saves them for they sought shelter in him.

PSALM 38 (37)

Prayer in time of trouble. When illness or misfortune comes, we begin to reflect; we then discover that the greatest misfortune is to be a sinner.

2 O Lord, rebuke me not in your rage, punish me not in your fury.

3 Your arrows have struck me; your hand has come down heavily upon me.

4 Your anger has spared no part of my body, my sin gives no peace to my bones.

5 For my transgressions overwhelm me; they weigh me down like an unbearable load.

6 My wounds stink and fester within me, the outcome of my sinful folly.

7 Stooped and bowed down, I go about mourning all day.

8 My loins burn, my flesh is diseased, my body, worn out and utterly crushed; I groan in pain and anguish of heart.

9 All my longing, O Lord, is known to you; my sighing is not hidden from you.

10 My heart pounds as my strength ebbs; even the light has deserted my eyes.

11 My friends avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far off.

12 Those who seek my life lay snares for me; those who wish to hurt me speak of my ruin and plot against me all day long.

13 But like a deaf-mute, I neither hear nor open my mouth.

14 I am like one whose ears hear not and whose mouth has no answer.

15 For I put my trust in you, O Lord; you will answer for me, Lord God.

16 I pray, “Don’t let them gloat over me, nor take advantage of my helplessness when my foot slips.”

17 For I am about to fall, my pain is ever with me. I confess my transgression, I repent of my sin.

18 Many are my foes; many are those who hate me for no reason, those who pay me evil for good and harass me because I seek good.

19 Forsake me not, O Lord, stay not far from me, O my God.

20 Come quickly to help me, O Lord, my savior!
PSALM 39 (38)  

We are nothing before God. Although in giving us his Son, God has given us everything, we possess nothing and continue to wait for everything from his mercy. Show me how frail and fleeting is my life.

2 I said, “I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will muzzle my mouth in front of the wicked.”

3 So I did. But as I kept silent, their happiness made my anguish grow.

4 My heart began to burn within, and finally, I blurted out:

5 “Lord, let me know when my end will come, let me know the number of my days; show me how frail and fleeting is my life.”

6 You allow me to live but a short span; before you, all my years are nothing. Human existence is a mere whiff of breath.

7 Humans are mere shadows that go about relentlessly. Being but a breath they toil and rake in wealth, not knowing who will take it next.

8 But now, O Lord, what do I await?

9 All my hope rests in you. Rescue me from all my sins and let me not be derided by fools.

10 I shall keep silent and not open my mouth, since this is your work.

11 Only remove from me your scourge; for I am done in with your blows.

12 When you want to correct the mortals and punish their sin, you eat like moth what they hold dear. Mortals are a mere puff of wind!

13 Hear, O Lord, my supplication, listen to my cry for protection; do not be deaf to my lamentation. For I dwell with you as an alien, a pilgrim, as all my ancestors have been.

14 “Turn from me awhile, that I may find relief, before I depart and be no more.”

PSALM 40 (39)  

The Bible tells me to do your will. The Letter to the Hebrews (10:5) places on the lips of Jesus verses 7-9 which express his perfect obedience. May we also be able to say: “Here I am!”

2 With resolve I waited for the Lord; he listened and heard me beg.

3 Out of the horrid pit he drew me, out of deadly quicksand. He settled my feet upon a rock and made my steps steady.

4 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and be awed and put their trust in the Lord.

5 Blessed is the one who relies on the Lord and does not look to the proud nor go astray after false gods.

6 How numerous, O Lord, are your wonderful deeds! In your marvelous plans for us you are beyond compare! How many they are – I cannot tell them or count their number.

7 Sacrifice and oblation you did not desire; this you had me understand. Burnt offering and sin offering you do not require.

8 Two prayers have been combined in this psalm. The first is verses 2-12 (or 13).

With resolve I waited for the Lord. Who speaks in this psalm? If one compares it to the Poems of the Servant (Isaiah 49–53) or to Psalms 22 and 68, it seems that it is not a matter of only one person. The psalm expresses the thanksgiving of the believing minority of God’s people, agents of God for the salvation of the world. It is also a fact that in the Bible someone, a savior or the Savior always embodies the people or the faithful group. This psalm then is in a special way applicable to Christ, even if it expresses the prayer of the people of God in their trials.

Out of the horrid pit he drew me. Many will see and be awed and put their trust in the Lord. The Church is in the hands of God and he will not spare it from trials along the way. Could it, without that, be the instrument of salvation? God asks all of us to accept in different ways this vocation of sacrifice, but it is only perfectly accomplished in the case of Christ: “Then I said, Here I come!”

From verse 14, we have the text of Psalm 70: verse 13 was probably part of it.
8 Then I said, “Here I come! as the scroll says of me. 9 To do your will is my delight, O God, for your law is within my heart.”

10 In the great assembly I have proclaimed your saving help. My lips, O Lord, I did not seal – you know that very well.

11 I have not locked up in my heart your saving help, but have spoken about it – your deliverance and your faithfulness;

I have made no secret of your truth and of your kindness in the great assembly.

12 Do not withhold from me, O Lord, your mercy; let your love and faithfulness preserve me constantly.

13 For troubles beyond number have closed in on me; I am all covered by sins and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and I am losing courage.

14 May it please you, O Lord, to rescue me. Make haste, O Lord, to help me!

15 May those who seek my life be brought to shame and disgrace; may those who want me destroyed be turned back in confusion.

16 May those who taunt me with, “Aha, aha!” be filled with shame and consternation.

17 But may all those who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; and may all who love your saving grace continually say, “The Lord is great.”

18 Though I am afflicted and poor, yet the Lord thinks of me. You are my help and my savior – O Lord, do not delay!

PSALM 41 (40)

Prayer of an abandoned sick person. Sick, ridiculed, betrayed: such is the one who says this prayer. Perhaps we know him and he is beside us waiting for our support.

2 Blessed the one who has regard for the poor; the Lord delivers him in time of trouble.

3 The Lord protects him, preserves his life, and gives him happiness in the land; he yields him not to the will of his foes.

4 The Lord helps him when he gets sick, and heals him of all his ailments.

5 I have pleaded, “O Lord, have mercy on me; heal me, in spite of all my iniquity.”

6 My enemies ask of me in malice, “When will he die and his name perish?”

When they come in to see, they talk emptily gathering slanderous gossip.

No sooner have they left, that they tell their comments.

7 Then all my enemies whisper together, imagining the worst for me:

8 “A deadly disease has fastened on him. He will never get up again!”

9 Even my most trusted friend, with whom I shared my food, has lifted his heel against me.
But you, O Lord, have mercy on me; lift me up to give them recompense.

This will assure me that I enjoy your favor: if my enemies do not triumph over me,

if you uphold my integrity and let me stand in your presence forever.

Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, from all eternity and forever!

Amen. Amen!

When shall I go to contemplate the face of the Lord? In exile, the psalmist remembers the years of grace.

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I go and see the face of God?

Day and night my tears have been my food, as people ask me day after day, “Where is your God?”

Now as I pour out my soul, I remember all this – how I used to lead the faithful in procession to the house of God, amid shouts of joy and thanksgiving, among the feasting throng.

Why are you so downcast, my soul, why so troubled within me? Hope in God, for I will praise him again, my savior and my God.

My soul is downcast when I remember from these lands of Jordan and Hermon, “Where are you, small mountain?”

Deep calls to deep as your cataracts thunder; your waves and torrents have gone over me.

May the Lord bestow his love by day, by night his song is upon my lips – a prayer to the God of my life.

I say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?”

My whole being suffers in mortal agony, as my adversaries continually taunt me, “Where is your God?”

Why are you so downcast, my soul, why so troubled within me?
Hope in God, for again I will praise him – my savior and my God.

Continuation of the previous psalm. Here we have the fervent prayer that the believer – immersed in adversity – addressed to God in order not to waver in his faith.

1 Make justice, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people; deliver me from the wicked and deceitful.

2 You are my God, my stronghold, why have you cast me out? Why should I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?

3 Send forth your light and your truth; let them be my guide, let them take me to your holy mountain, to the place where you reside.

4 Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my gladness and delight. I will praise you with the lyre and harp, O God, my God.

5 Why are you so downcast, my soul, why so troubled within me? Hope in God, for again I will praise him – my savior and my God.

PSALM 44 (43)

National lament. The believing people has suffered a defeat and complain to God.

2 With our ears, O God, we have heard; our ancestors have declared to us the works you did in their days of old. 3 You drove out the nations and settled them in their land; you conquered the peoples to make room for them.

4 For it was not with their own sword that they conquered the land nor were they victors by their own hand; but it was by your right hand and arm and by the light of your countenance; for you truly loved them.

5 It is you, my King and my God, who ordain victories for Jacob.

6 Through you we batter down our...
All day long my disgrace is before me and shame covers my face, at the voice of the one who mocks and reviles, in the presence of the enemy and the avenger.

All this has happened to us, although we have not forgotten you, nor have we been untrue to your covenant.

Yet now you have rejected and humbled us; you no longer go forth with our armies.

You have let our enemies drive us back and our adversaries plunder us.

You have let us be driven for slaughter like sheep, scattered among nations as captives.

You have handed us over to them for nothing: the sale was of no benefit for you.

You have made us the butt of our neighbors’ insult, the scorn and laughingstock of those around us.

You have made us a byword among the nations; they look at us and shake their heads.

All day long my disgrace is before me and shame covers my face, at the voice of the one who mocks and reviles, in the presence of the enemy and the avenger.

All this has happened to us, although we have not forgotten you, nor have we been untrue to your covenant.

Our heart has not turned back nor have our steps faltered; yet you have crushed us in the desert of the snakes and covered us with deep darkness.

Had we forgotten the name of our God and stretched forth to an alien god, God would have discovered this, for the secrets of the heart are not hidden from him.

For your sake we are slain all day and accounted as sheep for slaughter.

Awake, O Lord! Why are you asleep? Arise! Reject us not forever.

Why hide your face from us? Why forget our misery and woes?

Our souls are humbled in the dust, our bodies smashed to the ground.

Come to our help, deliver us for the sake of your kindness.

This psalm could have been written on the occasion of the marriage of a king of Israel with a foreign princess, but perhaps it was a poetic call to the chosen people to fully enter into a covenant with its God, its spouse. God made himself present through his King-Messiah, anointed by him (v. 9). Israel is party to the divine marriage, followed by all the nations who accept the revelation of God and salvation. Verses 13-16 take up the same expressions that we find in Isaiah 60–62.

All this can apply to the Church and to each of us also. Baptism was nothing less than a total gift to Christ. For our part the gift remained with words and gestures, but we already belonged to him and a whole life is not too long for that to become a reality.

Listen, O daughter, pay attention; forget your father’s house and your nation. When marriage takes place, much has to be abandoned. Here, it is the same: one day God will be all for all, but to reach that, one has

For the king’s wedding. Human love is a mystery that touches the mystery of God himself. God wishes to be united with humanity as a husband to his wife: he has already done so in the person of Christ.

My heart is moved by an exalted theme as I deliver my ode to the king, my tongue as nimble as a writer’s pen.

You are the finest among all others, your lips are anointed with graciousness, for God has blessed you forever.

Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty one, array yourself with splendor and majesty. Glorious and triumphant, ride on for the sake of truth, for a just cause. You will see marvelous deeds of your right hand.

Your arrows are sharp, O king, they pierce the hearts of your enemies; nations fall beneath your feet.

Your throne, O God, will last forever; a scepter of justice is your scepter.
to forget country and family, one must change one’s way of thinking and one’s habits for those of God.

Forget your fathers, and think of your sons. We can see here Jesus’ promises to those who leave all to serve him.

8 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness, above your fellow kings.

9 Your robes are fragrant with myrrh, aloes and cassia. The music of strings gladdens your palace adorned and glowing with ivory.

10 Among your ladies of honor are daughters of kings; at your right hand, in gold of Ophir, stands the queen.

11 Listen, O daughter, pay attention; forget your father’s house and your nation, and your beauty will charm the King, for he is your lord.

12 The people of Tyre will bow before him. The wealthiest nations will seek your favor.

13 All glorious as she enters is the princess in her gold-woven robes.

14 She is led in royal attire to the king, following behind is her train of virgins.

15 Amid cheers and general rejoicing, they enter the palace of the king.

16 Forget your fathers and think of your sons, you will make them princes throughout the land.

God is with us. A river whose streams bring joy to the city of God. To the upheavals mentioned in the first stanza the psalmist contrasts a vision of tranquility, the Holy City, Jerusalem, the Church.

2 God is our strength and protection, an ever-present help in affliction.

3 We will not fear, therefore, though the earth be shaken and the mountains plunge into the seas, though its waters foam and roar, though the mountains quake and totter.

For the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob, our stronghold.

5 There is a river whose streams bring joy to the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

6 God is within, the city cannot quake, for God’s help is upon it at the break of day.
He has put an end to wars. The spiritual Israel (the Church) will be there again to proclaim the wonders of God when the armies and imperial powers will have fallen.

At the sound of his voice, the earth melts away. And it is still true when God feels at home with us: if we had many reasons to fear, suddenly the scene changes and all is certitude and peace.

7 Kingdoms tottered, nations were in turmoil; at the sound of his voice the earth melts away.
8 For with us is the Lord of hosts, the God of Jacob, our refuge.
9 Come, see the works of the Lord – the marvelous things he has done in the world.
10 He has put an end to wars, broken the bows and splintered the spears, set the shields and chariots afire.
11 Be still, know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, exalted over the earth!
12 With us is the Lord of hosts, the God of Jacob, our refuge.

PSALM 47 (46)

To the king of all the nations. The Lord comes at the end of time to begin his reign.

2 Clap your hands, all you peoples; acclaim God with shouts of joy.
3 For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared; he is a great king all over the earth.
4 He brings peoples under our dominion and puts nations under our feet.
5 He chose our inheritance for us – the pride of Jacob whom he loves!
6 God ascends amid joyful shouts, the Lord amid trumpet blasts.
7 Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
8 God is king of all the earth; sing to him a hymn of praise.
9 For God now rules over the nations, God reigns from his holy throne.
10 The leaders of the nations rally together with the people of the God of Abraham. For in his hands are the great of the earth, God reigns far above.

PSALM 48 (47)

The Church-Zion: mountain of God. Zion is the other name for Jerusalem, the Holy City. God favored it and protected it on several occasions. Let the faithful rejoice: God watches over it!

2 Great is the Lord, most worthy of praise in the city of God, his holy mountain.
3 Beautifully elevated, it is the joy of all the earth – Mount Zion, heavenly mountain,
the city of the great King.
4 Here within her lines of defense,
   God has shown himself to be a sure fortress.
5 The kings assembled together,
   advanced toward the city.
6 But as soon as they saw it, they were astounded;
   they panicked and took to flight.
7 Seized with fear, they trembled,
   like a woman in travail,
8 or like the ships of Tarshish,
   shattered by a strong wind from the east.
9 As we have heard, so have we seen,
   in the city of the Lord of hosts,
   in the city of our God,
   the city God founded forever.
10 Let us recall your unfailing love,
   O God, inside your temple.
11 Let your praise as does your name, O God,
   reach to the ends of the earth.
   Your right hand is ever victorious.
12 Let Mount Zion rejoice,
   let the villages of Judah be glad,
   for your justice prevails.
13 Walk around Zion, count her towers,
14 consider her ramparts, examine her castles,
   that you may tell the next generation
15 that such is God;
   God is our guide forever.

PSALM 49 (48)

The irresponsibility of the rich. “Beware of every desire to possess, for even when one has everything, it is not possessions which give life.”

2 Hear this, all you peoples!
Listen, all you inhabitants of the world,
3 high and low together,
   rich and poor alike!
4 My mouth will speak wisdom,
   my deep thoughts will bring discernment.
5 To a proverb I will incline my ear,
   and solve my riddle to the rhythm of my lyre.
6 Why should I fear when evil days come,
   when wicked deceivers ring me round –
7 those who trust in their wealth
   and boast of their great riches?

• 48 This psalm, like Psalm 46, mentions the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem. The holy mountain, the text reads: Mount Zion in the far north – ancient traditions considered the mountains of the north as the residence of the gods. Walk around Zion: this refers, perhaps, to the very ancient religious practice of walking around a sanctuary and touching the wall.
For no ransom avails for one’s life, there is no price one can give to God for it.

For redeeming one’s life demands too high a price, and all is lost forever.

Who can remain forever alive and never see the grave?

For we see that the wise die, and pass away like the fool and the stupid leaving to others their fortune and wealth.

Their graves are their eternal homes, from generation to generation, no matter how big the tracts of land they own.

People of wealth have no thought, they will be silenced like the beasts.

This is the fate of people trusting themselves, the future of those who rely on their strength.

Like sheep led to the grave, they have death as their shepherd and ruler; quickly their form will be consumed in the world of the dead, which is their home.

But God will rescue my soul from the grave by receiving me unto himself.

Fear not when someone grows rich, when his power becomes oppressively great, for nothing will he take when he dies; his wealth and pomp he will leave behind.

Though he praised himself in his lifetime, “All will say that I have enjoyed life,” he will join the generation of his forebears, who will never again see the light.

People of wealth have no thought, they will be silenced like the beasts.

Serve God with a sincere heart. God is coming to judge his people. He condemns those who replace the obedience of the heart with offerings and material sacrifices, and those who recite the commandments instead of practicing them.

The God of gods, the Lord has spoken, he summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

God has shone from Zion, perfect in beauty.

God is no longer silent, he comes; before him is a devouring fire, around him a raging storm.
He calls to the heavens above, 
and to the earth below, 
that he may judge his people:

“Gather before me my faithful ones, 
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.”

The heavens will proclaim his sentence, 
for God himself is the judge.

“Hear, O my people, for I am speaking. 
I will accuse you, O Israel, 
I am God, your God!

Not for your sacrifices do I reprove you, 
for your burnt offerings are ever before me.

I need no bull from your stalls, 
nor he-goat from your pens.

For I own all the beasts of the forest 
and the animals of my thousand hills.

All the birds of the air I know; 
all that move in the fields are mine.

I need not tell you if I were hungry, 
for mine is the world and all that it contains.

Do I eat the flesh of bulls 
or drink the blood of goats?

Yet offer to God a sacrifice of thanks, 
and fulfill your vows to the Most High.

Call on me in time of calamity; 
I will deliver you, and you will glorify me.”

But God says this to the wicked: 
“What right have you to mouth my laws, 
or to talk about my covenant?

You hate my commands 
and cast my words behind you.

You join a thief when you meet one; 
you keep company with adulterers.

You have a mouth of evil 
and a deceitful tongue.

You speak ill of your brother, 
and slander your own mother’s son.

Because I was silent while you did these things, 
you thought I was like you. 
But now I rebuke you 
and make this charge against you.

Give this a thought, you who forget God, 
lest I tear you to pieces with no one to help you.

Those who give with thanks offerings honor me, 
but the one who walks blamelessly, 
I will show him the salvation of God.”
Have mercy on me, Lord. Let us admit our sin before the God of truth. Our humiliation will not be without hope, since we know God is able to give us a new heart.

3 Have mercy on me, O God, in your love.
In your great compassion blot out my sin.
4 Wash me thoroughly of my guilt; cleanse me of evil.
5 For I acknowledge my wrongdoings and have my sins ever in mind.
6 Against you alone have I sinned; what is evil in your sight I have done.

You are right when you pass sentence and blameless in your judgment.
7 For I have been guilt-ridden from birth, a sinner from my mother's womb.
8 I know you desire truth in the heart, teach me wisdom in my inmost being.
9 Cleanse me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.
10 Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
11 Turn your face away from my sins and blot out all my offenses.
12 Create in me, O God, a pure heart; give me a new and steadfast spirit.
13 Do not cast me out of your presence nor take your holy spirit from me.
14 Give me again the joy of your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.
15 Then I will show wrongdoers your ways and sinners will return to you.
16 Deliver me, O God, from the guilt of blood, and of your justice I shall sing aloud.
17 O Lord, open my lips, and I will declare your praise.
18 You take no pleasure in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, you would not delight in it.
19 O God, my sacrifice is a broken spirit; a contrite heart you will not despise.
20 Shower Zion with your favor: rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
21 Then you will delight in fitting sacrifices, in burnt offerings and bulls offered on your altar.
PSALM 52 (51)

3 Why boast of your wickedness, strong man? Why boast all day long that you are plotting crimes?
4 Your tongue is like a sharp razor; you love evil more than good, and falsehood more than truth. You love words that inflict harm, O you deceitful tongue!
5 But God will bring you down forever; he will snatch you, tear you away from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living.

PSALM 53 (52)

2 The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their ways are wicked; not one of them does good.
3 From heaven God looks down upon the people, to see if there is anyone who seeks God and understands.
4 None! They have all fallen away. Depraved – they are all alike. There is no one who does good, no, not even one.

PSALM 54 (53)

3 By your name, O God, save me; you, the Valiant, uphold my cause.
4 Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth.
5 Strangers are against me – the ruthless seek my life; they have no regard for God.
6 See, God is my helper; the Lord upholds my life.

5 Will these evildoers never learn? They devour my people just as they devour food and never call on God.
6 There they are – afraid when there is nothing to be feared. God will scatter their bones; they will be put to shame because God has rejected them.
7 May I see Israel’s salvation coming forth from Zion! When God restores his people’s fortune, Jacob will be glad, Israel will rejoice.

7 May their evil plots rebound on them; in your faithfulness destroy them!
8 Freely will I offer sacrifice to you and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.
9 You have delivered me from calamity, and I look down on my foes.
PSALM 55 (54)  

Prayer of the persecuted. The supremacy of money, violence, luxury, prostitution and the exploitation of people. In the midst of a perverted society, the just feel trapped and threatened. Cast your care upon the Lord.

2 Listen to my prayer, O God, do not be deaf to my pleading; 3 give heed to me and answer me.

I am greatly troubled 4 at the outcry of the enemy and the clamor of the wicked.

I am distraught at the way they revile me and persecute me in their fury.

5 My heart agonizes within me; the terrors of death fall upon me. 6 I tremble in fear – horror has got the better of me.

7 I said, “If I had wings like a dove, I would fly away and be at rest;

8 I would seek a home in the desert or hurry to find a cave for shelter from the tempest.”

9 O Lord, shatter their plans. In the city I see strife and violence; 11 day and night they prowl about its walls, while inside, evil prevails.

12 Forces of tyranny and treachery are at work undermining the city.

13 If it were a rival insulting me, I could bear with him; if it were a foe in pursuit of me, I could hide from him.

14 But it is you, an equal of mine, my bosom friend, my companion 15 whose fellowship I enjoyed as we walked together in the house of God.

16 Let death come upon them suddenly, let them go down to the grave alive, for within them evil and mischief thrive.

17 But in God I seek refuge; the Lord will rescue me.

18 Morning, evening, and even at noon, I cry out my grievance and moan; surely he will hear my voice.

19 He will deliver me in safety from my opponents, for they are many.

20 God who is enthroned forever will hear me and humble them, for they do not repent nor do they stand in awe of God.

21 My friend has attacked his associates and has violated his pact with them.

22 His words were smoother than butter, yet war was in his heart; his utterances, more soothing than oil, were swords ready and drawn.

23 Place your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you, for he never allows the upright to fall.

24 But you, O God, will cast the wicked into a pit; bloodthirsty and treacherous, they will not live out half their days. As for me, I trust in you alone, O Lord.

PSALM 56 (55)  

The just will not fall. Prayer of the millions of oppressed who live, and no doubt will die crushed. You, Lord, have gathered our tears!

2 O God, show your mercy to me, for my foes are in hot pursuit; they press their attack on me all the time.

3 My accusers pursue me all day long, many attack me. 4 But when I am afraid, O Mighty One, I put my trust in you.

5 In God whose word I praise, in God I trust without fear. What can mortals do against me?

6 All day long they hatch their evil plans, plotting mischief to injure my cause.

7 They conspire and lurk around, watching my every move, bent upon taking my life.

8 They must not be allowed to go unpunished; therefore, O God, in your fury bring the nations down.

9 You have a record of my laments; my tears are stored in your wineskin. Are they not written on your scroll?
10 My enemies turn back when I call on you for help; now I know that God is for me.
11 In God whose word I praise, I trust without fear. What can mortals do against me?

13 I am bound to you by vows, O God; I shall offer my thanksgiving.
14 For you have rescued my soul from death and my feet from stumbling, that I might walk in God’s presence in the light of the living.

O Lord, I live in the midst of lions.

2 Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy, for my soul takes refuge in you; I will find shelter in the shadow of your wings till the disaster has passed.
3 I call on God the Most High, on God who has done everything for me: may he send from heaven a savior and put my oppressors to shame. May God send me his love and faithfulness.
4 I lie prostrate in the midst of lions that greedily devour people, their teeth are pointed spears and arrows, their tongues, sharpened swords.
5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Your glory be over all the earth!
6 They have set a snare for my steps; my soul was bowed down in distress. They dug a pit along my path, but they themselves fell into it.
7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast. I will sing and make music.
8 Awake, my soul, awake, O harp and lyre! I will wake the dawn.
9 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praise to you among the nations.
10 For your love reaches to the heavens, and your faithfulness, to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your Glory be over all the earth!

God judges judges. God denounces leaders who establish and maintain a corrupt order instead of being agents of his justice.

2 You gods, are your decrees just, and are your judgments upright?
3 No, you willfully commit crimes; you deal in violence and corruption.
4 Even from the womb the wicked go astray; from birth they are wayward liars.
5 They are poisonous like deadly snakes, deaf as the adder that blocks its ears so as not to hear the charmer’s voice casting spells.
6 Break the teeth in their mouths, O God; tear out the fangs of the lions, O Lord.

8 Let them vanish like spilled water; let them be trodden down like grass that withers.
9 Let them be like snails that sink into slime, like untimely births that never see the sun. 10 Like green grass that is burned before the thorns are dry – let them be swept away!
11 The upright will rejoice when they are avenged; they will bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked.
12 Then will people say, “Surely the righteous are rewarded; surely there is a God who gives judgment on earth.”

• 58 The rulers and those responsible for social justice are called gods because they represent God in carrying out their functions.
PSALM 59 (58) The city is in the hands of the violent.

2 Deliver me from my enemies, O God, from those who rise up against me.
3 Deliver me from evildoers; rescue me from the bloodthirsty.
4 Look, they lie in wait for my life; the mighty conspiring against me, for no fault of mine, O Lord.
5 I have done them no wrong, yet they prepare to attack me. Rise and help me, look on my plight, O Lord God of hosts, God of Israel! Arise and punish the nations; have no mercy on the wicked traitors.
6 Each evening they return, howling like dogs, prowling about the city. To their mind, God does not hear or see their wicked deeds.
7 But you, O Lord, laugh at them; you look down upon the wicked.
8 O my Strength, I look up to you, for you, O God, are my fortress.
9 My loving God will come to help me and let me see my enemies fall.
10 But slay them not, lest my people forget; just shake them by your power, and bring them down, O Lord, our shield.
11 Give us your help against the foe, for human help is worthless.
12 For the curses and lies they utter, destroy them in your vengeance, destroy them till they are no more. Then it will be known that God rules over Jacob to the ends of the earth.
13 Each evening let them return, howling like dogs, prowling about the city, roaming about for food, growling and never filled.
14 But I will sing of your might; in the morning I will sing of your love. For you have been a fortress to me, a refuge in time of distress. O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my stronghold; you are a loving God.

PSALM 60 (59) Petition after a defeat.

3 O God, you have rejected us and have broken our defenses; you have been angry, but now turn back to us.
4 You have shaken the land and torn it open; mend its cracks for it totters.
5 You have made your people suffer; you have given us wine that makes us stagger.
6 You set the banner behind us and your people fled from bow and arrow.
7 Help us and listen to us, that your beloved may be rescued.
8 God has spoken in his sanctuary: "In triumph I will divide up Shechem and parcel out the Valley of Succoth.

PSALM 61 (60)

2 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.
3 I call to you from the ends of the earth; my heart grows faint. Set me high upon a rock; be my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.
4 Let me dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in your wings' shelter.
6 Indeed you have heard my vows, O God, and the wish of those who fear your name.
7 Increase the days of the king’s life; prolong his years for many generations.
8 May he ever be enthroned in God’s presence; let your love and loyalty watch over him.
9 So I will sing praises to your name and fulfill my vows day after day.

PSALM 62 (61)

Still another psalm that seems far removed from believers in peaceful countries. The psalms are the prayer of a people always struggling and suffering violence. Look at the televised news, and the violence of the world will be sufficiently present for us to pray this evening, the prayer of the real world that struggles to survive.

God has spoken one word, and I have heard two things. God revealed at the same time two of his dominant qualities: power and goodness.

My soul rests in God alone. God has revealed two of his dominant qualities: power and goodness. Would we like them to be active? Let us believe and open our hearts.

2 My soul finds rest in God alone; from him comes my salvation.
3 He alone is my rock and salvation; with him as my stronghold, I shall not be overcome.
4 How long will you assail with your threats, all of you, to bring someone down – as you would pull a wall or smash a fence?
5 Indeed they plan to topple me. They take pleasure in telling lies; with their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse.
6 Find rest in God alone, O my soul; from him comes my hope.
7 He alone is my rock and my salvation; with him as my stronghold, I shall not be overcome.
8 On God rests my salvation and my honor; he is my refuge, my mighty rock.
9 Trust in him at all times, my people; pour out your hearts before him; God is our refuge.
10 People of low rank are only a breath, important people, merely an illusion. If weighed together they are nothing, even lighter than a puff of wind.
11 Do not set your heart on extortion, nor your hopes upon corrupt gain. Even if wealth accumulates, keep your heart detached.

• 59 Is God far from evil places? Does he do nothing there? Is there no prayer, no witness which can move them?

• 60 Perhaps it is difficult for us to understand this psalm. The people have been humiliated and are complaining to God that it is his fault. Then, in the Temple, a priest or a prophet proclaims a comforting message from God: he is going to war and his arms will be the tribes of Israel: Gilead, Ephraim, Judah… and he will trample the neighboring countries… Edom, Moab…

• 61 The king of Israel has trouble and he says his prayer or someone says it for him. How much, perhaps, do we ask of God daily, for house, husband, children and the cat. God knows it is better not to hear everything but it pleases him that we want to call on him: in fact, he is all that we lack.
God has spoken one word, and I have heard two things:
that power belongs to God, and yours, O God, is also mercy:
you reward each one according to his deeds.

My soul thirsts for you. Contrast between daily life, so often
tedious, and the experience of God discovered in solitude.

O God, you are my God, it is you I seek;
for you my body longs and my soul thirsts,
as a dry and weary land without water.

Thus have I gazed upon you in the sanctuary,
to see your power and your glory.

Your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.

I will bless you as long as I live,
lift up my hands and call on your name.

As with the richest food my soul will feast;
my mouth will praise you with joyful lips.

When I remember you on my bed
I think of you all through the night,
for you have been my help;
I sing in the shadow of your wings.

My soul clings to you,
your right hand upholds me.

In vain they are after my life,
they will go down to the depths of the earth;
they will be delivered to the sword,
and become the prey of jackals.

The king will rejoice in God.
All who swear by God’s name will boast:
“At last slanderers’ tongues have been silenced.”

Punishment for those who slander.

They invite each other to evil-doing, they conspire to lay snares, saying,
“No one will see us, who will uncover our scheme?”

Who peers into man will uncover them.

And now God fires his arrows at them and suddenly they are struck down.
Their own tongue brought them

Everyone will stand in awe. We should not despise the fear of God, unless we belong to those
perfect people who have become pure love of God. A child is not educated without correction. The great
majority of humans are not angels, and they need to see that justice is effective. How many people have seen the justice of God rise in the eastern countries! Ask him to let it rise in our western world.
PSALM 65 (64)

This material abundance makes us think of another kind and for which God assured his friends. The Church also knows about spring rains, the summer harvest and songs of happiness.

That should not make us forget that God is at work through seasons and rainfall. If the majority of Christians and Church communities no longer dare to ask God for the weather needed for harvest, that is not a proof that our faith is now more spiritual but that we unfortunately feel at ease with a helpless God.

You visit the earth and fill it with abundance. Thanks-giving for the harvest of a fertile year.

2 Praise belongs to you, O God, in Zion; here people come to fulfill their vows.
3 All mortals bring to you their evil deeds, to you, who answer prayers.
4 Though our faults prevail over us, you forgive our sins.
5 Blessed is the one you choose to approach you and take to dwell in your courts. In your house we are satisfied with the good things of your holy temple.
6 With awesome deeds of righteousness you answer us, O God our savior, hope of all the ends of the earth and of distant islands.
7 By your power you set up the mountains.
8 By your strength the seas were calmed; you lull their roaring waves and the turmoil of the nations.
9 Those who dwell at the ends of the earth stand in awe of your marvelous deeds. You make joyful the dawn and the coming of dusk.
10 You water the land and care for it, enriching it with natural resources. God’s stream is filled with water; so you prepare the earth to give us its fruits.
11 You drench the furrows in the land and level the ridges, you soften the soil with showers and bless its crops.
12 You crown the year with your goodness; abundance flows everywhere.
13 The deserts have become pasture land, the hills are clothed with gladness, the meadows covered with flocks, the valleys decked with grain – they shout and sing for joy.
PSALM 66 (65)

The psalmist knows that God has not only created nature but that he protects his people from a hostile world, and he recalls his saving wonders.

"We thank you, Lord God, Master of the universe, who are and who were, for you have begun your reign, making use of your invincible power. The nations raged but your wrath has come, the time to judge the dead and reward your servants the prophets, the saints and those who honor your Name – whether great or small – and destroy those who destroy the earth” (Rev 11:17-18).

Thanksgiving after a struggle. The leader of the community is at the head of the procession: he thanks God who has freed his people of their trials.

Shout with joy to God, all you on earth;  
2 sing to the glory of his name;  
proclaim his glorious praise.

3 Say to God, “How great are your deeds!  
How formidable your power  
that makes your enemies cower!  
4 All the earth bows down to you,  
making music in praise of you,  
singing in honor of your name.”

5 Come and see God’s wonders,  
his deeds awesome for humans.  
6 He has turned the sea into dry land,  
and the river was crossed on foot.  
Let us, therefore, rejoice in him.

7 He rules by his might forever,  
his eyes keeping watch on the peoples,  
his arm holding the rebels in check.

8 Praise our God, O nations,  
let the sound of his praise be heard,  
9 for he has preserved us among the living  
and kept our feet from stumbling.

10 Why did you test us, O God;  
and refine us like silver?  
11 You let us fall into the snare;  
you burdened us with disgrace.  
12 You allowed a nobody to rule over us,  
and we have gone through fire and water,  
but you have brought us to safety at last.

13 I will bring offerings to your house  
in fulfillment of my vows –  
14 Those I made when assailed with troubles.  
15 I will offer holocausts of fatlings,  
sending up smoke of burning rams,  
and a sacrifice of goats and bulls.  
16 All you who fear God, come and listen;  
let me tell you what he has done.  
17 I cried aloud to him,  
extolling him with my tongue.  
18 If I had nurtured wickedness in my heart,  
than he would not have heard.  
19 But God has listened;  
he gave heed to my prayer.  
20 May God be blessed!  
He has not rejected my prayer;  
nor withheld his love from me.
PSALM 67 (66)  

All the nations will know you.

2 May God be gracious and bless us; may he let his face shine upon us,
3 that your way be known on earth and your salvation among the nations.

4 May the peoples praise you, O God, may all the peoples praise you!

5 May the countries be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with justice and guide the nations of the world.
6 May the peoples praise you, O God, may all the peoples praise you!

7 The land has given its harvest; God, our God, has blessed us.
8 May God bless us and be revered, to the very ends of the earth.

PSALM 68 (67)  

Triumphal procession of the God of victories. To the eyes of the believer, the history of the Church is a new triumphal march. The risen Christ present through his Spirit leads her to heaven, where he has prepared a place for her.

2 Arise, O God, scatter your enemies; let your foes flee before you.
3 As smoke is blown by the wind, so blow them away; as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish before you.
4 But let the righteous be glad and exult before God; let them sing to God and shout for joy.

5 Sing to God, sing praises to his name; open the way to him who rides upon the clouds; the Lord is his name. Rejoice in his presence.
6 Father of orphans and protector of widows – such is our God in his holy dwelling.
7 He gives shelter to the homeless, sets the prisoners free, but keeps the rebels in their jail.
8 O God, when you went forth, when you led your people through the desert, the earth trembled, the heavens poured down rain, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
9 Then you gave a rain of blessings to comfort your weary children.
10 Your people found a dwelling and in your mercy, O God, you provided for the needy.
11 The Lord has dispatched messengers: “The Lord has shattered an army!”
12 The kings and their armies flee, yes, they flee, they flee!
13 A woman at home divides the spoils: wings of dove covered with silver, their pinions with shining gold.

• 68 We have here a very ancient psalm, fairly picturesque, although in certain places the text may be obscure, having been badly preserved.

This psalm was sung in processions going up to Jerusalem. The faithful knew God was with them and the procession was like the entry of the triumphant God into his Temple.

This explains the images we find in this psalm. The Lord God has come from Sinai to the Holy Land, mounted on the clouds, or on the cherubim. He has been at the side of his people, and his miracles in the desert startled nature (vv.9-10). The enemy kings are defeated: this is a reference to the victory of Deborah at the torrent of Kishon (Jdg 4). The psalmist then remembers the choice of God’s mountain, Jerusalem (vv. 16-17). This choice causes jealousy in the great mountains.

All ends with a vision of the future full of hope. God who rides on the clouds will manifest himself to all the nations. In the liturgy, this psalm is used for the Ascension of the Lord.
When the Lord routed the kings, snow fell on the Dark Mountain.

O mighty mountain of Bashan, high and rugged mountain, why look with envy upon the mountain where God chooses to reign, where the Lord will dwell forever?

With myriads of powerful chariots, the Lord came from Sinai into his sanctuary.

He ascended the high mountain, leading captives in his train, taking people as tributes, even rebels, to his dwelling.

Blessed be the Lord, God our savior, who daily bears our burdens!

Ours is a God who saves; our Lord lets us escape from death.

But he crushes the heads of his enemies, the hairy crowns of the criminals.

The Lord said, “I will bring them back from Bashan, back from the depths of the sea, that you may bathe your feet in blood, and the tongues of your dogs may have their share of your foes.”

I remember the procession of the King, of my God, as they came into the sanctuary: the singers in front, the musicians last, between them maidens playing tambourines.

Praise God in the great congregation, praise the Lord in the feasts of Israel.

There in the lead is the least of them, the tribe of Benjamin; the princes of Judah in a body; the princes of Naphtali, and of Zebulun.

Summon your power, O God, with the strength you have wielded for us.

To your temple in Jerusalem, kings will come with gifts.

Rebuke the beast that dwell in the reeds, and the herd of bulls. Humble them; let them bring gold and silver. Scatter the nations who delight in war.

Let wealth come from Egypt; let Ethiopia extend its hands to God.

Sing to God, O kingdoms of the world; sing praises to the Lord, to him who rides the ancient heavens and speaks in the voice of thunder.

Proclaim the might of God; he is great in Israel, powerful in heavens.

Awesome in his sanctuary is the God of Israel. He gives his people power and strength.

Blessed be God!

The waters reach up to my neck. God’s servant almost submerged by the waters of suffering and death calls to the Lord for help. Christ has applied to himself several terms of this prayer. After having been saved from death, he will be the happiness of all who seek God.

Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.

I am sunk in the miry depths where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, swept and engulfed by the flood.

I am weary from calling for help; my throat is hoarse and parched. My eyes have grown dim looking for my God.

More than the hairs of my head are those who hate me for no reason; mighty are those who attack me, many are my enemies without cause. What I did not steal I am forced to restore.

Had I done wrong, O God, you would know it; my faults would not be hidden from you.

Let me not bring disgrace to those

• 69 The prayer of a believer who, no doubt, would be less a target of mockery and atrocity from his circle if he were not known as a Christian. A jealous love of your house devours me, draws insults from those who insult you (see Jn 2:17). Let us not think too quickly that if we are persecuted, it is because we are believers; and yet Jesus said that must be. Humiliation—often justified—will accompany the graces and the glory which God gives his children (2 Cor 4:7).
who hope in you, O Lord God of hosts; may I cause no dishonor to those who seek you, O God of Israel

– 8 since I am held in contempt for your sake, and shame has covered my face.

9 I have become a stranger to my kindred, an alien to my mother’s sons.

10 Zeal for your house consumes me as fire and those who insult you insult me as well.

11 When I humbled myself with fasting, I was scorned for it.

12 When I put on sackcloth, I was made a laughingstock.

13 I have become the talk of those who sit at the gates, the topic of the drunkards’ songs.

14 But I pray to you, O Lord, at a time most favorable to you. In your great love, O God, answer me with your unfailing help.

15 Rescue me, lest I sink in the mire; deliver me from the storm and the deep waters.

16 Let not the flood engulf me, nor the deep suck me in, let not the pit close its mouth upon me.

17 In your mercy, O Lord, give me a good answer; in your great compassion, turn to me.

18 Hide not your face from your servant; answer me at once for I am in distress.

19 Come and rescue me; set me free from my enemies.

20 You know the disgrace I suffer, and you know my oppressors and my humiliations.

21 Dishonor has driven me to despair; I looked for sympathy and there was none, for comforters and there was no one.

22 They gave me poison for food and vinegar to drink.

23 May snares be set for them in their banquets and traps in their sacred feasts.

24 May their eyes grow dim, so that they will not see; may their loins be stricken with palsy.

25 Pour out your fury upon them, and let your burning anger overtake them.

26 Make their camp desolate; may no one dwell in their tents,

27 for they persecute the one you have wounded, and increased the pain of the one you have struck.

28 Charge them with crime upon crime, and do not acquit them.

29 Blot them out of the book of life, and do not enroll them among the upright.

30 But I myself am humbled and wounded; your salvation, O God, will lift me up.

31 I will praise the name of God in song; I will glorify him with thanksgiving.

32 This will please the Lord more than an ox or a bull with horns and divided hoofs.

33 Let the lowly witness this and be glad. You who seek God, may your hearts be revived.

34 For the Lord hears the needy and does not despise those in captivity.

35 Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and whatever moves in them.

36 For God will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah. His people shall dwell in the land and possess it;

37 the children of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name will dwell in it.

PSALM 70 (69) The cry of the persecuted.

2 Be pleased, O God, to rescue me! Make haste to help me!

3 Let those who seek my life be put to shame and disgrace. Let those who
In you, O Lord, I seek refuge; let me not be disgraced. 
2 In your justice help me and deliver me, turn your ear to me and save me! 
3 Be my rock of refuge, a stronghold to give me safety, for you are my rock and my fortress. 
4 Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of cruel and violent people. 
5 For you, O Lord, have been my hope, my trust, O God, from my youth. 
6 I have relied on you from birth: from my mother’s womb you brought me forth. My praise is of you continually. 
7 I have become like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge. 
8 My mouth is filled with your praise, announcing your glory day by day. 
9 Do not cast me off in my old age, do not desert me when my strength fails. 
10 For my enemies speak ill of me; awaiting my death they set plans. 
11 They say, “God has forsaken him; let us pursue and seize him, for no one will rescue him.” 
12 O God, be not far from me; my God, make haste to help me! 
13 Let my accusers be destroyed in shame; let those who seek my ruin be covered with disgrace and scorn. 
14 Then I may trust in you and praise you. 

My lips will proclaim your intervention and tell of your salvation all day, little though it is what I can understand. 
15 I will come to your strength, O Lord, and announce your justice, yours alone. 
16 You have taught me from my youth and until now I proclaim your marvels. 
17 When I grow old and gray, do not leave me, O God; give me time to declare your might, your power to all generations to come. 
18 Your justice, O God, reaches to heaven; you have done great things. Who is like you, O God? 
19 Many have been my hardships and misery, but once more you come to revive me; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again. 
20 You will restore me and comfort me again. 
21 I will praise you with the harp, for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing your praise with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. 
22 My lips will rejoice, and my soul, too, which you have rescued. 
23 I will recall your intervention the whole day long, “Yes, those who sought to do me harm have been confused and put to shame.” 

Prayer of an elderly.

We shall have a better knowledge of the love of God at the end of our lives, and it will be easy for us to remember the wonders he worked for us. May God grant us true consolation at the end of our present life.
PSALM 72 (71)

The King of Peace. Waiting for the King of Peace, he who will do justice for the humble. The expectation of universal peace after so much obstinacy in murdering one another.

O God, endow the king with your justice, the royal son with your righteousness.

2 May he rule your people justly and defend the rights of the lowly.

3 Let the mountains bring peace to the people, and the hills justice.

4 He will defend the cause of the poor, deliver the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor.

5 He will endure as the sun and as the moon through all generations.

6 He will be like rain falling on the fields, or showers watering the earth.

7 Justice will flower in his days, and peace abound till the moon be no more.

8 For he reigns from sea to sea, from the River to the ends of the earth;

9 his foes are crushed before him, and his enemies lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tarshish and the islands render him tribute, the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts, all kings bow down to him, and all nations serve him.

12 He delivers the needy who call on him, the afflicted with no one to help them.

13 His mercy is upon the weak and the poor, he saves the life of the poor.

14 He rescues them from oppression and strife, for their life is precious to him.

15 May he live long, may gold from Sheba be given him.

16 May grain abound throughout the land, waving and rustling as in Lebanon; may cities teem with people, as fields with grass.

17 May his name endure forever; may his name be as lasting as the sun. All the races will boast about him, and he will be blessed by all nations.

18 Praised be the Lord, God of Israel, who alone works so marvelously.
Praised be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory!

This concludes the prayers of David, son of Jesse.

Why are the wicked successful? It is more a scandal than a temptation when the believer sees the wicked succeed in everything: the violent, the unscrupulous, those who have money and can corrupt, masters of deceit. “Wait for the end,” says the psalmist.

Surely God is good to Israel, I mean, to the clean of heart.
But, as for me, I almost stumbled, I nearly lost my foothold.
for I was envious of the arrogant, when I saw the wicked prosper.
For they suffer no pain; they are strong and sound of body,
free from troubles common to mortals; they are not stricken by human ills.
That is why pride becomes their necklace, and violence the robe that covers them.
Evil comes from their callous hearts, boundless evil from their corrupt minds.
They scoff and speak with malice, and they threaten arrogantly.
Their mouths defy the heavens and their tongues dictate on earth.
People, therefore, look up to them because they are well-watered.
“Does God see?” they say. “Has the Most High some knowledge of this?
Such are the wicked – always carefree while they rake in riches.
In vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence
if all day long I am stricken and punished every morning.”

Had I spoken like this, I would not be acting as one of your children.
Although I tried to understand this, it was difficult for me,
until I entered the secrets of God. Then I perceived their approaching doom.
You place them on slippery ground and make them fall into the pit.
19 How suddenly they are destroyed, completely swept away in terror!
20 As one awakes from a nightmare, so when you arise, O Lord, you shake them off like a dream.
21 When my heart was embittered, and my spirit distraught
it was folly, not wisdom;
I did not know you better than the beasts.
23 Yet I am always with you; you hold my right hand,
you guide me on the way you chose and your Glory brings me along.
24 I have no one in heaven but you; on earth I desire nothing but you.
25 My flesh and my heart waste away for you, O God, O my rock, you are mine forever.
27 Those who abandon you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.
28 But as for me, my joy is to be near God; I have made the Lord my refuge, and I will proclaim all his works.

Arise, Lord and defend your cause! What a mystery for our faith: the silence of God in face of our follies!

PSALM 74

O God, have you rejected us forever? Why vent your anger on the sheep of your own fold?
2 Remember the people you have formed of old, the tribe you have redeemed as your inheritance. Remember Mount Zion where you once lived.
3 Climb and visit these hopeless ruins, the enemy has ravaged everything in the sanctuary.
4 Your foes have roared triumphantly in the holy place, and set up their banner of victory.
5 Like lumbermen felling trees, they smashed the carved paneling with hatchets, hammers and axes.
6 They defiled your sanctuary and set aflame the dwelling place of your name.
8 They said in fury, “Let us destroy them all.” They razed to the ground all the shrines of God in the land.
9 With no signs and no prophets, no one can tell how long this will last.
10 How long, O God, will the foe blaspheme? How long will the enemy revile your name?
11 Why do you hold back your right hand? Why keep your hand hidden?
12 Are you not O God, my king since birth, you who bring salvation to the land?
13 You split the sea in two by your power; you broke the monsters’ heads

14 The great trials and persecutions at the time of the Maccabees had been a challenge to God: could he not and should he not act? It is the same in those places where the Church is really persecuted. With verse 14, we find the ancient legends about creation: God split in two the sea monster, the wicked goddess Rahab, and thrown her to the sea turtles to be eaten.
in the water; 14 you crushed the heads of Leviathan and fed him to the dolphins.
15 You opened up rivers and springs and dried up ever-flowing streams.
16 You own the day as well as the night; you have set the course of the sun and the light.
17 You fixed the earth's borders, you created summer and winter.
18 Remember, O Lord, how the lawless scoff at your name, a party of fools cast you off.
19 Do not betray your turtledove to the beast, do not forget forever the life of your poor.
20 See how they keep your covenant in the dark caves of the land.
21 Do not let the oppressed be put to shame; may the poor and needy praise your name.
22 Arise, O God, and defend your cause, see how the thoughtless laugh at you all day long.
23 Do not forget the clamor of your foes, the continuous uproar of your enemies.

**PSALM 75 (74)**

God will come to judge. Through the cross and resurrection of Christ, God has already judged the world; to the just he has given the assurance that they will triumph.

2 We give you thanks, O God, we give thanks. Those who invoke your name will recount your wonderful deeds.
3 “At a set time I will judge fairly.
4 The earth wobbles with its inhabitants, but I will restore its foundations.
5 To the proud I say, ‘Boast no more.’ And to the wicked, ‘Raise not your head.
6 Do not lift yourself so high, do not insult God.’”
7 God comes, though not from the east or the west, nor from the mountains or desert;
8 God comes to judge, putting one down and lifting up another.
9 In the hand of the Lord is a cup of spiced and foaming wine; he pours it out for the wicked to drain to the dregs.
10 As for me, I will rejoice forever and sing praises to the God of Jacob.
11 He will break the power of the wicked, but the power of the virtuous will be exalted.

**PSALM 76 (75)**

After a victory. God has defeated the kings who were attacking Jerusalem, the Holy City. This victory prefigures another when in the end, the humble will be liberated.

2 God is now famous in Judah, in Israel his name is great.
3 Salem is indeed his tent; he has made Zion his dwelling place.
4 There he broke the flashing arrow, the shield and sword, the spear and bow.
5 You are glorious and majestic, enthroned on everlasting mountains.
6 The stouthearted lie despoiled, sleeping their last sleep, not one able to lift a hand.
7 At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both rider and horse lay stunned.
8 But you – how terrible you are!  
Who can oppose the fury of your onslaught?
9 You thundered judgment from the heavens;  
while the earth trembled and lay still,  
10 as you, O God, arose to judge,  
to save all the humble of the earth.
11 Pagan nations will bring you praise,  
their survivors will celebrate your name.
12 Make vows to the Lord, your God,  
and fulfill them; let the peoples  
bring offerings to the Fearsome One,  
13 who breaks the spirit of rulers,  
and is formidable to the kings of the earth.

PSALM 77 (76)

I remember the deeds of the Lord. We tend to see the past  
as more wonderful than it actually was. The passage of time will  
let us see that God is just as present and active in our own day.

2 I cry aloud to God – aloud that he  
may hear me.
3 In the day of trouble I seek the Lord,  
and stretch out my hand untiringly, my  
soul refusing to be consoled.
4 When I think of God I sigh; when I  
meditate my spirit fails.
5 You keep my eyes watchful; I am so  
troubled I cannot speak,  
6 I remember the days of old. I consider the years of  
long ago 7 and the whole night my soul  
remains disturbed, my spirit wonders,
8 ‘Will the Lord keep silent forever?  
Will he never show his favor again?  
9 Has he locked his love and ended  
his promise for all time?  
10 Is God forgetting his mercy? Has  
he in anger withheld his compassion?’
11 This is what makes me distraught  
– that the Most High no longer acts  
as before.
12 I remember the deeds of the Lord; I  
recall his marvels of old.
13 I meditate on all your work, and  
consider your mighty deeds.

14 Your way, O God, is most holy. Is  
there any god greater than you, our  
God?
15 You alone are the God who works  
wonders, who has made known his  
power to the nations.
16 With power you have redeemed  
your people, the descendants of Jacob  
and Joseph.
17 When the waters saw you, O God,  
they were afraid, the depths of the sea  
trembled.
18 The clouds poured down rain; the  
skies resounded with thunder; your ar-  
rows flashed from every side.
19 Your thunder crashed in the midst  
of the whirlwind; your lightning lit  
up the world; the earth shook and  
trembled.
20 Your path led through the sea,  
your way through the great water, but  
your footprints were nowhere to be  
seen.
21 You led your people as a flock by  
the hand of Moses and Aaron.

• 77 The Most High no longer acts as before.  
The psalmist meditates on God’s marvels in the past,  
and then returns to his own time. It would seem that  
God abandons his people in the midst of insoluble  
difficulties. The fact is that the past is seen more  
beautiful than it was, even in the Bible. Similarly, the  
actual crises in the Church could be seen as collapse,  
but the next generation will find that there has been a  
resurrection. Likewise, in the life of every believer,  
there are moments when God reveals himself and lifts  
us, and others when he asks for our fidelity even  
though he offers no encouragement.

I remember the deeds of the Lord, I recall his  
miracles of old. We say with Paul: “Why will God, who  
has given his Son for us, not give us all with him?” Let  
us remember our past, the past of our nation and of  
our Christian community and let us search to discover  
God’s patience and to see in our misfortunes the
How many times did they tempt God! This psalm draws a lesson from the history of Israel: God’s blessings and the ingratitude of his people.

In the desert he split rocks to give them abundant drink.
16 He made streams come out of a rock and caused water to flow like a river.
17 Yet they sinned even more against him and rebelled against the Most High in the desert. 18 They tested God, demanding the food they craved.
19 They blasphemed against God, saying: “Can God spread a table in the desert?
20 He made water flow out of the rock; can he also give his people bread or meat?”
21 When the Lord heard this he was enraged; a fire raged against Jacob, his anger flared against Israel,
22 for they had no faith in God nor trust in his deliverance.
23 Yet he commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven;
24 he rained down manna upon them and fed them with the heavenly grain.
25 They ate and had more than their fill of the bread of angels.
26 Then from heaven he stirred the east wind, and by his power let loose the south wind,
27 to rain down meat on them like dust. Birds as thick as the sand on the seashore fell inside their camp, lying all around their tents.
28 They ate till they were satisfied, for he had given them what they craved.
29 But even before they were finished, while the food was still in their mouths,
30 God’s anger rose against them; he slew the strongest among them and laid low the flower of Israel.
In spite of all this, they kept on sinning and did not believe, so he swept away their days suddenly as a storm, and their years in terror. When he slew them, they repented and sought him earnestly.

They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High, their redeemer.

But they flattered him with their mouths, they lied to him with their tongues, while their hearts were unfaithful; they were untrue to his covenant.

Even then, in his compassion, he forgave their offenses and did not destroy them.

Many a time he restrained his anger and did not fully stir up his wrath.

He remembered that they were but flesh, a breeze that passes and never returns.

How often did they rebel against him in the wilderness, how often did they grieve him in the desert!

Again and again they tested him, and provoked the Holy One of Israel.

They did not remember his power in redeeming them from the oppressor; neither his marvels shown in Egypt nor his wonders in the fields of Zoan, when he turned the rivers to blood and the oppressors had nothing to drink.

He sent swarms of flies that devoured them, frogs that devastated them.

He gave their crops to the caterpillar and their produce to the locust.

He destroyed their vines with hail and their sycamores with frost.

He struck their herds with plague and their flocks with thunderbolts.

He unleashed his fury against them, his wrath, indignation and strife – a band of destroying angels.

Giving vent to his anger, he did not spare them from death, but gave them over to the plague.

He struck down Egypt’s firstborn, manhood’s firstfruits in the tents of Ham.

Then he led forth his people like a flock, and guided them like sheep through the desert.

He led them safely, they did not fear, but the sea engulfed their enemies.

He brought them to his holy land, to the mountain his right hand had won.

He drove out peoples before them and gave them the land as their inheritance; they pitched their tents in it.

But they challenged and rebelled against God the Most High, and disobeyed his decrees.

They were unfaithful like their ancestors, deceitful and crooked as a twisted bow.

They angered him with their high places; they aroused his jealousy with their idols.

Filled with wrath, God rejected Israel.

He abandoned his dwelling at Shiloh, the tent where he dwelt among humans.

He lead his glory into captivity, his ark into the hand of the enemy.

He gave his people over to the sword, so furious was he at his inheritance.

Fire devoured their young men; their maidens were deprived of wedding songs.

As their priests fell by the sword, no lament was heard from their widows.

Then the Lord awoke, shouting, as from sleep induced by wine;

he struck his enemies on their back and put them to everlasting shame.

He rejected the house of Joseph, and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but the tribe of Judah and Zion, his beloved mountain.

He built his sanctuary like heaven, like the earth he founded forever.

He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds;
tending the sheep and their young, he
brought him to shepherd Jacob, the
people of Israel, his inheritance.

72 And with upright heart David past-
tured them; with skillful hands he led
them.

PSALM 79 (78)

How long will your anger last? Let God do justice to his
people. The Lord owes us nothing since we are sinners.

O God, the pagans have invaded
your inheritance; they have defiled
your holy temple and reduced Jeru-
alem to rubble.

They have given your servants’
corpses to the birds, and the flesh of
your saints to the beasts of the earth.

They have poured out the blood of
your faithful like water around Jeru-
salem, and there was no one to bury
them.

Mocked and reviled by those around
us, we are scorned by our neighbors.

How long will this last, O Lord? Will
you be angry forever? Will your wrath
always burn to avenge your rights?

Pour out your anger on the nations
that do not acknowledge you; on the
kingdoms that do not call on your
name.

For they have devoured Jacob and
laid waste his homeland.

PSALM 80 (79)

Let your face shine on us! God is our shepherd: has he
forgotten his people? When the Church is discredited, the
salvation of Christ seems to be a failure. Lord bring us back and
convert us!

Listen, O shepherd of Israel, you
who lead Joseph like a flock, you who
sit enthroned between the cherubim.

Shine forth before Ephraim, Ben-
jamin and Manasseh. Stir up your
might and come to save us.

Restore us, O God of hosts; make
your face shine upon us, that we may
be saved.

O Lord of hosts, how long will your
anger burn against the prayers of your
people?

You have fed them with the bread of
the nations that do not acknowledge you; on the
kingdoms that do not call on your
name.

Then we, your people, the flock of
your pasture, will thank you forever. We
will recount your praise from genera-
tion to generation.

8 Do not remember against us the
sins of our fathers.

Let your compassion hurry to us, for
we have been brought very low.

9 Help us, God, our savior, for the
glory of your name; forgive us for the
sake of your name.

10 Give not the nations a chance to
say, “Where is their God?” Before our
eyes let them know that you avenge the
blood of your servants.

11 Listen to the groans of the prison-
ers; by the strength of your arm, deliver
those doomed to die.

12 Return our neighbors sevenfold, O
Lord, the taunts with which they have
taunted you.

13 Then we, your people, the flock of
your pasture, will thank you forever. We
will recount your praise from genera-
tion to generation.
woe, and have given them tears to drink in their sorrow.

7 You have made us the scorn of our neighbors and the laughingstock of our oppressors.

8 Restore us, O God of hosts; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

9 You had a vine you brought from Egypt. You drove nations out, to plant it in their land.

10 On the ground that you cleared, it took root, and filled the land.

11 Its shade covered the mountains, its shoots went through the mighty cedars,

12 its branches reached out to the sea and its shoots to the River.

13 Why, then, have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass by pluck its fruits?

14 The beasts of the forest ravage it and all creatures of the field feed on it.

15 Turn again, O Lord of hosts, look down from heaven and see; care for this vine, and protect the stock your hand has planted.

16 Let those who burned it down perish at your rebuke.

17 But lay your hand on your instrument, on the son of man whom you make strong for yourself.

18 Then we will never turn away from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.

19 Restore us, O Lord, God of hosts; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

**PSALM 81 (80)**

Open your mouth and I shall fill it. "If my people would listen to me, I would subdue their enemies." We lack dynamism to evangelize and change the world: this is because we still have idols even in our apostolate planning.

2 Sing joyfully to God, our strength; acclaim aloud the God of Jacob.

3 Start the music, strike the timbrel, play melodies on the harp and lyre.

4 Sound the trumpet at the new moon, on our feastday when the moon is full.

5 This is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob, a statute he wrote for Joseph when he went out of Egypt.

They heard a voice they did not know:

"Open wide your mouth and I will fill it,

7 I relieved your shoulder from burden;
I freed your hands.

8 You called in distress, and I saved you; unseen, I answered you in thunder;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah.

9 Hear, my people, as I admonish you. If only you would listen, O Israel!

10 There shall be no strange god among you, you shall not worship any alien god,

11 for I the Lord am your God, who led you forth from the land of Egypt.

12 But my people did not listen; Israel did not obey.
PSALM 81

So I gave them over to their stubbornness and they followed their own counsels.

If only my people would listen, if only Israel would walk in my ways,

I would quickly subdue their adversaries and turn my hand against their enemies.

Those who hate the Lord would cringe before him, and their panic would last forever.

I would feed you with the finest wheat and satisfy you with honey from the rock.”

PSALM 82 (81)

God judges the judges.

God assembles the gods of the world, those who, at the head of the nations share the task of supreme judge. God reminds them of the sacred rights of the people. The rulers are also mortals and will have to render an account.

All the earth’s foundations are shaken. The Bible does not separate the physical from the moral world. The evil of humans destroys the order of nature and brings about disasters.

Sons of the Most High (v. 6). In many places the biblical text mentions the “sons of God.” This hebraic expression could be translated “divine beings” and most of the time refers to angels. The rulers have been called to share the dignity of those heavenly spirits but God’s judgment may deprive them of it.

PSALM 83 (82)

Everyone is against us.

Do not be silent, O God, hold not your peace, be not unmoved!

See how your enemies are astir; those who hate you rear their heads.

Craftily they plot against your people, they conspire against those you protect.

They say, “Let us finish them as a nation. Let the name of Israel be forgotten!”

With one heart they devise a scheme and form an alliance against you: the people of Edom and the Ishmamines, Moab and the progeny of Hagar,

Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia, with the people of Tyre.

Those from Sur are in league with them and lend support to Lot’s descendants.

Deal with them as you did with Midian, with Sisera and Yabin at the river Kishon;

they perished at Endor and became dung for the ground.

• 83 Verses 10-13 refer to the wars of liberation of Israel at the time of the Judges (chaps. 4 and 7).
drive them out with your tempest and 
terrify them with your storm.

Cover their faces with shame, O 
Lord, that they may seek your name.

Let them be dismayed and 
abashed forever; let them perish in dis-
grace.

Let them know that you alone, 
whose name is the Lord, are the Most 
High over all the world.

Make their nobles like Oreb and 
Zeeb, all their chiefs like Zebah and 
Zalmunna, who said, “Let us seize the 
pasture lands of God.”

O my God, make them like leaves 
caught in a whirlwind, like chaff help-
less before the wind.

As fire consumes the forest, as 
flames set the mountains ablaze,

PSALM 84 (83)

Every believer is a pilgrim in search 
of the eternal homeland. Sometimes 
we feel the need to join the great 
marches and pilgrimages when 
people both relive and reaffirm their 
faith.

Happy are those who live in your 
house: the priests and Levites in 
charge of celebrations and music.

I would rather be left at the thresh-
hold... Better to sleep outdoor in the 
courtyard of the Temple than ask a 
citizen of Jerusalem for lodging – one 
who might be arrogant and unable to 
share the joy of a pilgrim.

I want to see the living God. The joy of the pilgrimage and 
of going up to the Temple.

How lovely are your rooms, 
O Lord of hosts!

My soul yearns, pines, 
for the courts of the Lord. 
My heart and my flesh 
cry out for the living God.

Even the sparrow finds a home, 
and the swallow a nest 
where she may lay her young, 
at your altars, O Lord of hosts, 
my King and my God!

Happy are those who live in your house, 
continually singing your praise!

Happy the pilgrims whom you strengthen, 
to make the ascent to you.

As they pass through the Valley, 
they make it a place of springs, 
the early rain covers it with blessings.

They go from strength to strength 
till they appear before God in Zion.

O Lord of hosts, hear my prayer; 
give ear, O God of Jacob!

Look upon our shield, O God; 
look upon the face of your anointed!

One day in your courts is better 
than a thousand elsewhere. 
I would rather be left at the threshold 
in the house of my God 
than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.

For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; 
he bestows favor and glory. 
The Lord withholds no good thing 
from those who walk in uprightness.

O Lord of hosts, 
blessed are those who trust in you.
PSALM 85 (84)

This psalm, written when the Israelites had returned from captivity in Babylon adopts the most universal terms of the human vocabulary: liberty, life, joy, salvation, love, justice, peace, happiness.

This return of the exiled Jews, however, was only one step towards authentic liberation. Nothing is definitive and each phase in the realization of God's plan leads us to another stage. God's people are forever being called to go further ahead. Even the actual reign of the risen Christ and the work of salvation accomplished by the Church are only an image of the eternal kingdom.

God loves our earth. When we feel troubled and discouraged by so much that is ugly around us, let us come back to the declaration of this psalm: You have favored your land, O Lord; justice bends down from heaven; glory will dwell in our land.

Salvation comes from God, but it is brought by a man, Christ, freely welcomed by a woman in the name of humanity. With the incarnation, it is not possible to believe in God without believing in humankind.

PSALM 86 (87)

Prayer in affliction. The servant of God, worn out by trials and anguished by death, implores the help of the One who is pure goodness.

Listen, O Lord, and answer me, for I am afflicted and needy.

1 Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all day.

2 Preserve my life for I am God-fearing; save your servant who trusts in you.

3 Bring joy to the soul of your servant, for you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

4 Everyone would like to rejoice with me, but few wish to suffer with me.

• 86 Here is a very tranquil psalm, without cursing and cries of anguish: the son of your handmaid has enemies, of course, but in the setting of a small town. But his sorrow is no less great because of that.

We add here some verses from the Imitation of Christ: Christ calls us to share his anguish.

Many are in love with my kingdom, but few are ready to carry my cross.

Many want my consolation, but few want my tribulations. I find many companions at my table, but few to share my privations.

Everyone would like to rejoice with me, but few wish to suffer with me.

Many follow me to the breaking of bread, but few to drinking the cup of my passion.

Many venerate my miracles, but few are devoted to the ignominy of my cross.

Many love me as long as they are without trials.

Many praise me and bless me as long as they receive favors.
5 You are good and forgiving, O Lord, caring for those who call on you.
6 Listen, O Lord, to my prayer, hear the voice of my pleading.
7 I call on you in the time of my trouble for you will answer me.
8 None is like you among the gods, your works are beyond compare.
9 All the nations you have made will come; they will worship before you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name.
10 For you are great, and wonderful are your deeds; you alone are God.
11 Teach me, O Lord, how to walk in your truth, that my heart may fear your name.

12 I give thanks to you, O Lord my God; I will glorify your name forever,
13 for great has been your love for me, you have saved me from the grave.
14 O God, the insolent are against me; a band of cut-throats, evildoers who do not hold you in reverence.
15 But you, O Lord God, are merciful, slow to anger, loving and faithful.
16 Turn to me, take pity on me; give your strength to your servant, and save the child of your handmaid.
17 Give me a sign of your grace, that my foes may see to their disgrace, that you, O Lord, are my help and comfort.

PSALM 87 (86)

God loves the gates of Zion. The psalmist recalls that God has chosen Jerusalem-Zion as the capital of his people and the mother of the nations.

He himself has built it in his holy mountain;
2 the Lord prefers the gates of Zion to all of Jacob's towns.
3 Great things have been foretold of you, O city of God:
4 Between friends we speak of Egypt and Babylon; and also Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia:
"Here so-and-so was born."
5 But of Zion it shall be said, "More and more are being born in her."
For the Most High himself has founded her.
6 And the Lord notes in the people's register: "All these were also born in Zion."
7 And all will dance and sing joyfully for you.

PSALM 88 (87)

Prayer of the sick person close to death. It would seem that knowing Christ, we cannot sink into despair. There are, however, days when heaven is closed for us as it was for Jesus in his agony.

2 O Lord, my God, I call for help by day; before you I cry out by night.

3 May my prayer come to you; incline your ear to my cry for help.

But if I hide and leave them for a while, they complain and sink into depression.
On the other hand, those who love me for my own sake and not because of a particular interest, bless me in time of trial and anguish of heart, just as in their time of great joy.
4 My soul is deeply troubled; my life draws near to the grave. I am like those without strength.

5 Counted among those going down into the pit – 6 I lie forsaken among the dead, like those lying in the grave, like those you remember no more, cut off from your care.

7 You have plunged me into the darkest depths of the pit.

8 With your wrath heavy upon me, you have battered me with all your waves.

9 You have taken away my closest friends; you have made me repulsive to them. I cannot escape from my confinement.

10 My eyes have grown dim with grief; spreading out my hands to you, I call upon you every day, O Lord.

11 Are your wonders meant for the dead? Will ghosts rise to give you thanks?

12 Is your love and faithfulness remembered among those gone to the netherworld?

13 Are your wonders known in the dark, your salvation in the land of oblivion?

14 But to you, O Lord, I cry for help; every morning I pray to you.

15 O Lord, why do you reject me, why do you hide your face?

16 Afflicted and close to death from youth, I have suffered terrors and helplessness.

17 Your wrath has swept over me; your assaults have destroyed me.

18 Now they surround me like a flood; and completely engulf me.

19 Bereft of loved ones and now alone, only darkness is my companion.

PSALM 89 (88)

Your love and your fidelity. God is faithful: he directs history and he guides our lives according to his promises which never fail.

2 I will sing forever, O Lord, of your love and proclaim your faithfulness from age to age.

3 I will declare how steadfast is your love, how firm your faithfulness.

4 You said, “I have made a covenant with David, my chosen one; I have made a pledge to my servant. I establish his descendants forever; I build his throne for all generations.”

6 The heavens proclaim your wonders, O Lord; the assembly of the holy ones recalls your faithfulness. 7 Who in the skies can compare with the Lord; who of the heaven-born is like him?

8 A God feared in the council of the holy ones, awesome to those who approach him.

9 O Lord God of hosts, who is like you, clothed in might and faithfulness?

10 You reign over the surging sea; you calm its raging waves. 11 You split Rahab like a carcass; with your strong arm you routed your foes.

12 Yours are the heavens and the earth; you founded the world and everything in it.

13 You created the north and the south – Tabor and Hermon rejoice at your name.

14 You have a powerful arm, mighty and exalted is your right hand!

15 Justice and righteousness are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you.

16 Blessed is the people who know
your praise. They walk in the light of your face. They celebrate all day your name and your protection lifts them up.

18 You give us glory and power; and your favor gives us victory. Our king is in the hands of the Lord; the God of Israel is our shield.

19 In the past you spoke in a vision; you said of your faithful servant: "I have set the crown upon a mighty one; on one chosen from the people.

20 I have found David my servant, and with my holy oil I have anointed him.

21 My hand will be ever with him and my arm will sustain him; no enemy shall ouwit him nor the wicked oppress him.

22 I will crush his foes before him and strike down his adversaries.

23 My faithfulness and love will be with him, and by my help he will be strong.

24 I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers.

25 He will call on me, 'You are my Father, my God, my Rock, my Savior.'

26 I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.

27 I will keep my covenant firm forever, and my love for him will endure.

28 His dynasty will last forever, and his throne as long as the heavens.

29 If his sons forsake my law and fail to follow my decrees, if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments,

30 I will punish their crime with the rod and their offenses with the scourge; yet I will not withdraw my love from him, nor will I withdraw my faithfulness.

31 I will be true to my promises and not break my covenant. Did I not swear by my holiness? I will not lie to David.

32 His dynasty will last forever, and his throne endure as the sun before me.

33 It will shine forever like the moon, the unfailing watch of heavens."

34 But now you have rejected, disowned and raged at your anointed.

35 You have disregarded your covenant and cast off the crown of your servant.

36 You have destroyed his walls and reduced his strongholds to rubble.

37 The victim of despoilers, he has become the scorn of his neighbors.

38 You have exalted the right hand of his foes; you have made his enemies rejoice.

39 You have turned the edge of his sword, and have not stood by him in battle. You have wrenched the scepter from his hand and flung his throne to the ground.

40 You have shortened the time of his splendor and covered him with shame.

41 How long, O Lord, will you hide? How long will anger burn like a fire?

42 Consider how short my life is, how shadowy the human destiny.

43 What mortal can live and never see death? Who will escape from the netherworld?

44 O Lord, where is your former great love, the faithfulness you pledged to David?

45 Remember, O Lord, how your servant is despised, how I suffer the scorn of the peoples, the taunts with which your enemies have mocked every step of your anointed.

46 Blessed be the Lord forever! Amen, Amen.
PSALM 90 (89)

Lord, you have been our refuge through all generations.
2 Before the mountains were formed, before you made the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity – you are God.
3 You turn humans back to dust, saying, “Return, O mortals!”
4 A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has passed, or like a watch in the night.
5 You sow them in their time, at dawn they peep out. 6 In the morning they blossom, but the flower fades and withers in the evening.
7 Your fury consumes us like fire, and we are helpless before your anger.
8 Our evils lie before you who scrutinize our hidden sins.
9 Our days pass away in your wrath; our years are gone in no time.
10 Seventy years to our life or eighty if we are strong, yet most of them are sorrow and trouble; speeding by, they sweep us along.
11 Who knows the extent of your anger? Who has seen the end of your wrath?
12 So make us know the shortness of our life, that we may gain wisdom of heart.
13 How long will you be angry, O Lord? Have mercy on your servant.
14 Fill us at daybreak with your goodness, that we may be glad all our days.
15 Make joy endure as the misery did, and the years in which we were afflicted.
16 Let your work be seen by your servants and your glorious power by their children.
17 May the sweetness of the Lord be upon us; may he prosper the work of our hands.

PSALM 91 (90)

Night prayer. A prayer that the believer prays with assurance that God protects those who trust in him.
1 You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who rest in the shadow of the Almighty, say to the Lord, “My stronghold, my refuge, my God in whom I trust!”
2 He will rescue you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence.
3 He will cover you with his pinions and give you refuge under his wings.
5 You shall not fear the terror of the night nor the arrows that fly by day,
6 nor the pestilence that stalks by night, and the plague that destroys at noonday.
7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but nothing shall befall you, his faithfulness is your shield.
8 Open your eyes: you will see how the wicked are repaid.
If you have made the Lord your refuge, 
the Most High your stronghold, 
no harm will come upon you, 
no disaster will draw near your home.

For he will command his angels 
to guard you in all your ways. 
They will lift you up with their hands 
so that your foot will not hit a stone. 
You will tread on wildcats and snakes 
and trample the lion and the dragon.

“Because they cling to me, I will rescue them,” 
says the Lord. 
“I will protect those who know my name. 
When they call to me, I will answer; 
in time of trouble I will be with them; 
I will deliver and honor them. 
I will satisfy them with long life 
and show them my salvation.”

2 It is good to give thanks to the Lord, 
to sing praise to your name, O Most High, 
to proclaim your grace in the morning, 
to declare your faithfulness at night, 
accompanied by music from the lyre 
and the melody of lute and harp.

For you make me glad with your deeds, O Lord, 
and I sing for joy at the work of your hands. 
How great are your works, 
O Lord, how deep your thoughts!

The senseless will not know, 
nor will the stupid understand them. 
For though the wicked prosper 
and evildoers flourish like grass, 
they are doomed to vanish for good. 
But you, O Lord, are exalted forever.

Time will come when your enemies will perish, 
evildoers will be scattered. 
You have made me stronger than the wild ox; 
you have poured fresh oil on me. 
I look down on my enemies; 
I take for granted their doom.

The virtuous will flourish like palm trees, 
they will thrive like the cedars of Lebanon.
Planted in the house of the Lord, they will prosper in the courts of our God.

In old age they will still bear fruit they will stay fresh and green,

to proclaim that the Lord is upright, “He is my Rock,” they say, “he never fails.”

**PSALM 93 (92)**

**Robed in splendor, the Lord rules.** God rules as the Creator of the universe. God reigns in the person of the risen Christ who already redirects the powers of history.

1 The Lord reigns, robed in majesty; the Lord is girded with strength. The world now is firm, it cannot be moved.

2 Your throne stands from long ago, O Lord, from all eternity you are.

3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their roaring, the floods have lifted up their pounding waves.

4 Mightier than the thunder of great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty!

5 Your decrees can be trusted; holiness dwells in your house day after day without end, O Lord.

**PSALM 94 (93)**

**Against evil rulers.** We believe in the redemption, let us also believe in the judgment. But before any judgment, God is the one who cares for all.

1 O Lord God, vengeance is yours; O God who avenges, show yourself!

2 Judge of the world, repay the proud with what they deserve.

3 How long shall the wicked, O Lord, how long shall the wicked exult?

4 Pouring out words of arrogance, evildoers make a show of their insolence.

5 They crush your people, O Lord, they oppress your inheritance.

6 They murder the widow and the lonely, they massacre the helpless;

7 “The Lord does not see,” they say, “the God of Jacob does not care.”

8 Remember this, you stupid people, when will you understand, you fools!

9 He who made the ear, will he not hear? He who formed the eye, will he not see?

10 He who rebukes nations, will he not punish them?

11 The Lord knows the thoughts of humans, that they are a puff of wind.

12 Fortunate the one you correct, O Lord, the one you teach your law;

13 you give them relief from distress while a pit is dug for the wicked.

14 The Lord will not reject his people nor will he forsake his heritage.

15 Justice will return to the just, and the upright will follow in its wake.

16 Who stands up for me against the wicked? Who stands by me against evildoers?

17 Had the Lord not helped me, I would have fallen into the silence of death.

18 No sooner did I say, “My foot is slipping,” your kindness, O Lord, held me up.
The more worries and trouble assailed me, the more you consoled me.
You shun wicked rulers who impose injustice by law.
They plot together against the virtuous and condemn the innocent.

But the Lord is my stronghold, my God, my rock of refuge.
He will repay them for their evil and destroy them for their wickedness; the Lord, our God, will blot them out.

**PSALM 95 (94)**

*Come, sing to the Lord.* When we come to praise God, let us prepare to listen to his word; and try to do his will in daily life.

1 Come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful sound to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before him giving thanks, with music and songs of praise.

3 For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the depths of the earth and the mountain heights.

5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hand shaped the dry land.

6 Come and worship; let us bow down, kneel before the Lord, our Maker.

7 He is our God, and we his people; the flock he leads and pastures.

Would that today you heard his voice!

8 Do not be stubborn, as at Meribah, in the desert, on that day at Massah, when your ancestors challenged me, and they put me to the test.

9 For forty years they wearied me and I said, “They are a people of inconstant heart; they have not known my ways.”

10 So I declared on oath in my anger, “Never shall they enter my rest.”

**PSALM 96 (95)**

*God loves justice.*

More than on the splendor of the universe, human society is founded on justice that glorifies God: there is joy in creation when God establishes his kingdom among us. Yes, joy of the universe, until then devastated by our exaggerated ambitions. Joy of nations that have discovered why they exist.

1 Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all the earth!

2 Sing to the Lord, bless his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.

3 Recall his glory among the nations, tell all the peoples his wonderful deeds.

4 How great is the Lord and worthy of praise! Above all gods he is to be feared.
For all other gods are worthless idols, but Yahweh is the one who made the heavens. Splendor and majesty go before him; power and glory fill his sanctuary. Give to the Lord, you families of nations, give to the Lord glory and strength. Give to the Lord the glory due his name; bring gifts and enter his courts. Worship the Lord with holy celebrations; stand in awe of him, all the earth. Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns!” He will judge the peoples with justice. Let the heavens be glad, the earth rejoice; let the sea and all that fills it resound; let the fields exult and everything in them; let the forest, all the trees, sing for joy. Let them sing before the Lord who comes to judge the earth. He will rule the world with justice and the peoples with fairness.

The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the distant islands be glad. Clouds and darkness surround him; justice and right are his throne. Fire goes before him, burning his foes on every side. His lightning lights up the world; the earth watches and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his justice, all peoples see his glory. Shame on worshipers of idols, on those proud of their worthless images. Let all spirits bow before him. Zion hears and rejoices, and the cities of Judah exult, because of your judgments, O God. For you are the Master of the universe, exalted far above all gods. You who love the Lord, hate evil, for he preserves the lives of his faithful, he delivers them from their foes.

We often find it hard to share the enthusiasm and joy of the psalmist who sees so clearly the world divided between the good and the wicked. We rather see the world covered by a fog where each one has his own excuses and share of wickedness. The confusion is temporary, however, there is good seed and there are weeds, and each one goes towards what he prefers. God hates evil as much as he loves himself, and what cannot return to God should be destroyed.

God reigns and the idols disappear. Already light shines on the just. Already it shines on the person of the risen Christ.
11 He sheds light upon the upright, 
and gladness upon the just.
12 Rejoice in the Lord, you who are blameless, 
and give praise to his holy name.

PSALM 98 (97) Sing a new song to the Lord. Humanity has found the way to liberation and salvation: 
– in the coming of Christ, God-made-man; 
– in his resurrection.

1 Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wonders; his right hand, his holy arm, has won victory for him.
2 The Lord has shown his salvation, revealing his justice to the nations.
3 He has not forgotten his love nor his faithfulness to Israel. The farthest ends of the earth all have seen God’s saving power.
4 All you lands, make a joyful noise to the Lord, break into song and sing praise, 
5 with melody of the lyre and with music of the harp.
6 With trumpet blast and sound of the horn, rejoice before the King, the Lord!
7 Let the sea resound and everything in it, the world and all its peoples.
8 Let rivers clap their hands, hills and mountains sing with joy 
9 before the Lord, for he comes to rule the earth. He will judge the world with justice and the peoples with fairness.

PSALM 99 (98) Holy is the Lord!

1 The Lord reigns and the nations tremble. He is enthroned upon the cherubim; the earth gets distraught.
2 Great is the Lord in Zion; he is high over all the nations.
3 May they give glory to your name, great and terrible: “Holy is he: 4 this is the mighty King who loves justice.”

For you come to install fairness, to establish in Jacob right and justice.
5 Extol the Lord, our God; worship at his footstool. Holy is he! And mighty!
6 Among his priests were Moses and Aaron, and Samuel among those who called on his name. They called to the Lord, and he answered them.

7 In the pillar of cloud he spoke to them, and they kept his statutes and the decrees he gave them.
8 O Lord our God, you responded to them; you were a patient God for them, but you punished their wrongs.
9 Extol the Lord our God; worship at his holy mountain. Holy is the Lord our God!

• 99 Yes, he is holy! This exclamation will appear three times in the psalm. Let us take the vision of Isaiah if we want to find the meaning of the word “holy.” It signifies, according to some, that God is totally different, removed from what is not “of him”: he is the “totally other.” That is true. It might be necessary to add here what the word “high tension” means for us: a mysterious power which upsets all our mechanisms, magnetizing all its surroundings, drawing sparks from bodies thought to be inert, striking down whoever approaches it (2 S 6:7).

This sovereign holiness has a beauty which leaves us speechless with a love that dispels our resistance and oppressive heaviness. It will not prevent God from giving himself totally to us in definitive marriage. The true fear of God, the fascination that his mystery has on us (we shall live it for eternity) has nothing to do with fear or defiance. The formidable aspect of death – necessary for returning to God – helps us to gauge what separates us from him.
PSALM 100 (99)  
All the earth acclaim the Lord. Let all the earth sing, and you, serve him with joy.

1 All you lands, acclaim the Lord!
2 Serve the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.
3 Know that the Lord is God; he created us and we are his people, the sheep of his fold.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name.
5 For the Lord is good; his love lasts forever and his faithfulness through all generations.

PSALM 101 (100)  
A king examines his conscience. I wish to train myself to follow the perfect way, but you, will you come to me?

I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O Lord, I will sing praise.
1 I will walk the way of integrity – O Lord, when will you come to me? With a blameless heart I will walk within my house.
2 I will not set before my eyes anything that is base. I hate the deeds of faithless people; I will have no part in them.
3 I will banish all wicked hearts, and evil I will not know.
4 He who deals with others treacherously, I will silence. He who talks and acts arrogantly, I will not endure.
5 I will choose from the faithful of the land those who may dwell with me; only the upright shall be my servant.
6 No double-dealer shall live in my house; no one who utters falsehood shall stand before my eyes.
7 Each morning I will clear the land and silence all the wicked; I will uproot all the evildoers from the city of the Lord.

PSALM 102 (101)  
Prayer in time of affliction.

2 O Lord, hear my prayer; let my cry for help come to you.
3 Do not hide your face from me when I am in trouble. Turn your ear to me; make haste to answer me when I call.
4 For my days are passing away like smoke, my bones burning like a furnace.
5 Like withered grass, my heart is blighted, and I forget to eat my bread.
6 Because of my great grief I am reduced to skin and bones.
7 I am like an owl in the wilderness, like a vulture among the ruins.
8 I awake moaning like a lonely bird on the housetop.
9 All day long I am taunted by my enemies; they use my name as a curse.
10 The bread I eat is ashes, my drink is mingled with tears, 11 for your wrath, your fury; for you have thrown me aside.
12 My days are vanishing like the shadows at night; I wither away like grass.
13 But you, O Lord, you sit forever; your name endures through all generations.

• 101 In beginning his daily work, the believer sets out to live according to the truth, to struggle for justice, while hoping for the coming of the Lord.
• 102 This psalm blends two poems: the cry of a forsaken, sick person, and a prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.
Verse 10 says: The bread I eat is ashes, which means: I'm fasting, I'm going without bread and I'm covering myself with ashes.
 declared in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem,
23 when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship him.
24 My walk has exhausted me, he has cut short my days.
25 I cry to him, "My God, do not take my life in mid-course, you whose days are from age to age."
26 In the beginning you laid the earth's foundation, the heavens are the work of your hands.
27 Although they perish, you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment, you change them like clothes: they pass away,
28 but you remain the same, your years unending.
29 Your servants' children will dwell secure; their posterity will endure without fail.

PSALM 103 (102)

The Lord showers his blessings upon you. This psalm looks on God, humans, and God's mercy toward humankind: from these three, praise is born.

1 Bless the Lord, my soul; all my being, bless his holy name!
2 Bless the Lord, my soul, and do not forget all his kindness; 3 he forgives all your sins and heals all your sickness;
4 he redeems your life from destruction and crowns you with love and compassion; 5 he gives fulfillment to your years, and renews your youth like the eagle’s.
6 The Lord restores justice and secures the rights of the oppressed.
7 He has made known his ways to Moses and his deeds to the people of Israel.
8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, abounding in love and slow to anger;
9 he will not always scold nor will he be angry forever. 10 He does not treat us according to our sins, nor does he punish us as we deserve.
11 As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his love for those fearing him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove from us our sins.

I
103 Because of their origin and their inconsistency, humans are dust. They are also God's creation and God's children. God is all-powerful but his authentic greatness is his infinite capacity to love, to increase the flame of his love from his own fire. God's characteristic is to be mercifully forgiving. In this regard, the psalmist uses a simple but grandiose image: the enormous distance between heaven and earth, the east and the west, is less representative of the greatness of God than of his merciful love. Christians will discover many resonances in this psalm:
- God is indulgent because he knows we are but dust, but also because he wanted to experience the human condition including suffering, death and even temptation.
- His pardon can be seen: the cross of Jesus Christ surmounting the world and history to the end of time.
- His covenant with Israel: definitive and universal.
- All the good that has come to us through Christ goes far beyond what the psalmist had hoped for: the truth of the Gospel and the grace of redemption leading us to eternal life.
- The permanence of the Church, the crowd of witnesses to Jesus Christ, those of yesterday and those of tomorrow, and finally our own experience of God in this life.
These are some of our reasons for hoping in God and for celebrating his immense glory.
As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him.

For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

The days of mortals are like grass; they bloom like a flower of the field; but the wind passes over it, and it is gone, his field will not see him again.

But the Lord’s kindness is forever with those who fear him; so is his justice, for their children’s children, for those who keep his covenant and remember his commands, for those who put them into practice.

The Lord has set his throne in heaven; he rules, he has power everywhere.

Praise the Lord, all you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, you who obey his word.

Praise the Lord, all his hosts, all his servants who do his will.

Praise the Lord, all his works, everywhere he rules.

The universe praises its Creator. In contemplating the universe, the believer feels full of admiration and optimism. All comes from God, and this universe is also for humankind. God is now completing his creation through the work of humans and the radiant light of his witnesses: “Send your Spirit to renew the face of the earth.”

Not only does all come from God but all belongs to him and speaks of him. Atoms, nature, shapes and colors, everything is a radiation of his own riches: light is your cloak; the clouds, your chariot; the firmament, the tent of your dwelling. The beauty of the cosmos is the cloud that hides God’s beauty.

Even if today we have a scientific vision of the world, this psalm, 2,500 years old, retains its value. The world we know is much vaster, diverse and marvelous. How could we ever think that it has formed itself or that it is the product of an accident?

God continually sustains every being and holds it in his hands. What would become of them should he in an instant take away his Spirit? Just think what happens when there is a power failure – no longer is there light, energy, movement – it is rather as if the world ceased to exist.

Invitation to optimism. All creatures are good and are linked together in harmony. One by one the psalmist names with admiration the great cosmic powers and almost with tenderness the birds, wild animals and fish. This psalm has a deeply human touch: everything exists for the benefit of humanity. Humankind is called to be the consciousness that understands the universe and is able to admire it, to praise the Creator, the artisan called to beautify it and organize it for the service of people, all people. Our psalms and songs of praise would be useless if they did not express human effort to build a world reflecting the purity and infinite riches of God.

“He formed me from of old, from eternity, even before the earth. When

13 You water the mountains from your abode
and fill the earth with the fruit of your work. 

14 You make grass grow for cattle and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth: 

15 wine to gladden his heart, oil to make his face shine, and bread to make him strong.

16 The Lord waters his trees to their fill, the cedars of Lebanon which he planted. 

17 The birds build their nests, the stork has its home in the pine trees. 

18 High mountains are for wild goats, the cliffs a refuge for badgers.

19 You made the moon to mark the seasons, and the sun that knows when to set; 

20 when you bring the darkness of the night, all the beasts of the forest begin to prowl: 

21 the young lions roaring for their prey claiming their food from God.

22 When the sun rises, the beasts steal away, returning to rest in their dens. 

23 Man then goes out to his work, and toils till evening comes. 

24 How varied O Lord, are your works! In wisdom you have made them all – the earth full of your creatures.

25 Behold the sea, wide and vast, teeming with countless creatures, living things both great and small, 

26 a strange world reserved for the ships, for Leviathan, the dragon you made to play with.

27 They all look to you for their food in due time. 

28 You give it to them, and they gather it up; you open your hand, they are filled with good things. 

29 When you hide your face they vanish, you take away their breath, they expire and return to dust. 

30 When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and the face of the earth is renewed. 

31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works! 

32 He looks on the earth, and it quakes;
he touches the mountain, and it smokes.
33 I will sing to the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to God while I live.
34 May my song give him pleasure,
as the Lord gives me delight.
35 May sinners vanish from the earth,
and may the wicked be no more.
Bless the Lord, my soul!

PSALM 105 (104)

The beginning of Salvation History. Remembering the past can be a prayer if we try to see the work of God and thank him for it.

1 Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known his works among the nations.
2 Sing to him, sing his praise, proclaim all his wondrous deeds.
3 Glory in his holy name; let those who seek the Lord rejoice.
4 Look to the Lord and be strong; seek his face always.
5 Remember his wonderful works, his miracles and his judgments,
6 you descendants of his servant Abraham, you sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!
7 He is the Lord our God; his judgments reach the whole world.
8 He remembers his covenant forever, his promise to a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the promise he swore to Isaac.
9 He confirmed his decree to Jacob, to Israel his eternal covenant:
10 “To you I will give the land of Canaan as part of your inheritance.”
11 When they were few in number, strangers in the land, wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another, he allowed no one to oppress them, and for their sake he rebuked kings:
12 “Touch not my anointed ones,” he warned, “do my prophets no harm!”
13 Then he sent a famine and ruined the crop that sustained the land; he sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave;
14 his feet in shackles, his neck in irons till what he foretold came to pass, and the Lord’s word proved him true.
15 The king sent for him, set him free, the ruler of the peoples released him.
16 He put him in charge of his household and made him ruler of all his possessions, that he might train his princes and teach his elders wisdom.
17 Then Israel came to Egypt, Jacob settled in the land of Ham.
18 The Lord made his people fruitful and much stronger than their foes, whose hearts he turned to hate his people, to deal deceitfully with his servants.
19 Then he sent Moses his servant and Aaron whom he had chosen.
20 They performed his signs among them, his miracles in the land of Ham.
21 He sent darkness to the land, but they rebelled against his words.
22 He turned their waters into blood, causing their fish to die.
23 Their land teemed with frogs, invading even the king’s bedroom.
24 He spoke, and flies and gnats swarmed throughout the country.
25 He gave them hail for rain, and lightning flashed over the land.
26 He blighted their vines and fig trees, shattered the trees in the countryside.
27 He spoke and locusts came, grasshoppers without number; they devoured all the vegetation and the produce of the soil; then he smote all the
firstborn, the firstfruits of their manhood.

37 He led Israel out of the alien land, laden with silver and gold, and none were left behind.

38 Egypt was glad when they departed, so filled were they with dread.

39 He spread a cloud as covering, and fire to give them light at night.

40 They asked for food; he gave them quails and fed them with bread from heaven.

41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out, flowing like a river through the desert.

42 For he remembered his promise to Abraham, his servant.

43 So he led forth his people with joy, his chosen ones with singing.

44 He gave them the lands of the nations, and let them take the fruit of others’ toil,

45 that they might keep his statutes and remain obedient to his laws.

PSALM 106 (105)

Another look at the history of Israel. Like Psalm 78, this psalm contrasts the mercy of God and Israel’s rebellions. God punishes but he always gives his grace again.

Alleluia!

1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his love endures forever.

2 Who can count the Lord’s mighty deeds, or declare all his praises?

3 Blessed are they who always do just and right.

4 Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people; rescue me when you deliver them; 5 let me see the triumph of your faithful, let me share the joy of your nation, and join your people in praising you.

6 We have sinned like our ancestors; we have done wrong and acted wickedly.

7 When they were in Egypt, our ancestors had no regard for your wondrous deeds; they forgot the abundance of your love; they rebelled against the Most High by the Sea of Reeds.

8 Yet he saved them for his name’s sake, to make his mighty power known.

9 He rebuked the sea, and it dried up; he led them through the deep as on dry land.

10 He saved them from hostility, freeing them from the hand of the enemy.

11 Waters covered their pursuers, and none of them was left alive.

12 Then they believed his promises and all at once sang his praises.

13 But soon they forgot his works and did not wait for his counsel.

14 They gave way to wanton craving and tempted God in the desert.

15 He gave them what they wanted, then sent them a wasting disease.

16 In the camp they grew envious of Moses and Aaron, the holy one of the Lord.

17 So the earth opened, swallowed Dathan, and buried the company of Abiram; 18 fire broke out against them, burning up the wicked.

19 They made a calf at Horeb and worshiped the molten image.

20 They exchanged the glory of God for the image of a bull that eats grass.

21 They forgot their Savior God, who had done great things in Egypt, 22 wonderful works in the land of Ham, and awesome deeds by the Sea of Reeds.

23 So he spoke of destroying them, but Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to shield them from destruction.

24 Yet they despised the promised land, for they had no faith in his word.

25 They grumbled in their tents and would not listen to the voice of the Lord.
26 So he swore to them with his hand raised that he would let them perish in the desert, scatter their descendants among the nations and disperse them over the lands.
27 They joined the rites of Baal-peor and ate sacrifices to lifeless gods.
28 Their deeds provoked the Lord to anger, and a plague broke out among them.
29 But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague came to an end.
30 This was credited to his uprightness, making him remembered for all ages.
32 Angered by them at Meribah’s waters, the Lord took it out on Moses for the rash words he uttered, when they rebelled against God.
34 They dared not destroy the pagans, as the Lord commanded; they mingled with these nations and learned to do as they did.
36 In serving the idols of the pagans, they were trapped into sacrificing children to demons, shedding the innocent blood of their sons and daughters to the idols of Canaan, polluting the country with blood.
39 They defiled themselves by what they did, playing the harlot in their worship.
40 The anger of the Lord grew intense and he abhorred his inheritance.
41 He handed them over to the nations, and their foes ruled them with arrogance.
42 Brought by the enemy into subjection, they suffered the agony of oppression.
43 He delivered them many a time, but they went on defying him and sinking deeper into their sin.
44 But he heard their cry of affliction and looked on them with compassion.
45 Remembering his covenant, he relented for their sake, because of his great love.
46 He let them be pitied by all those who held them captive.
47 Save us, O Lord, our God, gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to you and praise your holy name.
48 Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity. Let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the Lord!

PSALM 107 (106)

A third look at the history of Israel. Like the two preceding psalms, this one recalls the past, and draws another lesson from it: each time they cried to the Lord, he listened to them. “Let us give thanks for his love.”

1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his love endures forever.
2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say this, those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.
3 Some strayed in the wilderness and were lost, far away from the city.
4 They wandered about hungry and thirsty, their lives ebbing away.
5 Then they cried to the Lord in anguish, and he rescued them from their distress.
6 He led them by a straight way to a city where they could dwell.
8 Let them thank the Lord for his love and wondrous deeds for humans.
9 He quenches the thirst of the soul and satisfies the hunger of the heart.
10 They lived in the darkness of death like prisoners suffering in chains, for they rebelled against the word of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.
12 Their backs bent in hard labor, they fell down, and there was no one to help.
13 Then they cried to the Lord in anguish, and he rescued them from their distress.
14 He brought them out of the dark
and gloom, and he tore asunder their bonds.

15 Let them thank the Lord for his love and wondrous deeds for humans.
16 For he breaks open gates of bronze and batters down bars of iron.
17 They were sick because of their wrongs, they were afflicted for their iniquities.
18 Unable to take any food they drew near the gates of death.
19 Then they cried to the Lord in anguish, and he rescued them from their distress.
20 He sent forth his word and healed them, and rescued them from destruction.
21 Let them thank the Lord for his love and wondrous deeds for humans.
22 Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his deeds in joyful song.
23 Those who went to the sea in ships, merchants on the mighty waters,
24 saw the marvels of the Lord, his wondrous deeds in the deep.
25 For he spoke and stirred up a storm whipping up the waves of the sea.
26 Flung upward and plunged to the depths, they lost courage in the ordeal;
27 reeling like drunkards, they were adrift, in spite of all their seamanship.
28 Then they cried to the Lord in anguish, and he rescued them from their distress.
29 He stilled the storm to a gentle breeze and hushed the billows to silent waves.
30 How glad they were! He brought them safe and sound to the port where they were bound.
31 Let them thank the Lord for his love and wondrous deeds for humans.
32 Let them extol him in the congregation, praise him in the assembly of the people.
33 He turned rivers into wastelands, flowing springs into parched grounds,
34 and fruitful valleys into salt-flats, because of the wickedness of their inhabitants.
35 Yet he also turned deserts into watersheds and parched land into flowing springs.
36 There he let the hungry settle and found a city where they could dwell.
37 They planted vineyards, they sowed fields, and from them got fruitful harvests.
38 By his blessing their numbers increased, and their herds and flocks did not diminish.
39 But then they dwindled and were humbled through oppression, sorrow and distress.
40 And he who pours contempt upon princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes
41 rescued the needy from their affliction and made their families flourish like flocks.
42 The upright see it and are glad, but the wicked are silenced.
43 Let the wise consider all this and understand the Lord's infinite love.

PSALM 108 (107)  
Song of victory.

2 My heart is ready, O God! I will sing praise and make music. Awake my soul!

3 Awake, harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn.

4 I will thank you, O Lord, among the nations. I will sing praise to you among the peoples.

5 For great is your love above the heavens, your faithfulness beyond the skies.

6 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over the earth.

• 108 This psalm combines part of Psalm 57 and part of Psalm 60.
7 Give help and save us by your right hand, and rescue those you love.
8 God has spoken in his sanctuary: "In triumph I will divide up Shechem and parcel out the Valley of Succoth.
9 Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim is my helmet, Judah my scepter.
10 Moab is my washbasin; upon Edom I cast my sandal; over Philistia I shout in triumph."
11 Who will take me to the fortified city? Who will lead me to Edom?
12 O God! Have you really rejected us? You no longer go with our armies.
13 Give us aid against the foe, for the help of mortals is not worth a straw.
14 With God we will gain victory; he will crush the enemy for us.

**PSALM 109 (108)**

Have no pity for them. Someone who only had words of friendship has been accused and slandered. He asks justice from God who does not forsake his own. God will show no mercy for those who are merciless.

Break your silence, O God whom I praise, now that the wicked and deceitful hurl their false accusations at me.
3 They assail me with words of hatred; they attack me for no valid cause.
4 They return my friendship with slander, and yet I pray for them.
5 They repay me evil for good, and hatred for my love.
6 Appoint a wicked man against him; find an accuser to repeat this curse:
7 "Let him be found guilty when tried; let his own plea condemn him.
8 May his days be numbered, his office be taken by another.
9 May his children lose a father and his wife a husband.
10 May his children go begging, driven out of their ruined homes.
11 May the creditor seize all his belongings and strangers plunder the fruits of his toil.
12 Let no one extend kindness to him or take pity on his orphaned children.
13 May his posterity be destroyed, their names blotted out in the next generation.

**109** It is perhaps the psalm that most scandalizes Christians, well-educated as we are. An attempt has been made to change the translation (instead of a curse verses 6-20 would be a charitable way of saying what could happen to the evildoer). It has been excluded from the breviary. Whose fault is it, if it is part of the Bible and the word of God?

We have not yet completely come to the new Gospel age (we continue to kill each other in a "nice way" in Christian countries) and certainly no one has attained it. They all have the right to pray. These curses are a cry to the justice of God who understands them and who—yes, he too—knows how to curse.
Like an evening shadow, I fade away; like a locust, I am swept away. My knees have become weak from fasting, my body is wasted of its substance. I have become the butt for the scorn of my foes; people shake their heads at me in derision. Help me, O Lord my God, and save me for the sake of your love. Let them know that this is your hand, that it is you, Lord, who do this.

Help me, O Lord my God, and save me for the sake of your love. Let them know that this is your hand, that it is you, Lord, who do this.

They may curse, but you will bless; when they attack, they will be disgraced; but may your servant rejoice!

Let my accusers be clothed with dishonor; let them be wrapped in their own shame.

To the Lord, I will give my thanks; I will praise him in the great assembly.

He stands at the right hand of the needy, to save them from those who condemn them.

PSALM 110 (109)

Most probably, this psalm was first written for Simon Maccabee: see the commentary on Melchizedek in Heb 7. It was charged with a prophetic message and we can no longer read it without relating it to Christ.

The Lord said to my Lord. Sometimes we feel we are trapped, as if in prison, by the problems of life. This psalm is like a flash of lightning illuminating the prison and showing us an unexpected escape towards heaven. In spite of some obscure expressions, the overall meaning is clear: from Zion will come the one, as the warlike tone of verses 5-6 indicates, who will be victorious over all the hostile powers. He has tapped up the water from the brook which is an allusion to Judges 7:4 – the warriors who can cope with trials. The struggle will be hard, but God will finally ask him to sit at his right and all will be subject to him.

Melchizedek is the mysterious person in Genesis (14:18) – whose ancestors are not mentioned – but to whom Abraham offered the tenth part of his conquests. Melchizedek, king and priest, is already Christ (Heb 7).

PSALM 111 (110)

God creates, saves and guides us.

I thank the Lord with all my heart in the council of the just, in the assembly.

The works of the Lord are great and pondered by all who delight in them.
An alphabetical psalm, the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet begin the twenty-two verses. Other psalms are also written in this way (e.g. Psalms 34; 37; 119).

3 Glorious and majestic are his deeds, his righteousness endures forever.
4 He lets us remember his wondrous deeds; the Lord is merciful and kind.
5 Always mindful of his covenant, he provides food for those who fear him.
6 He shows his people the power of his arm by giving them the lands of other nations.
7 The works of his hands are faithful and just, trustworthy are all his precepts,
8 ordained to last forever, bearers of truth and uprightness.
9 He has sent his people deliverances and made with them a covenant forever. His holy name is to be revered!
10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; prudent are those who live by his precepts. To him belongs everlasting praise.

PSALM 112 (111)

Like the preceding one, this psalm is alphabetical. It uses the same terms, but this time praises the just person, the image of God.

1 Alleluia!
Blessed is the one who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commands.
2 His children will be powerful on earth; the upright’s offspring will be blessed.
3 Wealth and riches are for his family, there his integrity will remain.
4 He is for the righteous a light in darkness, he is kind, merciful and upright.
5 It will be well with him who lends freely, who leads a life of justice and honesty.
6 For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered and loved forever.
7 He has no fear of evil news, for his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.
8 His heart is confident, he needs not fear, he shall prevail over his foes at the end.
9 He gives generously to the poor, his merits will last forever and his head will be raised in honor.
10 The wicked will see this and be furious: they will gnash their teeth in seething envy. The desire of the wicked will fail.
PSALM 113 (112)  

Poor and humble people, praise the Lord! What distinguishes God from humans is not the infinity of his creation, but his way of being with us, his preference for what many despise. God likes to choose poor instruments to achieve his great deeds of grace.

1 Alleluia!  
Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord!  
2 Blessed be the name of the Lord now and forever!  
3 From eastern lands to the western islands, may the name of the Lord be praised!  
4 The Lord is exalted over the nations, his glory above the heavens.  
5 Who is like the Lord our God, who sits enthroned on high,  
6 but also bends down to see on earth as in heaven?  
7 He lifts up the poor from the dust and the needy from the ash heap.  
8 He makes them sit with princes, with rulers of his people.  
9 He gives a home to the barren woman, and makes her a joyful mother.  
Praise the Lord!

PSALM 114 (113 A)  
The departure from Egypt. The power of God-Savior manifested itself in the first Passover, the departure from Egypt. The resurrection of Christ has touched the universe in a different way.

1 Alleluia!  
When Israel came out of Egypt, the family of Jacob from a people of foreign language,  
2 Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his possession.  
3 At his sight the sea fled and the Jordan retreated;  
4 the mountains skipped like rams, the hills frolicked like lambs.  
5 Why is it, sea, that you flee? Jordan, that you turn back?  
6 Mountains, that you skip like rams? Hills, that you frolic like lambs?  
7 Tremble, O earth, at your Master's presence, at the presence of the God of Jacob,  
8 who turned the rock into a stream, and the flint into a spring.
PSALM 115 (113 B)

We must constantly denounce the idols of ordinary people as well as the idols of those who pretend to be free of every prejudice. Here is a thought of the poet, Paul Claudel:

“Blessed are you, O my God, who freed me from all the idols and who made me adore you alone, and not Isis or Osiris, or Justice, Progress, Truth, Divinity, Humanity, the Laws of Nature, of Art or of Beauty.

“Lord, I have found you! The one who finds you no longer tolerates death.”

God’s people have no idols. Since we have been given to know the one and true God, let us leave aside all that is not God.

1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name be the glory, for the sake of your love and faithfulness.
2 Why should the pagans say, “Where is their God?”
3 There in heaven is our God; whatever he wishes, he does.
4 Not so the hand-made idols, crafted in silver and gold.
5 They have mouths that cannot speak, eyes that cannot see, ears that cannot hear, noses that cannot smell.
6 They have hands but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk; neither can they make a sound in their throat.
7 Their makers will be like them, so will all who trust in them.
8 O Israel, trust in the Lord; he is your help and your shield!
9 You, family of Aaron, trust in the Lord; he is your help and your shield!
10 You who fear the Lord, trust in him; he is your help and your shield!
11 The Lord remembers us and will bless us; he will bless the family of Israel; he will bless the family of Aaron;
12 he will bless those who fear the Lord, both the small and the great.
13 May the Lord shower blessings, on you and your children as well.
14 May you be blessed by the Lord, Maker of heaven and earth.
15 Heaven belongs to the Lord, but the earth he has given to humans.
16 It is not the dead who praise the Lord, for they have gone down to silence;
17 but it is we, the living, who bless the Lord, from now on and forever.
You have freed me from death. “I shall walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.” We sing our thanksgiving with all those God has saved from death, with our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Alleluia!
I am pleased that the Lord has heard my voice in supplication,
2 that he has not been deaf to me, the day I called on him.

3 When the cords of death entangled me, the snares of the grave laid hold of me, when affliction got the better of me,
4 I called upon the name of the Lord: “O Lord, save my life!”

5 Gracious and righteous is the Lord; full of compassion is our God.
6 the Lord protects the simple: he saved me when I was humbled.
7 Return, O my soul, to your rest, for the Lord has taken care of you.

8 He has freed my soul from death, my eyes from weeping, my feet from stumbling;
9 I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

10 I have kept faith even when I said, “I am greatly afflicted.”
11 I have said in my dismay, “To hope in humans is vain.”

12 How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?
13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.

14 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.
15 It is painful to the Lord to see the death of his faithful.
16 O Lord, I am your servant, truly your servant, your handmaid’s son. You have freed me from my bonds.

17 I will offer you a thanksgiving sacrifice; I will call on the name of the Lord.
18 I will carry out my vows to the Lord in the presence of his people,
19 in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem.
PSALM 117 (116)

Less than a quarter of a psalm, but all is there: goodness (grace, favor) and fidelity (truth) that is the truth of God.

1 Alleluia!
Praise the Lord, all you nations; all you peoples, praise him.
2 How great is his love for us! His faithfulness lasts forever.

PSALM 118 (117)

This psalm was sung when the processions entered the Temple of Jerusalem. The people and their leader alternated with the choir of the Levites. At the end the priests gave Aaron’s blessing (Num 6:22). What does Israel sing? Their thanksgiving to God who saves them from death or raises them, thanksgiving to God who chooses the poor and the despised of this world to build his kingdom with them.

The stone rejected by the builders... A way of repeating the announcement of Isaiah 28:16. Who would dare to do this, if not the risen Christ? (see Mt 21:42; Acts 4:11).

1 Alleluia!
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his loving kindness endures forever.
2 Let Israel say, “His loving kindness endures forever.”
3 Let the house of Aaron say, “His loving kindness endures forever.”
4 Let those who fear the Lord say, “His loving kindness endures forever.”
5 In anguish I cried to the Lord; he answered by setting me free.
6 With the Lord beside me I need not fear. What can humans do to me?
7 The Lord is with me, ready to help; I can look in triumph upon my enemies.
8 It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in the help of humans.
9 It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in the might of princes.
10 All the nations surrounded me; in the name of the Lord I crushed them.
11 They surrounded me on every side; in the name of the Lord I crushed them.
12 Like swarms of bees they encircled me; but like burning thorns they died down; in the name of the Lord I crushed them.
13 I was pushed hard and about to fall, but the Lord came to my help.
14 The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.
15 Joyful shouts of victory are heard in the tents of the just: “The right hand of the Lord strikes mightily,
16 the right hand of the Lord is lifted high, the right hand of the Lord strikes mightily!”
17 I shall not die, but live
to proclaim what the Lord has done.
18 The Lord has stricken me severely,
but he has saved me from death.
19 Open to me the gates of the Just,
and let me enter to give thanks.
20 "This is the Lord’s gate,
through which the upright enter."
21 I thank you for having answered me,
for having rescued me.
22 The stone rejected by the builders
has become the cornerstone.
23 This was the Lord’s doing
and we marvel at it.
24 This is the day the Lord has made;
so let us rejoice and be glad.
25 Save us, O Lord, deliver us, O Lord!
26 Blessed is he who comes in the Lord’s name!
We bless you from the house of the Lord.
27 The Lord is God; may his light shine upon us.

With branches, join in procession
up to the horns of the altar.

28 You are my God, and I give you thanks.
You are my God, and I give you praise.
29 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever!

PSALM 119 (118)

Psalm about the Law. This psalm, the longest in the Bible,
repeats without tiring that to follow the word of God is life and happiness.

1 Blessed are they whose ways are upright, who follow the law of the Lord.
2 Blessed are they who treasure his word and seek him with all their heart.
3 They do no wrong; they walk in his ways.
4 You have laid down precepts to be obeyed. O, that my ways were steadfast in observing your statutes!
5 Then I would not be put to disgrace, having paid attention to all your decrees.
6 I will praise you with an upright spirit when I learn your just precepts by heart.
7 I mean to observe your commandments. O, never abandon me.
8 How can young people remain pure? By living according to your word.
9 I seek you with my whole heart; let me not stray from your commands.
10 In my heart I have kept your word, that I may not sin against my Lord.
11 Praise to you, O Lord; instruct me in your statutes, that with my lips I may declare all your spoken decrees.
12 I delight in following your laws, more so than in all riches.
13 I will meditate on your precepts and concentrate on your ways.
14 In your laws I will rejoice and will not neglect your words.
Be kind to your servant, that I may live to follow your word.

Open my eyes that I may see the marvelous truths in your law.

Do not hide your commandments from me, a wanderer on earth.

My soul is consumed with desire for your ordinances at all times.

You reprove the accursed ones who stray arrogantly from your commands.

Remove from me their scorn and contempt, since I have followed your precepts.

Although princes conspire against me, your servant will observe your decrees.

Your laws are my delight, my counselors who uphold me.

In the dust I lie prostrate; lift me up, as promised by your word.

When I explained my ways, you responded; instruct me then in your precepts.

Explain to me all your ordinances, and I will meditate on your wondrous deeds.

My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.

Keep me away from deceitful paths; be gracious and teach me your law.

I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart upon your laws.

Since I cling to your decrees, O Lord, save me from disgrace.

I will run in the way of your commands, for you have freed my heart.

Explain to me, O Lord, your commandments, and I will be ever faithful to them.

Give me understanding, that I may observe your law with all my heart.

Guide me in obeying your instructions, for my pleasure lies in them.

Incline my heart to follow your will and not my own selfish desire.

Turn my eyes away from vanities and direct them to your life-giving word.

Fulfill your promise to your servant, so that others may revere you.

Ward off the reproach I fear, for your law is good.

Oh, how I long for your precepts! Renew my life in your righteousness.

Give me your unfailing love, O Lord, your salvation as you have promised.

Strengthened by my trust in your word, I can answer my enemy's reproach.

Take not the word of truth from my mouth, for I would also lose my hope in your word.

May I always keep your word for ever and ever; I shall walk in freedom, having sought out your laws.

I will proclaim your word before kings, and I will not be confused or ashamed.

For I delight in your word, which I fear.

I will lift up my hands to you, and meditate on your commandments.

Remember your word to your servant, your word which has given me hope.

My consolation in suffering is this: that your promise renews my life.

Although the arrogant mock me without end, I faithfully cling to your word.

When I remember your ordinances of old, I find comfort in them, O Lord.

I feel indignant at the wicked who have forsaken your law.

Your decrees are the theme of my song, in this my place of exile.

Each night I call on your name, O Lord, and renew my vow to keep your word.

This has been my practice; I have kept your precepts.

You are my portion, O Lord; I have promised to obey your word.
With all my heart I have sought your face; be gracious to me according to your promise.

I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your paths.

I hasten and no longer delay in keeping your commands.

The wicked have me trapped in their snares, but I have not forgotten your laws.

At midnight I rise to praise you for the justice of your ordinances.

I am an ally for those who fear you, for those who keep your precepts.

The earth is full of your love, O Lord! Teach me your decrees.

You have been good to your servant, Lord, in accordance with your words.

Give me knowledge and good judgment for I trust in your commands.

Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.

You are good, and your works are good; teach me your decrees.

I am slandered by the arrogant, but I keep your precepts within my heart.

Their hearts have become dull, but I delight in your laws.

It is good for me to have been afflicted, for I have deeply learned your statutes.

Your law is more precious to me than heaps of silver and gold.

Give me insight to know your commands, since I have been formed by your hands.

Those who fear you will be glad, seeing that I hope in your word.

I know, O Lord, that your laws are just, and there is justice in my affliction.

Comfort me then with your unfailing love, as you promised your servant.

Let those who fear you turn to me, they will understand your statutes.

May my heart be blameless in your decrees, that I may not be ashamed.

My soul longs for your protection; your word is my hope of salvation.

I have kept watch for your promise. “When will you comfort me?” I ask.

I have become as dry as a wineskin, yet I have not forgotten your statutes.

How long must your servant endure? When will you judge my persecutors?

The arrogant have dug pitfalls for me in defiance of your law.

Your law indeed is trustworthy, when they persecute me, help me.

They have almost put an end to me on earth, and yet I have not forsaken your precepts.

In your kindness give me life, that I may keep your commands.

O Lord, your word stands forever, firmly fixed in the heavens.

Your faithfulness lasts throughout the ages – as long as the earth you created.

Your ordinances last to this day for all things are made to serve you.

If your law had not been my pleasure, I would have perished in affliction.

Never will I forget your precepts, for with them you give me life.

Save me for I am yours, since I seek your statutes.

The wicked lie in wait to destroy me, but I look to your word for salvation.

I saw that all perfection is limited but your command is boundless.

How I love your law, meditating on it all day!

Your command – mine forever – has made me wiser than my enemy.

I have more insight than my teachers for I meditate on your decrees.
100 I have more understanding than the elders for I abide by your precepts.
101 I turn my feet from evil paths, that I may keep step with your word.
102 I have not departed from your decrees for you yourself have instructed me.
103 How sweet are your promises to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
104 Your precepts have given me knowledge, and I hate all that is false.

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light for my path.
106 I have taken an oath to keep your just commands.
107 I have suffered much, O Lord; renew my life according to your word.
108 Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord, and teach me your decrees.
109 I am ready to sacrifice my life for your Law that is always in my heart.
110 Though the wicked have laid a snare for me, I do not stray from your precepts.
111 Your statutes are my heritage forever, they are the joy of my heart.
112 From age to age, I am determined to fulfill your decrees until the end.

113 I detest double-dealing people, but I treasure your law.
114 You are my shield, my refuge; my hope is in your word.
115 Leave me, you evildoers; let me keep the commandments of my God.
116 May your promise uphold me that I may live; let me not hope in vain.
117 Support me and I shall be safe, and faithfully keep your decrees.
118 You spurn all who stray from your decrees, for vain is their deceit.
119 You discard all the wicked as dross; that is why I love your statutes.
120 My flesh trembles in fear of you; I stand in awe before your laws.

121 I have done what is just and right; do not leave me to my oppressors.
122 Guarantee the well-being of your servant; let not the arrogant oppress me.
123 I strain my eyes searching your saving help, watching for the fulfillment of your just promise.
124 Treat your servant with compassion, and instruct me in your decrees.
125 Give me knowledge; I am your servant who desires to understand your statutes.
126 It is time for you, O Lord, to act, for they have broken your law.
127 I love your commandments more than gold – the finest gold.
128 Because my steps are guided by your precepts, I hate all false ways.

129 Wonderful are your decrees; my soul cannot but keep them.
130 As your words unfold, light is shed, and the simple-hearted understand.
131 I gasp in ardent yearning for your commandments that I love.
132 Turn to me then and be gracious as to those who love your name.
133 You promised to direct my steps; free my path from evil.
134 Rescue me from human oppression, and help me keep your precepts.
135 Favor me with your smile and teach me your statutes.
136 My eyes shed streams of tears for those who disobey your law.

137 O Lord, you are just, and your judgments right.
138 You have pronounced your decrees in justice and faithfulness.
139 I burn with zeal, seeing how my foes ignore your zeal.
140 Your promises have been tested; therefore our servant loves them.
141 Though I am lowly and despised, I do not forget your precepts.
142 Your justice is eternal and your Law is true.
143 In calamity and in anguish, your ordinances are my delight.
Your statutes are just forever; give me understanding, that I may live.

I call with all my heart; answer me, O Lord: help me keep your statutes.

I call upon you, save me and I will do your will.

Before dawn I rise and cry for help; all my hope is in your word.

I lie awake through the night to ponder on your promises.

Hear my voice, in your unfailing love; in your justice, O Lord, preserve my life.

My persecutors close in with evil intent; they are far from your Law.

But you, O Lord, are near, and all your commandments are true.

Long have I known that your decrees were founded to last forever.

Look upon my suffering and rescue me, for I have not forgotten your Law.

Plead my cause and redeem me; and, as you promised, give me life.

Salvation is far from the wicked, for they do not seek your statutes.

Great is your compassion, O Lord; renew my life according to your word.

Many foes persecute me, but I have not turned away from your law.

I look upon the faithless with loathing, because they do not obey your ruling.

See how I love your precepts; give me life, O Lord, in your kindness.

The essence of your word is truth, everlasting are your just ordinances.

Rulers persecute me for no cause, yet my heart stands in awe of your words.

Your word filled me with joy; I found there great riches.

I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law.

Seven times a day I praise you for your just ordinances.

Lovers of your Law have found great peace; nothing can make them stumble, not even distress.

O Lord, I wait for your salvation, and I keep your commands in faith.

My soul clings to your words for I truly cherish them.

I obey your precepts and your decrees; my ways are always before you.

Let my cry come to you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word.

May my prayer come before you; rescue me as you have promised.

Let my lips overflow with praise, for you teach me your decrees.

Let my tongue sing of your good news, for all you say is true.

Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts.

I long for your salvation, O Lord; I delight in your law.

Long may I live to sing your praise, may your ordinances always be my help!

Like a stray sheep I wandered about – come and look for your lost servant. See that I have not forgotten your commands.

The pilgrims who went up to the Temple were not without their troubles: some were not at peace with their neighbors; others complained that they were not living with believers but with pagans. They wanted the

I called to the Lord in my distress, and he answered me.

Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips and from deceitful tongues.
peace that God gives to those who draw near to him.

The Psalms 120–134 have the same title: “Song of Ascents.” The pilgrims, surely, sang them while going up to the Jerusalem Temple. That is why we find at times an antiphon that the crowd of pilgrims would repeat.

3 How shall he pay you back, O deceitful and lying tongue?
4 He will punish you with arrows hardened over the glowing coals!
5 Woe is me who live with barbarians, and dwell amid plunders.
6 My soul is sick of dwelling among those who hate peace;
7 I want peace, but they only think of quarrels.

PSALM 121 (120)

God wTrust in the Lord.

1 Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, immovable, it stands forever.
2 As mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord encompasses his people.
3 The scepter of the wicked will not remain over the land allotted to the upright, for then the upright might be led to put their hands to evil deeds.
4 Be good, O Lord, to those who are good, to those who are upright in heart.
5 But those who turn to crooked ways, the Lord will drive out with the evildoers. May peace remain upon Israel.

They will come back in joy carrying their sheaves. The mystery of life springing up from death. Hope for the afflicted, for those who are disappointed because of the little fruit of their labor.

1 When the Lord brought the exiles back to Zion, we were like those moving in a dream.
2 Then our mouths were filled with laughter, and our tongues with songs of joy.
3 The Lord had done great things for us, and we were glad indeed.
4 Bring back our exiles, O Lord, like fresh streams in the desert.
5 Those who sow in tears will reap with songs and shouts of joy.
6 They went forth weeping, bearing the seeds for sowing, they will come home with joyful shouts,
God often waits for them at the end of a march without which their effort would not have been a real one. Prayer of the believer who admires the presence of God in the Church, and also of those who seek the joy that accompanies faith.

What is built without God is lost time. It is useless spending all our days in search of security for the future, if blind and unresponsive, we pass by the events and joys that the present moment has in store for us.

1 Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain do its builders labor.
2 Unless the Lord guards the city, in vain does the guard stay awake.
3 It is in vain that you rise early and stay up late, putting off your rest, toiling for your hard-earned bread; God gives it to his loved ones, and they sleep.

The blessing of the home. In contrast to those who are anxious and impatient, the believer tries to see the good side of life. He recognizes the blessings God has given his home. A large family is God's blessing for those who have chosen it and have accepted its responsibilities.

1 Blessed are you who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.
2 You will eat the fruit of your toil; you will be blessed and favored.
3 Your wife, like a vine, will bear fruits in your home; your children, like olive shoots will stand around your table.
4 Such are the blessings bestowed upon the man who fears the Lord.
5 May the Lord bless you from Zion. May you see Jerusalem prosperous all the days of your life.
6 May you see your children's children, and Israel at peace!

From its youth, the people of God were persecuted. In the end, their enemies were dispersed, but they remained. To hold on in spite of the difficulties of life is a form of true hope.

PSALM 123 (122)

Prayer of the afflicted.
The cry of petition and hope of the Jews who, on returning from exile, are humiliated and despised by their pagan neighbors.
How often in the Gospel do we hear the same cry of the afflicted! Think especially of the Canaanite woman: "Lord, have pity on me!" She pursues Christ with desperate insistence for she feels it is now or never.

PSALM 124 (123)

With admiration and gratitude, the people of God remember how they overcame their trials because God was with them. An invitation to give thanks. In the Gospel, of the ten lepers who were healed, only one came back to thank the Lord. If we haven't the heart to thank God, it is because we do not know how to discover the wonders in our own life and in the world.
It is strange, that in the communities of the poor and the persecuted, the prayers of thanksgiving are interminable.

1 Blessed are you who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.
2 You will eat the fruit of your toil; you will be blessed and favored.
3 Your wife, like a vine, will bear fruits in your home; your children, like olive shoots will stand around your table.
4 Such are the blessings bestowed upon the man who fears the Lord.
5 May the Lord bless you from Zion. May you see Jerusalem prosperous all the days of your life.
6 May you see your children's children, and Israel at peace!
Trust in the Lord.

1 Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, immovable, it stands forever.
2 As mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord encompasses his people.
3 The scepter of the wicked will not remain over the land allotted to the upright, for then the upright might be led to put their hands to evil deeds.
4 Be good, O Lord, to those who are good, to those who are upright in heart.
5 But those who turn to crooked ways, the Lord will drive out with the evildoers. May peace remain upon Israel.

They will come back in joy carrying their sheaves. The mystery of life springing up from death. Hope for the afflicted, for those who are disappointed because of the little fruit of their labor.

1 When the Lord brought the exiles back to Zion, we were like those moving in a dream.
2 Then our mouths were filled with laughter, and our tongues with songs of joy. Among the nations it was said, “The Lord has done great things for them.”
3 The Lord had done great things for us, and we were glad indeed.
4 Bring back our exiles, O Lord, like fresh streams in the desert.
5 Those who sow in tears will reap with songs and shouts of joy.
6 They went forth weeping, bearing the seeds for sowing, they will come home with joyful shouts, bringing their harvested sheaves.

What is built without God is lost time. It is useless spending all our days in search of security for the future, if blind and unresponsive, we pass by the events and joys that the present moment has in store for us.

1 Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain do its builders labor.
2 Unless the Lord guards the city, in vain does the guard stay awake.
3 It is in vain that you rise early and stay up late, putting off your rest,
that the richest homes are not the happiest. The Father asks us to work but also wants us to keep the sabbath.

Sons are a gift from the Lord. The Bible does not forget that each one of us has received everything from family and country. Not to pass on life and education to a new generation, is not to pay a debt, for sure, but it is also to lose one’s life.

3 Sons are a gift from the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward.
4 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are the sons of one’s youth.
5 Blessed is the man who has filled his quiver with arrows of this kind, their foes will not silence them when they contend in court.

PSALM 128 (127)

The blessing of the home. In contrast to those who are anxious and impatient, the believer tries to see the good side of life. He recognizes the blessings God has given his home. A large family is God’s blessing for those who have chosen it and have accepted its responsibilities.

1 Blessed are you who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.
2 You will eat the fruit of your toil; you will be blessed and favored.
3 Your wife, like a vine, will bear fruits in your home; your children, like olive shoots will stand around your table.
4 Such are the blessings bestowed upon the man who fears the Lord.
5 May the Lord bless you from Zion. May you see Jerusalem prosperous all the days of your life.
6 May you see your children’s children, and Israel at peace!

PSALM 129 (128)

From its youth, the people of God were persecuted. In the end, their enemies were dispersed, but they remained. To hold on in spite of the difficulties of life is a form of true hope.

1 How they have oppressed me from my youth – let Israel say,
2 how they have oppressed me from my youth – they have not put me down.
3 Upon my back plowers have plowed long and deep furrows
4 But the Lord, who is just, has shattered the yoke of the wicked.
5 May all who hate Zion be thrown into confusion.
6 May they be like grass in the garden, which withers before you uproot it.  
7 No reaper sets his hands on it, no one gathers it to fill his arms,  
8 nor says of them the passersby, “The blessing of the Lord be upon you!”  
We bless you in the name of the Lord!

PSALM 130 (129)

From the depths I cry to you. A penitential psalm, but above all, a prayer of trust in God.

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,  
2 O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears pay attention to the voice of my supplication.  
3 If you should mark our evil, O Lord, who could stand?  
4 But with you is forgiveness, and for that you are revered.  
5 I waited for the Lord, my soul waits, and I put my hope in his word.  
6 My soul expects the Lord more than watchmen the dawn.  
7 O Israel, hope in the Lord, for with him is unfailing love and with him full deliverance.  
8 He will deliver Israel from all its sins.

PSALM 131 (130)

Childlike trust in God. A simple and humble prayer full of trust, which reminds us of the serenity of a child in its mother’s arms. Is not this what Jesus praised and is God less mother than father?

1 O Lord, my heart is not proud nor do I have arrogant eyes.  
2 I am not engrossed in ambitious matters, nor in things too great for me.  
3 I have quieted and stilled my soul like a weaned child on its mother’s lap; like a contented child is my soul.  
4 Hope in the Lord, O Israel, now and forever.

PSALM 132 (131)

Do not forget the descendants of your servant David.

1 Remember David, O Lord, and all his readiness, how he swore an oath to the Lord, to the Mighty One of Jacob.  
3 “I will not enter my house nor get into my bed,  
4 I will give no sleep to my eyes, no
slumber to my eyelids, until I find a
place for the Lord, a dwelling for the
Mighty One of Jacob.”

6 Then came the news, “The Ark is in
Ephrathah, we found it in the fields of
Jaar.”

7 Let us go to where he dwells and
worship at his footstool!

8 Arise, O Lord, and come to your
rest, you and the ark of your might.

9 May your priests be arrayed in glo-
rious mantle; may your faithful ones
shout in gladness.

10 For the sake of your servant,
David, do not turn away the face of
your anointed.

11 The Lord swore to David a prom-
ise, and he will remain true to it: “I will
keep your descendance on your
throne.

12 If your sons keep my covenant and
the decrees I have taught them, their
sons, too, will sit forever upon your
throne.”

13 For the Lord has chosen Zion; he
has desired it for his dwelling:

14 “This is my resting place forever;
this I prefer, here will I dwell.

15 I will bless its fruits, its bread, and
the poor will be satisfied.

16 I will clothe its priests with glory
and its faithful will sing in gladness.

17 From here a savior shall come
forth, a son of David; here shall shine
forever the lamp of my anointed.

18 In shame will I clothe his enemies,
but upon his head a crown shall shine.”

PSALM 133 (132)

What a marvel: fraternal love! Our unity in God’s service
as well as Christian friendship that is lasting and deep are gifts
of the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts. “Love and be united
so that the world may believe.”

1 How good and delightful to see
kindred living together in unity!

2 It is like precious oil poured
upon Aaron’s head,
running down his beard
onto the collar of his robes.

3 It is like the dew of Hermon
coming down the mountains of Zion,
where the Lord confers his blessing:
life everlasting.

PSALM 134 (133)

A song of praise. This was perhaps used in the Temple
during a night ceremony, when the priests replaced each other
in praising God.

1 Come, bless the Lord,
all you servants of the Lord,
who minister by night in the house of the Lord,
in the courts of the house of our God.

2 Raise your hands to the sanctuary
and bless the Lord.

3 May the Lord bless you from Zion,
he who made heaven and earth.
PSALM 135 (134)
Praise the Lord who chose us for himself.

1 Alleluia!
Praise the name of the Lord. O servants of the Lord, praise him, you who serve in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.
2 Praise the Lord, for he is good, praise his name, for it is beautiful; for the Lord has chosen Jacob as his own, Israel as his possession.
3 I know that the Lord is great, that our Lord is above all gods.
4 Whatever the Lord pleases, he does – in heaven and on earth, in the seas and in their depths.
5 He raises clouds from the ends of the earth; he hurls down lightning with the rain; and from his vaults he lets loose the wind.
6 It was he who killed the firstborn in Egypt, both people and beasts.
7 It was he who worked signs and wonders in your land, O Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his officers.
8 He destroyed mighty nations and slew powerful kings –
9 Sihon, king of the Amorites, Og, king of Bashan, all the kings of Canaan.
10 He gave their land as an inheritance to Israel, his people.
11 Your name, O Lord, will endure forever; your renown, O Lord, throughout the ages.
12 For the Lord vindicates his people and shows mercy to his servants.
13 The nations' idols are but gold and silver, the work of human hands.
14 They have mouths that cannot speak, eyes that cannot see, ears that cannot hear; neither is there breath in their mouths.
15 Their makers will be like them, so will all who trust in them.
16 Bless the Lord, house of Israel; bless the Lord, house of Aaron; bless the Lord, house of Levi; bless the Lord, all you who fear him.
17 Blessed be the Lord from Zion, he who dwells in Jerusalem.

PSALM 136 (135)
Give thanks to the Lord. Thanksgiving hymn used for the Passover, feast of the liberation of God’s people.

1 Alleluia!
Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his kindness endures forever.
2 Give thanks to the God of gods, his kindness endures forever.
3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords, his kindness endures forever.
4 He alone does great marvels, his kindness endures forever.
5 In wisdom he made the heavens, his kindness endures forever.
6 He set the earth upon the waters, his kindness endures forever.
7 He made the great lights, his kindness endures forever,
8 the sun to rule over the day, his kindness endures forever,
9 the moon and stars to rule the night, his kindness endures forever.
10 He slew the firstborn of Egypt, his kindness endures forever,
11 and brought Israel out, his kindness endures forever,
12 with strong hand and outstretched arm, his kindness endures forever.
13 He split the Sea of Reeds, his kindness endures forever,
14 and made Israel pass through it, his kindness endures forever,
15 drowning Pharaoh and his army, his kindness endures forever,
16 and led his people through the desert, his kindness endures forever.
17 He struck down great kings, his kindness endures forever,
18 and killed mighty kings, his kindness endures forever,
Sihon, king of the Amorites, his kindness endures forever,
and Og, king of Bashan, his kindness endures forever.
He gave their land as an inheritance, his kindness endures forever,
a heritage to Israel his servant, his kindness endures forever.

He remembered us in our humiliation, his kindness endures forever,
and freed us from our oppressors, his kindness endures forever,
he who gives food to all creatures, his kindness endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of heaven, his kindness endures forever!

Could I forget you, Jerusalem?
By the streams of Babylon,
we sat and then wept
as we remembered Zion.
When on the poplars
we hung our harps
our captors asked for song.
Our tormentors wanted songs of joy:
“Sing to us one of the songs of Zion!”
How could we sing the Lord’s song
in a strange and alien land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
may my right hand fall useless!
May my tongue cleave to my palate
if I remember you not,
if Jerusalem is not the first of my joys.
Remember, Lord, the Edomites
– what did they do when Jerusalem fell?
They said, “Tear the city down,
tear it down to its foundations!”
O daughter of Babylon, you will be sacked
happy is he who repays you
and does to you what you have done to us!
Happy is who seizes your infants
and dashes them against the rocks!

Your hands lead all for my good. A prayer for the times when we are pleased with God and we would like heaven and earth to share our joy and thanksgiving.

I thank you, O Lord, with all my heart,
for you have heard the word of my lips. 
I sing your praise in the presence of the gods.
I bow down towards your holy temple
and give thanks to your name,
for your love and faithfulness,
for your word which exceeds everything.
You answered me when I called;
you restored my soul and made me strong.
O Lord, all kings on earth will give you praise, when they have heard your words.

They will celebrate the ways of the Lord, “great is the glory of the Lord!”

From above, the Lord watches over the lowly; from afar, he marks down the haughty.

If I walk in the midst of trouble, you give me life. With outstretched arm, you save me from the wrath of my foes, with your right hand you deliver me.

How the Lord cares for me! Your kindness, O Lord, endures forever. Forsake not the work of your hands.

God everywhere, in all, knows all. A prayer filled with admiration of God’s wisdom: “Everything is exposed and open to the eyes of him to whom we are accountable” (Heb 4:13).

1 O Lord, you know me: you have scrutinized me.
2 You know when I sit and when I rise; beforehand you discern my thoughts.
3 You observe my activities and times of rest; you are familiar with all my ways.
4 Before a word is formed in my mouth, you know what it is all about, O Lord.
5 From front to back you hedge me round, shielding me with your protecting hand.
6 Your knowledge leaves me astounded, it is too high for me to reach.
7 Where else could I go from your Spirit? Where could I flee from your presence?
8 You are there if I ascend the heavens; you are there if I descend to the depths.
9 If I ride on the wings of the dawn and settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand shall guide me and your right hand shall hold me safely.
10 Shall I say, “Let darkness hide me, I prefer the night as my light?”
11 But darkness for you is not dark and night for you shines as the day.
12 It was you who formed my inmost part and knit me together in my mother’s womb.
13 I thank you for these wonders you have done, and my heart praises you for your marvelous deeds.
15 Even my bones were known to you when I was being formed in secret, fashioned in the depths of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw the course of my days; they were all recorded in your book before any of them came to be.
17 How difficult it is to grasp your thoughts, O God! Their number cannot be counted.
18 If I tried to do so, they would outnumber the sands; I am never finished with you.
19 If only you would slay the wicked, O God, and drive away from me the violent!
20 They rebel falseheartedly, your foes blaspheme your name.
21 I hate those who hate you, O Lord, and loathe those who defy you.
22 I hate them deeply, they have become my foes.
23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts.
24 See if my steps are going astray, and lead me in your eternal way.

**PSALM 140 (139)**

2 O Lord, deliver me from the evil one, protect me from violent people, forever plotting evil and stirring up strife.
3 They have tongues sharp as a serpent’s and venomous lips.
4 Save me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked, preserve me from the hands of the violent, who have planned to trip my feet.
5 The arrogant have set a snare for me; they have spread out their nets to entrap me along my path.
6 I say to the Lord, “You are my God.” Hear, O Lord, my voice in supplication.
7 O God, my Lord, my strength and salvation, in the day of battle you shield my head.
8 Do not grant, O Lord, the desires of the wicked; do not let their evil schemes succeed.
9 Let my attackers be overwhelmed by the mischief they prepared and not lift up their heads.
10 Let burning coals rain upon them; let them be cast into the depths, never to rise again.
11 Do not let the slanderer thrive on earth; let disaster hunt down the violent.
12 I know that the Lord upholds the cause of the afflicted, and justice will be done to the poor.
13 The just shall praise your name, the upright shall dwell in your presence.
PSALM 141 (140)

1 Lord, I call on you, hasten to help me! Listen to my plea when I call to you.

2 Let my prayer rise to you like incense, as I lift up my hands as in an evening sacrifice.

3 O Lord, set a guard at my mouth, keep watch at the gate of my lips.

4 Let not my heart be drawn to evil; let me not be enticed into evil acts in company with sinners, and let me not partake of their delights.

5 Rather the reproach and the just scourge, than the oil of the wicked anointing my head.

6 When their rulers are flung upon the rock, only then will these wicked learn that I was tolerant with them,

7 when the earth opens to swallow them and their bones are scattered at the edge of the netherworld.

8 But my eyes are turned to you, O God, my Lord; strip me not of life, for you are my refuge.

9 Keep me from the trap they have set for me, keep me from the net laid by evildoers.

10 Let the wicked fall into their own snares, while I alone escape safe and free.

PSALM 142 (141)

Prayer during trials. The prayer of someone in the most dire poverty. This psalm is applicable to the passion of Christ and St. Francis of Assisi prayed it when he was dying.

2 I cry aloud to the Lord, in a loud voice I beseech the Lord.

3 Before him I pour out my sorrows, before him I lay bare my troubles

4 and my spirit grows faint.

But you know my path.

Along the way I walk
they have hidden a trap for me.

5 Look to my right and see:
no one recognizes me.
I have lost all means of escape;
no one wants to help me.

6 I cry to you, O Lord;
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."

7 Listen to my groaning,
for I am in deep despair.
Rescue me from my pursuers,
for they are too strong for me.

8 O, set me free from captivity,
that I may praise your name!
Then the righteous will gather about me
when they see that you took care of me.
PSALM 143 (142)  Repetition of preceding psalm.

1 O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; answer me, you who are righteous and faithful.
2 Do not bring your servant to judgment, for no mortal is just in your sight.
3 The enemy has pursued me, crushing my life to the ground, sending me to darkness with those long dead.
4 And so my spirit fails me, my heart is full of fear.
5 I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on what you have done and consider the work of your hand.
6 I stretch out my hands to you, and thirst for you like a parched land.
7 O Lord, answer me quickly: my spirit is faint with yearning. Do not hide your face from me; save me from going down to the pit.
8 Let the dawn bring me word of your love, for in you alone I put my trust. Show me the way I should walk, for to you I lift up my soul.
9 Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord, for to you I flee for refuge.
10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Let your Spirit lead me on a safe path.
11 Preserve me, O Lord, for your name’s sake; free me from distress, in your justice.
12 You who are merciful, crush my enemies and destroy all my foes, for I am your servant.

PSALM 144 (143)  Happy the people whose God is the Lord! The first part of this psalm repeats verses of other psalms, especially Psalm 18. The second part, with simple images, reflects a yearning for heaven, where there will be no more tears or grief.

1 Blessed be the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle—
2 my loving God, my fortress; my protector and deliverer, my shield where I take refuge, who conquers nations and subjects them to my rule.
3 O Lord, what are humans that you should be mindful of them, the race of Adam, that you should care for them?
4 They are like a breath, their days pass like a shadow on earth.
5 Bend your heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountain and make it smoke.
6 Flash forth lightning and rout the foe; shoot your arrows and scatter them.
7 From above, reach down and draw me out of the deep waters, from the hands of foreigners whose mouths speak falsehood, whose words are full of deceit.
8 I will sing a new song to you, O God, I will make music on the ten-stringed harp, for you who give victory to kings and deliver David, your servant.
9 Rescue me from the evil sword and from the hands of foreigners, whose mouths speak falsehood, whose words are full of deceit.
10 May our sons be like plants well-nurtured and full grown, and our daughters like pillars that adorn the corners of the temple.
11 May our barns be full, with every kind of provision.
12 May our sheep increase by thousands, even by tens of thousands, in our pastures.
13 May our cattle be strong and fruitful; and may there be an end to raids and exile, to cries of distress in our streets.
14 Happy are the people so blessed; happy the people whose God is the Lord!
Bless the Lord forever. This psalm is like a litany: God is justice, faithfulness, goodness, the author of wonders. It invites us to discover the immense riches of God in his work and his revelation in the person of Christ.

I will extol you, my God and King; I will bless your name forever.
2 I will praise you day after day and exalt your name forever.
3 Great is the Lord, most worthy of praise; and his deeds are beyond measure.
4 Parents commend your works to their children and tell them your feats.
5 They proclaim the splendor of your majesty and recall your wondrous works.
6 People will proclaim your mighty deeds, and I will declare your greatness.
7 They will celebrate your abundant kindness, and rejoice in singing of your justice.
8 Compassionate and gracious is the Lord, slow to anger and abounding in love.
9 The Lord is good to everyone; his mercy embraces all his creation.
10 All your works will give you thanks; all your saints, O Lord, will praise you.
11 They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your power,
12 that all may know of your mighty deeds, your reign and its glorious splendor.
13 Your reign is from age to age; your dominion endures from generation to generation.
The Lord is true to his promises and lets his mercy show in all he does.
14 The Lord lifts up those who are falling and raises those who are beaten down.
15 All creatures look to you to be fed in due season; 16 with open hand you satisfy the living according to their needs.
17 Righteous is the Lord in all his ways, his mercy shows in all his deeds.
18 He is near those who call on him, who call trustfully upon his name.
19 He fulfills the wish of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.
20 For those who love him, the Lord has compassion; but the wicked, he will destroy.
21 Let my mouth speak in praise of the Lord, let every creature bless his holy name, for ever and ever.

The Lord frees the oppressed. The extent of human anguish – the hungry, the prisoners, the oppressed – has reached such a point that the powerful of this earth alone are incapable of finding a solution for it. Only God can give the world justice, peace, and hope. He has sent me to give Good News to the poor, to announce freedom to prisoners...

1 Alleluia!
Praise the Lord, my soul!
2 I will sing to the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to God while I live.
3 Do not put your trust in princes,
in a great one who cannot save.
4 Not sooner his spirit has left,
that he goes back to the earth;
on that very day, any plan comes to nothing.
Blessed are they whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, the maker of heaven and earth, the sea and all they contain.

The Lord is forever faithful; he gives justice to the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free.

The Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord straightens the bent. The Lord protects the stranger, sustains the widow and the orphan.

The Lord loves the virtuous, but he brings to ruin the way of the wicked.

The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, from generation to generation. Alleluia!

Rejoice, Jerusalem! Let the Church rejoice because the Lord has "strengthened the bars of her gates." The powers of evil and death will not overcome her. The Lord blessed her children and gave them his peace, not that of the world. He feeds his Church with his word and the best of wheat: his body-made-bread of life.

For the Jews, Jerusalem was more than a capital: it was the Holy City where God dwelt in his Temple. His presence protected the city and the people against hostile forces: Jerusalem is really the Church. Our God fills the distance between the order of the universe and the life of each one of us. He calls the stars by name and helps the humble. He is intimately near to each one of his children but he comes to them through the reality – so humanly deceiving in many cases – of his Church.

The Jews marveled at the transformation of water into ice: how could God so transform the elements? In the same way we marvel, when suddenly God melts situations in our world that seemed permanently solidified.

Alleluia!

How good it is to sing to our God, how sweet and befitting to praise him!

The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel; he heals their broken hearts and binds up their wounds.

He determines the number of stars, he calls each of them by name.

The Lord is great and mighty in power; his wisdom is beyond measure.

The Lord lifts up the humble, but casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving, make music on the harp for our God.

With clouds he covers the sky, and provides the earth with rain; he covers the hills with grass, and with plants for man to cultivate.

He provides food for the cattle, even for the young ravens when they call.

He is not concerned with the strength of a horse; nor is he pleased in the speed of a runner;
11 The Lord delights in those who fear him and expect him to care for them.

12 Exalt the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion!

13 For he strengthens the bars of your gates and blesses your children within you.

14 He grants peace on your borders and feeds you with the finest grain.

15 He sends his command to the earth and swiftly runs his word.

16 He spreads snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes.

17 He hurls down hail like pebbles; who will stand before his icy blasts?

18 But he sends his word and melts the snow; he makes his breeze blow, and again the waters flow.

19 It is he who tells Jacob his words, his laws and decrees to Israel.

20 This he has not done for other nations, so his laws remain unknown to them. Alleluia!

PSALM 148 (147)

1 Alleluia! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heavenly heights.

2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars.

4 Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.

5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, at whose command they were made.

6 He established them forever and gave each a fixed and lasting duty.

7 Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea creatures and all the depths,

8 clouds and snow, hail and lightning, storm winds that do his bidding,

9 you mountains and all you hills, you fruit trees and cedars,

10 you wild beasts and tame animals, you creeping things and winged fowl.

11 Kings of the earth and nations, princes and all rulers of the world,

12 young men and maidens, old and young together – 13 let them praise the name of the Lord.

For his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven.

14 He has given his people glory; he has given a praise to his faithful, to Israel, the people close to him. Alleluia.
National hymn. The people of God know that they are called
to glory and happiness. They will be the instruments of God’s
justice. God uses his poor, gathered by Christ, to judge the
world and bring it to salvation.

1 Alleluia!
Sing to the Lord a new song,
sing his praise in the assembly of his
saints.

2 Let Israel rejoice in his Maker,
let the people of Zion glory in their
King!

3 Let them dance in praise of his
name
and make music for him with harp
and timbrel.

4 For the Lord delights in his people;
he crowns the lowly with victory.

5 The saints will exult in triumph;
even at night on their couches.

6 Let the praise of God be on their
lips,
and in their hands two-edged swords,

7 to wreak vengeance on the nations
and punishment on the peoples,

8 to bind their kings in chains
and their nobles in iron fetters,

9 to execute on them the written sen-
tence:
this is the glory of all his saints. Alle-
luia!

Universal symphony!

1 Alleluia!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in the vault of heaven.

2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him for his own greatness.

3 Praise him with trumpet blast;
praise him with lyre and harp.

4 Praise him with dance and tambourines;
praise him with pipe and strings.

5 Praise him with clashing cymbals;
praise him with clanging cymbals.

6 Let everything that breathes sing praise to the
Lord.
Alleluia!