

# RESPONDING TO THE PSALMS – July 2022

- a project of the Spirituality Committee of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

*“What is more pleasing than a psalm? David expresses it well: Praise the Lord, for a song of praise is good: let there be praise of our God with gladness and grace. Yes, a psalm is a blessing on the lips of the people, a hymn in praise of God, the assembly's homage, a general acclamation, a word that speaks for all, the voice of the Church, a confession of faith in song.”*

*from The Explanations of the Psalms by Saint Ambrose*

Take an idea or phrase from the Sunday psalm for your focus for a day or two, for yourself or share with others. There is space for you to note your own thoughts as a possible personal journal.

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## 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 65(66):1-7,16,20

*Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.*

Cry out with joy to God all the earth,  
O sing to the glory of his name.  
O render him glorious praise.  
Say to God: 'How tremendous your deeds!

*All creation should be constantly giving praise to God. How is that part of my life?*

*We need to stop and reflect on all that God has done for the human race from creation to now.*

'Before you all the earth shall bow;  
shall sing to you, sing to your name!  
Come and see the works of God,  
tremendous his deeds among men.

*Let us reflect on how God's creation is a magnificent work put into our care.*

*We need to recognise all that God has made possible for people throughout human history.*

He turned the sea into dry land,  
they passed through the river dry-shod.  
Let our joy then be in him;  
he rules for ever by his might.

*We remember God setting the people free through the waters of the Red Sea, the Exodus event*

*Let us rejoice in how he has set us free through the waters of baptism to live the Christian life.*

Come and hear, all who fear God.  
I will tell what he did for my soul:  
Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer  
nor withhold his love from me.

*It's always good to name all the good things God has done for each one of us.*

*We thank God for listening to us, for loving us.*

## 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 68(69):14,17,30-31,33-34,36-37

*Seek the Lord, you who are poor, and your hearts will revive*

This is my prayer to you,  
my prayer for your favour.  
In your great love, answer me, O God,  
with your help that never fails:  
Lord, answer, for your love is kind;  
in your compassion, turn towards me.

***We are confident that we can pray to our God for all our needs***

***We express our sincere faith that God loves us and so will hear us compassionately***

As for me in my poverty and pain  
let your help, O God, lift me up.  
I will praise God's name with a song;  
I will glorify him with thanksgiving.

***Think back to times, or perhaps it is today, when God helps us in our need or in our pain.***

***This is a moment to praise and thank God for how he has helped us.***

The poor when they see it will be glad  
and God-seeking hearts will revive;  
for the Lord listens to the needy  
and does not spurn his servants in their chains.

***We need to remember the poor who have material or spiritual needs, and how we can help them***

***We need to think too of people with differing burdens, those in prison, those oppressed***

For God will bring help to Zion  
and rebuild the cities of Judah  
and men shall dwell there in possession.  
The sons of his servants shall inherit it;  
those who love his name shall dwell there.

***Do we think about the Jewish people, our ancestors in faith, thanking God for their steadfastness?***

***Let us pray for the Holy Land, and all places of pilgrimage, where people find God's presence***

## 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 14(15):2-5

*The just will live in the presence of the Lord.*

Lord, who shall dwell on your holy mountain?  
He who walks without fault;  
he who acts with justice  
and speaks the truth from his heart;  
he who does not slander with his tongue.

*We can use this as a moment to examine our worthiness to come before God in prayer.  
Are we people of justice and truth? How much harm do we do through our words?*

He who does no wrong to his brother,  
who casts no slur on his neighbour,  
who holds the godless in disdain,  
but honours those who fear the Lord.

*Do we care positively for our sisters and brothers?  
Are we selective about who we honour? How do we deal with our prejudices?*

He who keeps his pledge, come what may;  
who takes no interest on a loan  
and accepts no bribes against the innocent.  
Such a man will stand firm for ever.

*Are we faithful to our promises, careful not to take advantage of others' weakness?  
We need to renew our promise to live the baptismal life, to be strong in living the faith.*

## 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 137(138):1-3,6-8

*On the day I called, you answered me, O Lord.*

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart:  
you have heard the words of my mouth.  
In the presence of the angels I will bless you.  
I will adore before your holy temple.

*Simply thank God for being there for you, knowing God listens to our prayers.*

*Be grateful that in our liturgy we can praise God together with the angels and saints*

I thank you for your faithfulness and love,  
which excel all we ever knew of you.  
On the day I called, you answered;  
you increased the strength of my soul.

*Express your thanks that God's love is always there for us, more than we deserve.*

*Thank God for a time when you remember he gave you the strength you needed.*

The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly  
and the haughty he knows from afar.  
Though I walk in the midst of affliction  
you give me life and frustrate my foes.

*It's good sometimes to just ask why God bothers with us at all given all our failings.*

*It's good to thank God for being with us so often in moments of weakness.*

You stretch out your hand and save me,  
your hand will do all things for me.  
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,  
discard not the work of your hands.

*Stop and acknowledge how God supports you in your daily living.*

*Pray that God will always be with you as his child.*

## 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 89(90):3-6,12-14,17

*O Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to the next.*

You turn men back to dust  
and say: 'Go back, sons of men.'  
To your eyes a thousand years  
are like yesterday, come and gone,  
no more than a watch in the night.

*It's valuable to stop and remember the frailty of all human life compared to our eternal God.  
Do we think about how immense is God's eternal understanding of the cosmos?*

You sweep men away like a dream,  
like the grass which springs up in the morning.  
In the morning it springs up and flowers:  
by evening it withers and fades.

*How many human beings have lived and died, all known to God, through the centuries, millennia?  
Can we even imagine the immensity of the God of all creation?*

Make us know the shortness of our life  
that we may gain wisdom of heart.  
Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever?  
Show pity to your servants.

*Let us pray that we will use the days we have left to live to the best of our ability  
Let us ask for the gift of wisdom and for God's mercy.*

In the morning, fill us with your love;  
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.  
Let the favour of the Lord be upon us:  
give success to the work of our hands.

*Let us pray that we will try to love as God loves, rejoicing in that gift all our life.  
Let us ask God to bless us and all our enterprises, small and great.*