

Responding to the Psalms

October 2020

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

The Responsorial Psalm is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word. You could reflect on a verse for one or two days, and then move onto the next verse. The questions that follow each verse of the psalm are for personal reflection. Some might be good for sharing with another, or a small group. Some might be too personal.

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

4 October 2020

Psalm 79(80):9,12-16,19-20

The vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel.

You brought a vine out of Egypt;
to plant it you drove out the nations.
It stretched out its branches to the sea,
to the Great River it stretched out its shoots.

God saved the people from slavery in Israel.

What are the slaveries we endure, impose on others, see in the world?

Are we grateful for the freedom in our lives?

Then why have you broken down its walls?
It is plucked by all who pass by.
It is ravaged by the boar of the forest,
devoured by the beasts of the field.

There are times we feel broken, worn down, overcome.

Do we shout at God? Does God deserve it?

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted.

When things are not so good do we turn to God honestly?

How do we ask God to restore what is broken in our lives?

And we shall never forsake you again;
give us life that we may call upon your name.
God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

People often say 'we won't do that again'.

Do we ask for the courage to keep that sort of promise?

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

11 October 2020

Psalm 22

In the Lord's own house shall I dwell for ever and ever.

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me,
to revive my drooping spirit.

How do I understand God when my spirit is "down"?

What repose do I want and need from God?

He guides me along the right path; he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear.
You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort.

Think about how God was with you in darkness.

How did God comfort you?

You have prepared a banquet for me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.

What are the enemies in my life at the moment?

How do I sense God's presence with me?

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.

Think of moments when God has been good and kind.

Do they draw us to think about heaven?

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

18 October 2020

Psalm 95(96):1,3-5,7-10

Give the Lord glory and power.

O sing a new song to the Lord,

sing to the Lord all the earth.

Tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the peoples.

Are we joyful in our faith?

Do we tell the world how good God is?

The Lord is great and worthy of praise,
to be feared above all gods;

the gods of the heathens are naught.

It was the Lord who made the heavens.

Have we some "heathen gods" in our lives?

Do we really appreciate God as creator of all?

Give the Lord, you families of peoples,

give the Lord glory and power;

give the Lord the glory of his name.

Bring an offering and enter his courts.

How will you give glory and power to God?

What can you offer him?

Worship the Lord in his temple.

O earth, tremble before him.

Proclaim to the nations: 'God is king.'

He will judge the peoples in fairness.

Do we realise how great God is when we worship?

How do we appreciate God's goodness to us mortal people?

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

25 October 2020

Psalm 17(18):2-4,47,51

I love you, Lord, my strength.

I love you, Lord, my strength,
my rock, my fortress, my saviour.
My God is the rock where I take refuge;
my shield, my mighty help, my stronghold.
The Lord is worthy of all praise,
when I call I am saved from my foes.

*A short passage yet powerful words. Concentrate on the “strong” words.
Ask yourself how you have experienced God’s strength in your own life*

Long life to the Lord, my rock!
Praised be the God who saves me,
He has given great victories to his king
and shown his love for his anointed

*How do I praise God?
How do I know God’s love for me as his anointed?*