

Day 6

## Psalms: The Prayer of the Assembly

### For Personal Reflection & Prayer

- What psalm is familiar to me, or inspires me?
- When have I been like the insistent widow in prayer, asking without ceasing, insisting on being heard?
- “Have mercy on me a sinner.” When was the last time I prayed using these words of the tax collector?

*Take these considerations to the Lord in prayer, asking for light and strength.*



### Offer a prayer inspired by this Psalm, the very words of the Word of God:

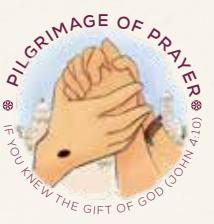
*Let those who fear the Lord say,  
his mercy endures forever.  
In danger I called on the Lord;  
the Lord answered me and set me free.*

*The Lord is with me; I am not afraid;  
what can mortals do against me?*

*Psalm 118: 4-6*

### Pope John Paul II: The Psalter is an Ideal Source of Christian Prayer

In the Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* I expressed the hope that the Church would become more and more distinguished in the "art of prayer", learning it ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master (cf. n. 32). This effort must be expressed above all in



the liturgy, the source and summit of ecclesial life. Consequently, it is important to devote greater pastoral care to promoting the Liturgy of the Hours as a prayer of the whole People of God...

Our reading will aim above all at bringing out the religious meaning of the Psalms, showing how they can be used in the prayer of Christ's disciples, although they were written many centuries ago for Hebrew believers... together we will learn from Tradition and will listen above all to the Fathers of the Church.

The latter, in fact, were able with deep spiritual penetration to discern and identify the great "key" to understanding the Psalms as Christ himself, in the fullness of his mystery. The Fathers were firmly convinced that the Psalms speak of Christ. The risen Jesus, in fact, applied the Psalms to himself when he said to the disciples: "Everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24: 44). The Fathers add that in the Psalms Christ is spoken to or it is even Christ who speaks. In saying this, they were thinking not only of the individual person of Christ, but of the Christus totus, the total Christ, composed of Christ the Head and his members.

Christians were thus able to read the Book of Psalms in the light of the whole mystery of Christ. This same perspective also brings out the ecclesial dimension, which is particularly highlighted when the Psalms are sung chorally. We can understand, then, how the Psalms came to be adopted from the earliest centuries as the prayer of the People of God. If in some historical periods there was a tendency to prefer other prayers, it is to the monks' great credit that they held the Psalter's torch aloft in the Church. One of them, St Romuald, founder of Camaldoli, at the dawn of the second Christian millennium, even maintained, as his biographer Bruno of Querfurt says, that the Psalms are the only way to experience truly deep prayer: "Una via in psalmis"...

With this assertion, which seems excessive at first sight, he actually remained anchored to the best tradition of the first Christian centuries, when the Psalter became the book of Church prayer par excellence. This was the winning choice in view of the heretical tendencies that continuously threatened the unity of faith and communion. Interesting in this regard is a marvelous letter that St Athanasius wrote to Marcellinus in the first half of the fourth century while the Arian heresy was vehemently attacking belief in the divinity of Christ. To counter the heretics who seduced people with hymns and prayers that gratified their religious sentiments, the great Father of the Church dedicated all his energies to teaching the Psalter handed down by Scripture... This is how, in addition to the Our Father, the Lord's prayer by antonomasia, the practice of praying the Psalms soon became universal among the baptized.



By praying the Psalms as a community, the Christian mind remembered and understood that it is impossible to turn to the Father who dwells in heaven without an authentic communion of life with one's brothers and sisters who live on earth. Moreover, by being vitally immersed in the Hebrew tradition of prayer, Christians learned to pray by recounting the magnalia Dei, that is, the great marvels worked by God both in the creation of the world and humanity, and in the history of Israel and the Church. This form of prayer drawn from Scripture does not exclude certain freer expressions, which will continue not only to characterize personal prayer, but also to enrich liturgical prayer itself, for example, with hymns and troparia. But the Book of Psalms remains the ideal source of Christian prayer and will continue to inspire the Church in the new millennium.

[https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_20010328.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20010328.html)

### **Hulda gates, The Trumpeting Place, Trumpeting Place:**

Hulda gates: After climbing up the staircase, there were two gates on the Southern wall called the 'Hulda Gates'. These are referenced in the bible and the Mishnah. "Five gates were in the temple mount: the two Hulda Gates on the south, that served for coming in and for going out..." The gates led to tunnels that led under and up into the temple mount.

The gates are sealed now, since the Arab or Crusaders times, but their traces can be seen on the exterior south-eastern wall. There was a triple-arch gate on the eastern side, and double-arch gate on the western side.





Trumpeting Place: One stone found fallen on the paved street was carved with an inscription reading in Hebrew **לְבִתְהַקִּיעָה לְהַב**..., 'To the trumpeting place to...'. On the basis of written sources, this stone probably indicated the place where the priests, serving on the Temple Mount in the Second Temple period, were to stand just before and after the Sabbath and blow a trumpet, announcing the inauguration or the close of the holy day of rest... The shape of the ashlar block bearing this inscription indicates that it was originally placed at the top of the corner of the Temple Mount. The inscription was carved above a wide depression cut into the inner face of the stone... Jewish historian Josephus' account is as follows. "...at the point where it was the custom for one of the priests to stand and to give notice, by sound of trumpet, in the afternoon of the approach, and on the following evening of the close, of every seventh day, announcing to the people the respective hours for ceasing work and for resuming their labors ." (Jewish War, Book 4, Chapter 9).

<https://www.archpark.org.il/article.asp?id=65>



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