

WAYS TO PRAY



Praying the Psalms

THE HEART OF PRAYER

“This Book expresses the entire human experience.”
[Pope Benedict XVI]



THE BOOK OF PRAYER PAR EXCELLENCE

“In the Psalms are expressed and interwoven with joy and suffering, the longing for God and the perception of our own unworthiness, happiness and the feeling of abandonment, trust in God and sorrowful loneliness, fullness of life and fear of death. The whole reality of the believer converges in these prayers. The People of Israel first and then the Church adopted them as a privileged mediation in relations with the one God and an appropriate response to God’s self revelation in history.” [Pope Benedict XVI]

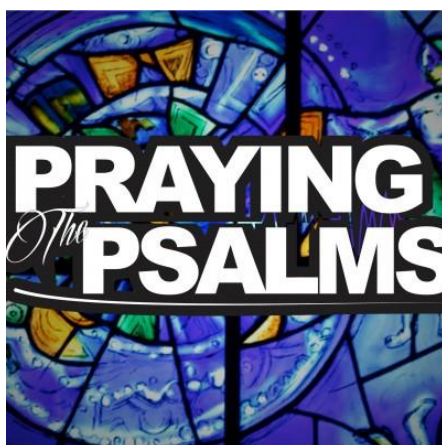
Psalms is a collection of 150 songs and prayers and nothing else. Each Psalm expresses the full range of emotions that any human goes through during the course of a lifetime: joy, sorrow, desperation, anger, vengeance, praise, peace, and thankfulness.

What’s striking about the Psalms is that they’re real, brutally honest outpourings of emotion along the roller coasters of life.

Psalms has been called the prayer book of the Bible in both Jewish and Christian traditions. It is a collection of sung prayers that has been used in worship from the time of ancient Israel up to the present. Because the psalms range so widely in emotional expression, from the heights of adoration and praise to the depths of vengeful curses against the enemy, they have special relevance to our prayer life. They teach us to hide nothing from God, but to bring all that is real into the only relationship that can bless the best and heal the worst in us.

No matter what we are feeling -- distress, trust, anger or delight, we find the words of the psalms accompany us into God's presence. ... In the psalms we find words to express every conceivable human condition and feeling. These prayers give us words to glorify, confess, hope, ask, and even curse. In so doing, they give us permission to share our whole being with God.

We hear and read Psalms every time we go to Mass. At the heart of the Bible are the Psalms, prayers from God that help us learn to pray. The Holy Spirit inspired them. Israel sang them. Christ himself prayed them, as did our Blessed Mother. As a child learns to write by letting her parent guide her hand to form the words, so we can learn to pray by reading the Psalms.



OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, let the Spirit descend upon this circle with an abundance of her gifts.

In the morning You hear my voice... Psalm 5:2-4

Give ear to my words, O LORD; understand my sighing. Attend to the sound of my cry, my king and my God! For to you I will pray, LORD; in the morning you will hear my voice; in the morning I will plead before you and wait. [Psalms 5: 2-4]

Be still with God ...

Take some time now to talk to God, to let God hear your voice....

Place your needs before God....

Listen Hear God speak with you...

'My Soul Thirsts... Psalm 42:1, 5

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Praise God ...

Take time now to praise God for the gifts, grace and blessings so abundantly poured down upon you...

Acknowledge the role God plays in your life

Sharing

Lord, help me to hold each speaker's prayer experience reverently, their talents and faith gently, and to enkindle in them love of our Creator and Lord, and to serve them in body as well as in work.

You are invited to share a word or phrase about your prayer experience or something for which you are grateful to God.



CLOSING PRAYER

I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall be always in my mouth. My soul will glory in the LORD; let the poor hear and be glad. Magnify the LORD with me; and let us exalt his name together. [Ps 34:2-4]

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, We praise you and give you glory:
We bless you for calling us to be your holy people. Remain in our hearts, and guide us in our love and service. Help us to let our light shine before others and lead them to the way of faith. Holy Trinity of love, we praise you now and forever.

In a special way we thank you for..... {State your intentions here}.

Father of Jesus, we praise you and give you glory for the wonderful things you do for us; for life and health, for friends and family, for this splendid day. For these reasons, we pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

