

Responding to the Psalms

December 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. Where the text says 'we' it can also be rephrased as 'I'.

Advent is about sensing God's presence in our midst. We ask to deepen our appreciation of that presence this year

Second Sunday of Advent

6 December 2020

Psalm 84(85):9-14

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace,
peace for his people.

His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land.

*God speaks of peace this Advent – let us pray for peace in God's world
Let us pray that we will be people of peace in all our relationships*

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven.

*God gifts us with mercy and faithfulness –
let us be thankful for all the mercies we have received
Let us pray for a deeper faithfulness this Advent to God
and to all who need us*

The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps.

*God has helped us prosper.
Let us make Advent a time to be grateful for his gifts.
Justice and peace are signs of God's presence.
Let us make them more deeply part of our lives.*

Third Sunday of Advent

13 December 2020

Luke 1:46-50,53-54

My soul rejoices in my God.

My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

This is a Sunday of Advent rejoicing.

Let us ask for the gift of joy for ourselves and for others

Mary rejoices in all that God has done for her.

Let us name with thanks all that God has done for us.

The Almighty works marvels for me.

Holy his name!

His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

Advent asks us to sense God's presence more intimately.

Let us be silent in awe of how God is with us

Let us pray for all we know who need to come closer to God.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.

He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy.

Mary's song remembers those in need.

Let us pray today for all who are hungry and in any need.

Advent challenges us to use God's gifts well.

Let us examine how we use what we have to help others.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

20 December 2020

Psalm 88(89):2-5,27,29

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord;
through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.
Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever,
that your truth is firmly established as the heavens.

Advent shows us how much God loves us.

Think of all the ways God's love blesses our lives.

Truth is so precious.

Let us pray that we will do all we can to proclaim God's truth.

'I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
I will establish your dynasty for ever
and set up your throne through all ages.

Advent reminds us how God is faithful to his promises.

Thank God for his faithfulness to you.

God is with us through all time.

Remember the people who have stood by you in your lifetime.

'He will say to me: "You are my father,
my God, the rock who saves me."
I will keep my love for him always;
with him my covenant shall last.'

Advent shows us God's fatherly love

when he asked Mary to give birth to Jesus. Say the Our Father slowly.

That we can call him Father is amazing.

Think what it means to know almighty God as your Father.

Christmas Vigil Mass

24 December 2020

Psalms 88(89):4-5,16-17,27,29

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

‘I have made a covenant with my chosen one;

I have sworn to David my servant:

I will establish your dynasty for ever

and set up your throne through all ages.’

*Jesus is born, God-with-us. Just thank God that he did that for us,
give us Jesus as our way to God.*

We are part of the story that goes back to David and is true today.

Thank God that this is our story too.

Happy the people who acclaim such a king,

who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face,

who find their joy every day in your name,

who make your justice the source of their bliss.

Christ’s birth brings a new light on the way to live.

Ask for that light to grow stronger for you.

Pray to live by that light, to be people of justice, to know true joy.

‘He will say to me: “You are my father,

my God, the rock who saves me.”

I will keep my love for him always;

with him my covenant shall endure.’

In sending his Son God shows us he is our rock. Put your trust in him.

It is a guarantee of his love for us always. Offer him your love in return.

Christmas Midnight Mass

25 December 2020

Psalm 95(96):1-3,11-13

Today a saviour has been born to us: he is Christ the Lord.

O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.

O sing to the Lord, bless his name.

Jesus' birth is like nothing else on earth!

For that just sing a new song in your heart.

Take time to reflect on how in Jesus' birth.

God gives us hope for our future, so bless his name.

Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the peoples.

*Reflect on Jesus' birth, and be glad that God helps us
in so many different ways.*

Pray to be able to tell others how good God is.

Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth.

Take a moment to think about creation, and its God given beauty

Ask to use the gifts of the world more carefully.

With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with his truth.

Christ brings true justice –

pray that we will see what is true and we will act with his justice.

The shepherds are the first to hear the news of Christ's birth.

Pray for all on the margins of society.

Christmas Dawn Mass

25 December 2020

Psalm 96(97):1,6,11-12

This day new light will shine upon the earth: the Lord is born for us.

The Lord is king, let earth rejoice,

let all the coastlands be glad.

The skies proclaim his justice;

all peoples see his glory.

The shepherds visit the Christ-child.

Take a moment to think how that baby is the Lord, the king.

Pray that all people will one day see his glory as God.

Light shines forth for the just

and joy for the upright of heart.

Rejoice, you just, in the Lord;

give glory to his holy name.

Christ's birth calls us to be just and upright.

Ask for those gifts now and for the future.

*With Mary treasure the gift of Christ's presence with us,
more than any other gift we receive.*

Christmas Day Mass

25 December 2020

Psalm 97(98):1-6

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Sing a new song to the Lord
for he has worked wonders.
His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation.

*The Lord works wonders. Just stop and rejoice that Christ's birth
is such a wonderful gift to the world.*

The Lord has made known his salvation;
has shown his justice to the nations.
He has remembered his truth and love
for the house of Israel.

*God saves us, shows us justice, truth, love.
Decide what to do in return for such gifts.*

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord, all the earth,
ring out your joy.

*Pray that we, the Church, can find ways to bring the world to know
Christ by the way we live the gospel.*

Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp
with the sound of music.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
acclaim the King, the Lord.

*Think how in the middle of all our Christmas celebrations
we will also rejoice in God as our Lord.*

Holy Family

27 December 2020

Psalm 127(128):1-5

O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!

O blessed are those who fear the Lord
and walk in his ways!

By the labour of your hands you shall eat.

You will be happy and prosper.

Let us stop and reflect on how we walk in God's ways.

*Let us thank God that we are fed and clothed,
and remember those in need.*

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive,
around your table.

We pray that all families, marriages,

and all human relationships are inspired by the love of the Holy Family

*We pray for all young people to be able to fulfil
their potential as images of God*

Indeed thus shall be blessed
the man who fears the Lord.

May the Lord bless you from Sion
all the days of your life!

Reflect on what it means to fear the Lord.

Ask for the wisdom to know how to live for the rest of our days.