

ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

November 2022 – Issue 136

'The Lord is King with Majesty Enrobed' (Psalm 92)

November is a month that starts off with the feast of 'All Saints' followed by 'All Souls'. The weather is often turning to greater cold, and it sees the end of the liturgical season, but brings us closer to Advent and Christmas. With the cold and the damp, certainly in this climate, as well as darker nights, waiting for the Joys of Advent is not easy. There is also the feast of Christ the King, which leads us onward in hope. We live in difficult and stress filled times and it is important to remember that Jesus is the Lord of the Future and King of the past too. All is in His hands...

As I was to be away during October, I decided to either write the next Encouragement early before I went or when I returned. Reflection on the fact that 'early' seemed too soon, and 'later' could result in delays I thought of what to focus on. I had already written about the feast of Christ the King, but the thought would not leave. This morning praying the Morning Office the Psalms for today leaped into my heart and especially Psalm 98/99.... 'The Lord is King.'

It struck me that there are so many Psalms, and some are well known but others are bypassed. Of the hundred and fifty psalms, how many people could quote even a few lines... maybe only the most famous 'The Lord is my Shepherd.' Psalms of course, are songs, often sung as people walked, and prayed that way. Seventy-three of them are attributed to King David. Other inspired poets in successive generations added now one, now another contribution to the sacred collection. The word Psalm itself comes from the Greek, meaning song or poem or 'praise'. They were meant to be a prayer shared and interacted with so the leader would say the main part, the verse and the 'response' would come from the people.



This tradition has been maintained and whether sung or spoken 'the response' is the key affirmation of the content of that special Psalm.

As I read that particular Psalm, it struck me that they are such a wonderful teaching and so reflective of the whole of the Bible as well as a prayer. It is easy to read them and wonder what does that mean? Or what is the purpose of that and what does it refer too? Indeed, we can be quite mechanical in our reading

and lose the purpose and intent of each one. They are clearly not the same and each one has a specific purpose. Many are sad songs or 'laments' for things past or events that happened. Some are praising God for his creation. Some are teaching us about the nature of God, as clearly 'The Lord is my Shepherd' illustrates. Some are cheerful and encouraging. Some speak of our human condition.

As there are so many it is impossible to go through each one here but maybe you could find them in the Bible or in a prayer book and choose one that 'speaks' to you... even 'The Lord is my Shepherd.' What does this Psalm reveal?

However it is worthwhile just pondering the Psalm of this morning:

'The Lord is King the people tremble. He is throned on the Cherubim; the earth quakes. The Lord is great in Zion.'

It is meant to be a reminder of the Holiness of God not to inspire fear but reverence and might. St. Athanasius comments: You are higher than the Cherubim; You changed the bad state of the earth, when you came in a nature like ours... God made man.

Then we have a reminder that He is King over all Mankind.....

"My strength returns to me with my cup of coffee and the reading of the psalms." Dorothy Day

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'He is supreme over all the peoples let them praise His name, so terrible and great. He is Holy and full of Power.'

Then we are given some attribute of God to remind us of why He is great. His greatness lies in those attributes that we, as human beings, often get so wrong. We struggle with fairness and justice, goodness and generosity.

'You are King who loves what is right; You have established equity, justice and right You have established them in Jacob.'

We then have a reference to the leaders of the people through whom we have knowledge of the trial and tribulations before Jesus' birth. It is worthwhile finding out about the people mentioned in this or any Psalm. Who was Jacob? Who were Aaron and Moses and who was Samuel? What book in the Bible are they referred to? Why are they important? Why are they mentioned? Children are taught to follow Samuel because he was the little boy given to Eli to train who was told to listen to God, literally, as He called him and then became a prophet.

'Among the priests were Aaron and Moses, among those who invoked his name was Samuel. They invoked His name and He answered'

And then we have a bit of history....

'To them he spoke in a pillar of cloud. They did his will; they kept the Law, which He, the Lord had given'

When and where did The Lord speak to them and why? Worth finding out...

'O Lord our God, you answered them. For you are a God that forgives, yet you punished all their offences. Exalt the Lord your God: bow down before the Holy Mountain for the Lord our God is Holy'

Where is the Holy Mountain or rather what is the Holy Mountain.? Do we realise that God is a God both of Forgiveness and Justice?

Reading the Psalms is both praying and learning and knowing that countless people before us had to learn too and follow God. It has been rightly said that the Psalms are "a school of prayer." They not only provide us with models to follow, but inspire us

to voice our own deepest feelings and aspirations. God's Kingship is eternal and throughout the Ages. Our Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe focuses on Jesus and is a relatively new feast (1925) but it is a reflection of the great truth of the Kingship of God. Maybe as we enter November and those dark days, we can spend a little time out of the cold and dreary and into scripture... You may find great light and warmth.

Halina Holman

Pope Francis

To learn how to pray the Psalter is a tremendous school. We saw how the Psalms do not always use refined and genteel language, and that they often bear the scars of existence. And yet, all these prayers were first used in the Temple of Jerusalem and then in the synagogues; even the most intimate and personal ones. The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it this way: "The Psalter's many forms of prayer take shape both in the liturgy of the Temple and in the human heart". And thus, personal prayer draws from, and is nourished first by, the prayer of the people of Israel, then by the prayer of the Church... Prayer can begin in the half light of a church's nave, but then come to an end on the city streets. And vice versa, it can blossom during the day's activities and reach its fulfilment in the liturgy. The church doors are not barriers, but willing to receive everyone's cry.

Oct. 21st 2020



Feast Days in November

1st All Saints' Day (Holyday of Obligation)

2nd All Souls' Day

3rd St. Winefride & St. Martin de Porres

4th St. Charles Borromeo

6th Thirty second Sunday in Ord. Time

9th The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

10th St. Leo the Great

13th Thirty third Sunday in Ord. Time

16th St. Margaret of Scotland

17th St. Hilda of Whitby

18th Dedication of the Basilicas of Ss. Peter & Paul

20th Our Lord Jesus Christ the King

21st The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

24th The Martyrs of Vietnam

25th St. Catherine of Alexandria

27th 1st Sunday in Advent

30th St. Andrew, Apostle, Patron of Scotland

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