

The PSALMS

St. Joseph

NEW CATHOLIC VERSION

WITH HELPFUL APPENDIX
An Index of Sunday Responsorial Psalms
and a Table of the Four-Week Psalter
for Morning and Evening Prayer



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PREFACE

In the life of Christians, there can never be too many translations of the Psalter. The Psalms are the prayer of God's assembly, the public prayer par excellence of the People of God. No prayer of Israel is comparable to the Psalter because of its universal character. The idea of the unity of the chosen people's prayer guided its elaboration as well as its adoption by the Church.

The Psalms may be looked upon as the prayer-book of the Holy Spirit. Over the long centuries of Israel's existence, the Spirit of God inspired the psalmists (typified by King David) to compose magnificent prayers and hymns for every religious desire and need, mood and feeling. Thus, the Psalms have great power to raise minds to God, to inspire devotion, to evoke gratitude in favorable times, and to bring consolation and strength in times of trial.

Furthermore, in giving us the Psalter, which sums up the major aspects of our relationship to our Creator and Redeemer, God puts into our mouths the words he wishes to hear, and indicates to us the dimensions of prayer:

“The Psalms call to mind the truths revealed by God to the chosen people, which were at one time frightening and at another filled with wonderful tenderness; they keep repeating and fostering the hope of the promised Redeemer, which in ancient times was kept alive with song, either around the hearth or in the stately temple; they show forth in splendid light the prophesied glory of Jesus Christ: first, his supreme and eternal power, then his lowly coming to this earthly exile, his kingly dignity and priestly power, and finally his beneficent labors, and the shedding of his blood for our redemption.

PSALMS 9—10*

PSALM 9*

Thanksgiving for the Triumph of Justice

¹ For the director.* According to *Muth Labben*. A psalm of David.

² I will offer praise to you, O LORD,
with my whole heart;
I will recount all your wondrous deeds.*

³ I will rejoice and exult in you;
I will sing praise to your name,* O Most High.

⁴ For my enemies have turned back;
in your presence they stumble and perish.

⁵ But you have upheld my just cause,
you who are seated on your throne as a righteous judge.

⁶ You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked,
erasing their name forever.^P

⁷ The enemies have suffered endless ruin;
their cities have been utterly destroyed,
and not even their memory remains.

p Ps 37:10; 59:6; 105:14; Job 18:17; Isa 26:14.

Ps 9—10 In this psalm we are perhaps in the period of the return from the Exile, toward the end of the sixth century; the foreign occupiers and the people who had remained in Palestine regarded returning deportees as intruders and they mistreated them. This is the first alphabetical psalm; in the Masoretic Text it is divided into two psalms, while in the Greek Septuagint and Latin Vulgate Psalms 9 and 10 constitute one psalm. This accounts for the difference in the numbering of the psalms in these versions (see Preface, p. 15).

Ps 9 is predominantly praise of God for his royal blessings and glories, including deliverance from hostile nations, concluding with a short prayer for God's continuing righteous judgments (see v. 5) on the nations.

9:1 *For the director*: these words are thought to be a musical or liturgical notation. *According to Muth Labben*: nothing is known about these words.

9:2 The praise rendered to the Lord by the psalmists in the Psalter is customarily public praise for his goodness and glory as well as the saving acts he has performed on behalf of his people. Some have described such praise as the forerunner of the Gospel preaching in the New Testament. See also note on Ps 7:18.

9:3, 6, 11 *Name*: see note on Ps 5:12.

- ⁴ Those who chase after other gods
only multiply their sorrows.
Never will I pour out libations of blood to them,
nor will I take up their names* on my lips.
- ⁵ O LORD, you are my allotted portion and my cup;*
you have made my lot secure.^e
- ⁶ The boundary lines have established a pleasant site for me;
I have truly received a wonderful inheritance.
- ⁷ I bless the LORD who offers me counsel;
even during the night my heart instructs me.
- ⁸ I keep the LORD always before me,
for with him at my right hand
I will never fall.^f
- ⁹ Therefore, my heart is glad*
and my soul rejoices;
my body too is filled with confidence.
- ¹⁰ For you will not abandon me to the netherworld
or allow your Holy One* to suffer corruption.^g

^e Pss 23:5; 73:26; Num 18:20; Deut 10:9; Sir 45:20-22; Lam 3:24.—^f Pss 15:5; 73:23; 121:5; Acts 2:25-28.—^g Pss 28:1; 30:4; 49:16; 86:13; Num 16:30; 2 Ki 19:22; Job 17:14; Hos 13:14; Jon 2:6; Acts 13:35.

16:4 *Take up their names*: that is, appeal to or worship them (see Jos 23:7).

16:5 *Cup*: a metaphor referring to what the host offers his guests to drink. To the righteous the Lord offers a cup of blessings (see Ps 23:5) or salvation (see Ps 116:13), but he makes the wicked drink from a cup of wrath (see Jer 25:15; Rev 14:10; 16:19).

16:9-11 The Lord, in whom the psalmist takes refuge, wills life for him (hence he has made known to him the path of life, v. 11) and will not abandon him to the grave, even though "heart and . . . flesh fail" (Ps 73:26). But implicit in these words of assurance (if not actually explicit) is the confidence that, with the Lord as his refuge, even the grave cannot rob him of life (see Pss 17:15; 73:24). If this could be said of David, how much more of David's promised Son! So Peter quotes vv. 8-11 and declares that with these words David prophesied of Christ and his Resurrection (Acts 2:25-28; see Paul's similar use of v. 10b in Acts 13:35). *Heart*: see note on Ps 4:8.

16:10 *Holy One*: the reference is first of all to David, but the psalm is ultimately fulfilled in Christ.

- 3 May he send you help from the sanctuary
 and grant you support from Zion.*^o
 4 May he remember* all your sacrifices
 and accept all your burnt offerings. *Selah*
 5 May he give you your heart's desire*
 and grant you success in all your plans.
 6 May we shout with joy over your victory
 and lift up our banners in the name of our
 God.*
 May the Lord grant your every request.
 7 Now I know that the LORD will grant victory
 to his anointed;*
 he will answer him from his holy heaven,
 granting mighty victories with his right
 hand.^p
 8 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses,^q
 but we trust in the name of the LORD, our
 God.*
 9 They will collapse and fall,
 but we will rise up and stand firm.^r
 10 O LORD, save the king,
 and answer us when we call upon you.

^o Pss 30:10; 128:5; 134:3.—^p Pss 18:51; 28:8; 144:10; 1 Sam 2:10; Job 40:14; Hab 3:13.—^q Ps 147:10-11; 1 Sam 17:45; 2 Chr 14:10; Prov 21:31; Isa 31:1; 36:9; 40:30-31; Hos 1:7.—^r Ps 27:2; Isa 40:30; Jer 46:6.

20:3 *Zion*: see note on Ps 9:12.

20:4 *Remember*: with God, remembering and acting go together (see Gen 8:1; Ex 2:24).

20:5 *Heart's desire*: see note on Ps 4:8.

20:6 *May we shout . . . name of our God*: see note on Ps 7:18. The Hebrew word "victory" could also be translated as "salvation."

20:7 *His anointed*: i.e., the king of Israel (see Pss 2:2; 132:10); the divine help is his as intrinsic to his kingship (see Ps 18:51). See note on Ps 2:2.

20:8-9 The force of arms is useless in the face of the divine power. The Prophets were always against the use of horses and chariots in Israel, in imitation of the neighboring pagans (see Deut 17:16; Isa 31:1; Hos 1:7; Mic 5:10; Zec 12:4). The same affirmation occurs in Pss 33:16f; 147:10; Prov 21:31. A similar expression of confidence in the Lord rather than in human weaponry is made by David when facing Goliath (1 Sam 17:45-47).

20:10 The psalm ends in the same way as it began—with fervent prayers that the Lord will come to the aid of the king.

- 7 giving voice to your praises
and proclaiming all your wondrous deeds.*
- 8 I love the house where you dwell, O LORD,^l
the place where your glory resides.*
- 9 Do not sweep my soul away with sinners,
nor my life with those who thirst for
blood,^{*m}
- 10 whose hands carry out evil schemes,
and whose right hands are full of bribes.
- 11 Rather, I choose to walk in innocence;ⁿ
redeem me and be merciful to me.^o
- 12 My feet stand on level ground;*
in the full assembly I will bless the LORD.^p

PSALM 27*

Trust in God, Our Light and Salvation

¹ Of David.

The LORD is my light* and my salvation;
whom should I fear?

^l Pss 29:9; 63:3; 96:6; Ex 24:16; 25:8; 2 Chr 7:1; Isa 66:10.—^m Pss 5:6; 28:3; 139:19.—ⁿ Pss 73:13; 101:6.—^o Pss 25:16; 31:6; 69:19; Jn 1:16.—^p Pss 22:23; 35:18; 40:10; 52:11; 143:10; 149:1.

26:7 *Proclaiming . . . wondrous deeds:* see note on Ps 9:2.

26:8 *Where your glory resides:* the presence of God's glory meant the presence of God himself (see Ex 24:16; 33:22). His glory dwelt in the tabernacle (see Ex 40:35) and later in the temple (see 1 Ki 8:11). Jn 1:14 places that same presence in the Word made flesh who "dwelt among us."

26:9 A premature death was a divine chastisement (see Pss 5:7; 28:4; 55:24).

26:12 *Level ground:* where there is safety and no danger of falling. *Assembly:* worshipping at the sanctuary (as in Pss 1:5; 22:26; 35:18; 40:10f; 111:1; 149:1).

Ps 27 Although enemies or the difficulties of existence may be multiplied, the believer finds a sure refuge in God—such is the cry of trust that opens this psalm. Then the movement of the prayer deepens, becoming the search and avid desire for God. It is in the temple that one discovers the presence of the Lord in the sacrifice, chant, supplication, and the Law. If such a search becomes necessary for life, will not God be present to his most forsaken and pressured servant?

In praying this psalm, we can place a similar confidence in God and the Lord Jesus, one capable of enabling us to overcome all adversity and death itself.

27:1 *The LORD is my light:* "light" often symbolizes happiness and well-being (see Pss 18:29; 36:10; 43:3; 97:11) or life and salvation (see Isa 9:2; 49:6; 58:8; Jer 13:16; Am 5:18-20), whose source is the Lord (see Isa 10:17; Mic 7:8f).

- 7 The voice of the LORD flashes forth
with bolts of lightning.
- 8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.*
- 9 The voice of the LORD batters the oaks
and strips the forests bare,
while in his temple all cry out, "Glory!"*
- 10 The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;*
the LORD is enthroned as king forever.^h
- 11 May the LORD grant strength to his people.
May the LORD bless his people with peace.ⁱ

PSALM 30*

Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Death

¹ A psalm. A song for the dedication of the temple. Of David.

- ² I will exalt you, O LORD,
for you have raised me out of the depths*
and have not let my enemies exult over me.

^h Gen 6—9; Isa 54:9; Bar 3:3.—ⁱ Pss 18:2-3; 28:8; 68:36; Isa 40:29; 41:10; 50:2; Dan 7:27.

29:8 *The wilderness of Kadesh*: probably a border location in southern Palestine; some believe it is a location north of Palestine near Lebanon and Mount Hermon.

29:9 The cry of "Glory!" takes place either in heaven (v. 2) or in the temple of Jerusalem whose liturgy echoes the heavenly praises.

29:10 *Enthroned above the flood*: a reference to God's control of the unruly primordial waters (see Gen 1:2, 6-10) or to his sending of the flood (see Gen 6:17), which was the first manifestation of the divine justice. Thus, the Lord will know how to make the cause of his people triumph (see Job 20:28; 22:16; Isa 24:18; 59:9ff).

Ps 30 This is a psalm of thanksgiving arising out of the experience of someone who was at death's door because of an illness, compounded by feelings of haughtiness in time of prosperity and despair in times of humiliation. The Lord listened to his cry and healed him; hence the psalmist calls for praise. This psalm came to be applied to Israel itself, especially in its experience of the Exile, and was chanted at the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple in commemoration of the purification of the temple in 164 B.C. (see Ezr 6:16; 1 Mac 4:36ff).

This psalm reminds us that while we await life eternal and union with Christ, the present life with its adversities offers us the opportunity to receive from the divine goodness a cure, various deliverances, and even spiritual resurrection.

30:2 *Out of the depths*: a common Old Testament phrase of extreme distress (see Pss 69:3, 16; 71:20; 88:6; 130:1; Lam 3:55; Jon 2:2) usually connected with the words "the grave" and "the pit."

18 I will extol your name through all generations;
therefore, the nations will praise you forever
and ever.*^b

PSALM 46*

God, Refuge of His People

¹ For the director.* A song of the sons of Korah. According to *alamoth*.

² God is our refuge and our strength,*
a well-proved help in times of trouble.*^c

³ Therefore, we will not be afraid, though the
earth be shaken
and the mountains tumble into the depths
of the sea,^d

b Isa 60:15; 61:9; 62:2.—c Pss 9:10; 48:4; Isa 33:2; Jer 16:19; Joel 3:16.—d Pss 3:6; 93:3-4; 97:5; Job 9:5-6; Isa 24:18-20; 54:10.

45:18 The psalmist sees the nations praising the Israelite king, i.e., especially the Messianic King. The Prophets had foretold that in the Restoration the nations would bring him gifts to celebrate the dignity of the People of God among the nations. The Book of Revelation also mentions this aspect of the everlasting state: "The kings of the earth will bring their treasures. . . . The nations will come bringing their treasures and wealth" (Rev 21:24, 26). Filled with blessings (see Gen 17:6; 35:11), the new Zion will be glorious and sovereign (see Isa 60:15, 21; 61:9; 62:2, 7), especially in Messianic times.

Ps 46 This psalm exalts the power of the God of Israel, Master of nature and Ruler of both armies and peace. Upon a horizon of wars and cataclysms rises the city of Zion, peaceful and unshakable. God is in her, a refuge protecting her from all agitations, a river bringing her a richness of life. The psalm lets us relive the explosion of joy prompted by the defeat of the Assyrian armies in 701 B.C. (see 2 Ki 18:13—19:37; 2 Chr 32).

This great moment of the past allows the Prophets to designate in advance the drama at the end of time. Amidst the turmoil of nations, God intervenes to save his people, and the world is turned upside down before obtaining definitive peace. It is an image of the movement of history with its cataclysms and the hope of universal salvation.

In praying this psalm, we should recall that the new and eternal Jerusalem, our mother, is the Church (see Gal 4:26) to whom Christ guaranteed his perpetual protection that renders her indefectible.

46:1 *For the director*: these words are thought to be a musical or liturgical notation. *Sons of Korah*: see note on Ps 42:1. *Alamoth*: probably a musical term.

46:2-4 The divine presence in the temple guarantees the security of the holy city even though creation itself may seem to be falling apart (see Ps 104:6-9; Gen 1:9f).

46:2 *Help in times of trouble*: when people are in trouble they feel the need of God's special protection (see Pss 22:20; 27:9; 40:14; 44:27; 63:8). They experience his presence especially when they go through a time of distress (see Ps 23:4). He is then very close to them (see Deut 4:7).

INDEX OF SUNDAY RESPONSORIAL PSALMS

Year A

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2nd Sun.	72 (1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17)	183		51 (12-13, 14-15, 18-19)	135
3rd Sun.	146 (6c-7, 8-9a, 9b-10)	381		(aft. Epistle) 118 (1-2, 16-17, 22-23)	310
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Christmas			2nd Sun.	118 (2-4, 13-15b, 22-24)	310
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At Dawn	97 (1+6, 11-12)	254	5th Sun.	33 (1-2, 4-5, 18-19)	88
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2nd Sun. after			Pentecost		
Christmas	147 (12-13, 14-15, 19-20)	383	Vigil	104 (1-2a, 24+35cd, 27-28, 29c-30)	269
Epiphany	72 (1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13)	183	During Day	104 (1ab+24ac, 29b-30, 31+34)	269
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5th Sun.	130 (1-2, 3-4, 5+6c-7a, 7b-8)	347	1st Sun.		
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and Easter Season			3rd Sun.	27 (1, 4, 13-14)	75
Holy Thurs.			4th Sun.	146 (6c-7, 8-9a, 9b-10)	381
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Lord's Supper	116 (12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18)	307	6th Sun.	119 (1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34)	314
Good Friday	31 (2+6, 12-13, 15-16, 17+25)	83	7th Sun.	103 (1-2, 3-4, 8+10, 12-13)	266
Easter Vigil	104 (1-2a, 5-6, 10+12, 13-14, 24+35c)	269	8th Sun.	62 (2-3, 6-7, 8-9)	157
	33 (4-5, 6-7, 12-13, 20+22)	88	9th Sun.	31 (2-3b, 3c-4, 17+25)	83
	16 (5+8, 9-10, 11)	49	10th Sun.	50 (1+8, 12-13, 14-15)	132
	(Ex 15)		11th Sun.	100 (1-2, 3, 5)	259
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TABLE OF PSALMS IN FOUR-WEEK PSALTER FOR MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

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