



THE PARACLETE PSALTER

A Book of Daily Prayer

THE COMMUNITY OF JESUS



PARACLETE PRESS
BREWSTER, MASSACHUSETTS

The Paraclete Psalter: A Book of Daily Prayer

Copyright © 2010 by Paraclete Press, Inc.

ISBN 978-1-55725-663-8

Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

The distribution of the psalms is taken from *The Liturgy of the Hours—Ordinary Time*. Copyright © 2000 by the Community of Jesus, Inc., Orleans, MA. All rights reserved.

Some quotations from the church fathers are from www.balamandmonastery.org.lb/fathers/indexdesert.htm, “One Hundred and Twenty Wise Sayings from the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church,” by the Balamand Monastery, accessed July 7, 2009.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Paraclete psalter : a book of daily prayer.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-55725-663-8

1. Prayer books. 2. Psalters--Texts. I. Bible. O.T. Psalms. English. Selections. 2009. BV245.P325 2009

242'.5--dc22

2009036681

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in an electronic retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Published by Paraclete Press
Brewster, Massachusetts
www.paracletepress.com

Printed in Italy

Contents

INTRODUCTION	v
Week One	1
Week Two	99
Week Three	173
Week Four	243
APPENDIX	317





Introduction

The Purpose of This Book

PRAYING THE PSALMS

The language of the Psalms is the language of the kingdom of God. As poetry of prayer, this language sometimes lifts us to the heights of adoration and gladness. Sometimes it helps us to verbalize our anxieties and doubts. Above all, the book of Psalms—also called the Psalter—is a language that tells us what is true, both about ourselves and about God.

A Christian teacher of the fourth century likened the Psalter to a garden in which one can find every variety of fruit, both sweet and sour. “For I believe,” he wrote to one of his students, “that the whole of human existence, both the dispositions of the soul and the movements of the thoughts, has been measured out and encompassed in those very words of the Psalter.”¹ John Calvin said that the book of Psalms is like a mirror, reflecting back to us every conceivable human thought and emotion. The brightest joy, the highest praise, the deepest grief, the fiercest rage—sometimes all these appear in the same psalm. No part of our human condition is left unaddressed.

This is one reason why, for two millennia, the psalms have held such a central place in the church’s worship of God. The psalms are first and foremost prayers, and, as such, they form what some have called a “school of prayer.” They teach us how to bring our honest selves before God. They tell us what is true. They tell us that God is God, and that we are not. And they tell us that all of life is lived under God’s loving sovereignty. Rooted in Christianity’s Jewish heritage, the Psalms have for centuries provided a language of prayer for every branch of the church.

¹ Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in “A Letter to Marcellinus.”

THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

The Liturgy of the Hours (or The Divine Office, or *Opus Dei* as it is sometimes known) is a form of prayer with both traditional and ecumenical dimensions. At its heart stands the Word of God, especially as it is expressed in the poetic lines of the Psalter. In this form of daily prayer we can join in a pattern of prayers that the church has faithfully followed for 2000 years. Although for many centuries this pattern was primarily followed in a communal setting, as early as the fourth century John Chrysostom advised his people who were unable to attend the daily office to pray where they were. His intent was not to use the whole form of the public office in private, but to offer a simpler form of these prayers—such as the book that is offered here.

How to Use This Book in Your Prayer Life

This book is intended for use as a prayer book or a breviary for individuals and groups that are not able to participate on a daily basis in the public prayers of churches or monastic communities. The psalms are time-honored prayers that can speak to the circumstances in which we find ourselves on any specific day.

To help with this, prayers or collects for each day are included at the beginning of Lauds and can be prayed at any time during that day, or perhaps several times. At the conclusion of each weekday Vespers there is a meditation on one of the psalms used during the prayer services that day. (This is noted before the text of that psalm.) Although these thoughts can be referred to at any time, it is most appropriate to use this meditation for further reflection as part of the service in which that psalm appears.

The psalm heading and verse, given at the beginning of each psalm, is provided as a summary and an inspirational aid in praying the text.

The doxology, or *Gloria Patri* as it is called in Latin, may be repeated after each psalm; its words assist us in concluding all our prayers with praise. The full text is “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and always will be, forever and ever. Amen.” Generally the psalms are said while sitting. However, one may stand on the last half of the final verse of a psalm so that a deep bow can be made during the first half of the “Glory be to the Father . . .” as a sign of respect for the Trinity. One normally sits again for “As it was in the beginning. . . .”

The Gospel Canticles—The Song of Zechariah (*Benedictus*) used in the office of Lauds, The Song of Mary (*Magnificat*) used in the office of Vespers, and The Song of Simeon (*Nunc dimittis*) used in Compline—are included in an Appendix, should you desire to use them.

The Community of Jesus

The Community of Jesus is an ecumenical monastic community in the Benedictine tradition, and thus strives to hold in balance the values inherent in work, study, and prayer. Since its inception, the Community of Jesus has held as its primary vocation the worship of Almighty God. To that end, a regular rhythm of prayer in word and sacrament has evolved, including the daily celebration of the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. Some of this evolution has come about through the rediscovery of traditional liturgical forms, and some has been newly developed in order to express the ecumenical character of the Community.

The Liturgy of the Hours has served to help maintain this balance for countless religious communities, and increasingly for individuals who do not live within a monastic community. In his Rule, St. Benedict called it the *Opus Dei*, the work of God, and he said that

nothing should be preferred to it. It is the liturgical pivot upon which the rest of life turns.

The psalms in this book follow the daily use of the Community of Jesus during ordinary time.

The Distribution of Psalms

These prayer services follow the natural order of our daily lives. Lauds begins the day, causing our first utterances to be those that are offered to the praise of God. At Midday we briefly break from our work in order to remember that God, not our work, gives meaning to our day and that whatever good we do will have prayer at its source. In the evening we celebrate Vespers, looking back upon the day with thanksgiving, while acknowledging that not all we have done has been to the glory of God. Finally, at Compline, we commend ourselves and the whole church to God's care for the night ahead, and we pray for God's blessing.

The distribution of the psalms over four weeks allows for the entire Psalter to be prayed. This distribution is thematic as much as possible. Psalms with references to morning, light, and praise can be found in Lauds; psalms describing evening and the remembrance of God's goodness are mostly found in Vespers. Retained at the Midday Office are Psalm 119 and the Gradual Psalms (120–34) that have traditionally been chanted at the Little Hours—the shorter prayer services used in some communities—of Terce, Sext, and None. Along with Compline these services are prayed each weekday.

On the weekend there are fewer prayer services. The only one on Saturday is Vespers, which is actually a First Vespers to prepare for Sunday's worship. On Sunday only Lauds and Vespers are observed. The psalms for each of these three prayer services are always the same.

This standardized distribution of psalms can be traced to *The Rule of St. Benedict*, a guide written by St. Benedict of Nursia in the

fifth century for the monks of his abbeys. Over the following fifteen centuries, churches and monastic houses have adapted this pattern for their specific needs, within the framework of St. Benedict's time-honored outline. This book reflects such an adaptation.

Explanatory Notes

All 150 psalms are included in this four-week cycle, with a few included more than once.

Each Lauds begins with an Invitatory Psalm that invites us to praise God, and ends with the Praise Psalm that concludes the service. There are different psalms for each day of the week, and these are repeated in each of the following three weeks.

Psalm 51 is repeated as the first “psalm of the day” at Lauds on Friday each week. While St. Benedict instructed that Psalm 51 should be used during every Lauds, here it is retained only on Fridays, which are traditionally penitential days. Psalms 4, 91, and 134 are repeated in all twenty Compline services without variation. These psalms declare our assurance of God's faithful protection, especially during the hours of darkness, and inform our prayers as we beseech God to watch over us during the night following.

The four psalms sung during Saturday Vespers (Psalms 46, 116, 138, and 141) are also each sung during a weekday Vespers, specifically during Thursday of week one, Tuesday of week four, Wednesday of week four, and Thursday of week four. Because at the Community of Jesus during one half of the year we sing Choral Evensong on Saturdays, during those months these four psalms would not otherwise be sung in the monthly cycle.

Saturday Vespers (First Vespers for Sunday), Sunday Lauds, and Sunday Vespers form a single unit. These prayer services are found in their entirety at the beginning of week one of the Psalter. During

the following weeks a new prayer is introduced, but the text of the psalms is not reproduced. The page where these psalms can be found is referenced instead.

Likewise the psalms for Compline are reproduced in their entirety during week one. Thereafter these psalms are not repeated, but a reference is given to the page on which they can be found.

Our Hope

We at the Community of Jesus have prayed following this pattern for the past thirty years, to the enrichment of our lives and to the praise of Almighty God. Our hope is that this volume of prayers will enrich your prayer life and bring ever-increasing praise to God.

WEEK ONE





Saturday Vespers

WEEK ONE

Prayer for the Day

All-loving and merciful God, †
whose Son was a new creation, untainted by Adam's fall, *
renew us in Christ, and cleanse us from every trace of sin, †
that our love and service to you might redound to your glory.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 46

GOD IS ALWAYS THERE TO HELP US

If you are praised, be silent. If you are scolded, be silent. If you incur losses, be silent. If you receive profit, be silent. If you are hungry, also be silent. (St. Feofil)

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

*A meditation
on this psalm
can be found
on page 103*

Come and see the works of the LORD,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear,
he burns the shields with fire.

Week One



Saturday

Vespers

“Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”

The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and always
will be, forever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 116

WALKING BEFORE THE LORD IN THE LAND
OF THE LIVING

*A meditation
on this psalm
can be found
on page 8*

*“We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”
(Acts 14:22b)*

I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.

The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came upon me;
I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.

Then I called on the name of the LORD:
“O LORD, save me!”

The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.

The LORD protects the simplehearted;
when I was in great need, he saved me.

Be at rest once more, O my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you.

For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling,
that I may walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.
I believed; therefore I said,
“I am greatly afflicted.”
And in my dismay I said,
“All men are liars.”

How can I repay the LORD
for all his goodness to me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.
I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his saints.
O LORD, truly I am your servant;
I am your servant, the son of your maidservant;
you have freed me from my chains.

I will sacrifice a thank offering to you
and call on the name of the LORD.
I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,
in the courts of the house of the LORD—
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

Praise the LORD.

Week One



*Saturday
Vespers*

Psalm 138

WHEN I CALLED YOU ANSWERED ME

The nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. (Revelation 21:24)

Week One



Saturday

Vespers

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart;
before the “gods” I will sing your praise.

I will bow down toward your holy temple
and will praise your name
for your love and your faithfulness,
for you have exalted above all things
your name and your word.

When I called, you answered me;
you made me bold and stouthearted.

May all the kings of the earth praise you, O LORD,
when they hear the words of your mouth.

May they sing of the ways of the LORD,
for the glory of the LORD is great.

Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly,
but the proud he knows from afar.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life;
you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes,
with your right hand you save me.

The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;
your love, O LORD, endures forever—
do not abandon the works of your hands.

*A meditation
on this psalm
can be found
on page 247*

Psalm 141

FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS

Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. . . . The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of saints, went up before God from the angel's hand. (Revelation 8:3–4)

O LORD, I call to you; come quickly to me.
Hear my voice when I call to you.
May my prayer be set before you like incense;
may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening
sacrifice.

Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD;
keep watch over the door of my lips.
Let not my heart be drawn to what is evil,
to take part in wicked deeds
with men who are evildoers;
let me not eat of their delicacies.

Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness;
let him rebuke me—it is oil on my head.
My head will not refuse it.

Yet my prayer is ever against the deeds of evildoers;
their rulers will be thrown down from the cliffs,
and the wicked will learn that my words were
well spoken.

They will say, “As one plows and breaks up the earth,
so our bones have been scattered at the mouth
of the grave.”

But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign LORD;
in you I take refuge—do not give me over to death.
Keep me from the snares they have laid for me,
from the traps set by evildoers.
Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
while I pass by in safety.

Week One



*Saturday
Vespers*

*A meditation
on this psalm
can be found
on page 177*

PSALM 116
I love the LORD

Week One



*Saturday
Vespers*

The author of Psalm 116 is telling forth, “in the presence of all his people” (vv. 14 and 16), what God has done for him. God has “delivered his soul from death” (v. 8), and he is returning thanks to God, not in the privacy of his prayer closet, but in the very public setting of the temple.

The exact nature of the psalmist’s predicament is unknown. It appears, however, that his suffering brought him to the very brink of death (v. 3). Whatever his condition, he was helpless to do anything about it other than to beseech the Lord for deliverance (v. 4). The joy he now feels, as he stands before the congregation and makes his thanksgiving sacrifice, is founded upon what God has done for him, first by hearing his prayer, and second by answering him with mercy and help. Heaven’s listening ears, the psalmist now knows, are always inclined toward the cries of the “simple.” He knows that God answers prayer. He will call upon God as long as he lives (v. 2); he will walk before the Lord in the land of the living (v. 9); and he will fulfill his vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people (v. 14).

Sunday Lauds

WEEK ONE

Prayer for the Day

Same as for Saturday Vespers for week one, found on page 3

Psalm 95

KNEELING BEFORE THE LORD

*Speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
(Ephesians 5:19)*

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.

For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.
Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah,
as you did that day at Massah in the desert,
where your fathers tested and tried me,
though they had seen what I did.

For forty years I was angry with that generation;
I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they have not known my ways."
So I declared on oath in my anger,
"They shall never enter my rest."

Week One



Sunday
Lauds

Psalm 63

A SOUL THIRSTING FOR GOD

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." (John 7:37–38)

*A meditation
on this psalm
can be found
on page 18*

O God, you are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you,
my body longs for you,
in a dry and weary land
where there is no water.

I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches of the night.
Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow of your wings.
My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

They who seek my life will be destroyed;
they will go down to the depths of the earth.

They will be given over to the sword
and become food for jackals.
But the king will rejoice in God;
all who swear by God's name will praise him,
while the mouths of liars will be silenced.

Week One



*Sunday
Lauds*

Psalm 118

PRAISING GOD FOR HIS SALVATION

*The Lord's Day is a mystery of the knowledge of the truth that is not received by flesh and blood, and it transcends speculation.
(St. Isaac of Syria)*

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

*A meditation
on this psalm
can be found
on page 179*

Let Israel say:
"His love endures forever."

Let the house of Aaron say:
"His love endures forever."

Let those who fear the LORD say:
"His love endures forever."

In my anguish I cried to the LORD,
and he answered by setting me free.
The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?
The LORD is with me; he is my helper.
I will look in triumph on my enemies.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man.

It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in princes.

All the nations surrounded me,
but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.

They surrounded me on every side,
but in the name of the LORD I cut them off.
They swarmed around me like bees,
but they died out as quickly as burning thorns;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off.

Week One



*Sunday
Lauds*

I was pushed back and about to fall,
but the LORD helped me.
The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.

Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:
“The LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!
The LORD’s right hand is lifted high;
the LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!”

I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.
The LORD has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.

Open for me the gates of righteousness;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.
I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.

The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone;
the LORD has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

O LORD, save us;
O LORD, grant us success.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.

From the house of the LORD we bless you.

The LORD is God,

and he has made his light shine upon us.

With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give you thanks;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Week One



*Sunday
Lauds*

Psalm 150

LET EVERYTHING THAT BREATHES

PRAISE THE LORD

*Since, therefore, we have everything from him, we ought in
everything to give him thanks, to whom be glory for ever and ever.
(St. Clement of Rome)*

Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.

Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
praise him with tambourine and dancing,
praise him with the strings and flute,
praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD.

*A meditation
on this psalm
can be found
on page 249*

Second Vespers for Sunday

WEEK ONE

Prayer for the Day

Same as for Saturday Vespers for week one, found on page 3

Psalm 110

GOD WILL RULE IN THE MIDST OF HIS
ENEMIES

*[Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.
(1 Corinthians 15:25)*

The LORD says to my LORD:

“Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.”

The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion;
you will rule in the midst of your enemies.

Your troops will be willing
on your day of battle.

Arrayed in holy majesty,
from the womb of the dawn
you will receive the dew of your youth.

The LORD has sworn
and will not change his mind:

“You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek.”

The LORD is at your right hand;
he will crush kings on the day of his wrath.

He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead
and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.

He will drink from a brook beside the way;
therefore he will lift up his head.

Psalm 111

GREAT ARE THE WORKS OF THE LORD

*“Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty.”
(Revelation 15:3)*

Praise the LORD.

I will extol the LORD with all my heart
in the council of the upright and in the assembly.

Great are the works of the LORD;
they are pondered by all who delight in them.

Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures forever.

He has caused his wonders to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and compassionate.

He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.

He has shown his people the power of his works,
giving them the lands of other nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

They are steadfast for ever and ever,
done in faithfulness and uprightness.

He provided redemption for his people;
he ordained his covenant forever—
holy and awesome is his name.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise.

Week One



*Second
Vespers for
Sunday*

Psalm 112

HOW HAPPY IS THE JUST MAN

Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth). (Ephesians 5:8–9)

Praise the LORD.

Week One



*Second
Vespers for
Sunday*

Blessed is the man who fears the LORD,
who finds great delight in his commands.

His children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

Wealth and riches are in his house,
and his righteousness endures forever.

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.

Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely,
who conducts his affairs with justice.

Surely he will never be shaken;
a righteous man will be remembered forever.

He will have no fear of bad news;
his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

His heart is secure, he will have no fear;
in the end he will look in triumph on his foes.

He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor,
his righteousness endures forever;
his horn will be lifted high in honor.

The wicked man will see and be vexed,
he will gnash his teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.

Psalm 113

PRAISE THE NAME OF THE LORD

“He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.” (Luke 1:52)

Praise the LORD.

Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD.

Let the name of the LORD be praised,
both now and forevermore.

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,
the name of the LORD is to be praised.

The LORD is exalted over all the nations,
his glory above the heavens.

Who is like the LORD our God,
the One who sits enthroned on high,
who stoops down to look
on the heavens and the earth?

He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
he seats them with princes,
with the princes of their people.

He settles the barren woman in her home
as a happy mother of children.

Praise the LORD.

Week One



*Second
Vespers for
Sunday*

*A meditation
on this psalm
can be found
on page 105*

PSALM 63
O God, you are my God

As the psalmist wanders about the barren hills of Judah, he recalls his former intimate meetings with God in the tabernacle, in much the same way a severely thirsty person might conjure up images of cold running water.

The metaphor of thirst, though thoroughly understandable, may not carry the same sense of urgency to us. Within moments of our reading this sentence, we can fill a glass of cold, clean water at the tap, and a second can follow just as quickly. But the only hope for quenching the psalmist's thirst was the presence of fresh streams or clean springs in the wilderness.

He used to enter God's presence by simply walking into the sanctuary (v. 2), much as we might turn on a water faucet. But now, alone in the desert, he finds himself separated from all of the surroundings that once enhanced his sense of God's loving presence.

What the psalmist happily discovers in his estrangement is that God is still his "help," that God's wings, much like the wings of the cherubim in his beloved tabernacle, still overshadow him out here in the wilderness (v. 7). The God of the sanctuary is also the God of the desert. Here, in the dry land, the psalmist will still "lift up his hands" in praise (v. 4).

Week One



*Second
Vespers for
Sunday*

Monday Lauds

WEEK ONE

Prayer for the Day

Almighty and eternal Father, †
a new day dawned when your only-begotten Son
came among us. *

Grant that we who share in his human nature †
may also share in the kingdom of his glory.

We ask this through the same Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 24

THE BLESSING OF A PURE HEART

Our holy fathers have renounced all other spiritual work and concentrated wholly on this one doing, that is, on guarding the heart. (St. Symeon the New Theologian)

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
for he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.

Who may ascend the hill of the LORD?

Who may stand in his holy place?

He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to an idol
or swear by what is false.

He will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God his Savior.

Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

*A meditation
on this psalm
can be found
on page 33*

Week One
—✻—
Monday
Lauds

Lift up your heads, O you gates;
 be lifted up, you ancient doors,
 that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
 The LORD strong and mighty,
 the LORD mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O you gates;
 lift them up, you ancient doors,
 that the King of glory may come in.
Who is he, this King of glory?
 The LORD Almighty—
 he is the King of glory.

Psalm 3

I SAFELY REST IN THE LORD'S KEEPING

Let us charge into the good fight with joy and love without being afraid of our enemies. (St. John Climacus)

O LORD, how many are my foes!
 How many rise up against me!
Many are saying of me,
 “God will not deliver him.”
But you are a shield around me, O LORD;
 you bestow glory on me and lift up my head.
To the LORD I cry aloud,
 and he answers me from his holy hill.
I lie down and sleep;
 I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.
I will not fear the tens of thousands
 drawn up against me on every side.
Arise, O LORD!
 Deliver me, O my God!