**RESPONDING TO THE PSALMS – MARCH 2024**

*- a project of the Spirituality Committee of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales*

“Indeed, who could fail to be moved by those many passages in the psalms which set forth so profoundly the infinite majesty of God, his omnipotence, his justice and goodness and clemency, too deep for words, and all the other infinite qualities of his that deserve our praise? Who could fail to be roused to the same emotions by the prayers of thanksgiving to God for blessings received, by the petitions, so humble and confident, for blessings still awaited, by the cries of a soul in sorrow for sin committed? Who would not be fired with love as he looks on the likeness of Christ, the redeemer, here so lovingly foretold? His was the voice Augustine heard in every psalm, the voice of praise, of suffering, of joyful expectation, of present distress.”

*from the Apostolic Constitution Divino afflatu of Pope Saint Pius X 1911*

We offer the Sunday Responsorial Psalm as a focus for prayer and reflection during the week ahead

for yourself or to share with others. You could note your own thoughts as a possible personal journal.

*Acknowledgements: Excerpts from The Psalms: A New Translation © 1963 The Grail (England) published by HarperCollins.*

Sunday 3 March 2024 Third Sunday of Lent

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 18(19):8-11

YOU, LORD, HAVE THE MESSAGE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

The law of the Lord is perfect,

it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,

it gives wisdom to the simple.

*Reflect how God’s law is perfect and how it calls us to revive, renew our efforts to be holy this Lent*

*We thank God for the rule of life we have as Christians which when we think about it is full of wisdom*

The precepts of the Lord are right,

they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,

it gives light to the eyes.

*Think how our hearts rejoice when we do or others good, how it brings us close to the goodness of God*

*Ask God to inspire us to see what he is asking us to do this Lent, to enlighten our minds.*

The fear of the Lord is holy,

abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth

and all of them just.

*Reflect how the all-holy God has come so close to us. It makes us stand back and, and be filled with awe*

*In a world of fake news pray for the gift of truth in all we do so that we can be just in all our actions and thoughts*

They are more to be desired than gold,

than the purest of gold

and sweeter are they than honey,

than honey from the comb.

*Compared to all material and worldly riches thank God for the treasure we have in knowing him in Christ*

*In a challenging and tough world be grateful for the joy that comes from knowing Christ and the Church*

Sunday 10 March 2024 Fourth Sunday of Lent – Laetare Sunday

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 136(137):1-6

O LET MY TONGUE CLEAVE TO MY MOUTH IF I REMEMBER YOU NOT!

By the rivers of Babylon

there we sat and wept,

remembering Zion;

on the poplars that grew there

we hung up our harps.

*Pray for all asylum seekers, refugees, emigrants who are struggling, for strength and support*

*Think of the people and things you have ever had to leave in your life, with thankfulness, love, forgiveness, sorrow*

For it was there that they asked us,

our captors, for songs,

our oppressors, for joy.

‘Sing to us,’ they said,

‘one of Zion’s songs.’

*Pray for all who are caught up as oppressors in any way: within families, in unjust regimes, in society*

*Reflect on a hymn or psalm you have sung in church that has given you joy and happiness*

O how could we sing

the song of the Lord

on alien soil?

If I forget you, Jerusalem,

let my right hand wither!

*Pray for all who feel marginalised or excluded for any reason*

*Think of people who are homesick and lonely, because of work, as students, or having been abandoned*

O let my tongue

cleave to my mouth

if I remember you not,

if I prize not Jerusalem

above all my joys!

*Thank God for the security of life that you have and consider all who are homeless or insecure*

*While our life is not perfect commit yourself to serving a society that works for the common good*

Sunday 17 March 2024 Fifth Sunday of Lent

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 50(51):3-4,12-15

A PURE HEART CREATE FOR ME, O GOD.

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.

In your compassion blot out my offence.

O wash me more and more from my guilt

and cleanse me from my sin.

*If God is kind and compassionate towards me, pray to be kind and compassionate towards others*

*I have faith that God cleanses me from sin. Pray for people who cannot forgive themselves or find peace*

A pure heart create for me, O God,

put a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence,

nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

*Pray to be able to focus on God alone in this Lenten time, to lay aside all distractions however good they are*

*Knowing God’s closeness to us in Word and Sacrament, pray for all who are struggling to find faith in God*

Give me again the joy of your help;

with a spirit of fervour sustain me,

that I may teach transgressors your ways

and sinners may return to you.

*Pray for renewed joy and fervour in your faith so that we can indeed be an Easter people*

*Ask God to help you see what you need to change in your life, and how you can bring others closer to the Lord*

Sunday 24 March 2024 Palm Sunday

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 21(22):8-9,17-20,23-24

MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

All who see me deride me.

They curl their lips, they toss their heads.

‘He trusted in the Lord, let him save him;

let him release him if this is his friend.’

*In our world with all its social media pray for all who are attacked unfairly and treated scornfully*

*Pray for people who have lost trust in God because of what has happened in their lives*

Many dogs have surrounded me,

a band of the wicked beset me.

They tear holes in my hands and my feet

I can count every one of my bones.

*With so much injustice and cruelty across the world pray for all victims of repression and their families*

*Think of all the places of war and conflict today and pray for all who have been injured, maimed and killed*

They divide my clothing among them.

They cast lots for my robe.

O Lord, do not leave me alone,

my strength, make haste to help me!

*Pray for innocent victims of war, those who have seen their homes and livelihoods destroyed*

*Reflect how we can become inured to the violence we see in the media; pray to be always empathetic*

I will tell of your name to my brethren

and praise you where they are assembled.

‘You who fear the Lord give him praise;

all sons of Jacob, give him glory.

Revere him, Israel’s sons.

*Thank God for your Christian community as you gather to remember the sacrifice of Christ on the cross*

*Pray that with the Church we may help people know the value of the cross and resurrection for our lives*

Sunday 31March 2024 Easter Sunday

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 117(118):1-2,16-17,22-23

THIS DAY WAS MADE BY THE LORD: WE REJOICE AND ARE GLAD.

or

ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA!

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,

for his love has no end.

Let the sons of Israel say:

‘His love has no end.’

*With Easter joy thank God for the ways in which he is good to you and all you love*

*Pray for all who share faith in Christ with us that together we may show him to the world*

The Lord’s right hand has triumphed;

his right hand raised me up.

I shall not die, I shall live

and recount his deeds.

*Ask for the ability to speak of God’s goodness and power today in your words and actions*

*Take time to reflect how Christ’s resurrection is our promise of conquering sin and reaching eternal life*

The stone which the builders rejected

has become the corner stone.

This is the work of the Lord,

a marvel in our eyes.

*Pray with thanksgiving for the gift of Baptism, the foundation of your relationship with Christ in the Church*

*Thank God and pray for all those baptised this Easter and those received into our community of faith*