

Psalm 1 and Psalm 149: Meditations for Us Saints, the Beloved of God, Together Forever

1. **Read Psalm 1**, pondering how it might deepen your understanding and your experience of the “communion of saints,” as expressed in the Apostles’ Creed, the Collect for All Saints’ Day, and the Proper Preface used in Eucharist on All Saints Day.

From the Apostles’ Creed: ... I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

One common explanation of the term “communion of saints” is that it refers to the whole community of faithful followers of Christ, living and dead, past, present and future—a faith community stretching beyond space and time.

Collect for All Saints’ Day: Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical Body of your Son: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God in glory everlasting. Amen.

Proper Preface for Eucharist on All Saints’ Day: (the reason for *giving thanks* on this day) For in the multitude of your saints you have surrounded us with so great a cloud of witnesses that we, rejoicing in their fellowship, may run with patience the race that is set before us, and together with them, may receive the unfading crown of glory.

2. **Psalm 1** contrasts the way of life of a righteous person with the way of life of a wicked, unrighteous person. God’s righteousness is his ongoing action to make all things right. Each of us chooses whether to open our lives to God’s action and work for and in us or to refuse God’s way, described as the way of Torah in **Psalm 1** (God’s instructions, teaching and way of life). Jesus Christ is the only completely righteous person, the one who is willing to bring us into his righteousness. In our union with Christ, we are joined with the Father and the Holy Spirit and the communion of the saints.

What stands out to you about the contrast between the righteous and the wicked? What words, what images draw you? Why?

What is your experience of praying, interceding for unrighteous, wicked people who are not yet open to God’s work and action in their lives and who refuse God’s teaching?

3. When you meditate on **Psalm 1:1-3**, what *longings* of your heart get triggered? (Meditating involves deep reflection and ongoing dialogue with God.) Allow these *longings* to become prayers for grace (energy from God) for continuing growth and transformation. Seek God's grace for sanctification.

What do you notice about the LORD and the LORD's Torah (law of the LORD, instruction, teaching, way of life) in **Psalm 1**? What is the LORD like, and what is he offering (**verses 1-2 and 6**)? Notice how Jesus' Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12) point to the same truth of the blessedness of life with and in God.

4. Think of people you have known or know whose lives challenge and strengthen you. Who has poured strength into your life, and whose life are you pouring strength into? What is your experience with being "knit together" in the mystical Body of Christ and being unashamed of your need for involvement and interdependence with other believers? And of course, how has that changed over time? How has your union with Christ and your experience of life in the Trinity impacted your desire to connect others with the life you are experiencing?

5. **Psalm 149** is a part of the "endless hallelujah" that closes the Psalms with a step-by-step progression in five hymns of praise, **Psalms 146-150**:

It begins with the individual (146), involves the community (147), extends to heaven and earth and all creation (148), *encompasses a King with his kingdom, subjects and mission* (149), and ends calling for everything that has breath to praise the LORD. (150)

Read **Psalm 149**, a hymn of praise about the ultimate victory of God. What do you learn in **149:1-5** about the *reasons* for praising God, speaking well of him?

What synonyms for "congregation of saints" are used in 149:1? Saints are faithful, godly people.

Notice all the actions and evidences of praise in verses 1-4. Which ones are most familiar to you? Which are most unfamiliar to you? How do you wish you could praise God?

We praise God because he has made us his people. He honors our value and worth. He takes delight in who we are and crowns/beautifies our humility with the victory of salvation (ultimate well-being), which is not an individual achievement.

6. What do you think about the actions God is calling for in **149:6-9**? Do you think of the actions as literal, metaphorical, or both? How has the Word of God been like a sword penetrating your heart's defenses to God and energizing you to share what he has done, and is doing, in you? (Heb. 4:12)

Who might God be connecting you with because that person needs to connect with God?

Pray for God to fill His people with joy and praise and enable them to share His Word with others who join in the communion of the saints.