

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

October 12, 2025

“Psalms 1-98:1-4: ‘Sing to the Lord a new song’”

The psalms, or “prayers of praise,” are the largest book in the Old Testament (150 chapters), located between the Books of Job and Proverbs. Psalms and canticles of the Old and New Testaments have been used for centuries by individuals and praying communities.

In the Old Testament, Jews used them when an Israelite felt the need to speak to God, whether to express praise, confess sin, ask for forgiveness, offer thanks, or intercede for a victim of injustice.

Jesus used psalms at key moments of his earthly life, when teaching and on Good Friday. Saint Paul used psalms to describe a sinful world, among other things.

Ancient Christian monks believed that their faith would enable the verses of the psalms, when recited, to release a special “energy” of the Holy Spirit.

By the fourth century, the priests and religious brothers and sisters were reciting psalms at certain hours of the day, like the Jews did. Christians connected their prayer experience with the Paschal Mystery of Our Lord’s suffering, death, and resurrection, for example, Morning Prayer for the Resurrection, Mid-afternoon Prayer for the Crucifixion, and Night Prayer as we watch for the Lord’s Second Coming. They also added the Trinitarian Doxology at the end of each psalm and canticle: “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.”

Saint Basil the Great once called the psalms “a gymnasium of the soul,” meaning they are a training ground where the soul is exercised in virtue.

In the Middle Ages, Christians adapted the Jewish practice of reciting 150 psalms each day to the Rosary, which is why, before the Luminous Mysteries in 2002, there were 150 Hail Marys said in the full rosary (Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries).

Today's psalm is number 98: "*Sing to the Lord a new song.*" This particular psalm is called an "enthronement psalm," which exalted the power of God during the enthronement of the king of Israel at the New Year festival.

All the great things the Lord did for his people are the reason for the praise offered in this psalm. God is portrayed as a mighty Warrior who saved his people during the Exodus and brought them back from exile in Babylon. The people, for their part, witnessed Israel's return from exile and saw it as God's act of vindication: God wins out in the end.

In our first reading, God healed the pagan Syrian commander Naaman of leprosy (2 Kgs. 5:1-19). In this miracle, Naaman recognized the power of the true God, and declared his faith in the true God.

The Church uses this particular psalm on the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, who is called "God's masterpiece."

What song is in your heart? Augustine once said, "Singing is for one who loves," and the ancient proverb says, "Whoever sings well prays twice over" (*GIRM* 39). What tune echoes in your heart?

There are many possible answers to this question. You might be playing a song of lament, or sadness at life's misfortunes. It could be a dirge, or song of despair over a seemingly hopeless situation. It might be a song of desperation as life's careens out of control. It might be a song of anxiety over an uncertain future.

On the other hand, you might be playing a song of thanksgiving for a special wedding anniversary, or the blessing of a new baby. It could be a song of praise for God as you experience his loving kindness. It could be a song of satisfaction over peace in your soul. It could be a song of joy at the Holy Spirit's presence.

What song is in your heart and soul? The song you identify is an indicator of the state of your soul. It is good to look at our hearts regularly and examine what God is doing.

As you reflect on this day's Responsorial Psalm, ask the Spirit to show you what song is playing inside you, and act accordingly by giving thanks, asking for God's help, praising his goodness, or adoring him in silence.

"God, come to my assistance, O Lord, make haste to help me."

God bless you.