

Wed., Dec. 7, 2011

Anthony (Andy) Rogers, Electronic Services Librarian

## Scripture

Psalm 53

<sup>1</sup>Fools say in their hearts, "There is no God."  
They are corrupt, they commit abominable acts;  
there is no one who does good.

<sup>2</sup>God looks down from heaven on humankind  
to see if there are any who are wise,  
who seek after God.

<sup>3</sup>They have all fallen away, they are all alike perverse;  
there is no one who does good,  
no, not one.

<sup>4</sup>Have they no knowledge, those evildoers,  
who eat up my people as they eat bread,  
and do not call upon God?

<sup>5</sup>There they shall be in great terror,  
in terror such as has not been.  
For God will scatter the bones of the ungodly;  
they will be put to shame, for God has rejected them.

<sup>6</sup>O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion!  
When God restores the fortunes of his people,  
Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.

Psalm 17

<sup>1</sup>Hear a just cause, O LORD; attend to my cry;  
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.

<sup>2</sup>From you let my vindication come;  
let your eyes see the right.

<sup>3</sup>If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,  
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me;  
my mouth does not transgress.

<sup>4</sup>As for what others do, by the word of your lips  
I have avoided the ways of the violent.

<sup>5</sup>My steps have held fast to your paths;  
my feet have not slipped.

<sup>6</sup>I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;  
incline your ear to me, hear my words.

<sup>7</sup>Wondrously show your steadfast love,  
O savior of those who seek refuge  
from their adversaries at your right hand.

<sup>8</sup>Guard me as the apple of the eye;  
hide me in the shadow of your wings,

<sup>9</sup>from the wicked who despoil me,  
my deadly enemies who surround me.

<sup>10</sup>They close their hearts to pity;  
with their mouths they speak arrogantly.

<sup>11</sup>They track me down; now they surround me;  
they set their eyes to cast me to the ground.

<sup>12</sup>They are like a lion eager to tear,  
like a young lion lurking in ambush.

<sup>13</sup>Rise up, O LORD, confront them, overthrow them!

By your sword deliver my life from the wicked,

<sup>14</sup>from mortals — by your hand, O LORD —

from mortals whose portion in life is in this world.

May their bellies be filled with what you have stored up for them;

may their children have more than enough;

may they leave something over to their little ones.

<sup>15</sup>As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;  
when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.

## **Devotional**

The Psalms above are inclusive of two different ways we experience God; or, rather, two different loci from which we articulate our experiences of God. First, as a faith community struggling to believe that God willfully acts in our world today, particularly on our (communal) behalf. We come together as a congregation in order to deliver one another (and be delivered) from a fragmented humanity unyielding in its pursuit toward corruption. We come together as a congregation to be restored and, especially during Advent, to celebrate salvation. And second, as an individual follower, innocent before God, desiring to find refuge in God's very being. We speak to God directly, asking that we be placed immediately in God's care, under God's wing, in God's arms. Seeking respite because the world seems

increasingly hostile when we're alone day to day, we behold God's likeness in the singular Son—the Son who continually reveals God's true image.

**Prayer**

Lord, we come to you knowing that there have been times when we have fallen away—as a community and as individuals. We ask that you forgive and restore us in these moments. We also come to you on behalf of those who do not believe; those who do not trust in your mighty acts: lead them to see your daily kindnesses. Lastly, let us never forget the poor, the hungry, the hurting, and the downtrodden. Be with them and give them strength. Through Jesus, Amen.