

Lenten Devotional March 17, 2018

Scripture

Psalm 143

- ¹Hear my prayer, O LORD;
give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness;
answer me in your righteousness.
- ²Do not enter into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.
- ³For the enemy has pursued me,
crushing my life to the ground,
making me sit in darkness like those long dead.
- ⁴Therefore my spirit faints within me;
my heart within me is appalled.
- ⁵I remember the days of old,
I think about all your deeds,
I meditate on the works of your hands.
- ⁶I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.
- ⁷Answer me quickly, O LORD;
my spirit fails.
Do not hide your face from me,
or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.
- ⁸Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning,
for in you I put my trust.
Teach me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.
- ⁹Save me, O LORD, from my enemies;
I have fled to you for refuge.
- ¹⁰Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.
Let your good spirit lead me
on a level path.
- ¹¹For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life.
In your righteousness bring me out of trouble.
- ¹²In your steadfast love cut off my enemies,
and destroy all my adversaries,
for I am your servant.

Devotional

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Today we approach Holy Week; in preparation we read Psalm 143, a poignant cry of repentance and supplication. St. John Chrysostom tells us that this psalm provides the remedy for haughtiness: “if your well-doing makes you arrogant,” then verse 2 (“No one living is righteous before You”) “will make you immediately lowly” (Romans Homily 28). But the psalm is also for the poor, the harried and the lowly. We enter with David into the cave, crushed to the ground, harassed by enemies, parched for God, and seeking refuge with God. True refuge comes in the form of remembrance: “I remember the days of old, I think about all your deeds, I meditate on the works of your hands” (verse 5). What are those divine

deeds? The creation of this beautiful world, His provision for sinful Adam and Eve, His calling and guidance of Israel, His promise of the Messiah through the prophets, His coming as the God-Man, His living the perfect human life; His sacrificial and representative death; His glorious resurrection, His ascension in glory; His promised coming again; and His giving of the Holy Spirit! God has not hidden His face, but has offered us everything we need, including a thirst for Him—for we, like David, live in a “parched land.” Even our longing, even our calling out, is a sign of His goodness and promise to us. How wonderful that He, anticipating our times of distress and need, has given this honest psalm!

Prayer

Hear me, Holy Father, as you heard your Son in distress. Bring me low when I am mindless of you, and lift me up when I am close to despair. By your Holy Spirit, recall to my mind and heart all you have done, and make me thirsty for you.