



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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MERCY ENDURES FOREVER

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

Today's Responsorial Psalm

*Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever;
Give thanks to the God of gods, for his mercy endures forever;
Give thanks to the LORD of lords, for his mercy endures forever.
Who led his people through the wilderness, for his mercy endures forever;
Who smote great kings, for his mercy endures forever;
And slew powerful kings, for his mercy endures forever.
And made their land a heritage, for his mercy endures forever;
The heritage of Israel his servant, for his mercy endures forever;
And freed us from our foes, for his mercy endures forever.*

PSALM 136:1-3, 16-18, 21-22 and 24

The Hebrew word *hesed* is translated into English here as “mercy.” That word, however, does not carry the depth of *hesed*. Rather, *hesed* evokes the spirit of abiding kindness within a relationship, as between members of a family, or between friends supporting a life-giving solidarity between them. *Hesed* does not refer to a vague kindness. It is the concrete actualization of the loving kindness manifested by God in caring for Israel. God’s *hesed*/ kindness is not founded on human actions; that is, our actions do not cause *hesed*. It is God’s choice and a gift freely given. In essence, *hesed* is God’s offering of Divine healing and nourishing kindness freely extended to all of creation at all times. It is this that the psalm’s repetition of “mercy” invites us to remember and be grateful for.



Jesus in the garden in Orange, CA
Photo by Alicia Rodriguez

For Pondering

- Pray the psalm slowly - out loud if possible. Repeat the one or two lines that stand out for you. Then, rest in them for a few minutes.

- In what ways do you experience God's *hesed*? What do you say about that experience?
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For Prayer

Begin your prayer with . . . *"Give thanks to the LORD _____ . . ."*

What words finish the prayer for you today?

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