

June 29, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER & PAUL, APOSTLES

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

"Blessed is the one who takes refuge in the LORD."

PSALM 34:9

From Today's Responsorial Psalm

*I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be ever in my mouth.*

*Let my soul glory in the LORD;
the lowly will hear me and be glad.*

*Glorify the LORD with me,
let us together extol his name.*

*I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.*

Look to him that you may be radiant with joy,

*and your faces may not blush with shame.
When the afflicted one called out, the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him.
The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
Taste and see how good the LORD is;
happy the one who takes refuge in the LORD.*

PSALM 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Reflection

Psalm 34 is categorized as a “thanksgiving” psalm. It combines instruction with grateful appreciation.

I imagine Peter and Paul praying this psalm together as the early Christian community gathered, proclaiming God’s impact on their lives. Of course each had prayed Psalm 34 while attending his local synagogue. Perhaps they even chanted this psalm at the Temple when they were in Jerusalem. I wonder if they each had a favorite verse. Maybe a verse that described their experience with God? Just as we do, Peter and Paul approached this Psalm prayer from the vantage point of their own personality and life experiences.

Born in Asia Minor (Turkey), Paul enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizenship as well as those of an educated rabbi. Since rabbis refused to accept payment for their teaching, they learned a trade that could support them. Paul chose tent-making, which positioned him in the midst of the business world. As a teacher he met resistance – at times very serious resistance - in most every place he offered Jesus’ message. Despite forceful oppression, Paul remained faithful to the LORD who stood by him and gave him strength because he knew the “Good News” was salvation for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. Perhaps the verse “I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears,” held meaning for him.

Peter, a fisherman from the small village of Capernaum in Galilee, was the kind of person who questioned and tested everything. After being one of Jesus’ followers and witnessing his teaching and healing, Peter is remembered as the one who three times denied knowing Jesus as he was standing trial. Yet it was also understood from the beginning that Peter was the leader of the Christian community. Maybe a verse that touched Peter was: “When the poor one called out, the LORD heard, and from all his distress he saved him.”

As you pray this Psalm, be conscious of our brothers, Peter and Paul, praying

with you in gratitude to our Creator, who is always with us -- nourishing and supporting our lives.



A man raises his hands in prayer

For Prayer

*I will never stop thanking God,
with constant words of praise.
My soul will boast of God;
the poor will hear me and be glad.*

*Join me in praising the Lord,
together tell of God's name.
I asked and the Lord responded,
freed me from all my fears.*

*Turn to God, be bright with joy;
you shall never be let down.
I begged and God heard,
took my burdens from me.*

*God's angel defends the faithful,
guards them on every side
Drink in the richness of God,
enjoy the strength of the Lord.*

PSALM 34:2-9 [ICEL TRANSLATION]

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