

## CBSM Wisdom Year: **Walking Daily with God** Summer Reading Discussion Questions 2025-26



We have three options for summer reading:

- C.S. Lewis's **Reflections on the Psalms**
- Eugene Peterson's **Answering God**
- Kathleen Harmon's **Becoming the Psalms**

*Each book helps us enter into the Psalms as both history and a conversation with God, something to be lived and experienced as much as studied.*

*If you have the optional book **The Gift of the Psalms**, start reading chapters 1-3.*

*If you have the optional book **Psalm Basics for Catholics**, start reading chapters 1-5.*

*You may also want to begin reading the Psalms or biblical Wisdom Literature over summer.*

*Take some time to ponder the following questions, and bring your reflections to the first class for a short discussion time.*

1. Each of our authors discusses various themes and purposes of the Psalms. How did these help you consider the Psalms or Salvation History in a new way?
2. The Psalm Response for Mass on Sunday, Sept 14th is taken from Ps 78. Read Psalm 78:1-2, 34-38:
  - What ideas about God's character and our relationship with God are expressed in this Psalm? You may want to look at key theological words, repeated ideas, and/or overall intent.
  - Optional digging deeper: How do you think this Psalm fits the overall theme of Scripture teaching on this day (Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross) in light of one or more of the other readings: Numbers 21:4-9; Philippians 2:6-11; John 3:13-17.
3. The Psalms cover all aspects of life and draw us into the big picture of God's story which we experience in our daily life. How has thinking about the Psalms, or studying Scripture in general, changed how you understand your experience of life?

*For more information on how the Catholic Church views the Psalms, read the Catechism references below.*

### **The Catechism of the Catholic Church on the Psalms:**

The Psalms, the prayer of the assembly

2585 From the time of David to the coming of the Messiah texts appearing in these sacred books show a deepening in prayer for oneself and in prayer for others.<sup>37</sup> Thus the psalms were gradually collected into the five books of the Psalter (or "Praises"), the masterwork of prayer in the Old Testament.

2586 The Psalms both nourished and expressed the prayer of the People of God gathered during the great feasts at Jerusalem and each Sabbath in the synagogues. Their prayer is inseparably personal and communal; it concerns both those who are praying and all men. The Psalms arose from the communities of the Holy Land and the Diaspora, but embrace all creation. Their prayer recalls the saving events of the past, yet extends into the future, even to the end of history; it commemorates the promises God has already kept, and awaits the Messiah who will fulfill them definitively. Prayed by Christ and fulfilled in him, the Psalms remain essential to the prayer of the Church.<sup>38</sup>

2587 The Psalter is the book in which The Word of God becomes man's prayer. In other books of the Old Testament, "the words proclaim [God's] works and bring to light the mystery they contain."<sup>39</sup> The words of the Psalmist, sung for God, both express and acclaim the Lord's saving works; the same Spirit inspires both God's work and man's response. Christ will unite the two. In him, the psalms continue to teach us how to pray.

2588 The Psalter's many forms of prayer take shape both in the liturgy of the Temple and in the human heart. Whether hymns or prayers of lamentation or thanksgiving, whether individual or communal, whether royal chants, songs of pilgrimage or wisdom meditations, the Psalms are a mirror of God's marvelous deeds in the history of his people, as well as reflections of the human experiences of the Psalmist. Though a given psalm may reflect an event of the past, it still possesses such direct simplicity that it can be prayed in truth by men of all times and conditions.

2589 Certain constant characteristics appear throughout the Psalms: simplicity and spontaneity of prayer; the desire for God himself through and with all that is good in his creation; the distraught situation of the believer who, in his preferential love for the Lord, is exposed to a host of enemies and temptations, but who waits upon what the faithful God will do, in the certitude of his love and in submission to his will. The prayer of the psalms is always sustained by praise; that is why the title of this collection as handed down to us is so fitting: "The Praises." Collected for the assembly's worship, the Psalter both sounds the call to prayer and sings the response to that call: Hallelu-Yah! ("Alleluia"), "Praise the Lord!"

What is more pleasing than a psalm? David expresses it well: "Praise the Lord, for a psalm is good: let there be praise of our God with gladness and grace!" Yes, a psalm is a blessing on the lips of the people, praise of God, the assembly's homage, a general acclamation, a word that speaks for all, the voice of the Church, a confession of faith in song.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Ezra* 9:6-15; *Neh* 1:4-11; *Jon* 2:3-10; *Tob* 3:11-16; *Jdt* 9:2-14.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *GILH*, nn. 100-109.

<sup>39</sup> *DV* 2.

<sup>40</sup> *St. Ambrose, In psalmum 1 enarratio, 1,9:PL 14,924; LH, Saturday, wk 10, OR.*