



Invest time each week to expand your vocabulary and deepen your faith.

27 October 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Responsorial Psalm

\rē-spän-sō-rē-'əl
'sälm\

Part of the Liturgy of the Word proclaimed in the Mass drawn from the Psalter (the Book of Psalms) or, more rarely, from biblical canticles. Sung responsively between the lector/cantor and the assembly. Follows the First Reading and corresponds thematically to the day's scriptures.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-responsorial-psalm>

CONTEXT

Through the singing of the **Responsorial Psalm**, we assent to how God's word heard in this particular liturgy is reshaping our identity.

—Kathleen Harmon, *New Developments in Understanding the Responsorial Psalm*

The **Responsorial Psalm** stimulates reflection upon God's saving deeds and serves both as a prolongation and reiteration of the scriptural text it accompanies.

—Elizabeth Harrington, *Liturgy Brisbane*

WHY IT MATTERS

In the **Responsorial Psalm**, we repeatedly chant a phrase to enable it to sink deeper into our being: "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (the most frequently used response); "The Lord hears the cry of the poor"; or "I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me." Across a lifetime, these internalized phrases become prayers that rise to consciousness for solace, contemplation, and instruction.

From the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*: The table of God's Word is spread before the faithful, and the treasures of the Bible are opened to them. . . . After the First Reading comes the **Responsorial Psalm**, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word . . . because it fosters meditation on the word of God (57-61).

RELATED WORDS

Psalter | Canticle | Prayer | Liturgy of the Word

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What's the difference between a psalm and a canticle?

Psalm comes from the Greek for the twanging of a harp or plucking of a stringed instrument. *Canticle* derives from the Latin for a little song. The main difference isn't style, but placement. Psalms are found entirely within the Book of Psalms, or Psalter. Canticles are located elsewhere in scripture.

The Psalter contains musical directions. A third of these 150 poems and hymns suggest stringed, flute, or harp accompaniment. Some were set to melodies everyone knew. Seventy-three psalms are internally attributed to King David, and he may have sponsored the whole collection. Canticles have a broader authorship. Song of Songs, ascribed to King Solomon, likely had multiple writers. Old Testament canticles include those of Miriam, Moses, Deborah, Hannah, and Judith. New Testament canticles include Zechariah's Benedictus, Simeon's Nunc Dimittis, and of course Mary's Magnificat.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-psalm>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (OCTOBER 27)

With a psalm in our hearts

Asked what liturgical song most fostered and nourished their spiritual life, the majority of respondents in a 2006 online poll cited "On Eagle's Wings" by Father Michael Joncas. The song, inspired by Isaiah's prophecy and Psalm 91, contains the beautifully crafted refrain:

And He will raise you up on eagle's wings,
Bear you on the breath of dawn,
Make you to shine like the sun,
And hold you in the palm of His Hand.

READINGS: Jeremiah 31:7-9; Hebrews 5:1-6; Mark 10:46-52 (149 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/102724.cfm>). "The LORD has delivered his people."

FAITH IN ACTION

Remember those words of solace whenever your burden feels too great.