

MASSES FOR THE DEAD - RESPONSORIAL PSALMS

The psalms are rich in imagery, feeling, and symbolism. They powerfully express the suffering and pain, the hope and trust of people of every age and culture. Above all the psalms sing of faith in God, of revelation and redemption. They enable the assembly to pray in the words that Jesus himself used during his life on earth. Jesus, who knew anguish and the fear of death, 'offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death... Although he was Son, he learned to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation...' (Hebrews 5:7-9). In the psalms the members of the assembly pray in the voice of Christ, who intercedes on their behalf before the Father. The Church, like Christ, turns again and again to the psalms as a genuine expression of grief and of praise and as a sure source of trust and hope in times of trial. Priests and other ministers are, therefore, to make an earnest effort through an effective catechesis to lead their communities to a clearer and deeper grasp of at least some of the psalms provided for the funeral rites.

The psalms are designated for use in many places in the funeral rites (for example, as responses to the readings, for the processions, for use at the vigil for the deceased). Since the psalms are songs, whenever possible, they should be sung.

– *Order of Christian Funerals*, General Introduction, nos. 25-26

From the *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 1013

Psalm 23:1-3, 4, 5, 6

R/. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

or:

R/. Though I walk in the valley of darkness, I fear no evil, for you are with me.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

in verdant pastures he gives me repose;

Beside restful waters he leads me;

he refreshes my soul.

He guides me in right paths

for his name sake. **R/.**

Even though I walk in the dark valley

I fear no evil; for you are at my side

With your rod and your staff

that give me courage. **R/.**

You spread the table before me

in the sight of my foes;

You anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows. **R/.**

Only goodness and kindness follow me

all the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

for years to come. **R/.**

Psalm 25:6 and 7b, 17-18, 20-21

R/. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

or:

R/. No one who waits for you, O Lord, will ever be put to shame.

Remember that your compassion, O LORD,
and your kindness are from of old.

In your kindness remember me,
because of your goodness, O LORD. **R/.**

Relieve the troubles of my heart;
And bring me out of my distress.
Put an end to my affliction and my suffering;
and take away all my sins. **R/.**

Preserve my life and rescue me;
let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,
Because I wait for you, O LORD. **R/.**

Psalm 27:1, 4, 7 and 8b and 9a, 13-14

R/. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

or:

R/. I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom should I fear?

The LORD is my life's refuge;
of whom should I be afraid? **R/.**

One thing I ask of the LORD;
this I seek:

To dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life.

That I may gaze on the loveliness of the LORD
and contemplate his temple. **R/.**

Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call;
have pity on me, and answer me.

Your presence, O LORD, I seek.
Hide not your face from me. **R/.**

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD
in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD with courage;
be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD. **R/.**

Psalm 42:2, 3, 5cdef; 43:3, 4, 5

R/. My soul is thirsting for the living God: when shall I see him face to face?

As the hind longs for the running waters,
so my soul longs for you, O God. **R/.**

Athirst is my soul for God, the living God.
When shall I go and behold the face of God? **R/.**

I went with the throng and led them in procession
to the house of God.
Amid loud cries of joy and thanksgiving,
with the multitude keeping festival. **R/.**

Send forth your light and your fidelity;
they shall lead me on
And bring me to your holy mountain,
to your dwelling-place. **R/.**

Then will I go in to the altar of God,
the God of my gladness and joy;
Then will I give you thanks upon the harp,
O God, my God! **R/.**

Why are you downcast, O my soul?
Why do you sigh within me?
Hope in God! For I shall again be thanking him,
in the presence of my savior and my God. **R/.**

Psalm 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

R/. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

O God, you are my God whom I seek;
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water. **R/.**

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
to see your power and your glory,
For your kindness is a greater good than life;
my lips shall glorify you. **R/.**

Thus will I bless you while I live;
lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.
As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied,
and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you. **R/.**

You are my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.
My soul clings fast to you;
your right hand upholds me. **R/.**

Psalm 103:8 and 10, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18

R/. The Lord is kind and merciful.

or:

R/. The salvation of the just comes from the Lord.

Merciful and gracious is the LORD,
slow to anger, and abounding in kindness.
Not according to our sins does he deal with us,
nor does he requite us according to our crimes. **R/.**

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.
For he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust. **R/.**

Man's days are like those of grass;
like a flower of the field he blooms;
The wind sweeps over him and he is gone,
and his place knows him no more. **R/.**

But the kindness of the LORD is from eternity,
to eternity toward those who fear him,
And his justice toward children's children
among those who keep his covenant
and remember to fulfill his precepts. **R/.**

Psalm 116:5, 6, 10-11, 15-16ac

R/. I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

or:

R/. Alleluia.

Gracious is the LORD and just;
yes, our God is merciful. **R/.**

The LORD keeps the little ones;
I was brought low, and he saved me. **R/.**

I believed, even when I said,
"I am greatly afflicted";
I said in my alarm,
"No man is dependable." **R/.**

Precious in the eyes of the LORD
is the death of his faithful ones.
O LORD, I am your servant,
you have loosed my bonds. **R/.**

Psalm 122:1-2, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

R/. I rejoiced when I heard them say: let us go to the house of the Lord.

or:

R/. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,
"We will go up to the house of the LORD."
And now we have set foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem. **R/.**

To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD,
According to the decree for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
In it are set up judgment seats,
seats for the house of David. **R/.**

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
May those who love you prosper!
May peace be within your walls,
prosperity in your buildings. **R/.**

Because of my relatives and friends
I will say "Peace be within you!"
Because of the house of the LORD, our God,
I will pray for your good. **R/.**

Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6ab, 6c-7, 8

R/. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord.

or:

R/. I hope in the Lord, I trust in his word.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;

LORD, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to my voice in supplication. **R/.**

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,

LORD, who can stand?

But with you is forgiveness,

that you may be revered. **R/.**

I trust in the LORD;

my soul trusts in his word.

My soul waits for the LORD

more than the sentinels wait for the dawn. **R/.**

More than the sentinels wait for the dawn,

let Israel wait for the LORD,

For with the LORD is kindness

and with him is plenteous redemption. **R/.**

And he will redeem Israel

from all their iniquities. **R/.**

Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6ab, 6c-7, 8

R/. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Lord.

Psalm 143:1-2, 5-6, 7ab and 8ab,

10 R/. O Lord, hear my prayer.

O LORD, hear my prayer;
hearken to my pleading in your
faithfulness; in your justice answer me.
And enter not into judgment with your servant,
for before you no living man is just. **R/.**

I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all your doings;
the works of your hands I ponder.
I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like parched land. **R/.**

Hasten to answer me, O
LORD; for my spirit fails
me.
At dawn let me hear of your
mercy, for in you I trust. **R/.**

Teach me to do your
will, for you are my
God.
May your good spirit guide
me on level ground. **R/.**