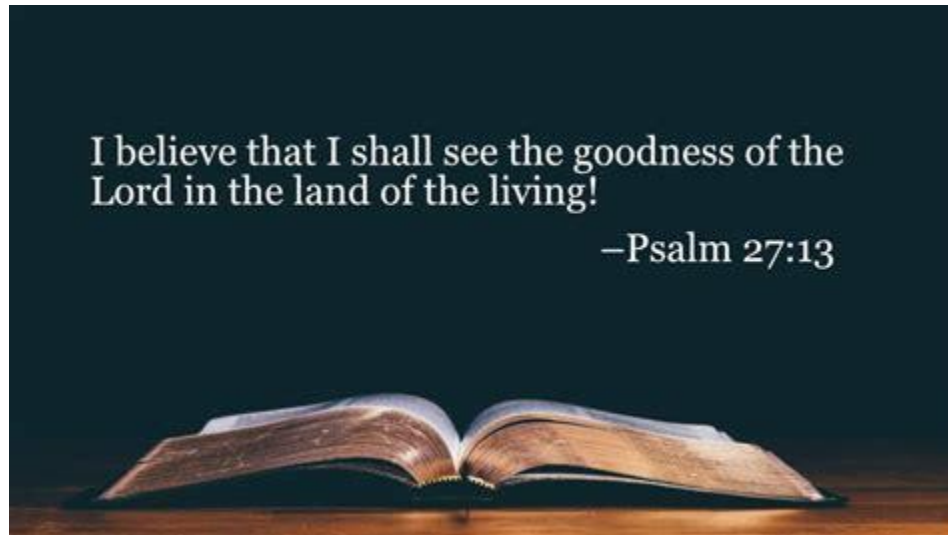


FROM FATHER JOHN: “I raise my eyes toward the mountains. From whence shall come my help? My help comes from the **LORD**, the maker of heaven and earth.” (Psalm 121)



One of the things that each of us should do every day is spend a few minutes reading the bible. A good place to start is with the Psalms. The Psalms inspire us, teach us how to praise the Lord our God and help us grow in our relationship with our heavenly Father. They show us how great and powerful God is, bring us great joy and, oftentimes, they reflect what we are feeling as we live in a fallen world.

Sometimes the Psalms put into words our pain, our disappointment, and our struggles. But at other times they put into words our joy, our hope, our peace and our love. They express our feelings in a way that reflects our love of God and His love of us. The Psalms are joyous, triumphant songs of praise.

Pope St. Pius X called the Psalms “*The song of the Church*” in his apostolic constitution *Divino Afflatus*. He went on to write that “The collection of psalms found in Scripture, composed as it was under divine inspiration, has, from the very beginnings of the Church, shown a wonderful power of fostering devotion among Christians as they offer to God *a continuous sacrifice of praise, the harvest of lips blessing his name*. Following a custom already established in the Old Law, the psalms have played a conspicuous part in the sacred liturgy itself, and in the divine office. Thus was born what Basil calls the voice of the Church, that singing of psalms, which is the daughter of that hymn of praise (to use the words of our predecessor, Urban VIII) which goes up unceasingly before the throne of God and

of the Lamb, and which teaches those especially charged with the duty of divine worship, as Athanasius says, the way to praise God, and the fitting words in which to bless him.”

St. Augustine wrote that, in the Psalms, *“God praised himself so that man might give him fitting praise; because God chose to praise himself man found the way in which to bless God.”*

St. Athanasius wrote that the Psalms awaken in our hearts the desire for the virtues. *“Though all Scripture, both old and new, is divinely inspired and has its use in teaching, as we read in Scripture itself, yet the Book of Psalms, like a garden enclosing the fruits of all the other books, produces its fruits in song, and in the process of singing brings forth its own special fruits to take their place beside them. ... The psalms seem to me to be like a mirror, in which the person using them can see himself, and the stirrings of his own heart; he can recite them against the background of his own emotions. Augustine says in his Confessions: How I wept when I heard your hymns and canticles, being deeply moved by the sweet singing of your Church. Those voices flowed into my ears, truth filtered into my heart, and from my heart surged waves of devotion. Tears ran down, and I was happy in my tears.”*

St. Pope Pius X went on to write in *Divino Afflatus*. “Indeed, who could fail to be moved by those many passages in the psalms which set forth so profoundly the infinite majesty of God, his omnipotence, his justice and goodness and clemency, too deep for words, and all the other infinite qualities of his that deserve our praise? Who could fail to be roused to the same emotions by the prayers of thanksgiving to God for blessings received, by the petitions, so humble and confident, for blessings still awaited, by the cries of a soul in sorrow for sin committed? Who would not be fired with love as he looks on the likeness of Christ, the redeemer, here so lovingly foretold?”

I hope and pray that you will take the time to read the Psalms. A great place to start is Psalm 103 and a great time to begin is right now.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.