

Family Prayer

Fifth Week of Lent - 5 - 12 April 2025

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We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present, and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Context - Fifth Sunday of Lent

Entering the fifth week of Lent we begin to turn our attention to Holy Week and the tumultuous events of the last week of Jesus' life. In the Gospel for this week, we can see society beginning to turn on Jesus when the scribes and Pharisees attempt to trap Jesus into either contradicting the law of Moses or, his own teachings of mercy towards sinners. Instead, Jesus invites those present into self-reflection. Lent is a time of self-reflection and during the preceding weeks, we may have focussed our self-reflection on our own short-comings and areas for growth. The Psalm for this week invites us into self-reflection on the times that God's enduring love has been evident in our lives as we consider **The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.**

Scripture

Scripture: Psalm 125. R.v.3

R: The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage,
it seemed like a dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

The Heathens themselves said: 'What marvels
the Lord worked for them!'

What marvels the Lord worked for us!

Indeed, we were glad.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

Deliver us, O Lord from our bondage
as streams in dry land.

Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when the reap.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:

they come back, they come back, full of song,
carrying their sheaves.

The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

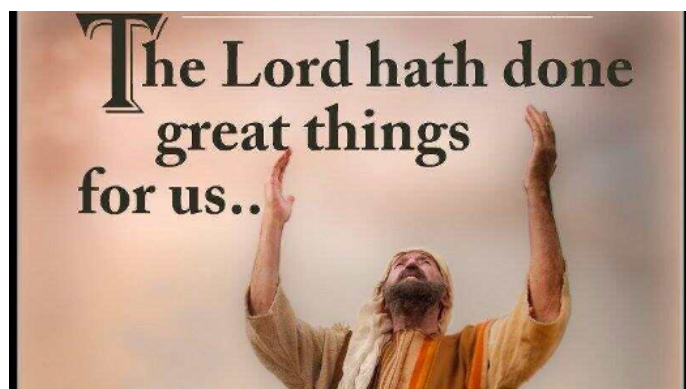


Figure 1: Artwork by Kenneth Berg

Reflection

Psalms 126, or 125 according to Greco-Latin numbering, is one of a collection of Psalms known as the Songs of Ascents. These were traditionally sung by pilgrims as they ascended Mt Zion to enter the gates of Jerusalem, headed for the temple. It is fitting that as we continue on our Lenten pilgrimages that the Psalm for this week invites us to partake in the ancient Songs of Ascents and invites us to reflect on the broader pilgrimage of our lives as we too head towards the gates of the Holy City that await. The first part of the Psalm bids us to reflect on the great things the Lord has already done for us in our lives just as the Psalmist reflects on the great things the Lord had done for Israel.



Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that *divine help often takes surprising forms that surpass what man is able to imagine; hence the wonder and the joy that are expressed in this psalm*. He continues, *in our prayer we should look more often at how, in the events of our own lives, the Lord has protected, guided and helped us, and we should praise Him for all he has done and does for us*.

The second part of the Psalm serves as a reminder that joy is not a permanent state and that, at times, it will be repressed by hardships in our lives and that it is necessary to continue to petition the Lord to help us in our times of need. Pope Benedict says *this psalm teaches us that, in our prayer, we must always remain open to hope, and firm in our faith in God. Our personal history – even if often marked by suffering, uncertainty and moments of crisis – is a history of salvation and of the "restoring of fortunes." In Jesus our every exile ends, and every tear is wiped away in the mystery of His Cross, of death transformed into life, like the grain of wheat that falls into the earth and yields a harvest. Also, for us, this discovery of Jesus Christ is the great joy of God's "yes," of the restoration of our fortunes*.

The fifth Sunday of Lent is an apt time for us to hear this, Psalm. The Songs of Ascents begin with Psalm 120 and conclude with Psalm 134. In the beginning, they are laments for being far from God's presence, from the temple. This mirrors the beginning of Lent, when we are in the desert with Jesus. As the Songs continue and the pilgrims get closer to their destination, the joy increases and thus we have Psalm 126 as we journey closer to the joy of the Resurrection which will wipe away our tears for the Passion of our Lord next week.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

In the midst of our tears, we find the promise of joy. Thank You for the beauty of transformation, for turning our sorrow into shouts of exultation. Help us to remember the moments when Your presence lifted us from despair and restored our spirits.

Guide us in creating a practice of revisiting these sacred encounters, that in prayer, we may draw nearer to You.

Grant us the strength to hold on a little longer, trusting in Your goodness and provision.

May our tears of anguish be sown as seeds of faith, knowing that in due time, we will reap abundant blessings.

As we journey through weariness and trials, may we cling to Your garment, finding healing and hope in Your presence. Hold us close, O Lord, and lead us into the fullness of joy that comes from walking faithfully with You.

Amen.

This prayer is written by Frances Rivera of Christ City Church, Washington DC.

Call to Action

- [Explore the readings](#) in depth with Loyola Press.
- Watch this [2-minute homily](#) by Fr Tom Elich.
- Use this [craft activity](#) to help children reflect on God's love and the good deeds he does for us.
- Pray this [Lenten examen](#) from Ignatian Spirituality.
- Listen to [Good Good Father](#) by Chris Tomlin.

