



## LESSON TWO

### RESOURCES

*Go to page 18 to download resources*

## **HANDOUTS**

Psalm 62  
(Grail Translation)

The text we are using for this second lesson is one of the most beloved of all the psalms, Psalm 62. I have used the Grail translation for this lesson, so the wording may be a little different from what you have in your own Bible.

About the Book of Psalms, or the Psalter as it is called:

*The Psalter, says Luther, might well be called a little Bible. In it is comprehended most beautifully and briefly everything that is in the entire Bible. It is really a fine enchiridion or handbook. In fact, I guess that the Holy Spirit wanted to take the trouble personally to compile a short Bible and a book of examples of all Christendom or all saints, so that anyone who could not read the whole Bible would here have anyway almost an entire summary of it, comprised in one little book. Werke, 35.254*

**LECTIO:** Read the psalm. Let us read it slowly, in order to prepare the soil of our hearts for new seeds and new growth. Be aware of the Holy Spirit playing on the fibres of your heart as you listen. This is the true *oratio* (prayer) of *lectio divina*.

### **PSALM 62**

God, you are my God, for you I long;  
for you my soul is thirsting.  
My body pines for you  
like a dry, weary land without water.

<sup>3</sup>So I gaze on you in the sanctuary  
to see your strength and your glory.

<sup>4</sup>For your love is better than life,  
my lips will speak your praise.

<sup>5</sup>So I will bless you all my life,  
in your name, I will lift up my hands.

<sup>6</sup>My soul shall be filled as with a banquet,  
my mouth shall praise you with joy.

<sup>7</sup>On my bed I remember you.

On you I muse through the night

<sup>8</sup>for you have been my help;  
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice.

<sup>9</sup>My soul clings to you;  
your right hand holds me fast.

<sup>10</sup>Those who seek to destroy my life  
shall go down to the depths of the earth.

<sup>11</sup>They shall be put into the power of the sword  
and left as the prey of the jackals.

<sup>12</sup>But the king shall rejoice in God;  
(all that swear by him shall be blessed,)  
for the mouth of liars shall be silenced.

**MEDITATIO:** Some further background to enrich our reading, reflection and response. This is a psalm of David as he hides in a wilderness after having fled from his enemies. Alone in this wilderness he ponders his situation and allows himself to utter the words that reside deep in his heart. “Oh God you are my God for you I long.” The wilderness that David is experiencing is not the literal wilderness of the desert but rather the wilderness that one finds oneself in when in danger

and with nowhere to turn except to God. It is a wilderness within oneself. Alone in this wilderness within himself there is nothing for David to do but seek the power of God to save him.

The “Collegeville Bible Commentary” notes that “this psalm has elements of a lament as in vv3-4 and 10-11. There is also an expression of trust vv7-9 and of thanksgiving vv4-6. The psalmist is beset by enemies and in desperation seeks God in the temple as an asylum from danger.” Here he may be safe as he prays for justice for his enemies. Externally then, David is in a safe place. Within himself though, various emotions vie for attention. He utters them all as a prayer to the God he trusts.

We will spend time with the text now. But as well, ponder on it in the days ahead. Write your response in your prayer journal. I share mine in *evangelizatio*.

**ORATIO:** This is the movement when we speak to God in response to what we have heard from the passage. We speak to God just as we would to someone who is close to us, whom we trust. If it is helpful you may wish to write your dialogue or your prayer in your prayer journal. You may even wish to draw your response. There are no rights or wrongs to this movement. Simply open your heart to God and reveal to God your thoughts, emotions, fears and concerns, your petitions, your thanksgiving and praise.

**CONTEMPLATO:** We are now in a position to leave behind all the thoughts and interior movements of our heart and allow ourselves to sit still in God’s presence as Mary of Bethany was able to do. Here we allow God to take over and we simply wait

in silence, in peace, not expecting anything or initiating anything. It is God's turn now. We are not perturbed if we hear nothing or feel nothing because this is an exercise of trust. We trust that God allows whatever God chooses and we allow ourselves to be content with what is and not what we would like it to be.

***EVANGELATITO/ACTIO:*** This is the time for making decisions as to what we will do in response to what we have heard in God's Word for us today. I share my response with you here.

There are two things that attract my attention as I pray with this psalm today, two opposites. The first line of the psalm draws me to my own longing for God, a longing I will not really be aware of unless there are times in my day when I withdraw from the crowd to "a lonely place". It is only in this lonely place that I am able to really feel that deep longing and yearning to, not so much know God as to be able to **be** in God's presence. As I write this I ask myself if this is perhaps a little self-centered. Do I want God all to myself? Can I still find God when among people, particularly in the Church when we are praying together? I find myself challenged by these questions that I ask myself. The feeling of uneasiness I have tells me that I need to spend more time praying about this issue and asking God to help me see clearly what is the way forward, and toward him.

The second thing that I find striking in this psalm is the violence in verses 10-11. The cursing of enemies is a theme often found in the psalms and other places in the Old Testament. Our *lectio* in the first lesson could help us here as

we juxtapose the message of Jesus about love of enemies with the words of David here where he curses his enemies and wishes them dead. Can I relate to this in any way? For me, as far as I can remember, I have never cursed anyone. But have I wished someone were dead? For some reason, I hesitate as I try to truthfully answer this question. Perhaps there is a difference between wishing someone were dead and actually uttering a curse that they be struck dead, perhaps even being graphic about how this would come about. Many people do feel like this and indeed not only utter the words but dream up ways whereby they can actually kill the person in question.

Most murderers are caught and end up in prison. I don't think about this very often but now I am wondering what life is like for them. Do they live with regret? Are they still hating? My response to these questions is that I feel an urge to pray for murderers that they may experience a change of heart and peace within their souls. As well though I need to rid my own heart of all negativity towards those I don't like or don't approve of, those I find difficult or overbearing, or who lie, and rather than dwell upon their weaknesses, look into my own heart and "kill" the enemy within me. I see the enemy within as my uncharitable thoughts about others and my desire to be rid of them from my life. Like David I need to gaze on God in the sanctuary and ask for His help.

### ***RUMINATIO***

We choose a word or phrase now from the passage, one that really speaks to us and which we resonate with, in readiness to carry it with us through the day and for as long as it continues to nourish us and speak to us. We may like to write it on a card and display it somewhere where we will see it frequently.

