

*“Wait for God, for I shall again praise him, my savior and my God”*

The praying of the 150 psalms is part of a timeless tradition within the Judeo-Christian tradition. The psalms offer a window into the past when our ancestors in the faith would praise God’s name as well as cry out to Him for mercy and deliverance from foes. The message found in Psalm 42 seems especially timely for our days. We too thirst for God like a deer thirsts for running water. We are only too aware of the fragility of human self-sufficiency. Humanity is in need of the care that can only come from God. On a related note, we have all had days where we can relate to the psalmist when the author cries out “Why are you cast down, my soul; why do you groan within me? Wait for God, for I shall again praise him, my savior and my God” (42:6).

Our reality seemed to crash earlier this year when we needed to remain in our houses and out of public spaces. It affected our ability to work in close quarters, attend school, gather at large graduation celebrations and birthday parties with friends and family, and look forward to casual Friday nights at popular restaurants. On an especially somber note, weddings were postponed and funerals were offered with heavy attendance restrictions. People naturally wondered “Why is God permitting this virus to wreak so much damage? Is it on account of divine anger or justice? What is the cause for all of this suffering?”

The threat of COVID-19 has been especially difficult for those with pre-existing conditions, the elderly who live alone, and the working class poor who may not have the option of calling in from a remote home office. The temporary closure of public spaces also meant that the people of God could not gather together for worship. We were not able to gather at the house of “The Mighty One” (42:5). It is only natural to consider the spiritual hunger that this contributed to. Significant portions of the faithful felt an ache for the Eucharist and the spoken word of God that they had not experienced in a long time.

Despite the very real losses of job security, food security, public worship, time spent with loved ones, and the fear of sickness that so many people face, we are called to trust that God is still with us and cares deeply about us. As the earthly hands and feet of Jesus, may we be Christ for others, particularly during these difficult days. For those blessed by God with the means to share time, talent, and treasure, may we use these days as an opportunity to renew our commitment to feed the hungry, give clothing to those who need it, and provide spiritual comfort to the afflicted. One of the ways that our Lord responds to the cries of His people is

through the generosity of God's human family to one another. We can use this time wisely to re-evaluate our trust in our heavenly Father's providence, avoid the temptation to think that we are self-sufficient, and be Christ to the neediest among us. May the blessings of God flow through us to our neighbor. When this time of exile comes to an end, may we remember our rediscovered connections to one another. Just as God delivered His people from Egyptian slavery and Babylonian captivity, He will deliver us from this troubling time. Let us emerge from this period of transition stronger and more loving towards God and others than before. That will be a fitting way to praise His name.