

Psalm 148

Alleluia.

- 1. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights.*
- 2. Praise him, all you his angels; praise him, all his host.*
- 3. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you stars of light.*
- 4. Praise him, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.*
- 5. Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.*
- 6. He made them fast for ever and ever;
he gave them a law which shall not pass away.*
- 7. Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;*
- 8. Fire and hail, snow and mist, tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word.*
- 9. Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;*
- 10 Wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and birds on the wing;*
- 11. Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;*
- 12. Young men and women, old and young together;
let them praise the name of the Lord.*
- 13. For his name only is exalted, his splendour above earth and heaven.*
- 14. He has raised up the horn of his people
and praise for all his faithful servants, the children of Israel,
a people who are near him.
Alleluia.*

Alleluia. Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights.

Psalm 148 is one of the 'Alleluia Psalms' (Psalms 146-150), so called because they begin and end with a call to praise (Praise the Lord).

Psalm 148 calls for praise to the Lord from the heavens (vv. 1-6) and from the earth (vv. 7-14).

In the first part, the psalmist summons the members of the heavenly council, the heavenly bodies and the heavenly ocean to form a great choir for the praise of God who created them.

The heavenly council can be seen also in Psalm 82:
'God has taken his stand in the council of heaven;
in the midst of the gods he gives judgement.'
He is the High God, who has taken his seat of honour.

The heavenly choir has to have an earthly equivalent. The creations of God, fire (lightning), snow, the stormy wind and the deep sea with its mysterious creatures should join the landscape, the creatures of the earth and human inhabitants of all ranks and ages to praise the Lord.

God's name (his saving presence) is exalted in power, and his glory (authority) rules the universe.

The fire, the wind and the mysterious creatures of the sea can be seen in Psalm 104:

'You make the winds your messengers and flames of fire your servants.
You laid the foundations of the earth,
that it never should move at any time.
You covered it with the deep like a garment;
the waters stood high above the hills.'

Also, the mysterious creatures:

'There is the sea spread far and wide,
and there move creatures beyond number, both small and great.
There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan
which you have made to play in the deep.'

Leviathan, the monster of the deep may remind us of the Loch Ness Monster!! In Ps. 104, the monster is tamed and plays in the water.

The last verse of Psalm 148 refers to Israel, who has a special reason to praise God, as he has drawn her near to him by establishing a covenant and by coming to dwell in Jerusalem. This can also be seen in Psalm 68:

'Why look with envy, you towering mountains,
at the mount which God has desired for his dwelling,
the place where the Lord will dwell for ever?'

So, Psalm 148 is an invitation to us to join with this choir in praising God for his creation. It asks for a response, to join with the joy of all the earth for God's creation, which never stops. By doing that, we co-operate with God in his creation and his love for all people.

There are many beautiful places in our own country and abroad, interesting towns and cities with fine buildings and architecture, all expressing the creative skill and gifts given by God.

This is summed up in that lovely sentence in Eucharistic Prayer D:
'Father of all, we give you thanks for every gift that comes from heaven.'

So, it is fitting that the last word of the Psalter is Alleluia!

Blessing

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among
you and remain with you always.

Amen.

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This is the last of the first series of psalm reflections. I hope that you have enjoyed them and found them helpful. A further series will begin in the autumn.

Fr. Peter
St. Michael's