

## Psalm 146

3rd Sunday of Advent Year A; 4th Sunday Year A

23rd and 32nd Sundays Year B

26th Sunday Year C

Evening Prayer I Feast of the Sacred Heart and Pastors

Morning Prayer Wednesday Week 4 & Office of the Dead

This is an invitation to praise YHWH because of who YHWH is – a God who cares for those who place their trust in him.

**<sup>1</sup>Praise YH! [Hal'êlû Yâ]!**

**Praise YHWH\*, O my soul\*!**

**<sup>2</sup>I will praise YHWH as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.**

**<sup>3</sup>Do not put your trust\* in princes, in mortal human beings, in whom there is no help\*.**

**<sup>4</sup>When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans come to nothing.**

The psalmist begins by calling on others to praise YHWH, and then immediately gives the same instruction to himself, telling himself to praise God from the depths of his being (his *nepeš*). See the article ‘Being’ in the Introduction.

I will sing to YHWH as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have breath to do so.

– Psalm 104:33

‘Mortal human beings’ are those who come from *’ādām*, and so from the *’adāmâ* (the ‘earth’, see verse 4), to which they must return.

Thus says YHWH: ‘Cursed are those who trust in mere mortal human beings and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from YHWH. Blessed are those who trust in YHWH, whose trust is YHWH.’

– Jeremiah 17:5,7

O grant us help against the foe, for human help is of no avail. With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.

– Psalm 60:11-12

It is better to take refuge in YHWH than to put confidence in human beings. It is better to take refuge in YHWH than to put confidence in princes.

– Psalm 118:8-9

Humans, made of earth a short time before, after a little while go to the earth from which all are taken, when the time comes to return the borrowed souls.

– Wisdom 15:8

All that is of earth returns to the earth, and what is from above returns above.

– Sirach 40:11

You turn us back to dust, and say, ‘Turn back, O human beings.’

– Psalm 90:3

Remember that you fashioned me like clay; and will you turn me to dust again?

– Job 10:9

I say, ‘Although you are gods, children of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like mortal human beings, and fall like any prince.’

– Psalm 82:7

Turn away from mortal human beings, who have only breath in their nostrils, for of what account are they?

– Isaiah 2:22

Humans [those from ’ādām] have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again.

– Ecclesiastes 3:19-20

All humankind [’ādām] must go to their eternal home, and the mourners will go about the streets; before the silver cord is snapped, and the golden bowl is broken, and the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it.

– Ecclesiastes 12:5-7

Know that I am with you [Jacob] and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

– Genesis 28:15

You are my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God my Saviour!

– Psalm 27:9

From where will my help come? My help comes from YHWH, who made heaven and earth.

– Psalm 121:1-2

You are the God my Saviour. I hope in you all day long.

– Psalm 25:5

I anxiously waited for YHWH; he stooped down to me and heard my cry.

– Psalm 40:1

You, O Lord, are my hope. I have placed my trust in you, YHWH, from my youth.

– Psalm 71:5

Wait for YHWH! For with YHWH there is kindness, and great power to redeem.

– Psalm 130:7

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

– Hebrews 4:16

**<sup>5</sup>Happy\* are those whose help is the God of Jacob, who wait on YHWH their God, <sup>6</sup>who made the heavens, the earth and the seas, and all that is in them;**

## YHWH

### 1. who keeps faith forever.

This is the first of ten qualities which the psalmist attributes to YHWH. We are told that God keeps faith for ever. This means that God will keep all the promises he has ever made to you and to your children and to the world. We will never be without God's love, no matter how dark the road may seem. Can we believe this when things are going hard for us? Sometimes we have found ourselves unable to keep promises we have made - and sometimes it is because the promises turned out to be unwisely made. Sometimes circumstances that are too complex to unravel have simply brought us to exhaustion and we have had to let promises go. Could we look at the central promises that are still functioning in our lives? Relying on God's grace could we ask to be more open to the Spirit which God is certainly offering us to find more effective ways of keeping the promises which we made in baptism and confirmation to carry on Jesus' mission of love in this world.

### 2. <sup>7</sup>who executes right judgment\* for the oppressed\*.

If we believe that God executes right judgment for the oppressed, then a lot of people must not be listening or responding to grace. If we were, the world would not be such an unjust place. Is God asking me or you to reach out in one or other area of oppression and do what we can, always respecting persons and in love, to put injustices right? Little help is gained by being overwhelmed by a huge list. God is the one who is just to the oppressed, so the real question is: Is God inspiring me, or us as a community, to do something in a specific area. If so am I willing to listen and to begin responding? Luke chooses the following text to set out the essence of Jesus' mission:

The spirit of the Lord YHWH is upon me,  
because YHWH has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners.

– Isaiah 61:1 (= Luke 4:17-18)

### 3. who gives food to the hungry.

Jesus gave food to the hungry (See Mark 6:34-44; Matthew 25:35-40). Can we love God without sharing his longing to reach out to meet people's hunger - for bread, for love, for a listening ear, for dignity, for a place and a home?

### 4. YHWH sets prisoners free.

See Jesus' example (Matthew 4:16; Luke 13:16). If so many people are locked into racism and prejudice and destructive addictions, and inability to forgive, it is not because grace is lacking. It must be because so many are insensitive to grace and failing to respond to the inspiration of God's loving Spirit to go out and help unlock the prisons that we create in our fear.

Jesus caused the ‘blind’ to ‘see’ (Matthew 9:30; 11:5; 20:29-34).

Thus says God, YHWH, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am YHWH, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

– Isaiah 42:5-7

I will lead the blind by a road they do not know, by paths they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I will do, and I will not forsake them.

– Isaiah 42:16

Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears!

– Isaiah 43:8

YHWH is faithful in all his words,  
and gracious in all his deeds.  
YHWH upholds all who are falling,  
and raises up all who are bowed down.

– Psalm 145:13-14

God gives the desolate a home to live in.

– Psalm 68:6

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed,  
defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

– Isaiah 1:17

YHWH is king; let the peoples tremble!  
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim;  
let the earth quake!  
YHWH is great in Zion;  
he is exalted over all the peoples.

– Psalm 99:1-2

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.

– Revelation 11:15

**5. <sup>8</sup>YHWH opens the eyes of the blind.**

**6. YHWH lifts up those who are bowed down.**

**7. YHWH loves the righteous\*.**

**8. <sup>9</sup>YHWH watches over the strangers.**

**9. He upholds the orphan and the widow.**

**10. but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.**

**<sup>10</sup>YHWH reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.**

**Praise YH! [Hal'êlû Yâ]**