

**08C*THE TIMELESS PSALMS:
A CALL TO WORSHIP
EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD C 2016
PSALM 72: 1-7, 10-14**

We come in awed worship, because of God's holy reign of love and mercy.

We come to celebrate the miracle of God's awesome revelations to humanity.

We come in wonder, to worship the God who reveals God's-Own-Self to us.

We come to celebrate the marvellous disclosures given to God's faithful ones.

We come in reverence, to honour and worship the God who is always Lord of lords, Monarch of all monarchs; President of all presidents, and Leader of all leaders. Holy is the Lord our God "...sacredness enfolding us, here and now." ¹

We come to celebrate the experiences of God's involvement with humanity over endless time, and how God has enabled humanity to receive these revelations. Amen.

PSALM 72:1-7, 10-14

1 Give your love of justice to the king, O God,
and righteousness to the king's son.

2 Help him judge your people in the right way;
let the poor always be treated fairly.

3 May the mountains yield prosperity for all,
and may the hills be fruitful.

4 Help him to defend the poor, to rescue the children of the needy,
and to crush their oppressors.

5 May they fear you as long as the sun shines,
as long as the moon remains in the sky. Yes, forever!

6 May the king's rule be refreshing like spring rain
on freshly cut grass, like the showers that water the earth.

7 May all the godly flourish during his reign.

May there be abundant prosperity until the moon is no more.

10 The western kings of Tarshish and other distant lands will bring him tribute.

The eastern kings of Sheba and Seba will bring him gifts.

11 All kings will bow before him, and all nations will serve him.

12 He will rescue the poor when they cry to him;

he will help the oppressed, who have no one to defend them.

13 He feels pity for the weak and the needy, and he will rescue them.

14 He will redeem them from oppression and violence,
for their lives are precious to him.

**PRAYERS OF TRUST AND PETITION:
EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD C 2016
PSALM 72: 1-7, 10-14**

Revealing God, we come in awed worship, because of God's holy reign of love and mercy as displayed over centuries to God's people. We come to celebrate the miracle of God's awesome revelations to humanity as nations, groups, or as individuals, to teach us how to live together in peace and with compassion for each other. We come to celebrate the way we can trust in God's leadership and direction in what is the best way forward in any situation; and we pray that we will always be guided by God's Holy Word, and the revelations that are disclosed to us. May we always be open to receiving from God, what God offers us in love.

God, you who are a Holy Mystery and a Sacred Presence, we come in wonder to worship the God who reveals God's-Own-Self to us in small and larger glimpses of God's holiness, so that we are blessed by that miracle of grace. We give thanks that God trusts us with these revelations; and may we always respect and honour them, so that we are always drawn ever closer to God's Holy Presence - *"Invisible Mystery... sacredness enfolding us; here and now."*¹; and in those holy moments of revelation, we rejoice and celebrate the marvels of God's grace and blessings.

God of Unparalleled Majesty, we bow in reverent awe as we worship you here in this sacred space that we call our true home. We give thanks for the faithful people who have nurtured our faith and encouraged us in our earthly pilgrimage; and taught us how to grow in faith and love. We pray for people who are new in their faith in God; for people who are persecuted for their faith in God; and for people who have no faith in God, and who feel as if there is no hope for them in either life or death. We pray that the God who meets all peoples' needs will come very near to them to bless and guide them all. All praise be to God, the Holy One. Amen.

**A PERSONAL MEDITATION:
EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD C 2016
PSALM 72: 1-7, 10-14**

I offer no disrespect to the thrust of Psalm 72, and its prayer for the king, but in a time when there are very few remaining kingdoms around the world with hereditary royalty as their leaders, I have therefore paraphrased the wording of the selected psalm. I have also been non-gender specific, and instead refer to prayers for a nation's leader and those leaders' successors. Therefore my meditative prayer is: *"...Give your justice to our leader, and righteousness to the leaders successors, O God. May all leaders judge their people in the right way, and let the poor always be treated fairly. May they know prosperity and fruitful harvests. Help all leaders to defend the poor and to rescue the children of the needy... May all leaders rescue the poor, and defend the oppressed; may leaders feel pity for the weak and needy and rescue them, saving them from oppression and violence – because their own people's lives are precious..."*

Creative pause: May all leaders judge all their people fairly and in the right way.

Without being too cynical, if one can believe some of the background briefings that appear in the media, the people who are forcing the most horrific treatment on people of faith in the One True God is because the perpetrators and their own communities are themselves utterly impoverished; and want others to suffer as "their people" are already suffering! Whatever are the motivations of any of our world or national leaders, Psalm 72 offers a template for prayers on their behalf.

Creative pause: May leaders save their people from oppression and violence.

The psalmist prayed that his leader and all subsequent leaders treat their people in *"the right way"* – but what do we mean by that? The United Nations determine and promote many "Conventions" and "Declarations" that have been hammered out over the years by nations and their Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) which provide an active template for nations who are signatories to some or all of those Conventions and Declarations. Articles 1 and 2 spell out the basic message of *"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights"*: **Article 1.** *All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.* **Article 2.** *Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty...."* Paraphrased are the words the psalmist also prayed: *"O God, may all leaders be in awe of you for as long as the sun shines upon us, as long as the moon remains up there in the sky."* Amen and Amen!

Creative pause: May our leaders and their successors act justly and humanely.

¹ *"Invisible mystery"* CD

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