

**47C\*THE TIMELESS PSALMS:  
A CALL TO WORSHIP  
PENTECOST 8C 2013 [Ordinary 15C] & [Proper 10C]  
PSALM 82**

God of wisdom, we come together to worship, praise and bless you.  
**Teach us that our God's wisdom is pure and holy, upright and honest.**

God of integrity and truth, we come together to honour and revere you.  
**Teach us that our God's integrity is pure and holy, and above reproach.**

God of justice, we come to learn from God's compassion and care.  
**Teach us that God seeks justice for all people – justice and fairness—  
that flows like a mighty river, that renews and revives all people - in love.  
Praise and blessings be to God's just and holy name, forever and forever. Amen**

Acknowledgements:

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\*The additional weekly numbering is from the Revised COCU Indexing Scheme COCU ('Consultation on Church Union); as it offers an easy sequential numbering for the Revised Common Lectionary for the Church Calendar.

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jstott@netspace.net.au

**PRAYERS OF CONFESSION & PETITION:  
PENTECOST 8C 2013 [Ordinary 15C] & [Proper 10C]  
PSALM 82**

Holy God, we come this day to confess to you our sins of omission and commission. We have failed in so many ways to be your reliable witness here within our gathered community of faith, and also within our own local community and neighbourhood. We come to our holy and compassionate God who knows all our secrets, who understands our fears, and who listens to our faltering prayers of regret and remorse, and who offers us pardon.

All-knowing God, however beautiful and good God's world is, and how wonderful is God's creation; somehow, there seems to be a dark cloud of evil hanging over our community, our nation, and over our world; as the powers of greed, wilful blindness and selfishness seems to dominate the minds and hearts of our elected leaders; our business magnates; our media tycoons; and our self-elected spokespersons for any entrepreneur out to make a profit from the misery and suffering of vulnerable people. Just as the Psalmist pleaded with God to *"Rise up, O God, and judge the earth, for all the nations belong to you...."*, help us to leave judgement to God; and guide us, as we seek to let in the light of your love and mercy into this our shadowed world; and forgive us when we have failed to be, or do acts of mercy, generosity, and simple kindness - in the name of God.

Grace-giving God, forgive and renew us, and enable us to be more truly a sign and symbol of your justice, mercy and peace. Help us to accept your forgiveness and mercy; and help us to forgive our neighbours, our fellow pilgrims within our own and other faith communities; and to forgive ourselves, as we seek to live a life of integrity, compassion and caring. Hear us, O God, as we confess our sin, and help us all to remember that compassion and forgiveness are integral parts of the Being of God, whose gracious mercy and love is never-ending, even in the face of our rebellion against God's ways. We give thanks that we worship a God who is utter generosity, tenderness and compassion; and who is slow to anger, and overwhelmingly rich in mercy, amazing grace and gentle forgiveness. Amen.

**A PERSONAL MEDITATION:  
PENTECOST 8C 2013 [Ordinary 15C] & [Proper 10C]  
PSALM 82**

There is a hymn that I dearly love, whose words were created by John W. Kleinig, an Australian Lutheran pastor and teacher whose repeated words: *“Because we bear your name...”*<sup>1</sup> refer to Jesus—but in the light of Psalm 82 and its mysterious concepts of the Holy and Righteous God as Judge over the lesser gods of the earth and the heavens - to me these words also relate to our God; because as one of God’s beloved children, I do *“bear God’s name”* in whatever I do and say, each and every day. Pastor Kleinig prays: *“Let nothing that we do or say offend the weak so that they fall and lose their faith in you - because we bear your name...”* This is also my prayer!

Creative pause:        May I not do or say anything to offend the weak.

This Psalm paints a picture of the results of intolerable neglect, poverty and distress that I have seen in my travels, when a sense of helplessness was overpowering in the face of such vulnerability to disease and poverty. Yet, what did I do? It is so easy to use helplessness as an excuse for doing nothing! But, there before me was evidence of indifference or appalling apathy, and the willful avoidance of responsibility by leaders. But, despite the years of speaking and writing about these issues, and apart from some level of consciousness raising, I doubt that I have made any improvements in any of those sad situations that I saw and experienced! As Pastor Kleinig prays: *“You are the salt that cleanses us, so clean us out, and make us fit for common life with you - because we bear your name...”*<sup>1</sup> May I, and leaders in positions of power indeed be cleansed of this futile sense of helplessness!

Creative pause:        A sense of helplessness is really no excuse!

Is the desire for change enough, when faced by such a dominating cloud of evil that appears as if it is hovering over the whole creation? The wise prophet Amos had quite a bit to say about similar situations, as is foreshadowed in the Psalm. *“.....How terrible it will be for you who say, ‘If only the day of the Lord were here! For then the Lord would rescue us from all our enemies.’ But you have no idea what you are wishing for. That day will not bring light and prosperity, but darkness and disaster. In that day you will be like a man who runs from a lion - only to meet a bear. After escaping the bear, he leans his hand against a wall in his house - and is bitten by a snake.”*<sup>2</sup> So what are you and I to do to change anything? Again, Amos speaks God’s message of truth: *“...Do what is good and run from evil - that you may live! Then the Lord God Almighty will truly be your helper, just as you have claimed he is. Hate evil and love what is good...”*<sup>3</sup>.

Creative pause:        *“Do what is good and run from evil - that you may live...!”*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This Meditation is based in part on a hymn from “Together in Song” #686—  
*“Lord Jesus, we belong to you...”*  
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<sup>2</sup> Amos 5: 18-19 (NLT)

<sup>3</sup> Amos 5:14-15a (NLT)