PSALM 5

✠ This psalm is written in the form of a Lament.

✣ See the note about "lament" in the introduction to Psalm 3.

✠ Saint Athanasius recommends that we sing Psalm 5 for prayer and supplication. For this also, he recommends that we sing Psalms 140, 141, 142, 145.

✠ This psalm is read at the First Hour. It is the "fixed psalm" of this hour. Vv. 8-13 are often said by clergy on entering the Altar of the Temple, during Entrance Prayers ; vv. 8-9 are used similarly by bishops, as they enter the Temple at the greeting. Since everyone who enters the Temple may say the same prayers as do the clergy, then the people likewise may repeat these verses. See the note on verse 8.

✠ Saint Athanasius recommends that when we see the attempts by the wicked to ensnare us, then we ought to wake up early and to sing Psalm 5.

"*Morning supplication of the Church*"

"*A morning prayer for guidance*"

"*The joy of life indwelt by God*"

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1 For the End. About her who receives the heritage. A psalm by David.

V 1 About the Inscription : in the Masoretic (Hebrew) text, the Inscription is : "To the choirmaster : for the flutes. A psalm of David".

✠ About "*for the End*" : see the note about "*for the End*" on Psalm 4:1.

✠ Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that the Church is she "*who receives the heritage*". The inheritance is the Kingdom of Heaven. He also says that the Church, as the Bride of Christ, addresses this psalm to God. It is her voice that cries out to the Lord (see verse 2).

✣ Saint Augustine, referring to Psalm 15:5-6, adds that the Church receives eternal life as her inheritance through our Lord Jesus Christ so as to possess God Himself, who feeds us and supports us.

✠ About "*heritage*" : the dictionary meaning is a relative of "*inheritance*", but it has a broader application. It means : features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, that were created in the past and still have historical importance. This is the one occurrence of this word in the Psalter.

[Τὰ ῥήματά μου Verba mea auribus]

2 Give ear to my utterances, O LORD ;/ understand my cry.

V 2 About "*give ear*" (divine) : see Psalms 16:1 ; 38:13 ; 53:4 ; 54:2 ; 83:9 ; 85:6 ; 139:7 ; 142:1.

✠ About "*understand*" : see the note about "*understand*" on Psalm 2:10.

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3 Give heed to the voice of my supplication,/ O my King and my God ;/ for to You shall I make my prayer, O LORD.

V 3 About "*give heed ... supplication*" : Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that we must follow the example of the silent prayer from the heart of Hannah (see 1 Kingdoms 1:2-2:21, and especially 1:10-13) and adopt the posture of a supplicant. Our prayer may never include even the suggestion of any accusation against anyone. We must simply and plainly be asking with the attitude of love.

✣ According to *The Orthodox Study Bible*, Saint Cyprian of Carthage recognises in the prayer of Hannah the silent and heartfelt prayer of the Church as she pours out her prayer icon and modestly from her heart.

✠ About "*give heed*" : see Psalms 16:1 ; 60:2 ; 85:6 ; 141:7.

✠ About "*voice of my supplication*" : see Psalms 27:2, 6 ; 30:23 ; 65:19 ; 85:6 ; 114:1 ; 129:2 ; 139:7 ; 140:1.

✠ About "*voice*" : see the note about "*voice*" on Psalm 3:5.

✠ About "*supplication*" (noun) : see Psalms 6:10 ; 16:1 ; 21:25 ; 27:2, 6 ; 30:23 ; 33:16 ; 38:13 ; 39:2 ; 54:2 ; 60:2 ; 65:19 ; 85:6 ; 87:3 ; 101:1, 18 ; 105:44 ; 114:1 ; 118:169 ; 129:2 ; 139:7 ; 140:1 ; 141:3, 7 ; 142:1 ; 144:19. See the note about "*make supplication*" on Psalm 29:9.

✠ About "*my King and my God*" : see Psalms 67:25 ; 83:4 ; 144:1 ; see also the note about "*King*" on Psalm 2:6.

✠ About "*God*" : see verse 5 ; see the note about "*God*" on Psalm 3:3.

✠ About "*to You shall I make my prayer*" : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus reminds us that every Christian believer and the whole Church are beset by temptations and attacks of all sorts. It is by constantly invoking the Lord's help that all survive and persist. He cautions us to keep in mind that the Scriptures show us that we must all call out to the Lord for help, and depend on Him to protect and to save us.

✠ About "*make ... prayer*" : see 1 Kingdoms 2:9 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 31:6 ; 71:15 ; 108:4 ; see also the note about "*prayer*" on Psalm 4:2 (noun).

✠ About "*Lord*" : see the note about "*Lord*" on Psalm 1:2.

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4 In the morning You will hear my voice ;/ in the morning I shall stand beside You,/ and You will look upon me ;

V 4 Saint Athanasius understands this verse as meaning that I shall see the divine and holy mysteries that the Lord has prepared for those who love Him.

✠ About "*in the morning*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that whereas others delay coming to prayer until countless other things are first accomplished, she who inherits rises at dawn to bless the Lord. Like the sun, she rises first thing to pay homage to the Lord. Moreover, he says that while we sleep, the rest of creation pays homage to the Lord. He says that if we wash our bodies upon awakening, how much more important it is to wash the soul before anything else. See Wisdom of Solomon 16:28.

⁜ Saint Athanasius advises that whenever we notice evil-doers setting a trap for us, and we want the Lord to hearken to our prayer, then we ought to sing (or at least to say) Psalm 5 at dawn.

⁜ Saint Jerome refers to the light of the Lord, which purifies the heart and scatters darkness and shadows. After the rising of the true Light in our hearts, the Lord will hear us as we stand beside Him.

⁜ Saint Bede of Jarrow comments that when the night of this present life has passed, and the morning of the life to come dawns, then we will have no further need of light from books. The true Light of the World will enlighten us. [See Apocalypse 21:23.]

⁜ Traditionally at daybreak, the believer is at worship. The placement of this psalm in the First Hour coincides with the rising of the sun, which always refers us to Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, to His Resurrection, and to the Second Advent. About "Sun of Righteousness" or another relative title "Orient" : see Malachi 3:20 ; Luke 1:78-79 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2).

⁜ See 2 Moses 29:39 ; 3 Moses 6:13 ; 4 Moses 28:4 ; Psalms 54:18 ; 58:17 ; 87:14 ; 91:3 ; 118:148 ; Wisdom of Sirach 39:5 ; Daniel 6:11 ; Mark 1:35.

✠ About "*I shall stand beside You*" : Father P Reardon notes that the Greek and Latin words "better preserve the original sense of standing in proper order in the presence of God".

✠ About "*You will look upon me*" : the French translation by Archimandrite Placide (Deseille) gives "je contemplerai" (I shall contemplate).

✠ In this verse, the word-and-concept order is repeated thrice, and reversed twice. This is a sort of chiastic poetic intensification of the concept itself.

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5 for You, indeed, are not a God delighting in lawlessness./
One working evil shall not sojourn near You,

V 5 About "*not ... delighting in lawlessness*" : see Wisdom of Sirach 15:20.

✠ About "*God*" : see the note on verse 3.

✠ About "*delighting in*" : there are three verbs which have approximately the same meaning, perhaps with a slightly different nuance in Greek, which are all translated with approximately the same words in English. These are : θέλω, *thelō* ; κατατρυφάω, *katatryphaō* ; τέρπω, *terpō*. In this verse, it is *thelō*.

⁜ Since the English dictionary meaning of "delight in" is "to get a lot of pleasure from", it is clear that, following the words of Saint Nikolaj (Velimirović), knowing the Law of God, being rooted in the Will of God (which expresses the love of God) does give great pleasure to the person whose personal focus is in this Law. This is further supported by the French translation by

Archimandritee Placide (Deseille), who uses "*se complaire*", which is translated into English as "to delight in or to revel in something or doing something".

✣ See Psalms 17:20 ; 21:9 ; 34:9 ; 36:4, 11, 23 ; 39:7 ; 40:12 ; 67:4 ; 111:1 ; 118:14 ; 146:10.

✠ About "*lawlessness*" : see the note on verse 6 ; see Psalms 7:15 ; 17:5, 24 ; 30:19 ; 31:5 ; 35:3, 4, 5 ; 37:19 ; 38:12 ; 40:7 ; 44:8 ; 48:6 ; 50:4, 5, 7 ; 54:4, 10, 11 ; 56:2 ; 58:4, 5 ; 63:7 ; 68:28 ; 72:19 ; 88:23 ; 93:2, 23 ; 106:17, 42 ; 108:14 ; 118:133, 150 ; 128:3 ; 138:24 ; Isaiah 33:15 ; Jeremiah 6:13.

✠ About "*one working* [doing] *evil*" : Saint Augustine explains that such persons have a habit of sinning, and therefore cannot bear the light of true understanding. They carry their own night around with them, and they recoil from light.

✣ See Psalms 14:4 ; 21:17 ; 25:5 ; 36:1, 8, 9 ; 63:3 ; 73:3 ; 91:12 ; 93:16 ; 104:15 ; 118:115.

✠ About "*... not sojourn near You*" : see the initial note on verse 6 ; see also Matthew 7:23 ; 25:41 ; Luke 13:27.

✠ About "*sojourn*" : see the note about "*sojourn*" on Psalm 14:1 ; see Psalm 30:14 ; 55:7 ; 60:5 ; 93:17 ; 104:23 ; 119:6. See also the notes about "*sojournings*" on Psalm 54:16. See the note about "*sojourner*" on Psalm 38:13.

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6 nor shall transgressors of the law continue before Your eyes :/
You have hated all those working lawlessness.

V 6 The second phrase of the previous verse, the first phrase of this verse, and both parts of the following verse in their repetition of the concept emphasise its essence by providing a substantial poetic intensification.

✠ About "*transgressors of the law*" : this translates the noun-form of the Greek word παράνομος, *paranomos*, meaning "the transgressor". The root word *para* means "beyond", "distinct from ", "diametrically opposite", "beside", "against", "near" "rather than". All these are possible nuances regarding the mistreatment of the law.

✣ See Psalms 35:2 ; 36:7 ; 85:14 ; 118:85, 113.

✠ About "*Your eyes*" : see the note about "*His eyes ... needy*" on Psalm 10:4 ; see 5 Moses 11:12 ; 5 Moses 32:10 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 3 Kingdoms 9:3 ; 2 Chronicles 16:9 ; Psalms 17:25 ; 30:23 ; 31:8 ; 32:18 ; 33:16 ; 65:7 ; 138:16 ; Proverbs 5:21 ; 15:3 ; Wisdom of Sirach 15:19 ; Amos 9:8 ; Jonah 2:5 (Matins Canticle 6) ; 1 Peter 3:12.

✠ About "*You have hated*" : Saint Jerome asks rhetorically : "Who is hated by God ?" He answers that it is the evil-doer. He continues that this, however, has not to do with those who fall into sin and who "miss the mark". Rather, it has to with those who have actually become sin. Those who insist on persevering in sin are those who have become sin, because they do so as their way of life. On the contrary, those who abandon the ways of sin are loved by the Lord.

✣ See Psalm 30:7 ; Proverbs 1:19 ; 11:19 ; 12:24 ; 5:9, 10, 28 ; 17:16 ; Wisdom of Solomon 14:9 ; Wisdom of Sirach 15:13 ; Amos 5:21 ; Zechariah 8:17 ; Malachi 1:3 ; Apocalypse 2:6, 15.

✠ About "*hate*" : According to the usual dictionary interpretation, "*hate*" as a noun or as a verb implies an emotion of intense or passionate dislike ; an extreme aversion, hostility, detestation loathing ; abhorrence ; execration ; an antipathy ; a revulsion ; an abomination. Hatred does not require logic and it may reject logic or "common sense". It is thus irrational. Although some believe that hate is the opposite of love, the true opposite of love is fear. We are exhorted in the Scriptures and in the words of the Fathers to beware of fear. Since fear is at the root of hatred, there is a close relationship between fear and hate, and both are irrational. Sometimes, the intensity of the emotion provokes a desire to destroy the object of hatred, which is why there is often violence associated with the emotion. Saint Augustine demonstrated the balance of the path of the Christian believer with his saying : "With love for mankind and hatred of sins". The Apostle Paul also reminds us : "'Be angry, and do not sin' : do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27). It is useful to recall that "wrath" is an extreme form of anger. These passionate definitions and expressions describe in the first place the emotional activity of fallen human beings. By extension, these definitions describe how human beings consistently project their fallen perceptions onto God, and in self-deception imagine that God has passions as do humans. It is crucial that the words of the Apostle John be kept in mind as seen in 1 John 4. Both here, and in the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, it is seen that the environment of God is purely and simply love. We can see from 5 Moses 6:5 and from the words of our Saviour in Matthew 22:37 and Luke 10:27 that love is expected to be the foundation of our relationship with the Lord. The nature of this God-rooted love is refined in 1 John 4:18 : "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love". No negative passion can emanate from the Lord God, who is the source of love and whose nature is love.

✠ About "*those working lawlessness*" : see the note on Psalm 6:9 ; see also Psalms 13:4 ; 35:13 ; 52:5 ; 57:3 ; 58:3, 6 ; 91:8, 10 ; 93:4, 16 ; 100:8 ; 118:3 ; 124:5 ; 140:4, 9.

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7 You will destroy all those speaking the lie :/ a deceitful man of blood, the LORD loathes.

V 7 About "*You will destroy*" : Saint Augustine explains that this phrase does not necessarily mean that the Lord destroys. Rather, those whose habit is to sin and to lie are in fact willingly stealing away from existence and creeping into non-existence. He further comments that through our fallen nature we human beings have become liars by habit. At worst, we can become ourselves a lie. He exhorts us that if we wish to be truthful, then we must call out for help to the Lord. With His help, we begin to be healed and we become truthful. In Him, we can become true in the several meanings of that word. He further underlines the fact that any lie has no being, no existence. "If what is is spoken, truth is spoken ; but if what is not is spoken, it is a lie". He also reminds us that "*a lying mouth will destroy one's soul*" (Wisdom of Solomon 1:11).

✣ Blessed Jerome believed that the worker of evil (murderer, cunning), though hated by God, is still alive (*i.e.*, capable of repentance and amendment). The liar (an aspect of the heretical teacher) perishes altogether. This person is self-destroyed by the lie, and this person destroys others nearby. The heretical teacher destroys and kills as many souls as he seduces by the lie, including himself.

✠ About "*destroy*" : see 2 Moses 15:9 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 32:28 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 20:11 ; 82:18 ; 118:95 ; 142:12 ; Isaiah 26:14 (Matins Canticle 5). See also the note about "*do not destroy*" on Psalm 25:9.

✠ About "*the lie*" : see the note about "*lie*" on Psalm 4:3.

✠ About "*deceitful*" : see Psalms 11:3, 4 ; 16:1 ; 23:4 ; 30:19 ; 42:1 ; 51:6 ; 108:2 ; 119:2, 3. (This list includes adjectives and adverbs.) See the note about "*deceived*" on verse 10.

✠ About "*man of blood*" : see 2 Kingdoms 16:7 ; Psalm 25:9 ; 54:24 ; 138:19 ; Isaiah 1:15 ; 59:3, 7.

✠ About "*blood*" : see Psalms 50:16

✠ About "*loathes*" : see Psalms 13:1 ; 52:2 ; 55:6 ; 105:40 ; 106:18 ; 118:163. See the note about "*hated*" on verse 6 ; see also the note about "*anger*" and "*fury*" on Psalm 2:5.

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8 But as for me, in the multitude of Your mercy/ I shall come into Your house :/ I shall worship towards Your holy temple in fear of You.

V 8 About "*mercy*" : Saint Cyril of Jerusalem informs catechumens that the sum of our sins is not greater than the magnitude of God's mercies. Our wounds are not beyond the skill of the Great Physician. We surrender to Him with faith, and we tell Him of our ills.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that the Church has been gathered together from all the previously described sinners ; and therefore, her rescuing is due completely to God's mercy, wonderful loving-kindness and ineffable goodness. However, there are those who still refuse this mercy and this love.

✣ Saint Cæsarius of Arles exhorts us not to despair of the Lord's mercy, even after we have committed a hundred, or even thousands of sins. We ought never to allow ourselves to believe that we can have committed such sins that are beyond God's mercy (contrary to the frequent lament of many people). He reminds us not to focus on the multitude of our sins, but rather to gaze upon the Divine Physician. What can close the door to Divine Mercy is our readiness to believe that God is either unwilling or unable to have compassion on us. This is a patent lie. Although the Lord both wills to show mercy because He is Good, and He is able because He is Omnipotent, yet He does not force us because of His compassion, love and patience.

✣ Saint Nikolaj (Velimirović) wrote : "Truly, the name of the Lord's justice is mercy" (*Prayers by the Lake*, #2).

✣ Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) reminds us that "*mercy*" refers to the bridging of the gulf between God's righteousness and the fallen creation. Anyone who asks God to "have mercy" is lamenting his own helplessness, and at the same time is giving a cry of hope. The request addresses the sin, but also its overcoming. The one who thus prays affirms that God in His glory accepts us even though we are sinners, and that He indeed asks us to accept the fact that God has accepted us.

✣ Schemamonk John (Alekseyev) of New Valamo, in a letter, comments that there is no sin which

could conquer God's mercy. He adds that, compared with God's mercy, all our sins (whatever they may be) are tantamount to a handful of sand thrown into the great ocean.

❖ See, for instance, Micah 7:18-19 ; Isaiah 38:17 ; 43:25 ; Jeremiah 38:34 ; 40:8 ; Hebrews 8:12.

✣ Archimandrite Placide (Deseille) comments that the word "*hesed*" manifests the loving fidelity of God to the bilateral covenant made with His people.

✣ "*Mercy*" translates the Hebrew word *hesed* and the Greek word ἔλεος, *eleos*. This word's meaning refers to a relationship between persons which is manifested in concrete actions of love by a person towards another person or persons or creatures. It is a covenant term used to describe the character of those who know and love God. Other words such as "kindness", "loving-kindness", "mercy", "compassion", "loyalty" and "loyal love", are all words which together describe this relationship and behaviour. It does not describe a mood or feeling, but rather a state of being.

✣ See the note on Psalm 22:6. See also 1 Moses 24:12 ; Ruth 1:8 ; Psalms 30:8, 22 ; 31:10 ; 32:5, 18, 22 ; 35:8 ; 56:11 ; 58:17, 18 ; 60:8 ; 62:4 ; 68:14 ; 102:4, 11, 17 ; 113:9 ; 118:64 ; 129:7 ; 135 ; 137:2, 8 ; 140:5 ; 142:8, 12 ; 143:2 ; 146:11 ; Wisdom of Solomon 15:1 ; Wisdom of Sirach 2:18 ; 18:10 ; Habakkuk 2:2 (Matins Canticle 4) ; Jonah 3:9 (Matins Canticle 6) ; Lamentations 3:28 ; Daniel 3:35, 38, 42 ;

Luke 1:50, 54 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 1) ; Luke 1:72 (Matins Canticle 2).

✣ About "*mercy*" as a concept : see Psalms 129:3 ; 142:2.

✠ About "*I shall come into Your house...*" : these words would naturally and habitually come to mind whenever one enters the Holy Temple. The words are liturgically prescribed for the clergy in certain places, and they are always appropriate for all the faithful as they enter the Temple to pray.

✣ Saint Augustine says metaphorically that he enters the house as a stone which is part of that house, which is God's holy Temple. Although we enter the house, we are at the same time part of this house. See 1 Corinthians 3:17.

✠ About "*come into*" : see Psalms 42:4 ; 65:13 ; 70:16 ; 72:17 ; 99:4 ; 117:19, 20 ; 131:3, 7.

✠ About "[*Your*] *house*" (God's house) : see the note on Psalm 95:1 ; see also Psalms 25:8 ; 29:1 ; 35:9 ; 41:5 ; 51:10 ; 54:15 ; 64:5 ; 65:13 ; 68:10 ; 83:5, 11 ; 133:1 ; 134:2.

✠ About "*worship*" : see 2 Moses 34:14 ; 5 Moses 26:10 ; 32:43, (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Chronicles 16:28 ;

Psalms 21:28, 30 ; 28:2 ; 65:4 ; 85:9 ; 94:6 ; 95:9 ; 96:7 ; 98:5, 9 ; 131:7 ; 137:2 ; Matthew 4:10 ; John 4:23-24.

✠ About "*... towards Your holy temple*" : see 3 Kingdoms 8:42, 46 ; Psalms 27:2 ; 137:2 ; Jonah 2:5, 8 : Daniel 6:11.

✠ About "*temple*" : see the note on Psalm 10:4 ; see also Psalms 17:7 ; 26:4 ; 27:2 ; 28:9 ; 44:16 ; 64:5 ; 67:30 ; 78:1 ; 137:2 ; 143:12 ; Jonah 2:5, 8 (Matins Canticle 6) ; Habakkuk 2:20 ; Daniel 3:53 (Matins Canticle 7).

✠ About "*fear of You*" (of the Lord) : see the note about "*fear*" on Psalm 2:11.

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9 O LORD, lead me on the way in Your righteousness, because

of my enemies./ Make straight my way before Your Face ;

V 9 About "*lead me on the way*" : this phrase translates a single Greek word of complex meaning. The verb ὁδηγέω, *hodēgeō*, means "to lead one upon his way". The word includes the verb ἡγέομαι, *hēgeomai*, which means "to lead the way", "to go before" (and it is the root of the word "hegumen" or "igumen", hence this title for an abbot or abbess). It includes also the word ὁδός, *hodos*, which means "way", "road", "path". The translation "*lead me on the way*" is stronger in implication than merely to use "guide me on the way", because the one leading personally goes ahead, on the path. A guide, however, may accompany at the side, be nearby, or even give directions in writing.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that since we require guidance to travel anywhere on earth, how much more are we in need of the guidance of Divine Grace in this present life on our way to Heaven. Therefore, not only ought we to reach out to hold the Lord's Right Hand, but also to strive to be worthy of being taken by that Hand.

✣ Saint Augustine uses a Latin text which gives "guide my journey in Your sight", which may add a helpful perspective. He says that this journey is one which is made not by making any change of geographical location on earth. It is important that we take flight within, to our conscience, to our heart, to the place where God sees. To travel and to reach the journey's end is simply to desire it with all our heart.

✣ Saint Jerome considers that "*the way*" is the reading of the Holy Scriptures. He adds that it is crucial that our reading of these words be in harmony with the Grace of God, since everyone whose understanding becomes faulty falls down in God's path.

✣ See Psalms 24:5 , 9 ; 26:11 ; 30:4 ; 44:5 ; 59:11 ; 60:3 ; 66:5 ; 72:24 ; 85:11 ; 118:35 ; 138:24 ; 142:10.

✠ About "*Your righteousness*": see 2 Moses 15:13 (Matins Canticle 1) ; Psalms 7:18 ; 21:32 ; 30:2 ; 34:24, 28 ; 35:7, 11 ; 39:11 ; 49:6 ; 50:16 ; 68:28 ; 70:2, 15, 16, 19, 24 ; 71:1 ; 87:13 ; 88:17 ; 96:6 ; 97:2 ; 102:17 ; 118:7, 40, 62, 106, 123, 142, 144, 160, 164 ; 142:1, 11 ; 144:7.

✠ About "*enemies*" : Although it may not always appear so to others, it is not necessarily so that I am an enemy to another or others, but that another or others choose(s) to be an enemy to me. Although the word "enemy" often appears in the plural, it may sometimes be treated in the singular, with reference to the person of Satan (the devil), the "Adversary" (see 1 Peter 5:8). Although he is the Adversary, we must be careful not in any way to consider him as an equal opposite to the Lord. Rather, the devil is an insubstantial and powerless liar, who has only such power as we allow him to have over us. Because of our weakness and our inability to trust God, it took the Incarnation of the Logos and His Death and Resurrection to overcome this slavery (see Hebrews 2:14-15).

✣ See the notes about "*enemies*" on Psalms 6:8, 11 ; 7:5 ; 20:9 ; 43:6 ; see also 2 Moses 15:6 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 32:27, 31, 41, 43 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Kingdoms 2:1 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 8:3 ; 9:4, 7, 14, 26 ; 12:3, 5 ; 16:9, 13 ; 17:1, 4, 18, 41, 49 ; 24:2, 19 ; 56:2, 6, 11 ; 29:2 ; 30:9, 12, 16 ; 36:20 ; 37:17, 20 ; 40:3, 6, 8 ; 41:11 ; 43:11 ; 44:6 ; 53:7, 9 ; 55:3, 10 ; 58:2, 11 ; 65:3 ; 67:2, 22, 24 ; 68:5, 19 ; 70:10 ; 71:9 ; 77:53, 61, 66 ; 79:7 ; 80:15, 16 ; 82:3 ; 88:11, 24, 52 ; 91:10, 12 ; 96:3 ; 101:9 ; 104:24 ; 105:10, 41, 42 ; 107:14 ; 109:1, 2 ; 111:8 ; 117:7 ; 118:98, 139 ; 126:5 ; 131:18 ; 135:24 ; 137:7 ; 138:21, 22 ; 142:9, 12 ; Daniel 2:32 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:71, 72 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2).

✠ About "*make straight*" : here, and elsewhere in the Psalter are words such as "straighten", "direct" and

"uprightness", which refer to God and His Law and the making of things right, hence "*straight*".

✣ Words such as "inclining", "bending", "crooked", and "twisted", which address the result of the Fall, are found in the Scriptures.

✣ See the note about "*straight path*" on Psalm 26:11 ; see also Psalm 118:9 ; Wisdom of Solomon 9:18 ; Wisdom of Sirach 2:6 ; Isaiah 26:7 ; Hebrews 12:13.

✠ About "*before Your Face*" : this phrase translates the Greek ἐνώπιόν σου, *enōpion sou*. This may give a meaning similar to "in Your presence", although the meaning is less focussed then. The root of the Greek word ἐνώπιον, *enōpion* is ὤπς, *ōps*, which means "eye", "face", "countenance". Sometimes the phrase is tranlated as "before ... eyes" because the word "eyes" appears with this Greek word. This word in Greek is also sometimes translated as "before me", "in the presence of", "in the face of". "Face-to-face" conveys Homer's use of its root meaning, "look in the face", which stresses the importance of the sense of sight in this encounter. In the Greek, there is in this psalter a specific word for "*face*", which is πρόσωπον, *prosōpon*. See the note about "*Face*" on Psalm 4:7.

✣ See Psalms 9:20, 25 ; 14:4 ; 17:7, 13, 23, 25 ; 18:15 ; 21:26, 28, 30 ; 22:5 ; 35:3 ; 37:18 ; 38:6 ; 40:13 ; 49:3, 8 ; 50:5, 6 ; 53:5 ; 55:9, 14 ; 60:8 ; 61:9 ; 67:4, 5, 8 ;68:23 ; 71:9, 14 ; 72:16 ; 78:11 ; 85:9, 14 ; 87:3 ; 95:6 ; 97:6 ; 99:2 ; 110:7 ; 105:23 ; 114:9 ; 118:169, 170 ; 140:2 ; 141:3 ; 142:2 ; Daniel 3:38, 40 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:75, 76 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2).

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10 for there is no truth in their mouth :/ their heart is futile ;/
their throat is an open tomb ;/ with their tongues have they deceived.

V 10 About "*no truth*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that this verse refers to those who live a lie, and those whose mouths and minds are revealed as being destitute of any good. He also observes that our mouth/throat must be not a tomb but a treasury. A tomb corrupts. A treasury preserves. He exhorts our hearts, therefore, to guard the treasure that lasts forever : the search for wisdom. [See Matthew 6:21.]

✣ Saint Jerome reminds us that those who are heretical do not have Christ the Truth on their lips because they do not have Him in their heart. It is because they have chosen ideas and teachings that veer away from Christ the Truth that they have become distorted.

✠ About "*truth*" : see Psalms 11:2 ; 14:2 ; 24:5, 10 ; 25:3 ; 29:10 ; 30:6, 24 ; 35:6 ; 39:11, 12 ; 42:3 ; 44:5 ; 50:8 ; 53:7 ; 56:4, 11 ; 60:8 ; 68:14 ; 70:22 ; 83:12 ; 84:11, 12 ; 85:11 ; 87:12 ; 88:2, 3, 6, 9, 15, 25, 34, 50 ; 90:4 ; 91:3 ; 95:13 ; 97:3 ; 99:5 ; 107:5 ; 110:7, 8 ; 113:9 ; 116:2 ; 118:30, 43, 75, 86, 90, 138, 142, 151, 160 ; 131:11 ; 137:2 ; 142:1 ; 144:18 ; 145:6 ; Isaiah 26:10 (Matins Canticle 5) ; Daniel 3:28

(Matins Canticle 7) ; John 14:6 ; 16:13 ; 17:17.

✠ Within these four phrases, four parts of the body are mentioned (mouth, heart, throat, tongue), each of which, and all together can become a source of evil to oneself and others.

✠ About "*heart*" : see the note about "*heart*" on Psalm 4:3.

✠ About "*futile*" (adjective) : see Psalms 59:13 ; 61:10 ; 93:11 ; 107:13 ; Jonah 2:9 (Matins Canticle 6).

✠ About "*with their ... deceived*" : see the notes on Psalms 11:3, 4 ; 14:3 ; see also Psalms 9:28 ; 27:3 ; 30:19 ;

35:3 ; 49:19 ; 51:4, 6 ; 108:2 ; 119:2-3 ; Wisdom of Sirach 5:13-14 ; 6:1 ; Isaiah 59:3-4 ; Jeremiah 9:2-7 ; Romans 3:13 ; James 1:26 ; 3:6, 8.

✠ About "*deceived*" : see Psalms 14:3 ; 35:3 ; 76:3 ; 104:25. See the note about "*deceitful*" on verse 7.

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11 Judge them, O God./ Let them fall because of their deliberations./
In accordance with the multitude of their impieties, thrust them out,/
for they have embittered You, O LORD.

V 11 About "*judge*" : Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that the Greek verb κρίνω, *krinō*, "to judge" has several meanings in Scripture. It can mean "to do justice", "to punish", "to investigate", "to examine" (according to certain criteria), "to ponder", "to catalogue". He says that in this case, it means "to investigate" the circumstances in which a Jew, an Elamite or a Scythian, for example, can be assigned a greater or lesser guilt.

✣ See the note about "*judging*" on Psalm 2:10.

✠ About "*God*" : see the note on verse 3.

✠ About "*let them fall ...*" : see the note about "falling into the hole" on Psalm 7:16.

✠ About "*deliberations*" : see the note about "*deliberations*" on Psalm 9:23.

✠ About "*impieties*" : see the note about "*impiety*" on Psalm 72:6 ; see Psalms 31:5 ; 64:4 ; see also the note about "*impious*" on Psalm 1:1.

✠ About "*thrust them out*" : see Psalms 35:13 ; 48:15.

✠ About "*embittered*" : Saint John Chrysostom explains that the Prophet David is not concerned about any injuries that he has suffered or suffers. Rather, he grieves only about bad things done to and against the Lord. This is the characteristic behaviour of the saints as well.

✣ The life of righteousness is always opposed spiritually by negative principalities and powers who oppose those living in the light of love. The opponents may also be friends, family, neighbours, the envious, the jealous, and enemies. This opposition may come in the form of distraction leading to forgetfulness. This antipathy to righteousness embitters God, as it were, although it is very incorrect and dangerous to attribute human passions and emotions to God.

✣ See 5 Moses 32:16 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 65:7 ; 77:17, 40, 56 ; 104:28 ; 105:7, 33, 43 ; 106:11.

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12 But may they be glad – all those hoping on You :/ unto the age
shall they exult,/ and You will pitch Your tent amongst them./
They shall boast in You – all those loving Your Name,

V 12 About "*may they be glad*" : Saint John Chrysostom tells us that the gladness that is from the Lord is

unchanging and it has strong roots. It is lasting and it is not disturbed by any unforeseen event. Rather, by means of the obstacles themselves, it becomes yet more lifted up. He refers us to the steadfast example of the apostles whose love in the Lord grew in proportion to the difficulties and afflictions they endured. He also calls our attention to the Dominical words : "*Your joy no one will take from you*" (John 16:22). He says that this assures us of the indissolubility of this joy.

✣ Saint Augustine explains this line by saying that the eternal gladness of the righteous will come to be when the righteous are the Temple of God, and when He who dwells in them will be their joy.

✣ See the note about "*be glad*" on Psalm 9:3 ; see also 5 Moses 32:43 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Kingdoms 2:1 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 13:7 ; 15:9 ; 18:9 ; 20:2, 7 ; 30:8 ; 31:11 ; 32:21 ; 33:3 ; 34:15, 27 ; 39:17 ; 42:4 ; 44:9 ; 45:5 ; 47:12 ; 62:12 ; 63:11 ; 65:6 ; 66:5 ; 67:4 ; 69:5 ; 76:4 ; 84:7 ; 85:4 ; 88:43 ; 89:14, 15 ; 91:5 ; 96:8, 12 ; 103:15, 34 ; 104:38 ; 105:5 ; 106:42 ; 112:9 ; 117:24 ; 121:1 ; Isaiah 26:19 (Matins Canticle 5).

✠ About "*hoping*" : see the note about "*hope*" on Psalm 4:6.

✠ About "*the age*" : "*the age*" is an expression, used in several manners and in several sorts of combinations in the Psalter (and throughout the Scriptures), in order to express indefinite future, endless time and the Kingdom of Heaven. Variants include "*unto an age*", "*unto an age of an age*", "*unto the ages*". Sometimes, in liturgical and other texts, we can see "ages of ages", or "forever", "forevermore" or "forever and ever" used to express this concept.

✣ See the note about "*unto the age, and to the age of the age*" on Psalm 9:37.

✣ See 2 Moses 15:18 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 32:40 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 9:6, 8, 37 ; 11:8 ; 14:5 ; 18:10 ; 20:5, 7 ; 21:27 ; 24:6 ; 27:9 ; 28:10 ; 29:7 ; 30:2 ; 32:11 ; 36:18, 27, 28, 29 ; 40:4 ; 43:9 ; 44;3, 7, 18 ; 47:15 ; 48:12, 20 ; 51:10, 11 ; 60:5, 8, 9 ; 70:1 ; 71:17, 19 ; 72:12, 26 ; 74:10 ; 76:8 ; 77:69 ; 78:13 ; 80:16 ; 82:18 ; 83:5 ; 84:6 ; 85:12 ; 88:2, 3, 5, 29, 30, 37 , 38, 53 ; 89:2 ; 91:8, 9 ; 92:2 ; 99:5 ; 101:13, 29 ; 102:9, 17 ; 103:5, 31 ; 105:31, 48 ; 109:4 ; 110:3, 5, 8, 9, 10 ; 111:3, 6, 9 ; 112:2 ; 113:6 ; 118:44, 89, 93, 98, 111, 112, 142, 144, 152, 160 ; 120:8 ; 124:1, 2 ; 130:3 ; 131:12, 14 ; 132:3 ; 134:13 ; 144:1, 2, 21 ; 145:7, 10 ; 148:6 ; Daniel 3:26, 52-26 (Matins Canticle 70 ; Daniel 3:57-88 (Matins Canticle 8) ; Luke 1:55 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 1).

✠ About "*exult*" : see the note about "*exult*" on Psalm 2:11.

✠ About "*pitch ... tent*" : this is a translation of a verb-form (κατασκηνόω, *kataskēnaō*) of the noun σκηνή, *skēnē*, which means "*tent*". As "*pitch Your tent*", the verb-form could be translated as "You will tabernacle". One can generally understand by the context when the Tabernacle itself is intended. The term "*pitch Your tent*" expresses an understanding of taking up long-term residence (in the context of nomadic societies), but also understanding that there are regular necessary moves. Such moves, which included longer pauses, were the case after the establishment of the Temple in a tent in the Sinai wilderness. This was the case also upon settling in the Land of Canaan, when the Ark of the Covenant remained in a tent until the Temple was constructed. As long as the Children of Israel also lived mostly in tents, this keeping of the worship of the Lord in a tent emphasised the Lord's presence amongst, and identification with, His chosen.

✣ The nun Maria Boulding O.S.B. explains that, in fact, there is a relationship between this word "*pitch your tent*" and "*sojourn*", and that as the Hebrew people moved about in tents as sojourners, so did the Lord move along with them in the "Tent of Meeting". See the references in 2 Moses, chapters 25-31; 33:7-11 ; 36:8-39 ; and chapters 37-40.

✣ See Psalms 7:6 ; 14:1 ; 15:9 ; 22:2 ; 36:3, 27, 29 ; 64:5 ; 67:17, 19 ; 68:37 ; 73:2 ; 77:60 ; 84:10 ; 101:29 ; 119:5 ; 138:9.

✠ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that these words convey to us that the Lord (our Guardian, Protector, Shelter) shall dwell in us, and we thus become the abode of God ("*Theophor*"). This text prefigures the Eucharistic mystery and our path to deification.

✣ See 3 Moses 26:12 ; 4 Moses 35:34 ; Zechariah 2:14 ; Ezekiel 37:27 ; John 1:14 ; 14:20, 23 ; 15:4-5 ; 17:23 ; Romans 8:9, 11 ; 1 Corinthians 3:16 ; 6:19 ; 2 Corinthians 6:16 ; Galatians 2:20 ;

Ephesians 3:17 ; Colossians 1:27 ; 1 John 3:24 ; Apocalypse 3:20 ; 21:3.

✠ About "*boast*" : Saint John Chrysostom tells us that only those who love the Lord and boast in Him can exult in Him. Only they can truly rejoice and find happiness. To boast in Him is a greater honour than any crown or earthly reward. Nothing at all can disrupt this honour, not even death, since at this time it shines even more brightly. Those who take pride in the things of this life and of this fallen world are in fact enjoying themselves only in dreams and fantasy.

✣ See 1 Kingdoms 2:10 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 31:11 ; 48:7 ; 88:18 ; 149:5 ; Proverbs 11:6 ; Jeremiah 9:22-23.

✠ About "*those loving Your Name*" : see Psalms 68:37 ; 118:132.

✠ About "*Name*" (of God) : Saint John of Kronstadt clarifies for us that "the Name of God is God Himself". He refers us to Psalms 19:2 ; 141:8. The Lord is utterly simple Being and Spirit. He is completely contained in one word or thought. He is always and everywhere in all creatures. If we only call upon His Name, we call upon Him, Himself, and we shall be saved. He refers us to Acts 2:21.

✣ See the notes about "*Name*" on Psalms 8:2 ; 43:21 ; see 2 Moses 15:3 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 32:3 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 7:18 ; 8:10 ; 9:11 ; 12:6 ; 17:50 ; 19:2, 6, 8 ; 21:23 ; 22:3 ; 24:11 ; 28:2 ; 30:4 ; 32:21 ; 33:4 ; 39:5 ; 43:27 ; 47:11 ; 51:11 ; 53:3, 8 ; 60:6, 9 ; 62:3 ; 65:2, 4 ; 67:5 ; 68:31, 27 ; 71:19 ; 73:7, 10, 18, 21 ; 74:2 ; 75:2 ; 78:6, 9 ; 82:19 ; 85:9, 11, 12 ; 88:13, 17, 25 ; 90:14 ; 91:2 ; 95:2, 8 ; 98:3, 6 ; 99:4 ; 101:16, 22 ; 102:1 ; 104:1, 3 ; 105:8, 47 ; 108:21 ; 110:9 ; 112:1, 2, 3 ; 114:4 ; 115:4, 8 ; 117:10, 11, 12, 26 ; 118:55, 132 ; 121:4 ; 123:8 ; 128:8 ; 129:5 ; 1134:1, 3, 13 ; 137:2 ; 139:14 ; 141:8 ; 142:11 ; 144:1, 2, 21 ; 148:5, 13 ; 149:3 ; Proverbs 18:10 ; Malachi 1:11 ; Isaiah 26:13 (Matins Canticle 5) ; Daniel 3:26, 34, 43, 52 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:49 (Canticle 9, Part 1) ; Acts 2:21 ; 3:16 ; 4:12 ; Philippians 2:9-10. See the note about "*Name of the Lord*" on Psalm 7:18.

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13 for it is You that will bless the righteous one./ O LORD, You have crowned us as with a shield of good-pleasure.

V 13 About "*it is You that will bless* : Saint Augustine tells us that the righteous are blessed when they are glorying in God and being indwelt by God.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom amplifies this statement considerably by saying that this blessedness is greater and more important than anything else. It is this blessed state that sustained Job in his suffering and made him more blessed than anyone else ; and it is this same blessedness that sustains us in every trial and tribulation. He continues by saying that whether we are praised to

the heights or condemned to the depths by other humans, it is being blessed by the Lord and living in praise of Him which is most important for us.

✠ About "*bless*" : see the notes on Psalms 15:7 ; 27:9 ; 33:2 ; see also 1 Moses 12:2, 3 ; 14:19 ; 2 Kingdoms 7:11-12, 18, 20, 21, 29 ; Psalms 25:12 ; 28:11 ; 36:22 ; 44:3 ; 62:5 ; 64:12 ; 65:8 ; 66:2 ; 102:1-2, 20-22 ; 106:38 ; 111:2 ; 113:20, 21, 23 ; 131:15 ; 133:1 ; Proverbs 3:36 ; Isaiah 19:25 ; Daniel 3:51 (Matins Canticle 7). See also the notes on Psalms 3:9 (noun) ; 17:47 (adjective).

✠ About "*righteous one*" : see 1 Kingdoms 2:9 (Canticle 3) ; Psalms 7:10 ; 10:3, 5 ; 30:19 ; 33:22 ; 36:12, 16, 21, 25, 26, 30, 32 ; 54:23 ; 57:12 ; 63:11 ; 74:10 ; 91:13 ; 93:21 ; 96:11 ; 111:6 ; 140:5. See also the note about "*righteous*" (plural) on Psalm 1:5.

✠ About "*crowned us as with a shield*" : Saint Jerome reminds us that God is our crown and our shield. It is crucial that we keep this in mind and remain under His authority and protection.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom, citing Psalm 102:4, mentions that the shield of blessing (good-pleasure) is the best of all shields, the best defence for the righteous one, a victory wreath woven of mercy and compassion. He recalls that Job was thus sustained and protected as he continued to sing the praises of the Lord. His hymns of thanksgiving were a spiritual sacrifice, and he remains an uplifting example for us.

✣ Saint Augustine reminds us that in the face of the multitudinous temptations and attacks of the evil adversary, there is but one weapon, the invincible shield that drives back all enemies – the fact that "*If God is for us, who can be against us* ?" (Romans 8:31) We can be protected and overcome all obstacles not by any of our own merits, strengths or virtues, but only through living in the power and protection of God's love for us.

✣ About "*crowned*" : see Psalm 20:4 ; Proverbs 4:8 ; Wisdom of Solomon 5:16 ; 1 Corinthians 9:25 ; Philippians 4:1 ; 2 Timothy 4:8 ; Hebrews 2:9 ; 1 Peter 5:4.

✠ About "*good-pleasure*" : Cassiodorus draws our attention to the significance of the placement of this word at the end of this psalm. This one expression expresses the Lord's ineffable kindnesses. The Lord's estimation of us and His disposition towards us is not dependent upon our efforts to be pleasing. We cannot earn His "*good-pleasure*". Rather, it is He who enables us to be pleasing.

✣ See Psalms 18:15 ; 50:20 ; 68:14 ; 88:18 ; 105:4 ; 140:5 ; 144:16.

O Good Lord, before it is offered, You know the sigh of an exhausted heart.
We ask that You make of us the temple of the Paraclete,
so that we may be granted protection
by the shield of heavenly benevolence. — Roman
