



Lenten Reflection for Friday, March 11th

Daria Rigney

You can listen to the reading and reflection by clicking [here](#).

Psalm 27

*The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear?**
*The Lord is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?
When evildoers came upon me
to eat up my flesh—**
*it was they, my foes and my adversaries,
who stumbled and fell.
Though an army should encamp against me,*
Yet my heart shall not be afraid;
And though war should rise up against me,*
yet will I put my trust in him.
One thing have I asked of the Lord;
One thing I seek;**
*That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life;
To behold the fair beauty of the Lord*
and to seek him in his temple.
For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe in his shelter;**
*he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his
dwelling and set me high upon a rock.
Even now he lifts up my head*
above my enemies round about me.
Therefore I will offer in his dwelling
An oblation with sounds of great gladness;**
*I will sing and make music to the Lord.
Hearken to my voice, O Lord, when I call;**
*Have mercy on me and answer me.
You speak in my heart and say, “Seek my face!”**

*Your face, Lord, will I seek.
Hide not your face from me.*
nor turn away your servant in displeasure.
You have been my helper;
cast me not away;*
do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.
Though my father and mother forsake me,*
the Lord will sustain me.
Show me your way, O Lord;*
lead me on a level path, because of my enemies.
Deliver me not into the hand of my adversaries,*
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and also those who speak malice.
What if I had not believed that I should see the goodness of the Lord* in the land of the living!
O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure;
be strong, and he shall comfort your heart;*
wait patiently for the Lord.*

This emotional psalm of David begins with a declaration of his absolute faith and trust in God, “his light, his salvation and his refuge.” We know that if anyone needed the wings of God to sail on it was King David, a powerful and polarizing leader who spent countless years battling with rival tribes in order to establish the kingdom of Israel in God’s name. A superhero with an iconic origin story (most famously fending off Goliath as a youth) David begins this beautiful sung prayer as an homage to God and the many ways he knows that his faith in God has protected him and bestowed the fearlessness and courage he’s needed to be a soldier and leader for his people, “though an army encamp against me, even then do I trust.”

The sentiment of his prayer soon shifts as David moves from confident leader of God’s people into revealing himself as a troubled and worried supplicant asking for mercy and protection from God imploring him for shelter “in the cover of his tent.” He begs God to show his face to him and not to forget him no matter how challenging life becomes. He pleads with God not to forsake him in times when he’s surrounded by enemy armies and nefarious forces. He concludes with a promise to God to remain stouthearted, faithful and courageous as he waits patiently for his Lord.

The season of Lent is upon us and I need all the grace and guidance I can muster from both within myself and from the rich sources of meditation and prayer around me. Each Lent, I look for new insights and a renewed understanding of this penitential season but so often, I feel my thoughts and prayers are tired and lacking depth and inspiration. Like David, I sometimes feel filled with the confidence of my faith and at others bereft and alone in the desert of my fears. The expectations of Lent can be daunting and I often wonder whether I even possess the tools for plumbing the depths of the season, let alone my soul.

I’ve loved the liturgical seasons of the church year since I was a child because they force us to mark the passage of time (and our lives) with meaningful events, rituals and celebrations. However, if I’m completely honest I’m far more at home with the ordinary times, the days unmarked by expectations. And while I accept that holidays and feast days are important, I cherish the in-between times, the times when we wanderers can find exquisite beauty and astonishing insight in the mundane and ordinary moments. Finding the extraordinary in the ordinary brings me unexplained joy and I believe it was the reason why I loved being a teacher so much. Here we are perched on the precipice of Lent and I want this season to matter more this year and hold more extraordinary moments of revelation and meaning. I want to make

this season of 40 ordinary days into an extraordinary space and time for deeper contemplation and passionate devotion. Like David, I will live inside my own contradictions, my stoutheartedness and my fear, my confidence in my faith and my utter frailty in the eyes of God and myself.

This Lent, I will undoubtedly shed tears each day for the ineffable courage of the Ukrainian people who will remind me what bravery and fearlessness truly mean in the face of toxic power. Their pain and helplessness will be a deep purple shroud of sadness around the world as we pray for their redemption and release from evil forces.

This Lent, I will pray to remember to see God's face in everyone I encounter especially now that our circles have finally expanded to include friends and family from pre-pandemic days. I will not forget the pain both expressed and deeply hidden that so many of us have sustained these past two years as we've all hidden in the "cover of our tents."

This Lent, I will like David, pray to grow a stronger understanding of God's presence in my life. I will open my mind and heart to hearing God's voice and seeing his face both in the world and especially in my closest relationships that hold up a mirror to our souls and where love always abides.



Daria lives with her husband, Fran and their big yellow dog, Henri, in Ditmas Park. She's been a member of Holy Apostles for a couple of years and loves being part of such a warm and loving community. She enjoys reading, knitting, quilting, walking and being with her family, especially her 4 grandsons.