



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 5, 2017

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 146

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!
- 2 I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.
- 3 Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no help.
- 4 When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.
- 5 Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God,
- 6 who made heaven and earth,

the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
7 who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free;
8 the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.

9 The LORD watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

10 The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD!

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Father Archimandrite Nnachette Maximos, Cathedral of the Resurrection, Orthodox Archdiocese / Lagos, Nigeria / Eastern Christian Focus

“Praise the LORD, O my soul!” Unfortunately, the word “praise” seems nonexistent in the lives of many people today. Our lives have become tainted with complaints and supplications that betray an all-about-what-I-want attitude. But the psalmist calls our minds back to the need to be grateful regardless of our circumstances. After all, Christ’s love for us never wavered, despite what He endured—and not for His own sake but for our good.

The psalmist also encourages us to lift our eyes above our day-to-day troubles, difficulties, and challenges and up to the infinite realm of God. Of course, troubles will always remain, but God’s people will be better equipped to move forward in the midst of this chaos when we gather as a community to sing praises to God, for doing so leads us to strength and sustenance. Thus the psalmist issues a definite call to return to the early Christian practice of *koinonia*—fellowship.

Further, the psalmist admonishes us not to “trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.” We moderns continue to rely on ourselves. We put much of our confidence in science and technology, despite their constantly failing and disappointing us, instead of putting our trust in God, who never has and will never fail us regardless of our betrayals. “But God proves His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). Let us followers of Christ remember this amazing, wonderful truth in our daily lives during Advent and beyond. Praise the LORD!

PRAYER

Heavenly and almighty God, give us the grace to be thankful every day of our lives, regardless of the difficult challenges facing us each day—the gratitude to appreciate your infinite mercy and love, despite our betrayal and disappointment of you. Let your Holy Spirit enlighten our hearts so that we constantly put our trust in you in the knowledge that you will never fail us, even if we do fail you. May the words of praise never depart from our lips, and may the thoughts of our hearts be pure and spotless in thanksgiving to you unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610



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