

July 17, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

Image by Christine Sponchia from Pixabay

OUR HELP IS IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

From Today's Responsorial Psalm

*Had not the LORD been with us—
let Israel say, had not the LORD been with us—
when men rose up against us,
then would they have swallowed us alive,
when their fury was inflamed against us.*

*Then would the waters have overwhelmed us;
the torrent would have swept over us;
over us then would have swept the raging waters.*

*Blessed be the LORD, who did not leave us a prey to their teeth.
We were rescued like a bird from the fowlers' snare;
Broken was the snare, and we were freed.
Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.*

Reflection

In this thanksgiving psalm, the existence of Israel is attributed to the LORD who rescues the people. Their enemies are couched in mythical images: the Dragon (*they would have swallowed us alive*) and the Flood (*the waters have overwhelmed us . . . over us then would have swept the raging waters*). Sometimes Scripture expresses the strength of Israel's historical enemies by portraying them with the behaviors of the primordial enemies of creation. Their destructive influence is notable and contrasts with the LORD's saving power.

The psalm ends with praising the LORD for saving Israel. The image used for Israel is a captured bird who is freed from a hunter's trap. Israel's deliverance was originally from Egypt's Pharaoh and now is from their current enemy. The ending of the psalm points back to the first line: *Had the LORD not been with us . . .* It is the LORD's steadfast commitment to Israel that stands in the way of destructive forces. The message of this psalm is: the LORD is with us . . . the LORD is on our side. Therein lies the reason for thanks!



Person holding white feather
Photo by Erik Mclean

For Pondering

- Which line of this psalm catches your attention? What does it say about God's relationship with you? What does it say about your relationship to God?
 - What does this psalm say about your faith community?
 - Do you experience the "Dragon" and/or "Flood" in your life? How do you deal with them?
 - Where does "thanksgiving" enter your life these days?
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For Prayer

*God, you've given me
the physical, emotional
and spiritual will
to overcome so many obstacles
that have risen before me.
How many times have I faced
what I perceived to be
impossible, hopeless situations
and withstood them ---
and discovered creative solutions
through which to surmount
and master them.
You've strengthened me
again and again.
I know that you
will never fail me.*

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