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A few contemporary psalms composed during the course, **Windows On Theology – The Psalms**, Regis College, Toronto January – April, 2009. Some are quite serious; others employ light humour. I include them here as they appear with almost no editing. *Michael Kolarcik, S.J.*

(Authors' names are included only if the original text sent to me included the names. Notice the diagram of the interrelatedness of psalm types which Vicky Chen has cleverly designed in overlapping circles)

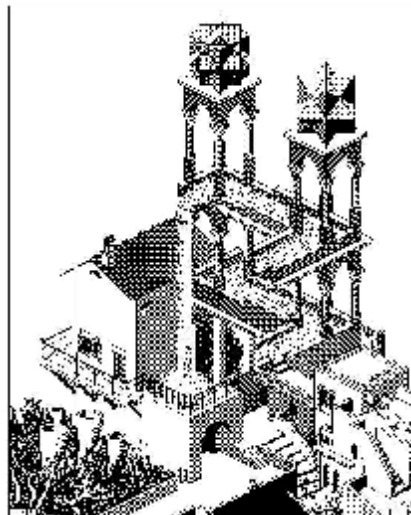
A – Praying Laments

B – Praying in Trust

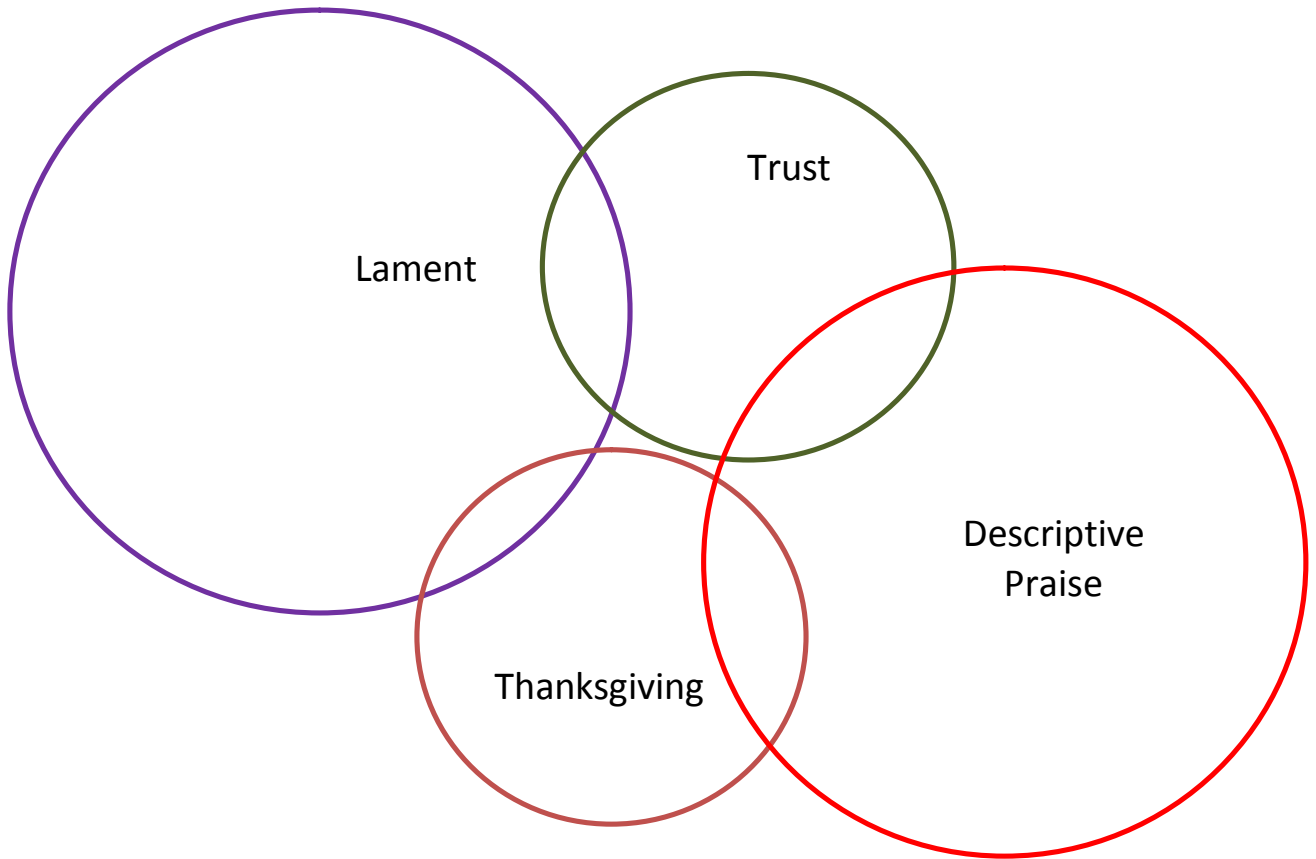
C – Praying in Thanksgiving
Psalms of Thanksgiving (Declarative Praise)

D – Praying in Praise
(Hymns - Psalms of Descriptive Praise)

E – Praying through Wisdom

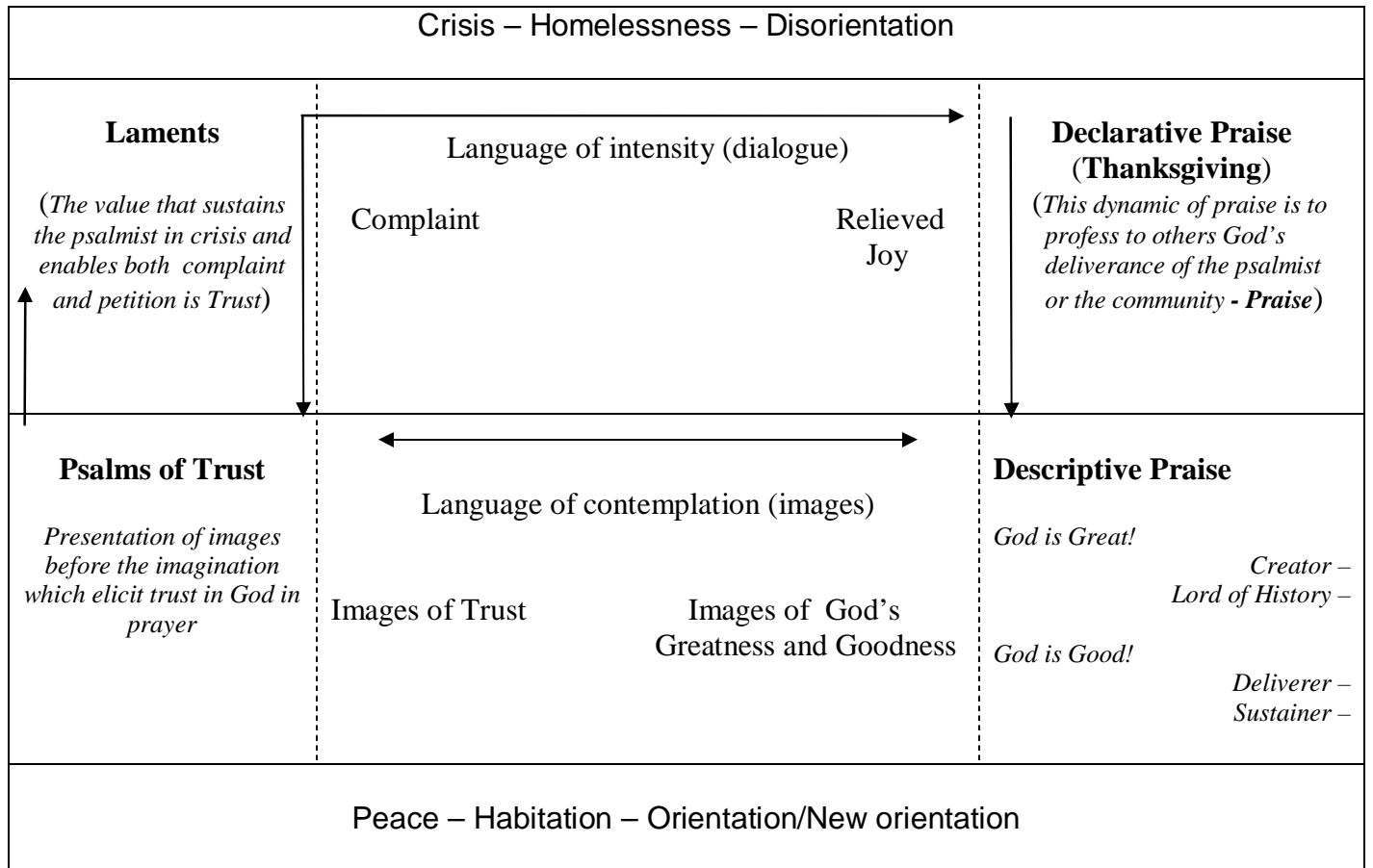


Interrelatedness of Psalm Types



Vicky Chen

Movements of disposition of prayer in Psalm Types:



LAMENT

1)

A Lament (A Psalm of Judith – Virginia Edman)

Oh God, my God
Hear me in my sorrow
Turn your ear to me in my distress
My days are filled with pain
my nights with fear

I am ignored and my spirit is crushed
My hope is dimmed
I am someone of no regard
My enemies laugh and my critics gloat
My body is disfigured and my strength is drained
I walk alone and without friends

You are my hope and I trust in you
Be a rock to me in the desert
And a stream of water to refresh my spirit
I will praise you as my father
I will praise you God of my salvation

2) Lament

A Psalm of Gaza and Israel

O Lord, the God of our salvation
We trust in you to hear our cry.
Turn your ear to us in our distress.
Listen to the cries of your people.
Do you not hear our cries from the wilderness?
The hyenas of conflict and war
Surround us and threaten our lives.
They threaten to destroy our land.
They murder our children.
We are a people abandoned.
In you our ancestors trusted.
Hear us and quiet the howls of despair and grief..
Deliver us from the enemy,
We will praise you in the marketplace.
We will praise you both day and night.

3) Lament

Ps 88 from the perspective of a gay Catholic youth –

Abba my father, God of my salvation!
I cry to you at night
for fear of showing my face among the congregation in the day time.
Listen to my pleading; make haste to help me!

From the moment I became aware of myself
I have been filled with confusion and unspeakable misery.
My life is over before it begins
I am cursed though I have done nothing.

Helplessly I am crushed between
the evil nature of my orientation
and the condemnation of the Church I love.

I am like the one left among the dead,
the slaughtered lying in a common nameless grave.
One you remember no more,
cut off from the majority of human race.

You have created me and given me many talents
but plunged me immediately to the bottom of the grave,
in the darkest of darkness and deepest of depths.
I am weighed down by your wrath,
overcome by the waves of your anger.

You have deprived me of my friends and families,
made me repulsive to them.
I am imprisoned with no way of escape,
incapable of arriving the shore of faith beyond resentment.
My eyes are blinded by sorrow and suffering,
I call to you all day and all night my God,
my hands outstretched to you constantly like sunflowers.

Will the dead serve you?
Can the dry bones dance for you?
Do they speak of your faithful love from the grave?
Or praise your constancy in the pit?
Will your Truth be proclaimed in darkness?
Will your saving justice be practised in the land of oblivion?

Yet I cry to you daily my God.
Every morning I look to you for help afresh.
How long will you ignore me?

Turning your face away from me?

I am condemned since childhood.

I have born the terror of what you created, I am doomed!

Your unending punishment has overwhelmed me.

Your terror exterminated me.

The normal folks they flood around me all day long,

Close in on me all at once.

You have deprived me of friends and families.

My sole companion is darkness.....

4) Lament

O Lord my God, why have you done this to us?

Address to God.

We are suffering

We no longer have our jobs at the car plant.

The factory has closed.

All our skills are there.

What shall we do?

Complaint

We feel cheated.

We didn't see this coming.

We worked well and our families depended on us.

*Declaration of
Innocence*

We trusted in the company.

What shall we do?

Trust

Lord, we know you look out for the disadvantaged;

And we have given our best.

We need your help.

*Motivation for
God's
Intervention*

Save us in our hour of need.

Petition

And we will praise you.

Vow to praise God

5) Lament
Plea of a Homeless Person

My Lord, My God
You who provide shelter for all creatures, large and small,
Hear my prayer.
Why have you abandoned me?
To rain and snow, cold and hunger.
Others have shelter
Where is my shelter?
Why must I beg for a crumb of bread?
Why must I struggle to find a place to rest?
My sins are no greater in number!
No greater in gravity!
Than those who surround me,
In the comfort of their homes!
Provide me with a place of refuge,
Feed me from your bounty,
I trust in you.
O! Deliver me from all my trials.

6) Lament
Lament On Unemployment

O Lord, my God,
come to my aid for I am without resources
and means of support.
My family suffers and there is no hope that life will improve.
Through no fault of my own I can no longer support my family.
You know, Lord, how diligently I have worked.
You have been there with our family from generation to generation
and you have been there with us since we left the old country.
Deliver us from the rapacious scallywags of Bay Street.
They are a thorn in my side by day
and a bed of nettles by night.
Save us, O Lord for not one of the workers in Ontario
has time to praise you.
However, I know your goodness.
I trust in you
and I will sing your praises on YouTube.

7) Lament

Psalm of Lament (On Sickness)

O Lord my God, hear my plea for help.
I have been sick for so long.....
I struggle each morning to just get out of bed.
My symptoms take me by surprise
By day and by night....

I know that you have the power to heal me.
Listen to my prayer and save me from this torment.
If I am too weak and bitter, how can I praise you.
When I am sick I cannot glorify your name.

Do I deserve to be abandoned in this way?
I have suffered enough....
Heal me, O God, — Show your mercy and strengthen me.
You are most powerful and merciful...
And you have loved me from the very beginning.....

January 19th, 2009, Group – Agostinelli

8) Lament

O LORD MY GOD why do so many women suffer abuse?
WE women suffer for such injustices
WE have no illusions
WE are not naïve
We are teaching our children to overcome violence with love.
WE trust YOU JESUS
YOU stooped to become human
AND to pass from eternal life to death here in time,
Out of LOVE for us.
WE need your help LORD
WE want to fight nonviolently for an end to such abuse
WE praise YOU for saving the human race
WE praise you for your own heartfelt response to GOD's call.

ANONYMOUS

9)

Lament Psalm by Ernestine Walters

Where is My Shepherd?
Why has He not come to rescue me?
Adonai, I cry day and night.
My heart is aching and I feel that
it will burst within me.
All the anguish that is throbbing within me
consumes my entire being.
There is no stillness within me.
The waters are as dark and turbulent
as my emotions.
There is no place where I can lay my head
in rest.
Thoughts crowd my mind and march
to deafening drumming sounds.
They cause me to become confused and
frightened.
What have I done, O Lord, to be struck down
by my own flesh?
As he grew within my womb for nine months,
there was such joy and love awaiting his arrival.
Now he no longer rejoices or praises his parents.
Instead he denigrates them with false accusations.
Venomous are his words and actions.
Where art Thou, O Wise and Loving One?
Many have come to Your pleading and
You have wrapped your light around them
to protect them from their enemies.
Yet I shall put my trust in the Almighty
whose wisdom and love will console me,
a wretched creature.
He alone will stay my tears and heal
the crushed being before Him.
Blessed be God! Blessed be His Holy Name.

TRUST

1)

A Psalm of Trust

O my beloved Creator, my Life and my All,
Even when I was still in my mother's womb you already knew me.
You guided the migration and growth of my cells.
I came to this world wonderfully weaved together.

I am like the bud that you cultivated into a blossom;
The egg that you hatched into a bird soaring in the heavens;
The seed that you nurtured into a shady tree.
You walk with me in the day and stay with me through the night.

You have always given me total freedom.
"Just be yourself, you are so much part of me."
Your love is unconditional.
In being fully alive I hope to show your glory.

When I stumble you stabilize me.
When I make a detour you patiently await my return.
When I am in trouble you have never forsaken me.
Even when I forget you – you will not be forgotten.

Now in the golden years of my life I begin to wonder.
Who am I that you should bestow so much on me?
What have I done to deserve you?
Where should I go from here on?

Like the clouds that transiently gather and disperse in the sky,
I know you are always the Wind beneath me.
Like the duckweed that cluster or scatter in the pond,
Though free-floating I am rooted in the Living Water.

So, like the Bedouin I will wander around the desert of this earth,
With little to guide me except for the Sun.
And when the time comes for me to depart
I will once again rest in the arms of you my Creator.

26-01-2009

2) Trust
A Psalm of Trust

Lord, thank you for another day.
I know you are with me,
From my rising to my day's end.
In sunlight or in darkness,
You are there beside me.

When I take the subway you are there.
When I walk down a dark alley,
And my enemy stalks around with firearms,
Hoping to harm me,
You are there to protect me.

When restlessness and violence
Overcome my spirit,
You are there to bring me comfort.
Your presence overwhelms me,
Like a mighty wind sweeping over the land.

Virginia Edman

3) Trust

A Psalm of Trust

O LORD, you always have been and always are,
the true compass, the sure direction of my life.
You have been the God of my childhood and adolescence,
But more than that, you have been the constant guide through my adulthood.

In the midst of the turmoil of emigration, marriage, new career,
You have been an unmoving lighthouse giving me direction and hope.
No matter what storms rages, within or outside of me,
You have been there, unshakable, even when I could not see you.

And, so I praise you, my God, my light, my compass and guide,
Even when I am blind and cannot see,
I know that you are there
And in you alone will I trust.

LORD, fill my heart with the joy of praising you.
Strengthen my faith in times of difficulty and trial.
With joy I will share the hope and life you give me.
I will trust you, and put my trust in you, as long as I live.

Denis Costello

4) Trust

Psalm of Trust

My Lord, my Gardener. In Spring, You prepared a garden.
You hoed and tilled the soil and sowed a seed;
From harsh winds and nasty bugs, You protected it.
Watered and fertilized it, You watched it grow.
Rain and sunshine came., You cared for it.

My Lord, my Gardener. In Summer, Your seed became a bush.
It bloomed and You smiled with delight. You gathered the fruits.
Five feet it rose, hardy and healthy, pretty as well.
From scorching heat and preying pests, You protected it.
Your mighty, pruning hands made it resilient.
Its fruits, its beauty – praise offerings to You Lord, my Gardener.

Then Autumn burst, His plant still bearing fruits, but slowly ebbing.
Its once brilliant leaves are turning grey; its stems and limbs bowing.
My Lord, My Gardener, You continue weeding, watching, caring.
Winter is at the offing and You My Gardener will protect it.
Soon You will take me inside to Your House where I will rest.
My Lord, my God, my Gardener
You have raised me, cared for me, and delighted in me.
I will give You praise in the Springtime and in the Summertime
In the Autumn and in the Winter of my life. For You have created me and loved me.

Sylvia Leaver

THANKSGIVING – PSALMS OF DECLARATIVE PRAISE

1)

A Psalm of Thanksgiving

I love you, my God, because you give me counsel.
You lead me on paths of life;
You set me on a journey that nourishes my soul.
My neighbors envy me because you have been my helper.
Why do they not love you as I do?

My world had become desolation.
The sun stopped shining,
The sky became grey with rain,
And the stars no longer gave light.
All was darkness around me.

You came and saved me, you gave me strength.
I will never stray away from you,
For you are the rock upon which I rest.
In the morning I sing your praises,
And in the night you comfort me.

You give me companions, and together we praise you.
My soul rejoices in your words;
I walk for miles just to be with you.
I will tell of your kindness and mercy.
I will exult you, my God, forever.

Virginia Edman

2)

Psalm of Thanksgiving

I thank you O Lord with all my heart.

You have delivered me from uncertainty about your presence in my life.

I had heard so many conflicting things about you.

Now you are real to me.

You heard my cry for help even though I couldn't put it into words.

You have sent people to encourage me and to show me there are many ways to find you.

I will thank you forever and I can rest in you.

3)

Psalm of Thanksgiving

Lord our God, Mighty are You indeed.
We praise You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
We raise our hearts in thanksgiving.
We dance for joy and sing Alleluia.
We kneel before You O Lord and give thanks.
Come, let us worship the Triune God.
Blessed Trinity, we prostrate before your Majesty.
Come, join in the Eucharistic celebration
For God has shown His marvelous love.
Listen to God's voice, you people.
Remember His bounty and beauty.
He blessed this land, our country
With peace, progress, and prosperity.
From the Canadian Rockies
to the coast of Labrador.
From the Yukon Territories down to the Centre Island.
He transplanted you and your families –
Of different colours, creeds and origins
To this beautiful country – Canada.
Do not provoke His anger
By setting up abortion clinics,
Neglecting the elderly; desecrating matrimonial sanctity,
marginalizing the youth and worshiping idols on Bay Street.
O Lord our God, open our eyes
To your manifold blessings.
Your goodness surrounds us.
You saved us from infernal calamities,
Terrorists' attacks, famine and destruction.
Give us the spirit of generosity
To praise You, love You and thank You.

Sylvia Leaver

4)

Psalm of Thanksgiving:

Holy Spirit, we thank you for our living Faith,
gifted to us throughout our lives,
keeping us enlivened within it,
and nurturing us by bringing us to places like this.

We struggled in bringing up family in Faith.
We struggled to grow in our own Faith.
We found ourselves in bankruptcy situations.
Often we had no one with whom to share our Faith.

You brought us out of our isolation.
You enkindled the fire of God's love within us.
Our stress seemed to be eternal,
but you, O God, gave us consolation.

Praise to you, O God of wisdom and love.
We will proclaim your goodness to all whom we meet.
We will pray for the orphan, the widow, the poor and the foreigners.
Holy Spirit, continue to give us life.

Table 2.

5)

An initial attempt at Declarative Praise, in the end, looks like Descriptive Praise

God our Creator, You are breathtaking!
The whole earth shouts how beautiful You are.

The trees--look at the trees!--
they are stately even in their nakedness.
They curve in beauty against the clouds.
They raise their arms in praise to You.

In spring You breathe on them,
and they blossom.
You warm them,
and they fill the air with fragrance.
The littlest creatures hide in them,
they raise their young,
they sing for joy...

as we sing when You renew our lives.

The trees would be enough to speak of Your beauty,
but there is so much more!
Think of the water! Taste the water
that comes from Your heaven
and makes our earth Eden again.
The trees seek it with their roots,
the animals run to it.
and we, Your stewards,
settle by Your rivers,
drink from Your streams,
are cleansed and saved by Your rain.

We will never stop thanking You.
We will rejoice in Your gifts.
We will remind each other of Your beauty
which shines through every leaf.
Alleluia!

The oblong group, on February 9

6)

Psalm of Thanksgiving

Lord God I thank you

For delivering me to such a beautiful, peaceful country

From a country torn by war.

When the roads were crowded with soldiers, hatred and evil,

Where neighbour killed neighbour

And tribe destroyed tribe

I called on you as I fled.

You heard me when I cried and brought me to this new land of plenty.

Freedom, safety, fresh water, a welcoming community – I will sing your praises to all

Canadians that they may understand how you have blessed them and how important their
welcome is to refugees like me.

From the group (February 9, 2009)

7)

A Psalm of Praise and Thanksgiving

Ruthie brought me Valentine party cake
And that brought me joy and awareness this afternoon.
It was a moment when I realized how very much
I love this life that you have given me.

How blessed we are in our own little way.
The sun shines on us intermittently
Between showers, and mist and fog,
After snowfalls and wind that brings down trees.

How pleasant it is to contemplate your goodness
In the comfort of a Saturday that echoes your name.
How good you are to me, and I will praise you
In the privacy of my room and in the noise of my radio.

I will sing your praises in rock and roll,
In the silence of the crowded city,
Where thousands do not know your name.
I will teach them so that they may praise you too.

Virginia Edman

8)
My Soul Rejoices

Imagine the endless sleepless nights
of weeping until exhaustion,
in fear of waking up
to another day of despair.

Imagine the anger that burns from within,
consuming and destroying
beyond all reasons,
in the end leaving but ashes.

Imagine the insatiable hunger
racing from one ideal to another,
restless like a caged animal,
for what other than shadows.

Then came Dawn,
and freedom from all these.....

How can I help but to proclaim
with continuous gratitude
for the rest of my life
the peace that You have brought
through loving enough to become one of us?

9)

A declarative praise to God for the leadership of Obama
Feb 16th 2009 – Group effort

O God of eternal love, to You
Our hearts blossom in profound gratitude.

For years nations are at war against each other,
Steeped in generations of violence and hatred.
Like the fast spreading tongues of a forest fire,
Seizing and consuming all living creatures.

Our global economy is in turmoil, fuelled by our greed and irresponsibility.
Jobs are cut, homes lost and business shuttered.
We are like water fowl caught in the sea of tar sand.
The more we struggle the more we strangle ourselves.

Our trust and hope disappear rapidly
Under the quicksand of endless suffering.
Each day brings new faces of despair.
Fear of the unknown hovers around refusing to relinquish its victims.

Then out of darkness and the ordinary you have fashioned for us
A man whose voice echoes the universal need of all beings.
He pledges to end the petty grievances and false promises,
And leads us to choose hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord.

With our ancestors, mostly men and women obscure in their labour
We will continue to journey the long and rugged path towards your promise
That all are one, equal and free, regardless of race, faith and origin,
deserving of a chance to pursue the full share of your kingdom.

For You are the source of our strength.
You have called on us to shape an uncertain destiny.
To you alone we give thanks.
Grant us the wisdom to follow your will.
Never let us lose sight of you, through the thickness of the forest,
the depth of the sea and the height of the mountains.
Like the flocks of honking Canada geese as they return to their land,
Or the multitude of wild flowers that compete to burst forth each spring,
The day will come when we proclaim in thanksgiving with all our being
Alleluia! All honour and glory be to You!

10) Psalm of Thanksgiving

I will give thanks to you, Oh Lord
For you move the hearts of the good
Samaritans in our society

Exhortation

O Lord, in the depth of the subway
I felt ill and faint,
The crowds pressed around me
With the air stifling and hot,
I despaired that I would ever get home

Summary of Need

Every good motivation comes from God
His Spirit moves His people to good deeds
He is in my heart and in the heart of my fellow man
He leads all in the ways of love

Reflection

Sing praise to the Lord
For He sent his angels to deliver me
He moved the hearts of fellow passengers
To come to my assistance
They didn't turn their backs away but reached out
To assist me before I collapsed

Deliverance

My God, I will let everyone know how you moved
The hearts of people to care for those in need
I will praise your name and tell all, Oh Lord
It is your love that is at the heart of the city

Praise in the presence of the people

11)

A Psalm of Thanksgiving Declarative Praise

We will thank you for the days of all our lives.

You have rescued us from serious illness.

We were brought low by our disease.

We could not walk, our movements were impaired.

There was no strength in us.

We were losing hope.

But you healed us through the care and expertise of others.

The doctors were compassionate to us.

The nurses were kind.

They gave us hope.

They kept our spirit up.

We recovered.

Now our hearts are rejoicing.

We will tell all our friends of your saving help and the goodness of your creation which we saw in your medical servants.

12)

Declarative Praise

I waited for you Lord to hear my prayers.
With anxiety I ruminated over my plight.

Now all praise to you Lord.
Your attentive ear has heard my plea.
Your will is made manifest.
Your support for my life's path continues.
Praise be the Lord at every step, in all places.

Let our whole family repeat.
"His faithful love supports us in our task"
Let our community repeat
"His faithful love supports us in our role"
Let skeptics observe and sigh
"His faithful love supports their cause"

In my anxiety to proclaim your truths
I cried my petition at eventide
"Save me from an early grave so
That I may multiply your faithful flock.
If I join my ancestors in faith then
Who would have proclaimed your name?
Who would lead the young?
How would they learn of your love?"

Oaths were made and cast aside
Innocents were bereft of a parental hand.
Abandoned to the world's confusion
They were prey for an unholy mob.
A world filled with false prophets and nay Sayers.

Doubters bawl against your truths.
They range to silence knowledge of you.
They deny your goodness, love, and compassion.
They rant against your manifest reality,
The majesty of your creation is to them a chance event.

But you have heard my prayer
And you have granted my plea.
You have lifted the curtain of my anxiety
You have pushed back the threat

Your servant's role is set

I will trumpet your wonders to the young,
I will lead them to know your ways so
They may seek grace at your table.

You have moved me to sing your praises
Help me convey your ways and truths.
So that we can worship in your community
And together sing your praises to confound doubters.

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D) Psalms of Descriptive Praise

1)

A Psalm of Descriptive Praise: Based on the Commentary on the song that the angels sang to greet the Redeemer, by the Fathers of the Church.

O Lord, my God
The angels knew you in the realm of the universe,
In the reason and beauty of the cosmos
That comes from you
And is a reflection of you.

They have heard creation's silent song of praise
And have transformed it into celestial music.
But now something new had happened,
Something that astounded them.
The One of whom the universe speaks,
The God who sustains all things
And bears them in his hands:
You yourself had entered human history.

For your most holy desire
Is that your Son be born anew
In every moment of human history,
In every imaginable circumstance,
To act and suffer within history.
For this all of creation will praise you
And sing halleluiah.

Virginia Edman

Inspired by a column in Restoration, March, 2009, by Fr. David May.

2)

Psalm of Descriptive Praise

Gracious God, we praise you.
We stand in awe, in wonder
At your ongoing, dynamic evolving
Of our spiritual awareness.

We praise you as from age to age
We stand on the shoulders of our ancestors.
You have led us to this golden moment,
Encouraged us to develop our informed consciences.

We praise you for our freedom
You have liberated us intellectually and
Delivered us from a narrowness of thought
To discern and grow in love.

You want us to find our own way,
To choose wisely and justly,
More open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
All praise to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Rob, Don, Bob and Jane

3)

Psalm of Descriptive Praise

Group Version: Eleanor McLaughlin Elsa Campuzanom Sylvia Leaver M. Kielty

Praise the Lord all you people
Praise Him in the city, in the universities,
in the subways, in sports arenas,
in your home, and in your hearts.

You loved us into existence
and you made each one of us
unique and special, and we are Yours.

Praise the Lord all you people.
For You created the cosmos and
fashioned a world to be our home.
Sand and snow, rain and sunshine,
mountains and rivers delight us.

Praise the Lord all you people.
You invited us to join You
in Your work of creation and see Your hands
in the amazing technologies we have developed,
in scientific breakthroughs from stem cells research,
in the manufacture of hybrid cars,
in the discovery of vaccines to support life.

Praise the Lord all you people.
You love us still and show Yourself to us
in the gifts of song, dance, poetry and laughter.
People of Toronto, let us praise God!
Let us praise Him in boutiques, libraries,
concert halls and coffee shops.

Praise God, you people of Toronto.
Let us see Him in the faces of the homeless,
the suffering and the elderly in the nursing homes.
Let us praise God for the gentleness of caregivers,
the beauty of our city's skyline, parks and lakes.
Let us recognize that all creations are
themselves a testament of Your goodness and magnificence.

Praise God, all you people. Praise God!

4)

Praise the wonders of the Lord
for we are delivered
from the chaos of the enlightenment
in which our senses
were deemed to determine
our theology and our fate.

We have persevered,
and through Your guidance,
found our reawakening.

We now find You
through the instruments of science:
through the scopes, the inventions of those
blessed by God

Your creation is revealed to us in the infinitesimal
microcosm of the quirk and the quark

Earth. I am not separated from you.
I am a species.

Everything we see informs us of Your goodness
and compassion.

And now we see in the universe,
the majesty of Your work,
the wonder of Your loving creation
Your inspiration comes to us
Through the minds of the great scientists.

We now see further into the universe
than we have ever seen and we see You
wherever we go.
Excitement and wonder abounds with
each new discovery.

From the big bang to our
ever expanding universe, we are present in Your glory.

5)

Finding God in All Things – A Psalm of Descriptive Praise

Alleluia! God the majestic Creator

The first kiss of young lovers; surrendering
The strong cry of a vernix-covered newborn
Hope-filled faces of the new graduates
Gratifying tiredness after a long hard day

Morning mist over the field; dew drops on the grass
Chirping birds in the woods
Seagulls by the shore
Vegetations turning to the rising sun

Finding the glory and power of God in all things
The splendour and magnificence of creation
Growing closer to the Beloved through daily events
Experience of peace and joy; turbulence and suffering

Warm glow of sunset across a cloud-laced sky
Ships returning to the harbour
Hustle and bustle of a city awakening to night life
Golden horizon against the silhouette of high rises

Pink slips; hungry and weary looks of the aged
Despair of HIV infection; stigma of social leper
Mourning of the terminally ill
Last breath of the dying, returning to dust

Alleluia! God the everlasting Love

March 14th 2009

6)

A MODERN PSALM

O God, Creator of all life,
We thank You for your Spirit's gifts,
Encouraging us to share your plan
Of nurturing all human life.

The promise of a new world dawns
As You enable us to see
The power to transform and change,
Inherent in a tiny cell.

The pluripotent stem cell shows
That adult stem cells can provide
The raw materials to renew
Potential for development.

Praise God, your Spirit grants us knowledge,
Wisdom, insight, perseverance.
No perverse action is embraced,
No travels down the errant path.

But ethical life serving goals
Are those You inspire us to pursue.

Praise God!

7)

Psalm of Descriptive Praise (by: Sylvia Leaver)

Praise the Lord, all you people.
Praise Him whose mighty knowledge
permeate man's thoughts
to explore the vast space beyond,
to uncover the mysteries of human genes.
Praise Him whose brilliance
shines through medical researchers,
aerospace scientists, bioethicists, scripture scholars.

Praise the Lord, you people.
Praise Him for His serene-felt Presence.
Corn-silk heads bowed in silence.
Sunlight streaming through the stained-glass windows
of St. Michael's Cathedral, illuminating
the dusty corners of our beings.

Praise the Lord for His goodness
guides the hands that serve at St. Francis table,
directs the arms that push the wheelchairs,
leads the learned to instruct the unlearned,
inspiring our souls to praise Him in Psalms.
God's good heart prays in our heart.

Praise Him for His patience
etched on furrowed brows
shivering behind TTC's bus shelters.
Praise Him whose compassion
echoes through the soft murmurings
of the white-collared, the wimpled and the lay ones,
consoling huddled figures, blanketed on the gutters
numbed by the cold, damp, wintry nights.

Praise the Lord, all you people
Praise Him for His Beauty
reflected on tiny folded hands,
little feet shuffling, inching, towards the Throne,
anticipating Bread – Divine's gift to Humanity.

Praise the Lord, all you people
Brilliance, Knowledge, Serenity, Compassion, Beauty
Surround us and we surround You.
Praise the Lord, all you people. Praise the Lord!

8)

Oh Lord, all creation shows your glory;
By your divine finger, marvelous works come into being;
For you have given us a modern day version of Noah's ark in
the form of our city's new art gallery.

Crystalline structures, ballerinas viewed through clear glass windows,
sky scraping condominiums, power-generating windmills
and green spaces in the heart of the city.
All these you have given in order
to continue praising your glory made known in creation.

From your heavenly drafting table,
You turn your love toward us
In our awkward attempts to imitate your works
You inspire and awaken our artistic sensibility.

Come and see! Come and see the goodness of the Lord!
O Divine Creator, how majestic is your finger
by which marvelous works come into being.

9)

Contemporary Psalm of Descriptive Praise

Praise of God during Spring

Lord, you are close to us.
You warm us and heal us with the sun,
The rains of spring quench the earth
and bring forth signs of new life.
The robin returns, delighting in the warmth.
The buds flourish in the garden.
The wind brings life to the trees.
Your glory echoes through all of creation.

My heart leaps with joy,
Your Spirit awakens hope,
Lord, we bask in the warmth of your Love.

Rob, Joe, Nadia

10)

Praise God the Creator, all you people.
He has created worlds too many to count
Yet has fashioned one tiny planet where we can bless Him for its comfort.
He created innumerable stars but chose one minor star to shine on His people.
Praise Him and thank Him for His goodness.

In the beginning God breathed on the waters.
He showed His power in the flood and in the force of the tsunami.
He shows His power in the April rain that brings forth May flowers,
And the golden grain in harvest.
Praise Him and thank Him for his bounty.

Praise God the Lawgiver.
He has set His law on the stars and therefore the stars are.
Our galaxy travels around its axis in the Milky Way in a galactic year.
Earth and its fellow planets follow their regular yearly orbit.
The moon obeys its law keeping to its path and manmade satellites maintain the same law.

He gave Moses 10 laws to teach us and protect us.
His laws are imprinted in our hearts .
Courts throughout the world use their offices to protect the weak .
Good people have created an International Criminal Court to promote justice.
Its people bless the Lord by their efforts.
Praise God, all who honour the law.

His laws govern the great and the tiny - from the super clusters of galaxies to the tiny building blocks of life
In our DNA.
We are "equi-distant from atoms and the stars".
But He encompasses all.
Praise the Lord for He is our Creator , our benefactor and our Protector.

Carl Sagan used this phrase in his introduction to A Brief History of Time

11)

Psalm of Praise

Praise God, all you people, praise God the Artist
Who drew the line of the horizon, Who dyed sky and water
Who sketched in the foliage enclosing the blue while leaving a path that opened into
mystery, adventure, survival.
Our forefathers sought this , and today we cherish it.

Did you design such a vista for our pleasure?
Or did you input a code in us so that it resonates even today?
We praise you and thank you for the beauty you have made.

Landscape artists interpret your creation,
Though not all know your name , still they give glory to You, O Lord.
Toddlers snatch crayons from their crayon boxes to draw the world
They have not learned as yet is yours.
Students in Alsop's crayon box search for a part of You that no one has uncovered.
They are Your hands and they give glory to You.
All creation gives glory .
Let all artists praise God in word or in work.
Let lovers of beauty praise Him.

Let all peoples on earth praise God.

In "The Art Instinct" Prof. Denis Dutton quotes a survey in which people on every continent chose as their favourite picture, a landscape of sky, water, trees with enough cover for protection but showing a way in and pathway forward. His theory is it traces back to early man who had learned the conditions that helped him survive.

12)

A Scientist Psalm of Descriptive Praise

Lord and sustainer of our existence
you hold us tenderly in your palm.
As in the garden, you breathed life into Adam
so your continuing love maintains the world.
Your vast creation is our home and we your children.
As the nestling, serpent, and quasar too, we were
your musings as time began and are so now.
Open our eyes to your loving presence in all things
as we live supported by your immutable laws
made manifest in your creation, then and now.

Let man bow down and praise the Father
who formed us, sentient residues of Her thought.
We, who are made in His image, now puzzle
whether Genesis verbatim or Darwin's model
holds a candle to Her creative force and will,
for God has writ both grand and small.
We search by means of science for the truth of
God's creation, year by year, and piece by piece
each advance standing on borrowed shoulders
we seek to reveal God's laws and creations history.

The Cosmos, formed in a cataclysmic instant,
still leaves a faint imprint on all horizons
a subtle glow witnessed by scopes below and craft above.
A fingerprint from the primal event for all to see
it now reveals an energy, as yet imponderable by man
that confounds our measurements of galactic mass
and dictates the universe will gestate forever.
We seek by hurling bits of matter in magnetic fields
to approach an understanding of His created temple.
Above the arch of heavens, at every turn we gaze amazed.

And now below we delve into our very being
and learn that unlike man's scripts, diverse
God with an economy of purpose
and design used a code of letters four
to encompass the plan of every man
and all beings living on our earth.
Of Her creation we stand in awe.
Bow down and adore the works of God the Father,
His special gift to man, His Son, for our redemption,
and the Holy Spirit, present to inform in every age.

Donald Sutherland

Wisdom

1)

Divine Master,
By my own Cardoner River,
You teach me like a schoolmaster
explaining the complex with the simple.

In the clouds floating across the sky
I see impermanence in life.
Sunrise and sunset show me
The ever-changing views of your everlasting vision.

The similarity between plants and the nearby weeds
Makes me realize my weakness is often in my strength.
The bigger the tree the greater is its resistance to the wind.
Those given more also carry a heavier responsibility.

Like the icicles melting but still
Reflecting the beauty of the morning sun,
I continue to sing praise and feel grateful
Even when I seem to be cast in the furnace.

Shadow is but the deeper colour of the same ground.
My dark side is made of the same elements as my gift.
A pine cone opens and disperses its seeds in the forest fire.
Suffering taken spiritually brings its own fruitfulness.

By my own shore of Babylon
You have taught me how to let go.
Divine Musician, you write with the ups and downs of life.
Teach me to sing in harmony with you and your creation.

March 23rd 2009

2)

In Praise of God through Aging and Dying

There is as much glory in the Autumn leaves
As there is in the Spring blossoms.
Thank you for the beautiful colour in nature
And for the different hues in my life.

When my eyesight grows dim,
I have learned to see the pattern rather than the details.
When my ears fail to hear,
You have taught me to listen with my heart.

When my voice sounds weak and hoarse,
I have discovered that there is more strength in gentleness.
When my hands become unsteady,
You have shown me how I've never functioned without you.

When my joints begin to hurt,
You are telling me to slow down.
When my skin wrinkles and sags,
You've made me appreciate the lovely forms in every stage of life.

When those close to me start leaving one by one,
You've drawn me closer to your wounded-self each time.
Ah, it is almost a joy to seek such pain,
Knowing that it will lead to a deeper union with you.

When my memory deteriorates,
I know that Life with you is easy when I forget trifles.
When I can't keep up with my students' recent advances
I know deep down that your Truth is simple and lasting.

Beloved, you close a door and open a window.
When you close all the other exits
You will have opened fully the Way to your perfect love.
No more doubts, discernment or decisions,
But instant, free and total communion.

Until then, please accept my imperfect love.

3)

A Wisdom Psalm

Go up to the temple of the Lord
and render him praise.
Lift up your voices and make a festival.
Be true to the Lord in your heart.
Do not plan a war against your enemy,
but pray for him.
Do not take up the sword or the gun,
or slander the name of your enemy.
Teach us your ways, O Lord.
We would follow your words and obey your commandments
Are we not like other men and women?
We must walk in the path of peace:
peace to our brothers, peace to our sisters,
peace to those who hurt us and abuse us.
The world is full of hatred;
We bring love, compassion and empathy to it.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.
He instructs us in the way that we should go.
Praise and thank him, the God who shares
his amazing glory with us.
Praise the Lord!

Virginia Edman

4)

Happy are those who have no guns in their homes.
They rely on the Lord to protect them,
and animals are their friends.
Happy are those who listen to teachers
and use their imaginations to change their ways.
They rely on the Lord to show them the way.
Their gardens are organic, and the birds delight them with song.
Happy are those who save for a rainy day,
They rely on the Lord to bring them peace
and they give to the poor and to those in need.
Happy are those who use drugs only when needed.
They rely on the talents the Lord has given them,
and they live a long life.
Happy are those who are content with their profits,
They rejoice in newfound species and the beauty of the rainforest.
For them heaven is near.
For they are just and fair to all people;
their compassion commits them to action,
Their love and awe extends to all of God's works
Their hope is in the Lord whom they ask to walk with them.
Their prayers reach their Almighty God and they see the answers.
They will be remembered forever.

Lynn

5)

Psalm of Wisdom

Happy is the man who works quietly,
Not grumbling, nor loafing, nor schmoozing,
He does not play corporate games, nor
trample on toes, nor tell lies to get ahead.
God's kindness will be upon him.

The ambitious, glib-tongued CEO
Cannot be trusted, his path leads to doom.
He hires, he fires, then gets fired.
For he who employs wicked ploys
Loses friends and ends up alone.

God's wisdom can never be measured,
He rewards the just who toils honestly,
Not seeking the high and the mighty,
But goes the extra mile to assist the weak.
His peace and joy no high wage can match.
Blessed be the name of the Lord!

by Sylvia Leaver

6)

Lord of majesty and creation
All things are in Your keeping,
You know my heart – its beatings
Its desires and its longings.

You have watched my comings and goings
You have lifted me high to elude
Lurking wolves and predatory foxes.
You have kept me from the fools and the unwise.

The crosses I carry You fashioned
With care to suit my temperaments.
To bear them alone I could not do.
Your wisdom helps me so.

My heartaches and trials:
The loss of my one and only child
Was death as well to me,
But You O Lord have measured well
The sufferings you tailored for me to wear.

You come to me before I can come to you.
My desire to pray was already Your desire.
My utterance would not have been
Had you not uttered first in my heart.
Benedicamus Domino. Deo gratias!

by Sylvia Leaver

AMDG