

**JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY 2015-2016**  
**Dublin Diocese**  
*Mercy in the Psalms*

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**Welcome**

- Who called it?
- Contexts?
- Resources: OT
- Words
- Psalms
- What to look out for
- Examples

**Who called it?**

- Pope Francis
- Holy Years in general
- Jubilee years in the Bible
- Why this now?

**Contexts**

- Worldwide
- Local
- Pastoral

**Resources: OT**

- The Lord passed by before him and proclaimed: “The Lord, the Lord, the **compassionate** and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness.” (Exodus 34:6)
- Emotion of mercy and compassion, often with a reference to the origin of that feeling (the womb, the viscera)
- Closely related: to be gracious, to pardon, to spare, to comfort, to help, to be kind, to be magnanimous
- **Rachum** (adjective: **compassionate**) Exod 34:6; Deut 4:31; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Ps 78:38; 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 112:4; 145:8
- **Rachumim** (noun [pl]: **compassion**)
- **Rechem** (noun: **womb**) Gen 20:18; 29:31; 30:22; 49:25; Exod 13:2, 12, 15; 34:19; Num 3:12; 8:16; 12:12; 18:15; 1 Sam 1:5–6; Isa 46:3; Jer 1:5; 20:17–18; Ezek 20:26; Hos 9:14; Ps 22:10; 58:3; 110:3; Job 3:11; 10:18; 24:20; 31:15; 38:8; Prov 30:16.
- Jonah prayed to the Lord and said, “Oh, Lord, this is just what I thought would happen when I was in my own country. This is what I tried to prevent by attempting to escape to Tarshish!—because I knew that you are gracious and **compassionate**, slow to anger and abounding in mercy, and one who relents concerning threatened judgment. (Jonah 4:2)
- The Lord is **compassionate** and merciful; he is patient and demonstrates great loyal love. (Psalms 103:8)
- In your distress when all these things happen to you in the latter days, if you return to the Lord your God and obey him (for he is a **merciful** God), he will not let you down or destroy you, for he cannot forget the covenant with your ancestors that he confirmed by oath to them. (Deuteronomy 4:30–31)

Lam 3:19 (Zayin)

Remember my impoverished and homeless condition,  
 which is a bitter poison.

20 I continually think about this,  
 and I am depressed.

21 But this I call to mind;  
 therefore I have hope:

22 (Khet)

The Lord’s loyal kindness never ceases;  
 his **compassions** never end.

23 They are fresh every morning;  
 your faithfulness is abundant!

24 “My portion is the Lord,” I have said to myself,  
so I will put my hope in him.

- Words like mercy, compassion, grace, love, forgiveness, faithfulness kind of merge into each other.
- We turn now to mercy and compassion in the Psalms, the prayer book of the ancient Israelite and the prayer book of the church still today.

### Words

“But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house” (NRSV)	“But, so great is your faithful love, I may come into your house” (NJB)	“But I, through Your abundant love, enter Your house” (JPS)
“But I, through the abundance of your mercy, will enter into your house.” (NABRE)	“But as for me, because of your great faithfulness I will enter your house;” (NET)	“But because of your great love I can come into your house” (TEV)

- HESED: 121 times steadfast love
- EMETH: 31 faithfulness
- HENAN: 23 grace
- RECHEM: (3 time = womb); 2 = compassion
- Also: tenderness, grace, mercy, forgiveness, goodness, benevolence, steadfast love...
- Also: to pardon, to forgive, to save, to rescue...

### Psalms

- Book 1 (Psalms 1–41)
- Book 2 (Psalms 42–72)
- Book 3 (Psalms 73–89)
- Book 4 (Psalms 90–106)
- Book 5 (Psalms 107–150)

Psa. 41:13 *Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.*

- Hymns
- Communal laments
- Royal Psalms
- Individual laments
- Individual thanksgiving psalms

Also: Wisdom; Pilgrimage; Entrance liturgies; Prophetic liturgies; “Mixed psalms”

### What to look out for

- Parallelism (of various kinds)
- Imagery
- Sustained metaphors
- Embedded stories
- Rhythm (in the Grail Psalter)
- Vertical symbolism (ascending / descending)
- Horizontal symbolism (seated, as sign of intimacy)
- Dynamic and temporal symbolism (a person on the move)

**Examples: Psalm 57**

1	Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful ( <b>HANAN</b> ) to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by.
2	I cry to God Most High, to God who fulfils his purpose for me.
3	He will send from heaven and save me, he will put to shame those who trample on me. Selah God will send forth his steadfast love ( <b>HESED</b> ) and his faithfulness ( <b>EMETH</b> ).
4	I lie down among lions that greedily devour human prey; their teeth are spears and arrows, their tongues sharp swords.
5	<i>Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth.</i>
6	They set a net for my steps; my soul was bowed down. They dug a pit in my path, but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah
7	My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast. I will sing and make melody.
8	Awake, my soul! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn.
9	I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations.
10	For your steadfast love ( <b>HESED</b> ) is as high as the heavens; your faithfulness ( <b>EMETH</b> ) extends to the clouds.
11	<i>Be exalted, O God, above the heavens. Let your glory be over all the earth.</i>

**Psalm 57**

- ▶ Parallelism: e.g. v. 2a
- ▶ Imagery: e.g. v. 2b
- ▶ Sustained metaphors: e.g. v. 4
- ▶ Embedded stories: "To the leader: Do Not Destroy. Of David. A Miktam, when he fled from Saul, in the cave." 1 Sam 24
- ▶ Rhythm: 3+3 i.e. a Psalm of trust.
- ▶ Vv. 1-4 **Supplication**
- ▶ V. 5: "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.  
Let your glory be over all the earth."
- ▶ Vv. 6-10 **Thanksgiving**
- ▶ V. 11: "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.  
Let your glory be over all the earth."
- ▶ Psalm 25
- ▶ Psalm 51
- ▶ Psalm 103
- ▶ Task: Parallelism, images, sustained metaphors
- ▶ Eventually: NT passages echoing the teaching

(Available on separate hand-outs)

### **Conclusion**

- › Compassion: God (YHWH) in the Hebrew Bible
- › Compassion: rich vocabulary
- › Psalms as a particular example
- › Linking to today

### **Jubilee Prayer**

(On the screen)

*Resources on the web*

### **For study etc.**

<http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/psalms/>

### **The Grail Psalter (for the rhythm)**

[http://www.giamusic.com/sacred\\_music/RGP/psalmDisplay.cfm?psalm\\_id=364](http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/RGP/psalmDisplay.cfm?psalm_id=364)

### **General (Psalms in Wikipedia)**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalms>

### **Official Website (Vatican)**

<http://www.iubilaeummisericordiae.va/content/gdm/en.html>

*Our Sunday Visitor*

- › **Pastoral Resources for living the Jubilee**
- › (Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelisation)
- › Eight short books

**Psalm 25****Psa. 25:0** *Of David.*

- 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.  
 2 O my God, in you I trust;  
     do not let me be put to shame;  
     do not let my enemies exult over me.  
 3 Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
     let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

**Psa. 25:4** Make me to know your ways, O LORD;  
 teach me your paths.

- 5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
 for you are the God of my salvation;  
 for you I wait all day long.

**Psa. 25:6** Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,  
 for they have been from of old.

- 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
 according to your steadfast love remember me,  
 for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

**Psa. 25:8** Good and upright is the LORD;  
 therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

- 9 He leads the humble in what is right,  
 and teaches the humble his way.  
 10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
 for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

**Psa. 25:11** For your name's sake, O LORD,  
 pardon my guilt, for it is great.

- 12 Who are they that fear the LORD?  
 He will teach them the way that they should choose.

**Psa. 25:13** They will abide in prosperity,  
 and their children shall possess the land.

- 14 The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,  
 and he makes his covenant known to them.  
 15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD,  
 for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

**Psa. 25:16** Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
 for I am lonely and afflicted.

- 17 Relieve the troubles of my heart,  
 and bring me out of my distress.  
 18 Consider my affliction and my trouble,  
 and forgive all my sins.

**Psa. 25:19** Consider how many are my foes,  
 and with what violent hatred they hate me.

- 20 O guard my life, and deliver me;  
 do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.  
 21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
 for I wait for you.

**Psa. 25:22** Redeem Israel, O God,  
 out of all its troubles.

**Psalm 51**

**Psa. 51:0** *To the leader. A Psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.*

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.

- Psa. 51:3** For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgment.
- 5 Indeed, I was born guilty,  
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

- Psa. 51:6** You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8 Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- 9 Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.

- Psa. 51:10** Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.
- 11 Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

- Psa. 51:13** Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.
- 14 Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

- Psa. 51:15** O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- 16 For you have no delight in sacrifice;  
if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.
- 17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

- Psa. 51:18** Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;  
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,  
19 then you will delight in right sacrifices,  
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

**Psalm 103****Psa. 103:0** *Of David.*

- 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name.
- 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and do not forget all his benefits—
- 3 who forgives all your iniquity,  
who heals all your diseases,
- 4 who redeems your life from the Pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
- 5 who satisfies you with good as long as you live  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

- Psa. 103:6** The LORD works vindication  
and justice for all who are oppressed.
- 7 He made known his ways to Moses,  
his acts to the people of Israel.
- 8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- 9 He will not always accuse,  
nor will he keep his anger forever.
- 10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
- 12 as far as the east is from the west,  
so far he removes our transgressions from us.
- 13 As a father has compassion for his children,  
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.
- 14 For he knows how we were made;  
he remembers that we are dust.

- Psa. 103:15** As for mortals, their days are like grass;  
they flourish like a flower of the field;
- 16 for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
and its place knows it no more.
- 17 But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting  
on those who fear him,  
and his righteousness to children's children,
- 18 to those who keep his covenant  
and remember to do his commandments.

- Psa. 103:19** The LORD has established his throne in the heavens,  
and his kingdom rules over all.
- 20 Bless the LORD, O you his angels,  
you mighty ones who do his bidding,  
obedient to his spoken word.
- 21 Bless the LORD, all his hosts,  
his ministers that do his will.
- 22 Bless the LORD, all his works,  
in all places of his dominion.  
Bless the LORD, O my soul.