

SOVEREIGN

THE LESSON: PSALM 9

Our lessons this year are shaped around the Litany, which forms the oldest part of the Book of Common Prayer. While some parts of the Litany have been revised and updated, its core dates all the way back to the *fourth* century! So when we pray with the Litany, we are uniting our voices with generations of believers stretching back many centuries, allowing words that express the concerns common to Christians in every place and time to direct our hearts and minds.

A few generations ago, the Litany was encouraged for use three times a week, but in more recent years it has fallen out of regular use, finding a place in corporate worship at most parishes once or twice a year, at the beginning of Lent, and if you are lucky at the beginning of Advent. If you are familiar with the Litany, what probably struck you is that it is an amazingly *thorough* prayer, and one that doesn't shy away from confronting the darkness that often inhabits our world.

At its heart the Litany is an invitation to enter into the presence of an awesome God, and to bring before him the myriad concerns that shape our lives: concerns for our world, for the Church, and for our own wellbeing. Why do we do this? We do this because we know that God is sovereign over everything and merciful towards us, and we have been given the privilege of approaching him through what Christ did for us. So our lessons begin where the Litany begins: with a consideration of the character of the God we address.

+++

The psalms form the ancient prayer book of Israel, written by many poets at many different dates, and these continue to be used by the Christian Church in prayers, chants, and songs. The psalms express a range of experience and emotion, but they share a common theme of recognizing that ultimately all human concerns are under the control of a sovereign God.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Choose one of the petitions from the Litany to focus on this week. Choose something that speaks to your own concerns right now. Begin with the words of the petition and then add your own to them.

For example: "To bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived, we beseech thee, good Lord... I especially bring before you these people (...) that I am concerned about and ask that you would open their eyes to your truth and bring them home to yourself. I know that you are sovereign over all things, even this, and I thank you because I know you care..."

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth: We humbly beseech thee to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which be profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (THE COLLECT FOR THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, BCP PAGE 229)

SOVEREIGN

PSALM 9:1-10: **ENTHRONED FOREVER**

¹I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. ²I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. ³When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before your presence. ⁴For you have maintained my just cause; you have sat on the throne, giving righteous judgement. ⁵You have rebuked the nations; you have made the wicked perish; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever. ⁶The enemy came to an end in everlasting ruins; their cities you rooted out; the very memory of them has perished. ⁷But the Lord sits enthroned for ever; he has established his throne for justice, ⁸and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness. ⁹The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. ¹⁰And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.