

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 30:2, 4, 5–6, 11–12, 13 (2a)

R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew
me clear
and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.
O LORD, you brought me up from
the netherworld;
you preserved me from among those
going down into the pit.

Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.
For his anger lasts but a moment;
a lifetime, his good will.
At nightfall, weeping enters in,
but with the dawn, rejoicing.
Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me;
O LORD, be my helper.
You changed my mourning into dancing;
O LORD, my God, forever will I give
you thanks.

READING V Isaiah 55:1–11

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah**Thus says the LORD:**

All you who are **thirsty**,
come to the **water**!

You who have **no money**,
come, receive **grain** and eat;
come, without paying and without **cost**,
drink wine and milk!

Why spend your money for what is **not bread**,
your wages for what **fails** to satisfy?

Heed **me**, and you shall eat well,
you shall delight in **rich** fare.

Come to me heedfully,
listen, that you may **have** life.

I will renew with you the everlasting covenant,
the **benefits** assured to David.

Proclaim with high energy this great news
from the Lord. Pay attention to the words
in bold.

reading concludes with another water
image: the rain and snow that come down
from heaven soak into the earth, bringing
about seed and bread. So too is God's
Word. It soaks down deeply into the human
spirit, and accomplishes God's purpose.

Isaiah's promise of life-giving waters,
bread freely given, and a rich banquet is
particularly appropriate at the Easter Vigil.
The waters of Baptism, the bountiful procla-
mation of God's Word, and the Eucharistic
feast provide a banquet far richer than any
envisioned by Isaiah. This night everyone is

invited: come, eat, listen, and delight in the
Lord's rich fare.

READING VI Baruch 3:9–15, 32–4:4.

The sixth Easter Vigil read-
ing, a poem from Baruch, is a beautiful
hymn that praises Wisdom, not as an
abstract reality but as a personified and
relational entity. Although ascribed to
Baruch, a scribe of the prophet Jeremiah,
the hymn to Wisdom (along with the rest of
the book) was perhaps written long after
the life of Jeremiah and the Babylonian

exile. Yet the reality of the exile remained a
forceful example of the consequences of
disobedience and the necessity of repen-
tance. The whole book can be read as a
perennial exhortation to see God's Law as
the source of life and well-being. Just
before today's hymn to Wisdom is a prayer
of supplication (2:11–3:8) that is a helpful
theological context for understanding the
hymn. In the prayer, the people with
"anguished soul, the dismayed spirit" (3:1)
call out to God to save them, and to again
show mercy on them, even though their

Say in a gentle tone.

The Lord's words are firm. Let the assembly hear his words clearly.

As I made him a witness to the peoples,
a **leader** and commander of **nations**,
so shall **you** summon a nation you **knew** not,
and nations that knew you not shall run to you,
because of the **LORD**, your God,
the **Holy One of Israel**, who has glorified you.

Seek the **LORD** while he may be found,
call him while he is near.
Let the scoundrel forsake his way,
and the wicked man his thoughts;
let him turn to the **LORD** for mercy,
to our God, who is generous **in forgiving**.
For my thoughts are **not** your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the **LORD**.
As high as the heavens are **above** the earth,
so **high** are my ways **above** your ways
and my **thoughts above** your thoughts.

For **just** as **from** the heavens
the **rain** and **snow** come down
and do **not return** there
till they have watered the earth,
making it **fertile** and **fruitful**,
giving seed to the **one** who sows
and **bread** to the **one** who eats,
so shall my word be
that goes **forth** from my mouth,
my **word** shall **not** return to me **void**,
but shall do my will,
achieving the end for which I **sent** it.

sins are many. They are impious, and have violated all God's statutes; they did not heed the voice of the Lord. Although the exile is their rightful punishment, they remind God that they are God's own people, and the Lord is able to turn them back from their "stiff-necked stubbornness and from their evil deeds" (2:33). The prayer, in which Israel admitted its disobedience, opens the possibility of restoration if they turn away from their sinful deeds and are obedient to God's commandments.

After this plea to God, Baruch addresses the people: "Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life: listen, and know prudence!" The essential way to learn Wisdom is through the "commandments of life," the very law that Israel had disobeyed. Prayer and hymn each emphasize the necessity of adherence to God's statutes if the people are to live. The Mosaic Law, equated with Wisdom, gives life in all its dimensions, both individually and collectively. But Israel has forsaken the fountain of Wisdom, bringing about their exile in the

land of their enemies, and they have grown old in a foreign country. Now if they are to learn anew the depth and richness of God's Wisdom, they must listen and walk in the way of God through adherence to God's commandments.

Throughout the hymn, as elsewhere in Wisdom writings, Wisdom is personified as a woman with quasi-divine qualities. Those who find her will find strength and understanding, and will discern where there is life, light, and peace. In this text, as well as elsewhere in Wisdom literature