*Advent – Great Adventure - Psalms*

*David – David & the Psalms,* Fr. J. Ponessa

*Fathers – Praying the Psalms with the Holy Fathers,* P. Celano

*SK = Chinese Bible*

*SN = Special Notes*

*CCC= Catholic Catechism*

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| **A** | **The Four Levels of Meanings of Scripture*** The four different levels of meanings or interpretation of Scripture and the Psalms: historical (literal) – looking back; allegorical – pointing towards Christ; anagogical – pointing towards God’s Kingdom; and moral – looking inward towards one’s soul.
* “O praise the Lord, O Jersulem! Praise your God, O Zion!” (Ps 147:12) – note the parallelism and the 4 different levels of meanings.
* The four meanings of Psalm 150.
* The victory of David evokes a scene that took place one thousand years before – when Melchizedek met with Abraham who had just defeated his enemies, offered bread and wine and praise to God fort that victory. A thousand years later, David had the Ark of the Covenant carried to Jerusalem in a loud and joyful procession. He offered bread and meat and wine and appointed Levites to offer praise and thanksgiving before the Lord perpetually, “he blessed the people in the name of the Lord; and he distributed to every person in Israel – man and woman alike – to each a loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins” (1Chronicles 3). Another thousand years after David, Jesus himself would enter Jerusalem, offer bread and wine and give thanks. Such exegetical techniques will be used to help us understand the mystery of Scripture.

  | CCC 115-117David p 187David p 187David p 189QS 10 p 67 |
| **B** | **About The Psalms of Praise*** Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because HE IS.
* Prayers in the Psalms often revolve around praise, an important characteristic of the psalms. The same characteristic can be found in all five scrolls as well as the whole collection. The Psalter concludes with “Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving”, each of the five psalms begins with “alleluia”. The Psalter is also called the “Tehillim” (HB) – songs of praise. Similarly, praising God has become an important component in Christian life and prayer of the Church. One must praise God unceasingly as our faithful God must be praised!
* Upon deliverance from mortal illness or danger, the “todah” (HB) or “eucharistia” (GK) was offered by the Israelites. This “Todah or “thanksgiving” offering involved offering bread, meat, and sometimes wine (the cup of salvation” with friends and family in the Temple. Many psalms are written to accompany the “todah” sacrifice, featuring our journey from plight toward praise.
 | CCC 2639RS 1 p 3-4David p 189CCC 2589QS 10 p 67Ps 22 |
| **C** | **When Should We Give Praise and Thanksgiving?*** When one is cheerful and happy (James 5:13) – don’t focus on yourself or the situation; turn to God in praise.
* In all situations (Phil 4:6) – “do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God”.
* Give thanks in all circumstances (1Thess 5:18) – One offers thanksgiving so that one’s “senseless mind” is not “darkened” (Rm 1:18-23).
 | RS10Q3RS10Q3RS10Q4 |
| **D** | **Why Praise and Give Thanks to God?*** “Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him who is its source and goal”. Praise unites us with the Holy Spirit, turns our hearts to God and makes us remember Who God is and what He has done to save us. It reminds us of God’s mercy, and Christ by his death and resurrection, has transformed everything.
* The Israelites praise God as God has fought for them, defeating their enemies.
* Psalm 149 – Praise goes hand in hand with battle and victory in this psalm.
* Give thanks in all circumstances and let our petitions be known to God, victory will be granted.
* Ps 69:31-37 – The result of praising God is gladness and a revived heart; God hears and will come to our aid.
* St. Augustine’s reflection of praising God.
 | CCC 2639RS10Q9bRS10Q2Chron 20:1-24RS10Q6RS10Q9aPhil 4:4-7RS10Q8SN1 |
| **E** | **Living in Thanksgiving*** Once we realize our Redemption, our lives can become Eucharistic: grounded in thanks and praise to God whatever our circumstances, before, during, and after life’s afflictions, because of what Christ has accomplished for us.
* Psalm 100: note what the Psalmist invites listener to do and for what reasons are we giving thanks.
 | 2Tim 4:6RS10p3SN2RS10Q10 |

**SPECIAL NOTES**

1. The thoughts of this, our present life should focus on the praise of God, because the unending exultation of our future life will be the praise of God, and no one can be fit for future life who has not practiced somehow for it.

But give praise from your whole self, that is, so that not your tongue and voice alone praise God, but also your consciousness, your life and your deeds.

Let him not cease to live right, and he will always praise God. You only cease to praise God when you fall from justice and from what is pleasing to Him. For if you never fall from the life of goodness, though your tongue be silent, your life is shouting, and your heart will be present to the ears of God. For as our voices are3 to one another’s ears, so our thoughts are to the ears of God. (St. Augustine, *Exposition on Psalm 148*, v. 1).

1. The Eucharistic sacrifice tends to foster a spirit of offering that accepts the obstacles more willingly and is able to see in them the possibility of a deeper love (Theological-historical Commission for the great jubilee of the year 2000, *The Eucharist, Gift of Divine Life*, p.98).