

Meditation on Psalm 123:1-4

Our eyes look to the Lord, our God!

Psalm 123 is a prayer of trust in the redeeming and transforming mercy of God. It is a personal and communal lament by a people despised, who go through anguish inflicted by adversaries. Psalmist and his people experience contempt and discrimination by arrogant opponents. This psalm is also known as a pilgrim psalm recalling Israel's bitter struggles in exile. In desperation the people are 'lifting up eyes to God', it is a trusting inner movement toward God, surrendering oneself in an effort to seek answers to life's struggles. The heart that pleads for God's mercy is content with the closeness of God's presence. God's presence fills the heart with hope, that he/she will not be shamed. The arrogant will not have the last word. God is Lord of restoration, who continuously recreates everything with his transforming grace.

Psalmist approaches God as a servant, despite experiences of ridicule and contempt; psalmist listens to God and patiently waits for his mercy to grant him peace. God's mercy is experienced as being drawn to the loving heart of God, God who is the guarantor and giver of dignity and worth to human life [Psalm 139:14 praises the mystery of God's mercy and love that knits each human being in the mother's womb; God's marvelous deeds fashion everyone]. Appealing to God's mercy is the sign of a heart that is ready for change, seeking friendship with God, a heart free of evil, so that God's grace may restore the individual or community to well-being! Heart that seeks mercy would let go its depressive/negative emotions and rejoice in the stability that receives from God's love.

Jesus turned the contempt and ridicule of the arrogant into manifestation of forgiveness and love for all. Grace of mercy is about turning unpleasant, distressing life-situation into a peaceful, welcoming existence! We can relate this psalm to the struggles of church today-reminds us our call to live the gospel in freedom and love. We reaffirm that our trust is in the Lord and his mercy will purify and help rebuild the church; we place our hope in the God of restoration and redemption. Psalm reminds the church of its vocation to be a servant to the world!

Father Jose