



Lent reflection for March 29, 2025

Click [here](#) to listen to the podcast!

### Psalm 56: 1-13

*Be gracious to me, O God, for people trample on me;  
all day long foes oppress me;  
my enemies trample on me all day long,  
for many fight against me.*

*O Most High, 3 when I am afraid,  
I put my trust in you.*

*In God, whose word I praise,  
in God I trust; I am not afraid;  
what can flesh do to me?*

*All day long they seek to injure my cause;  
all their thoughts are against me for evil.*

*They stir up strife, they lurk,  
they watch my steps.*

*As they hoped to have my life,  
so repay[a] them for their crime;  
in wrath cast down the peoples, O God!*

*You have kept count of my tossings;  
put my tears in your bottle.*

*Are they not in your record?*

*Then my enemies will retreat  
on the day when I call.*

*This I know, that[b] God is for me.*

*In God, whose word I praise,  
in the Lord, whose word I praise,  
in God I trust; I am not afraid.*

*What can a mere mortal do to me?*

*My vows to you I must perform, O God;  
I will render thank-offerings to you.*

*For you have delivered my soul from death,  
and my feet from falling,  
so that I may walk before God  
in the light of life.*

---

## Today's reflection if from Carol Oliver:

**"Be gracious to me, O God, for people trample on me;"** I highlighted the word 'trample' as soon as I read the Psalm of Lament. For a few days, I was stuck on the word 'trample' because it felt harsh and severe; it felt like someone had taken my breath away, choking my last breath, and yet I did not want to associate that word with anything in my life. I let it go for a few more days. I woke up one morning thinking this is it, I am going to attack the word 'trample,' today and write my reflection.

As a Latina light-skinned woman of Puerto Rican descent, my identity has always been a questionable curiosity for people. I have lived my life between two worlds: that of Puerto Rican culture and values of my parents and grandparents, and multiple generations of family members, all from that little island that people have a lot of questions about. Is Puerto Rico part of the US? Do you vote for the president? What is a commonwealth? ARE YOU AMERICAN?

The questions about me have also been interesting: "Oh you are an only child," I thought Puerto Ricans had many children?" Is Oliver your married name? Oh, you are Puerto Rican, and you speak English perfectly! These questions were often from other educators who should have known better. At first, I did not see this as being trampled on, but after giving it some thought, I get tired sometimes of having to explain who I am, so yes, I have been trampled on quite a lot.

The second world I live in is that of my professional educator life. Being an educator, all my life has been a struggle. Being in circles where normally minorities are not always welcomed has been the other trampling that I have suffered. I worked in a challenging system that trampled on me as I worked tirelessly, helping students who were like me, trying to navigate college and graduate school. I remember being told by a graduate faculty member behind closed doors, "You're not smart enough to be in a PhD program, you should quit." She gave me a B- on a paper one day (in graduate school that is not a favorable grade) and said if I spent the winter break reworking the paper, she would look it over and see if she could change the grade. Well, I did, and I submitted the paper to her the following spring semester; she looked at me, did not review the paper, and right in front of me wrote an A- on my paper. What was that all about? Why did she not bother to look at that paper? I had worked so hard on that paper trying to prove to her that I deserved a better grade. Through it all, I never thought the program was for me and imposter syndrome surfaced. It took 11 years and working full time, eventually I earned my doctorate.

**"All day long they seek to injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil."**

Recently, these trample feelings are real again as we hear the barrage of news every day of federal grants shutting down and discussions of the US Dept of Education shutting down. The word DEI has become a "dirty word." I have worked for over 20 years in federal grants supporting DEI. Students have thrived with these grants. It is hard to work every day and not know what to tell your employees regarding their jobs. Trampling...trampling...and yet... **"You have kept count of my tosses; put my tears in your bottle."**- how gracious that God holds all my complaints and concerns, and he puts my tears in his care. Despite all the trampling around me, God always comforts me, and I just leave all of this to God. I cannot imagine what my life would be if I did not thank God every day for the blessings, living in abundance, and not fear.

This weekend's Holy Apostles' retreat was one of those blessings. Whether in darkness or in light I will **"walk before God in the light of life."**

---



Carol Oliver has been living in Kensington since she was 13 years old. She is an educator, a yoga teacher, loves to travel, and enjoys movies and theater. She has been attending Holy Apostles since 2017. Her husband and she were married in Holy Apostles last April.