



Lent reflection for April 16, 2025

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Psalm 143: 1-12

*Hear my prayer, O Lord;
give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness;
answer me in your righteousness.
Do not enter into judgement with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.*

*For the enemy has pursued me,
crushing my life to the ground,
making me sit in darkness like those long dead.
Therefore my spirit faints within me;
my heart within me is appalled.*

*I remember the days of old,
I think about all your deeds,
I meditate on the works of your hands.
I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah*

*Answer me quickly, O Lord;
my spirit fails.
Do not hide your face from me,
or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.
Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning,
for in you I put my trust.
Teach me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.*

*Save me, O Lord, from my enemies;
I have fled to you for refuge.
Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.
Let your good spirit lead me
on a level path.
For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life.
In your righteousness bring me out of trouble.
In your steadfast love cut off my enemies,
and destroy all my adversaries,
for I am your servant.*

Today's reflection is from Emily Hursh:

There is something about this reading that makes me uncomfortable, and it's not the part about destroying my adversaries: it's the sense of entitlement, almost whininess. It's the same feeling I used to get watching a friend talk back to their parents, usually right before the friend got grounded. This isn't how I think someone should talk to God.

But, I remember one time in high school I threw a fit over not being allowed to eat a granola bar in class (I may or may not have claimed my human rights were being violated: truly cringe). My teacher called me up to the desk, and I went, prepared to get written up or sent to the principal's office, but instead he only said, "Emily, what's wrong?" That incredibly simple question, that moment of seeing through my rage and rebellion to the pain underneath it, destroyed the brittle facade of control I was trying so hard to maintain. Tears streamed down my cheeks as I made excuses, unable or unwilling to share the reasons for my pain. There was a lot wrong that we don't have to get into here; suffice it to say my personal life felt as much like a dumpster fire as the political situation does now, and I think he knew that because I went to a small school in a small town. He gently suggested I go hang out in the guidance counselor's office, and take my granola bar with me.

I think that's the kind of grace I need from God these days. I think all the memes about punching nazis I'm sharing on instagram are coming from the same place as that self-righteous teen rebellion over a granola bar: rage and bravado masking pain and fear.

I don't know what the answer is. I don't know how to make God feel like a close and comforting presence in the times when They feel far away. I don't know how to feel inspired by the Holy Spirit to take action when I feel like anything I could do would be pointless. But I do know that God tells us They are more like that high school teacher, and less like a parent grounding their kid for talking back. God has infinite grace for our shortcomings, our unskillfulness, our lack of internal resources. God doesn't need us to pray from a place of perfect perspective, or maturity, or even faith that They will fix it. God can see underneath whatever we say, and however we say it, and what's underneath is beloved by God.

Maybe in focusing on that, I can once again drop the brittle facade, and allow myself to feel the pain and fear behind it. Maybe I can only experience God's comfort if I let myself experience the feelings that need to be comforted. Maybe it's what I hear as entitled whininess that makes these prayers so raw, real, and ultimately, powerful.



Emily Hursh has been a member of Holy Apostles since 2017. She lives in Windsor Terrace with her two cats, and her partner Teddy also attends Holy Apostles. Emily spends most of her time on her doula work, aerial arts, playing pool, and going to the zoo.