

The Pray More Retreat Study Guide



Seeking God's Mercy Through Psalm 51

by Kim Padan

Psalm 51

[For the choirmaster Of David When the prophet Nathan had come to him because he had gone to Bathsheba] Have mercy on me, O God, in your faithful love, in your great tenderness wipe away my offences;

2 wash me clean from my guilt, purify me from my sin.

3 For I am well aware of my offences, my sin is constantly in mind.

4 Against you, you alone, I have sinned, I have done what you see to be wrong, that you may show your saving justice when you pass sentence, and your victory may appear when you give judgement,

5 remember, I was born guilty, a sinner from the moment of conception.

6 But you delight in sincerity of heart, and in secret you teach me wisdom.

7 Purify me with hyssop till I am clean, wash me till I am whiter than snow.

8 Let me hear the sound of joy and gladness, and the bones you have crushed will dance.

9 Turn away your face from my sins, and wipe away all my guilt.

10 God, create in me a clean heart, renew within me a resolute spirit,

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11 do not thrust me away from your presence, do not take away from me your spirit of holiness.

12 Give me back the joy of your salvation, sustain in me a generous spirit.

13 I shall teach the wicked your paths, and sinners will return to you.

14 Deliver me from bloodshed, God, God of my salvation, and my tongue will acclaim your saving justice.

15 Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will speak out your praise.

16 Sacrifice gives you no pleasure, burnt offering you do not desire.

17 Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, a broken, contrite heart you never scorn.

18 In your graciousness do good to Zion, rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then you will delight in upright sacrifices, -burnt offerings and whole oblations -- and young bulls will be offered on your altar.

Reflective Questions/Challenges

- Consider choosing a line out of Psalm 51 to memorize and repeat every day throughout Lent or through this Year of Mercy. Ask God to work through that portion of the Psalm, so that your heart may be transformed. If there's a line in Psalm 51 that is something you particularly struggle with, choose that line, and ask God to make it true within you.
- Ask yourself whether there's a temptation you have a particularly hard time overcoming. And then, choose a portion of Psalm 51 to repeat to yourself whenever you're being tempted. Ask God to strengthen you and help you overcome that temptation through His mercy and through this psalm.
- Consider going to confession and receiving Penance more often, because this sacrament will help you overcome those temptations and habitual sin.
- Remember that God's mercy is brand new for you every single day.

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- Are you joyful, or could you be joyful more often? Curtis Martin wrote it is essential for us as Catholics to be joyful, especially if we wish to evangelize. He said, “If the people we seek to evangelize see us as angry, pessimistic, and unduly aggravated by problems within and without the Church, why should they want to become Catholic? No. We must show those around us that, because of Christ, we are joyful, undaunted, and hopeful, in spite of the problems and obstacles that may surround us.” If you’re struggling to be joyful, ask God to give you your joy back, and reflect on what He has already given you — each day, as you wake up.