

Christian Prayer: March

Psalm 50

Since the seventh century a group of psalms have been designated the penitential psalms. These are Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143 (in the Hebrew numbering used in most modern scripture translations)

Especially during Lent these psalms are prayed to help us to recognize our sinfulness, express our sorrow and ask for God's forgiveness.

Psalm 51, given below, (as its superscription suggests) has been associated with King David (traditional author of many of the Bible's Psalms).

It is understood to be his prayer of repentance when confronted with his sin in committing adultery with Bathsheba and plotting the death of her husband Uriah. The story is told in 2 Samuel 11 and 12.

Psalm 51 (50)

- 1 For the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David
- 2 when the prophet Nathan came to him after he had gone to Bathsheba.
- 3 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your merciful love;
according to your great compassion,
blot out my transgressions.
- 4 Wash me completely from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 5 My transgressions, truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
- 6 Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.
So you are just in your sentence,
without reproach in your judgment.



- 7 O see, in guilt I was born,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- 8 Yes, you delight in sincerity of heart;
in secret you teach me wisdom.
- 9 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be pure;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 10 Let me hear rejoicing and gladness,
that the bones you have crushed may exult.
- 11 Turn away your face from my sins,
and blot out all my guilt.
- 12 Create a pure heart for me, O God;
renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- 13 Do not cast me away from your presence;
take not your holy spirit from me.
- 14 Restore in me the joy of your salvation;
sustain in me a willing spirit.
- 15 I will teach transgressors your ways,
that sinners may return to you.
- 16 Rescue me from bloodshed, O God,
God of my salvation,
and then my tongue shall ring out your justice.
- 17 O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 18 For in sacrifice you take no delight;
burnt offering from me would not please you.
- 19 My sacrifice to God, a broken spirit:
a broken and humbled heart,
O God, you will not spurn.
- 20 In your good pleasure, show favor to Sion;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
- 21 Then you will delight in right sacrifice,
burnt offerings wholly consumed.
Then you will be offered young bulls on your altar.