THE RESPONSORIAL PSALM

The Responsorial Psalm is included in the Mass as part of the Liturgy of the Word. Specifically, it follows the First Reading. The reading ends with the simple "the Word of the Lord," whereby those gathered respond, "Thanks be to God." And then we move to a more specific invocation and petition, the Responsorial Psalm.
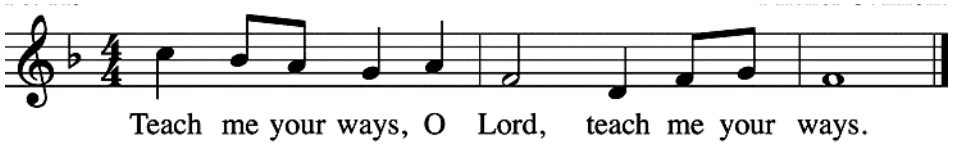


This is our prayerful response *to God* after hearing His Word. The response and verses echo what we have heard in the readings of the day — we raise our voices as a Church to God, we appeal to him and praise him. They often reflect joy, gratitude or sometimes consolation and encouragement. The Responsorial Psalm itself is typically drawn from the Book of Psalms in the Bible.

The psalms are older than Christianity. When we recite them, we take up formulas of worship that were used by the Jews in the Temple centuries before the coming of the Messiah.

The psalmist or cantor sings or says the Psalm with the people making the response.

They help us to meditate on the Word of God as we repeat or reflect on one thing drawn from the readings or the purpose of the celebration. It is helpful for us to remember that "*in today's world of information overload, it's all too easy to let something enter one ear and pass out the other: it's the reflex that makes us respond 'fine' when someone asks us how we're doing, even when we're miserable. Sometimes we have to repeat something to help it sink in. Our response helps some aspect of the readings of the day to reverberate in us a little, in our minds and hearts, so they don't just pass through our ears and vanish. We make them not just God's Words, but our words.*"

Psalm 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9



Teach me the demands of your statues
and I will keep them to the end.
Train me to observe your law,
to keep it with my heart. R.

Guide me in the path of your commands;
for there is my delight.
Bend my heart to your will
and not to love of gain. R.

Keep my eyes from what is false;
by your word, give me life.
Keep the promise you have made
bo the servant who fears you. R.

Keep me from the scorn I dread,
for your decrees are good.
See, I long for your precepts;
fhen in your justice, give me life. R.

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