



Psalm 113

Praise God Who Descends
to the Lowly

Ranking of Liturgical Days

- Solemnity – most important days – Vigil, 3 readings, Gloria, Creed
 - Christmas (Dec 25)
 - Ascension (40 days after Easter Sunday)
 - Mary, Mother of God (Jan 1)
 - All Saints (Nov 1)
 - Every Sunday
- Feasts – next in importance – no Vigil, 2 readings, Gloria
 - Triumph of the Cross (Sept 14)
 - Saint Matthew (Sept 21)

Ranking of Liturgical Days

- Obligatory Memorials – major commemorations typically of importance to the entire, universal Church
 - Saint John Chrysostom (Sept 13)
 - Saints Cornelius and Cyprian (Sept 16)
- Optional Memorials – lesser or more specific celebrations
 - Saint Januarius (Sept 19)
 - Saint Patrick (March 17) but in Ireland a solemnity
 - Saint Peter Claver (Sept 9) but obligatory in US
- Rankings may be dependent on local importance
 - For example, St. Benedict, an obligatory memorial in the universal calendar, is a feast in Europe since he is one of its patrons, and is a solemnity in the diocese and abbey of Montecassino where he is buried

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- Pss 113-118 are called the Hallel (praise) of Egypt
 - distinguished from the great Hallel, the Songs of Ascents (Pss 120-134)
 - Egypt is from the reference to the Exodus in Ps 114
 - Soncino believes they originated after the return from Bablyon to celebrate that event
 - A wonderful psalm to simply shout out God's praises – like someone dear to us
- v1 - Hebrew <Hallelu Yah>; also in verse 9
 - Hebrew Hallelujah becomes Greek Alleluia becomes Latin Alleluia
- v2 - From this time - the return from Babylon was a stunning, miraculous event - cf. Ps 126:1-3

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- v3 - This is probably not a reference to time (half the day) but to geography (the entire world from one end to the other)
- v5 – There are important nuances in the Hebrew in verses 5-6
 - Literally "who exalts to dwell" perhaps implying choice more than simply the way things are thus complementing the choice in v6 to come down
 - In vv 4-5, God is portrayed as transcendent, i.e., above creation
 - In the rest of the psalm, He is portrayed as immanent - near to and involved in His creation
- v6 - It is not just God looks down but, more literally, "God comes down low to look." (Rotherham, Soncino) – choice
 - Heavens and Earth, i.e., all creation, cf. Gen 1:1

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- v7 - cf. I Sam 2:8
 - Poor - low, weak, poor, thin (e.g., Gen 41:19) (BDB), a person brought low by illness or misfortune (Soncino)
 - Sitting in the dust was a sign of mourning, e.g., Is 47:1, Job 2:8
 - The ash heap was not just ashes but dung and garbage. Lepers and outcasts might gather by these piles to stay warm
- v9 - A likely reference to Hannah in I Sam 2 but also Is 54:1-3
 - The Jewish perspective would see a reference to the return from exile
 - Paul sees reference to Sarah as a type of the Church - cf. Gal 4:22-28