

Devotion, Fifth Week of Lent, March 17, 2024

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The reading for the fifth week of Lent is Psalm 46, which most of you know. It inspired Martin Luther's celebrated hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." It articulates deep trust in God amid turmoil and chaos — realities with which we are all too familiar in our current world crises:

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar; the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice; the earth melts.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
"Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations;
I am exalted in the earth."
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

God is indeed our refuge – our fortress in times of trouble. As we move toward Holy Week, let us remember that this week. God wants us to be "still" or quiet – to settle within ourselves and know that God is God, and God, the Lord of hosts is with us – always.

Jeanne