



## Introduction

On the heights of Golgotha, amid a silence torn by agony, Jesus utters words that resound with unsettling power:

**“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”** (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34).

These words, far from being an expression of despair, are in fact the opening line of **Psalm 22**, an ancient song that reveals the heart of the suffering Messiah. This psalm not only astonishingly foreshadows the Passion of Christ, but also offers us a spiritual compass to navigate our own moments of trial, darkness, and abandonment.

This article will take you on a deep journey through **Psalm 22**—its **history**, its **fulfillment on the cross**, and its **spiritual and theological significance**. We will explore it as a practical guide for daily life, from a traditional Catholic perspective, while maintaining the closeness, pedagogy, and pastoral inspiration needed for any reader, at any stage of faith, to find in these lines a wellspring of comfort and meaning.

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## I. Psalm 22: Context and History

**Psalm 22** was composed by King David about a thousand years before the birth of Christ. It is a **psalm of lament**, from a man who feels completely abandoned by God in the midst of terrible suffering. Yet this lament is not faithless—it is **deeply trusting**. The psalmist cries out from anguish, but he does so knowing that God hears.

From the earliest centuries of Christianity, the Church Fathers saw in this psalm a **direct Messianic prophecy**. St. Augustine, for instance, said that “David wrote as if he himself were Christ,” while St. Jerome called it “the Gospel of the Passion in the form of a poem.”

Let us look at some key lines from the psalm that echo in Christ’s Passion:

- **“All who see me mock me”** (Psalm 22:7) → Cf. Matthew 27:39
- **“They have pierced my hands and my feet”** (Psalm 22:16) → Cf. John 20:25
- **“They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing”** (Psalm 22:18) → Cf. John 19:23-24

This level of literal fulfillment makes Psalm 22 a direct bridge between the **Old and New Testaments**, between the **Messianic hope** and its **realization in Christ**.



## II. Theological Relevance: The Mystery of Abandonment

### 1. Did God truly abandon His Son?

Jesus' cry from the cross has been a source of perplexity and scandal. Can God abandon God? Catholic theology firmly responds: **No**.

What Jesus expresses is not an actual rupture in the Trinity, but rather the **human experience of abandonment**, just as so many righteous figures in Scripture experienced it. Jesus, true God and true man, **enters fully into human suffering**, even the feeling of divine silence, to redeem it from within.

The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** teaches:

*"Jesus did not experience rejection by the Father. He expresses it in human terms, from the depths of his human soul." (cf. CCC §603)*

This cry from the cross is a **prayerful invocation**, not a blasphemy or reproach. It is a way of **embracing the entire Psalm 22**, from sorrow to hope, from lament to praise.

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## III. Spiritual Structure of the Psalm: From Lament to Praise

One of the wonders of Psalm 22 is its **arch-like structure**. It begins in the depths of suffering, but ends in an explosion of trust and praise:

- **Verses 1-21:** Human pain, loneliness, injustice.
- **Verses 22-31:** God's triumph, universal hope, worship by all nations.

This inner movement shows us that faith does not consist in avoiding suffering but in **journeying through it with meaning**, until we reach the glory revealed in the Resurrection.

On the cross, Jesus not only proclaims the beginning of the Psalm: He **lives it in full**. His



death is not the final word. The “why?” becomes **“I will declare your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you”** (Psalm 22:22). This is the same dynamic we find in the liturgy of the Easter Triduum, where Good Friday prepares the way for the Easter Vigil.

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## IV. Pastoral and Spiritual Guide: How to Apply Psalm 22 in Daily Life

### 1. Pray from the darkness without fear

Many believers feel guilty for experiencing doubt, dryness, or the sense that God is silent. Psalm 22 teaches us that it is **legitimate to pray from pain**, even when we feel nothing. Jesus did it. So can you.

□ *Practical tip:* When you feel abandoned, pray Psalm 22 out loud. Don’t just read it—make it your personal prayer. Join your voice to Christ’s.

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### 2. Rediscover trust amid suffering

Every line of the psalm is infused with trust, even amid abandonment:

“*You are He who brought me out of the womb; You made me trust while on my mother’s breasts*” (Psalm 22:9)

God never ceases to be Father, even when you don’t feel it. Trust, even when your soul is broken.

□ *Practical tip:* Keep a spiritual journal where you write down your own “verses of abandonment,” followed by your “verses of hope.” Imitating the structure of the psalm helps you transition from sorrow to trust.

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### 3. Offer your suffering united to the Cross



Psalm 22 teaches that **suffering offered up has redemptive power**. We are not called to seek pain, but to **give it meaning in Christ**.

□ *Practical tip:* When you experience physical or emotional pain, say in your heart: “Jesus, I unite myself to your cross as in Psalm 22. Receive this wound as prayer.”

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#### 4. Accompany those who suffer with honest words

This psalm is a powerful pastoral resource for accompanying the sick, the depressed, or those in mourning. It is not about giving quick answers, but **being present with them as Jesus was in Gethsemane**.

□ *Practical tip:* When visiting someone who is suffering, bring a printed copy of Psalm 22. Read it with them, pausing at the verses that move them most. The Word will do its work.

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#### 5. Celebrate the triumph of hope

The psalm ends on a note of victory:

*“For the kingdom is the Lord’s, and He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship” (Psalm 22:28-29)*

Suffering is not the end. It is the path to **eternal glory**. Just as the psalm ends in praise, so our lives are meant to.

□ *Practical tip:* End each day by repeating the last verse of the psalm:  
**“They will come and declare His righteousness to a people yet to be born, that He has done this.”** (Psalm 22:31)  
It is a way of living in praise—even after tears.



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## Conclusion: Psalm 22 as a Map of Our Own Passion

Psalm 22 is not a distant text nor only for theologians. It is **a song for every human heart** that has known pain, injustice, mockery, or darkness—and that, nonetheless, **chooses to trust**.

By quoting it on the cross, Jesus not only showed us how He suffered, but **how we should live** our own crosses: with faith, with hope, and with the certainty that **the Father never abandons His children**.

In a world wounded by suffering, confusion, and meaninglessness, Psalm 22 remains a shining guide that **awakens faith, strengthens hope, and renews love**. May it be for you a constant prayer, a living catechesis, and a key to enter the mystery of the Cross—not as failure, but as the **path to eternal life**.

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**“They will come and declare His righteousness to a people yet to be born, that He has done this.”**

(Psalm 22:31)

**And you—have you begun to proclaim it?**