

I was predicting that the Detroit Tigers would win the World Series in 6 games. St. Louis won it in 5. Of course, I never said which year Detroit would win the World Series in 6 games. Kansas City fans watched a team in Missouri beat a team from our division, and neither team was ours. But the memory of the 1985 World Series keeps us thinking that one day we will be freed from our exile.

Today's responsorial psalm is all about remembering the good old days: "The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy." This psalm especially fits situations when you hope things will be as good again as once they were before. It uses three images – two from nature and one from history.

One image from nature is the harvest. Farmers sowed their seed with tears, probably because of the back-breaking work, but they harvested with joy, because they could see the fruit of their labor.

The other image from nature is rain. In the desert strong rains can suddenly turn some dry places into a river at certain times of the year. The psalm prays, "Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the torrents in the southern desert." Just as the rains suddenly make a river in the desert, let your kindness come on us too. The people who first sang this psalm saw that God could make things fruitful in nature, so they ask God to make their lives fruitful too.

The third image comes from history. A foreign army had invaded Israel and carried people off to Babylon. There they stayed in exile for many years until a new king decided to let them go home. Israel joyfully remembered that event as the good old days. The psalm opens with these words, "When the Lord brought back the captives, it was like we were dreaming. Our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with rejoicing." So several times the psalm remembers something wonderful God had done in nature or in the past, and asks God to do it again now.

We're using this psalm today because in the first reading Jeremiah prophesies that those exiled captives would return home – all of them, even the blind and the lame. God would take care of every one. And in the gospel, Jesus cures a blind man, as a sign that he has come to free us from our slavery to sickness, sin and death and bring us to his kingdom of light and peace, a place we can call home.

Psalm 126 gives us a style of praying when these days are not as good as the good old days; it helps us pray on days we want things to be different – things even more important than baseball. God has done great things for us in the past, and God can do great things today. Psalm 126 prays this way: Look around you. Find something in nature that demonstrates God's abilities. Think about the past. Remind God of something wonderful from long ago. Then make your request. God has done great things for us; God can fill us again with joy.