

## **Isaiah 64:1-9<sup>ii</sup>**

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

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### **<sup>ii</sup> About Isaiah 64:1-9**

Today's reading is included in a psalm of lamentations and intercession (63:7-64:11). When the exiles returned to their land, they found Israel still desolate and the temple still in ruins (64:10-12). Their conviction that God desired Israel's salvation wavered in the face of the immense task of restoration and their own continuing sense of sinfulness and alienation.

The prophet cries out for God's glory to be manifested as in the past. Sinfulness now bars the people from God's presence, just as ritual uncleanness barred one from corporate worship. The prophet recognizes the need for a Redeemer, God alone, who would return their hearts to "doing right."

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In the space of a few verses, the prophet three times reminds God that “you are our father” (63:16; 64:8). The prophet recalls the fatherhood of God in order to stress God’s role as Israel’s begetter, the One that gives life and identity to Israel. The prophet’s use of the title Father also reminds his audience of the permanence of their relationship with God. In that relationship rests all their hope.