

**CALLED TO OFFER RIGHT PRAYER**

Hear again the Word of the Lord call out to His Church on this eleventh Sunday after the Feast of the Holy Trinity:

*Call upon Me in (the) Day of Trouble;  
you I will deliver, and you shall give (glory) to Me.<sup>1</sup>*

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

Today, God has called His assembled people, His Church, to offer right prayer to Him. The Holy Spirit, through the historic Church calendar, has once again brought us to that teaching from the Word of God in the time called, *Laurentide*. We have today marked the seasonal shift in scriptural emphasis with a change in greens for the congregation's paraments (cloths adorning the altar table) and vestments (garments with which Pastor and Deacon are clothed).

We also set this day apart from recent Sundays by having a fuller Gospel procession. That movement symbolizes, in a more visible manner than usual, the Presence of Christ in the midst of His people as His own words are read. That positioning reminds us that Christ is with us. That leads us to remember that we may call upon the Father, in the Spirit, through the Son, through right prayer in good times and in times of trouble.

Without going into the church-history accounts concerning Laurence the Deacon, suffice it to say that his day, August 10 that begins this sub-season, commemorates an important day in his life. He, who appears to have been one of the seven deacons (literally, "table waiters") of Rome long ago, received the eternal crown of life on account of his love of the Church and his faithfulness to Christ. He earned his martyrdom for the good work of presenting the poor, ill, maimed, lepers, orphans, widows, the people of the Church, to Roman officials when he was ordered to give up the treasures of the Church. On account of that offering, Laurence was grilled to death on an iron grate. Some of the Church Fathers, who have been known to err, reported that the Sainted

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<sup>1</sup> *Psalm 50: 15.*

Deacon prayed, as he gave up his spirit, for the conversion of Rome and that the Faith of Christ would spread from there throughout the world.<sup>2</sup> In life, into death, and into eternal blessed life, Deacon Laurence lived in the Church that had, through pressure, persecution, and manifold troubles learned to actually follow these biblical words:

*Call upon Me in (the) Day of Trouble;  
you I will deliver, and you shall give (glory) to Me.”<sup>3</sup>*

In St. Laurencetide four years ago, on Trinity 11 (the same Sunday as today), this congregation sent the first of her daughters to The Seminary (Fort Wayne) to enter studies to become a commissioned Deaconess. We sent her off with the Word of God used for centuries on this particular Sunday of the year. We did so knowing that trouble – hopefully not as bad as that which Deacon Laurence faced – usually comes to those who set out to study, learn, and practice that which will lead them into full-time service of Christ, and of His Church. The devil works his wiles to get them out of service before they can begin to actively rob souls from his kingdom. It is poetic, and appears to be under the direction of the Holy Spirit, that the same woman, now a Deaconess Intern, is again present among us in Laurencetide, this time accompanied by her husband and infant son.

We sent Brittini off to study and intern in the hope that God’s Word of Promise, the same Christ Who is revealed in the Psalm of the Day, would hold her steadfast in the Faith. It was God’s promises she heard that Trinity 11, 2014, that she, and you, have heard again today. We sent her off, to face whatever troubles would come in her studies and training, with these words of promise for her years of academic study and internship:

*Call upon Me in (the) Day of Trouble;  
you I will deliver, and you shall give (glory) to Me.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> c.f. *Butler’s Lives of the Saints*, v. 3, 1996, 298.

<sup>3</sup> *Psalm 50: 15.*

<sup>4</sup> *Psalm 50: 15.*

Little did we know then how often such scriptural promises God would use to sustain Brittani, and her husband, Kyle, throughout their years of learning. We should not be surprised when we may hear from them of any of the times God's Word brought them God's deliverance. From the recounting of those stories you are free to learn that God was teaching them to rightly pray in any day of trouble.

That leads us to understand that God's call to right prayer declares to His people, as one Body, that we are to call upon Him in every need. That is true for us even when the road ahead in life appears dim or filled with dangers. God wants us, as one, to pray, praise, and give thanks to Him above all. God calls to the people He unites through His Word to speak or sing with one voice, to offer a *symphonia*. He reveals that He desires that His people speak or sing in unison His Word, and through that Word, for us to be led to look to Him in the Faith.

That is important to remember always. It is also necessary to recall whenever we send a son or daughter of the congregation to learn to serve Christ and His Church in a focused manner. For we send them not as individuals, but as part of the Body of Christ in this place. That reality also applies to the men who we have been called to train. They become, by virtue of the Church's placement, adopted sons of this congregation. (That is part of the reason you grieve when one leaves, even as you rejoice that another is coming). Our vicars, and now we number along with them an accompanying wife and children, become, in this visible Household of God, the adopted sons and daughters of this congregation. Their voices, added to ours for a time, are called to join ours in speaking to God as one. They join the congregation's *symphonia* of prayer, calling out to God with one voice in any day of trouble.

All of that which has been proclaimed already reveals that we have been assembled here today that we might hear that the Body of Christ is composed of many members. All of them are to call out to God with one Voice in days of trouble. He has promised to deliver us as one Body, one family. This our theme verse declares:

*Call upon Me in (the) Day of Trouble;*

*you I will deliver, and you shall give (glory) to Me.”<sup>5</sup>*

With that, we called to respond to God’s delivering us from trouble by giving Him glory! We have covered a lot of that which has been read into our ears today, and there is more to cover. So, we dive deeper into today’s Psalm, as we hear God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, working through a human psalmist and translator, say:

*“Make sacrifice to Elohim (with) thanksgiving;  
and pay to (the) Most High your vows;  
and call upon Me in (the) Day of Trouble;  
you I will deliver, and you shall (give) glory to Me.”<sup>6</sup>*

Some of you might recall that today’s Psalm sounds forth in the Church at least four times each year. The first is during the season in which we remember the Advent of our Lord. The second comes during the Epiphany of Christ. The third is this day. And the fourth is heard on the second-last Sunday of the year.

The ones who assembled the Church’s lectionary, this grouping of readings for the Church Year, appear to have desired that you take comfort in making right sacrifices to God – on account of His continually delivering you from trouble! Chief among those sacrifices is that you, as part of the Body of Christ assembled by Him in one of His congregations, that you offer God the sacrifice of right prayer. That is, that, along with your brothers and sisters in Christ, that is, with all who have been adopted into His family, sealed in His blood, that you call upon God in any Day of Trouble.

God is faithful. He answers your united offering of prayer with His deliverance. That is, as you pray as one, God grants to you the benefits of His atoning sacrifice. He gives you the salvation Jesus won for you on the cross. His blood-covering delivers you from the wrath of God, sin, death, and hell.

That is, it fulfills the literal plea of the tax collector Jesus spoke of today: *O God, propitiate me, the sinner!*<sup>7</sup> God, in Christ, desires to continue to save you, us, the Church,

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<sup>5</sup> Psalm 50: 15.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 50:14-15.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 18:13b.

from His wrath, sin, death, and hell (that is what it means to be propitiated). Jesus, long ago, chose to use penitential words to teach right prayer to those who trusted in their own righteousness. He gave their responses to be negative examples to us.

What words do we sacrifice to God when we are faced with days of trouble? Have you ever heard your pastors, deacons, vicars, and the table waiters in training here publicly offer to God words that tell him that we are not like others – those manifest sinners who are swindlers, adulterers, or IRS agents? Do we offer to God petitions that take the form of: “Look what we have done for You, so now You do good for us?”

If we did, or do, we should be called immediately to repent! Those were examples of evil ways to pray. After all, the Psalmist declares:

*But to (the) wicked Elohim says:  
“What (is it) to you to recite My statutes,  
and to take My bi’rith upon your lips?”<sup>8</sup>*

I think that you now will be truly attentive to today’s congregational prayers! You are really going to listen to determine if we simply recite God’s statutes and take His New Covenant into our mouths, without offering the right sacrifice of prayer. You will pay attention to ensure that we do not continue to reject His discipline by casting the full counsel of His Word away while unrepentantly violating the entire Second Table of the Law in our prayers. Such attention to God’s Word, and its proclamation among us, is good and God-pleasing. It should reflect your Overseers’ (Bishops, Pastors) giving attention to how God’s Word is working among us, in you!

To those, to us, to you, who will to turn from your sins of offering to God the things we, you, do or do not do to violate His commands, to those who truly desire to turn from justifying themselves before God, He gives His Word of hope. That Word calls you to remember that true sacrifice, offering, and worship before God is practiced in receiving first His gifts on account of His merits – in Christ! Hear God’s encouragement to right prayer, sacrifice and offering again, as the Psalm declares:

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<sup>8</sup> Psalm 50:16.

*The one bringing thanksgiving (as sacrifice) honors Me;  
and to one ordering aright his way,  
I will cause to show (the) Salvation of Elohim.”<sup>9</sup>*

That teaching follows lines that declare that right prayer (and right worship) begins with God. He first, and continually, offers His promises of His grace, mercy, life and forgiveness to sinners. The Psalm declares those things that the New Testament authors then number among the right sacrifices of the New Covenant priesthood. Those are offered in congregations filled with members who continue to learn that true worship is that which is received and offered in spirit, the Holy Spirit.

From that Holy Spirit, working through the Word, you who are here today are being called to offer right prayer, that is, true worship to the living God. This teaching is set into the annual season of witnesses, of martyrs, that you might learn from examples of their faithful holding onto the following spiritual tenants that you are free to also grasp them firmly into life eternal. These are today three that have been reinforced:

1. True worship response, the prayer of the faithful in worship in thanksgiving, begins with God’s declaring His forgiveness of sins. He has, in Christ, declared His forgiven people right with Him;
2. Any earthly punishments we receive on account of our sins are lightened by our prayers and good works;
3. That such complete penitence produces the fruits of forgiveness.<sup>10</sup>

All this is revealed in forgiven sinners, to you, as you daily begin to walk in new life. That is displayed to you, and to others, in your, in our humble approach God in the prayers of the Church. True worship response, right prayer, is beheld in repentant persons confessing their sins. God continues to beseech you to:

*Call upon Me in (the) Day of Trouble;  
you I will deliver, and you shall give (glory) to Me.<sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Psalm 50:22-23.

<sup>10</sup> cf. *The Book of Concord, “Apology of the Augsburg Confession,”* Article IV, Justification. Paragraph 268.

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 50: 15.

This you do as you continue to pray, *O God, propitiate me, the sinner!*<sup>12</sup> That God will continue to do for you, out of His mercy. He will continue to take away His wrath at your sins, as He rescues you from sin, death, and hell. Call upon Him!

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

Trinity XI (*Lutheran Service Book* one-year series)

Psalm 50:7-23; Genesis 4:1-15; I Corinthians 15:1-10; Luke 18:9-14

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***Soli Deo Gloria***

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<sup>12</sup> *Luke 18:13b.*

TRANSLATION, SECOND DRAFT:

*"Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, I will cause to testify against you. Elohim, your Elohim I AM!"<sup>13</sup>*

*Not upon your sacrifices you are caused to be reproached, and your burnt offerings (are) before Me continually.<sup>14</sup>*

*I will not accept from your house, bull; from your folds, he-goats.<sup>15</sup>*

*For to Me all beast of forest, cattle on thousand hills.<sup>16</sup>*

*I know all birds of the mountains and (all that) moves in field is Mine.<sup>17</sup>*

*If I were hungry, not I would say to you. For to Me (is) the world and all in it.<sup>18</sup>*

*Do I eat flesh of bulls or blood of goats do I drink?<sup>19</sup>*

*Make sacrifice to Elohim of thanksgiving, and pay to Most High your vows.<sup>20</sup>*

*Then, call upon Me in Day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me.<sup>21</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Psalm 50:7.

<sup>14</sup> Psalm 50:8.

<sup>15</sup> Psalm 50:9.

<sup>16</sup> Psalm 50:10.

<sup>17</sup> Psalm 50:11.

<sup>18</sup> Psalm 50:12.

<sup>19</sup> Psalm 50:13.

<sup>20</sup> Psalm 50:14.

<sup>21</sup> Psalm 50:15.

*Hear, O My people, and I will speak, O Israel;  
and I will cause to testify against you.*

*"Elohim, your Elohe, I am."<sup>22</sup>*

*"Not for your sacrifices do I cause to reprove you;  
and your offerings (which are) before Me continually;  
Not I will accept from your house (a) bull,  
(nor) from your folds male goats."<sup>23</sup>*

*"For to Me (are) all the forest beasts,  
cattle in (a) thousand mountains.  
I know all (the) birds of the air,  
all mountains and all in fields which moves (are) Mine."<sup>24</sup>*

*"If I were hungry, not I would say to you;  
for to Me (is) all the world, and all which (is) in it.  
Do I eat (the) flesh of bulls,  
or (the) blood of goats do I drink?"<sup>25</sup>*

*"Make sacrifice to Elohim (with) thanksgiving;  
and pay to (the) Most High your vows;  
and call upon Me in (the) Day of Trouble;  
you I deliver, and your glory is (given) to Me."<sup>26</sup>*

*But to (the) wicked Elohim says:  
"What (is it) to you to recite My statutes,  
or take My bi'rith upon your lips?"<sup>27</sup>*

*"For you hate discipline,  
and you cause to cast My words behind you."<sup>28</sup>*

*"If you see (a) thief,  
also you accept him,  
and with adulterers (is) your portion.  
Your mouth you give free reign in evil,*

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<sup>22</sup> Psalm 50:7.

<sup>23</sup> Psalm 50:8-9.

<sup>24</sup> Psalm 50:10-11.

<sup>25</sup> Psalm 50:12-13.

<sup>26</sup> Psalm 50:14-15.

<sup>27</sup> Psalm 50:16.

<sup>28</sup> Psalm 50:17.

*and your tongue causes to frame deceit.  
You sit, against your brother you speak;  
(the) son of your mother you slander."*<sup>29</sup>

*"These things you have done,  
and I have caused to be silent.  
You thought I was like you:  
you I cause to rebuke  
and lay (a) charge before your eyes."*<sup>30</sup>

*"Mark then this, you who forget Elohe;  
lest I rend you and (there be) none to deliver.  
Bringing thanksgiving as sacrifice honors Me;  
and to him who orders aright his way,  
I will cause to show (the) Salvation of Elohim."*<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Psalm 50:18-20.*

<sup>30</sup> *Psalm 50:21.*

<sup>31</sup> *Psalm 50:22-23.*