

to take him to the mainland; but they refused, for the king had forbidden it under threat of heavy punishment.

Failing all else, and determined to go, Raymund spread his cloak on the water, fastened one end to his staff for a sail, and boarded, asking his companion to accompany him. The friar refused, so Raymund sailed out of the bay alone with a following wind. The terrified companion rushed into the town, rousing the people with his cries and lamentations. So a crowd, the king included, went to the cliffs. Meanwhile the ships in port, seeing what was happening, followed Raymund, but the cloak-ship outclassed them all.

People on the mainland, noticing something unusual on the water, crowded on the shore in time to see Raymund land, resume his cloak, which was quite dry, incline courteously to them and walk away. The priory doors were closed for the siesta, but they opened at his prayer. He went in, asked the prior for his blessing, and then hid in the enclosure until the throng outside had gone away.

Until 1270 Raymund continued his missionary work, when he became too feeble to travel. From then on until 1275, he remained quietly in the priory at Barcelona.

On the feast of the Epiphany, feeling himself dying, he asked for the last sacraments, and in the presence of his brethren, repeating the 19th Psalm, he gave up his soul to God.



## A LENTEN SERMON OF ST AUGUSTINE ON THE FORTY-SECOND PSALM

**T**HIS is a short psalm, so it can satisfy your listening minds without irking your fasting stomachs. May it feed the soul of every one of us, which is said to be sad by the psalm; sad, it seems to me, because it is fasting in some way, or rather because it is hungry. The Church is hungry, the body of Christ is hungry, that man, the whole Christ, who is all over the world, his head up above and his limbs down below. His voice singing or sighing in all the psalms, happy in hope for the future

or sighing at the sadness of the present, his voice should be well known to all of us, so familiar that we can make it our own. So I won't take up any more time reminding you who is speaking here. Let each of us be in the body of Christ, and so let it be each of us speaking here.

Now all of you know, you who are sighing for that heavenly city, who realize that you are travellers here in a foreign land and keep marching steadily on, your hopes anchored firmly in that unshakeable homeland of your desires, you know that this sort of men, this good wheat of Christ is sighing here below among thistles and will continue to do so until harvest time at the end of the world, as infallible Truth himself explained to us (Matt. xiii, 18). So here is this man sighing among the thistles, the swindlers, the violent, the treacherous, and he looks round and sees himself and them in the same field, both getting rain and sunshine together, both receiving the same gifts from God, the same sort of good and bad fortune; he sees how much he has in common with bad men, without however making common cause with them, and so he bursts out: 'Judge me, God, and distinguish my cause from an unholy nation'. Judge me, he says. I am not afraid of your judgment, because I know your mercy. Distinguish my cause from an unholy nation. For the time being, during this voyage of exile, you are not making any distinction of place, since I must live with the thistles till harvest time. You are not distinguishing my rain or my sunshine; then at least distinguish my cause. Let there be some difference between one who believes in you and one who does not. We have the same weakness but not the same conscience, the same difficulties but not the same desires. The desire of the wicked shall perish (Ps. cxi, 10); we could not be very certain about the desire of the just, were it not for the absolute certainty of God's promises. The end and goal of our desire is the promiser himself. He is going to give us himself, because he has given us himself. He will give us in our immortality his immortal self, because he has given us himself as mortal in our mortality. 'Rescue me from a wicked and deceitful man'; from a man means from a certain kind of man. There's man and there's man, and of the two one shall be taken and the other shall be left (Matt. xxiv, 40).

But we need patience till the harvest, and strength, which we can only get from God; if the soul lays claim to strength of itself,

it will be enfeebled. So he goes on: 'Because, you, my God, are my strength. Why have you thrust me away, and why do I go sadly along, while the enemy afflicts me?' He afflicts me with daily temptations, things which we would be wrong to love or wrong to fear. So the soul is battling on two fronts, and even if it is not overpowered, it is in a tight spot, constricted with sadness, and it says to God, 'Why?' It can hear why from the passage of Isaias which has just been read: 'Because of sin I have made him sad a little while, and have turned my face away from him; and he is saddened and has gone off sadly on his way' (Is. lvii, 16). You ask, 'Why do I go sadly along?'; here's the answer—Because of sin. Sin is the cause of your sadness; let justice be the cause of your gladness. And then there is the enemy you complain of; true enough, he afflicts you, but it is you who gave him the chance. Still, there is something you can do about it; drive out the tyrant, let in the king.

But in order to do this, notice what prayer he makes. Pray with him yourself; this ought to be the voice of us all. 'Send forth your light and your truth. They have led me through to your holy mountain and your tents.' God's truth and God's light are the same thing, and Christ is each of them. 'I am the light of the world' (John viii, 12); 'I am the way and the truth and the life' (*ib.* xiv, 6). May he come then and rescue us, and separate the wheat from the thistles. He will send forth his light and his truth, because they have already led us through to his holy mountain and his tents. His holy mountain is his holy Church. This is the mountain on which the man is heard who says, 'I cried to the Lord with my voice, and he heard me, from his holy mountain' (Ps. iii, 5). Whoever prays apart from this mountain need not hope that he will be heard as regards life everlasting. But now we are on his mountain and in his tent. A tent is for travellers and campaigners, a house for people living at home. When you hear the word tent, think of war and beware of the enemy. What will house and home be? 'Fortunate are those who live in your house, they will praise you for ever and ever' (Ps. lxxxiii, 5).

We have already been brought to his tent then, and set on his holy mountain. What are our hopes? 'And I will go in to the altar of God', an invisible altar on high, which the unjust cannot approach. Only he can approach that altar who sincerely approaches this altar. If he distinguishes his cause at this one, he will

find his life at that one—'to God who gladdens my youth'. Youth stands for renewal. He gladdens me renewed just as he saddened me grown stale. Now I walk along sad in my staleness, then I shall stand and rejoice in my newness.

'I will confess to you on the guitar, God my God.' What is the difference between a guitar and a fiddle, both being instruments which are carried and played by the hands, thus standing for bodily activities of some sort? Briefly, the fiddle has its sounding-box on top, and the guitar underneath. So when we obey God's commandments, and do something without suffering anything, we are playing the fiddle. After all, the angels too do things but do not suffer anything. But when we suffer troubles, temptations, scandals, on this earth, we are playing the guitar, because suffering comes to us through the lower part of our nature. Still, it is good and pleasant music; as St Paul said, 'We glory in our troubles, knowing that trouble produces patience, patience approval, approval hope' (Rom. v, 3). Patience is sweet in God's ears. But if you break under your troubles, it means you have broken your guitar. So here he says, I will confess to you on the guitar, because he has just been saying, Why do I go sadly along?

Then he goes on in the same strain: 'Why are you sad, my soul, and why do you disturb me?' Who is the 'I' here that is speaking? Scarcely my flesh, because my soul is more properly 'me' than my flesh. It must be then something that is still more properly 'me', and that is the part of us in which we are made in God's image, our *mind*. So it is our mind addressing our soul. The soul is pining away in trouble, toil, and temptation, and the mind, clasping Truth up above, rallies the soul and says, Why are you sad, my soul. . . .

Perhaps the soul is worried about its sins, and God's judgment on them. So the mind says to it, Don't worry about your not being able to avoid sin altogether; 'Hope in the Lord, for I will confess to him.' A sincere confession will put things right. Do your best to be just, and however much you succeed confess that you are a sinner, and hope in the Lord, because I will confess to him. What will you confess to him? 'You are the healing of my face, God.' It is the same as in another psalm, 'Heal my soul, because I have sinned against you' (Ps. xl, 5).

These words are safe and sound, brothers; pay attention nonetheless to doing good. Play the fiddle by obeying God's com-

mandments and the guitar by putting up with your sufferings. 'Break your bread to the hungry', you heard Isaias saying (Is. lviii, 7). Don't imagine that fasting is enough. Fasting chastens you, but it doesn't feed the other man. Squeezing yourself will be worth while if it enables another man to spread himself. Think how many poor people could get a square meal out of the dinner we have given up today! Fast in such a way that you can enjoy dining off the meal another man has eaten, by having your prayers heard. This is what he says: 'While you are still speaking, I will say, Here I am, if you willingly break your bread to the hungry'. People often do this grudgingly to get rid of a tiresome beggar, not to feed a hungry stomach. But God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. ix, 7). If you give your bread grudgingly you lose bread and merit together. So do it willingly, and he who can see inside you will say Here I am. How quickly the prayers are heard of people who do good! Here is what man's justice in this life consists of, fasting, almsgiving, prayer. Do you want your prayers to fly to God? Then give them two wings, fasting and almsgiving. May God's truth and God's light find us to be such people when he comes to deliver us from death, having come once already for our sakes to suffer death. Amen.