

Thanksgiving in Midst of Trials

I. PSALM 138:1-8 – Thanksgiving with King David

1 I thank You, LORD, with all my heart; ...to You I sing.

2 I bow low toward Your Holy Temple;

I praise Your Name for Your... [faithfulness] and love.

For You have exalted over all Your Name and... promise.

3 When I cried out, You answered... [and] strengthened my spirit.

4 All the kings of earth will praise You, LORD...

5 They will sing of the ways of The LORD:

"How great is The Glory of The LORD!"

6 The LORD is on high, but cares for the lowly...

7 Though I walk in the midst of dangers, You guard my life... You stretch out Your hand... [which] saves me.

8 ...LORD, Your love endures forever...! ¹

¹ 1, NAB, PSALM 138:1-8.

II. Thanksgiving in Midst of Trials

Yesterday I met the parents of baby KL in Pediatric ICU at the cribside of their 19 month old daughter. Going in, I knew the child's name, Faith [Lutheran], admission date, and service [Pediatric Surgery]. The Nurse told me the baby was "recovering well" from belly surgery, would go to the Children's ward soon and that Mom is a Nurse.

Dad stood at the crib with his hand on KL's head, Mom at his side. She described the belly surgery in detail, as I would expect a Nurse to do. But then they said, "K is our Our Miracle Baby." Asking what they meant, they shared the baby had been born with "brain damage." They were told their newborn had "3 to 6 months to live, just take her home and love her."

But there they stood at her cribside 19 months later. "She's still beating the odds!" And though they have a healthy child at home, they were prepared to love this child just as much every day that they had her, knowing every day could be her last on earth. And in loving her, their love for each other seemed to me to glow. And in loving one another through this difficult ordeal, they also shone forth GOD's Love.

I ended my visit with the 3 of them with a prayer, caught in their thanksgiving for their daily gifts of life and love. And it dawned on me: What is the first – Life - without the second - Love? Life without Love is dead. The second makes the first worth living, every day in thanksgiving as a gift from GOD - especially when the burdens seem heaviest – a sacrifice of thanksgiving!

III. The Sacrifice of Thanksgiving

Moses calls us in LEVITICUS 7:12 to offer a sacrifice of “Thanksgiving” - תודה – TODAH² - to GOD, a giving up in praise with thankful confession and praise to GOD by His people.³

Paul calls us in PHILIPPIANS 4:6, to put away anxiety and to lift up in prayer with thanksgiving our petitions to GOD. Here The Word - εὐχαριστία – Eucharistia means thankfulness and the giving of thanks to He Who saves us.⁴

It is The Same Word often used in The Church for Holy Communion with The Lord, exactly because receiving The Eucharist is an action of thanksgiving to GOD by His people received from The Lord as a means of Grace, secured by CHRIST’s Sacrifice for us.⁵

“The attitude of thankfulness is central to Christian spirituality. The debt of gratitude we owe for GOD’s faithful Love... [for us at The Cross lives most vibrantly in our] turning to GOD in thanksgiving and doing for others what has been done for us” – Love.⁶

In spite of her critical condition, KL was such a living “sacrifice of thanksgiving” for her parents, an embodiment of The most Holy Eucharist of Thanksgiving of Love between GOD and man, husband and wife, parents and child. May we be always open to become living sacrifices of thanksgiving to all those placed in our paths, even ourselves!

² 1, NAB, LEVITICUS 7:12.

³ 2, Strong’s Data, 08426 - תודה – TODAH. Confession, praise, thanksgiving; give praise to GOD; thanksgiving in songs of liturgical worship, hymn of praise; thanksgiving choir or procession or line or company; thank-offering, sacrifice of thanksgiving; confession.

⁴ 2, Strong’s Data, 2170 - εὐχαριστία – Eucharistia. Thankfulness; giving of thanks.

⁵ 3, CCC 1328, p 369. The Eucharist.

⁶ 4, Magnificat, Monday 5th, 2009, p 91. Prayer for the Evening, PSALM 138.

IV. A Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us come together before The LORD
Each according to our own Tradition.

The LORD be with you!
And also with you!

[silence]

O GOD, let us love You above all things,
With our whole heart and soul,
Because You are all good
And worthy of all our love.

Let us love our neighbor as ourselves
For the love of You.

Let us forgive all who have injured us
And ask pardon of those whom we have injured.⁷

Let our hearts sing out to You in thanksgiving
And so receive The Peace of GOD
that surpasses all understanding
to guard our hearts and minds in You, O Lord!⁸
AMEN.

Let us go forth to love and serve The LORD!
Thanks be to GOD!

⁷ 5, Prayers for Catholic Families, adapted from "Act of Love," p 35.

⁸ 1, NAB, adapted from PHILIPPIANS 4:7.

V. References

1. "New American Bible." Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
2. "Strong's Data" Bible Lexicon. Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
3. "Catechism of The Catholic Church." United States Catholic Conference. Doubleday of Random House, Inc. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland. 1995.
4. "Magnificat." The Catholic Herald, Ltd. Yonkers, New York.
5. "Catholic Prayers for Catholic Families." Reverend Robert L. Tuzik, PhD and Reverend John F. Canary. Archdiocese of Chicago. Loyola Press, Chicago, Illinois. 2006.