

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

God sent the Prophet Samuel to publicly select and anoint David as King of Israel. But murderous Saul still filled the throne. Proud men can't stand competition. So David, although blessed by God and anointed, had to flee for his life.

As he fled and was hungry, the priest at Nob, Ahimelech, fed David the consecrated bread, the Bread of the Presence that had been removed that day from before the Lord in the Tabernacle. Before he departed for Gath, the territory of the enemy Philistines, Ahimelech gave David the sword of Goliath, whom David had slain.

David entered Gath, and presented himself to Achish the king, who had the title Abimelech. Achish's servants had heard the songs the people sang of David's great conquests, so David feared the king. To protect himself, David feigned madness.

Now it was not the Prophet's holy oil that ran down his beard, but his own saliva as he pretended to be insane. The king mockingly asked if there was a shortage of madmen in his country, and then released David, who escaped to the cave of Adullam, where he hid.

Psalm 34 is the Psalm David wrote when he pretended madness before Abimelech. The opening Words of the Mass this day/night were the first verse of the Psalm: "I will praise the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth... And even in the darkness of this violet time, it has been ours to glimpse the rose of hope.

So we, with the Psalmist, may declare "Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." David was delivered by the Lord out of all his troubles. And the same Lord has promised to deliver you.

This world is full of Philistines and pagan kings. The Philistines were enemies of Israel who worshipped false gods. Around us there are no shortage of those who do the same. And many are the enemies of the Church. While David feigned madness, the fallen world calls the Christian mad.

They confuse male and female, abort their young, worship the creation, and they call us mad. But so it is in these last days. Christian persecution is greater now than perhaps ever before. And so it will be until the Lord returns to deliver His Church.

But it is not the Philistines without that are your greatest enemy. It is the Philistine within, the Philistine of your fallen flesh. For there you find a pagan that prefers false gods and trusts in your own works. There you find the old man, who willingly falls into the devil's traps. The sinner needn't feign madness. The insanity of the fallen nature, the madness of lust and jealousy and pride are manifest. And the murderous prince of this world covets your soul.

Hear the Words of Psalm 34: "Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it... Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate righteousness will be condemned."

That you be saved from your sins, that you be sundered from the kingdom of darkness and slavery to transgression, the Prince of Peace suffered violence. The True Anointed King entered enemy territory. He came down from heaven and was made Man. He took on Flesh and dwelt among those who hated him. He healed the man born blind, and they accused Him of being mad and having a demon. They called the Holy One a sinner.

By the grace of God, David fled and was spared. The True King of Israel, the Lord Christ, did not flee. He was not spared. He went willingly to that sham trial and horrible beating. He was vested in purple and mocked. So the Words of Psalm 34 declare “Many are the afflictions of the Righteous...”

And while God protected David, the Father forsook the Son. In the darkness of Calvary, bearing the stripes of the scourge, bearing shame and humiliation, bearing the sins of the world, He suffered alone. And it appeared for a time, a short, bitter time, that the evil Saul, the one who tried to usurp the throne of God the Son, the murderous prince of this fallen world, it appeared as if he had prevailed.

The One Anointed with the Holy Spirit was anointed with His own Blood. The One born in Bethlehem, the True Bread from Heaven, the One who gives to eat of the Bread of Life, the One to whom the showbread was offered, was removed from the Father’s presence and put to death. What David escaped Christ endured.

And as they tore His lifeless Body from the tree of shame, although the soldiers broke the legs of the criminals that flanked Him in His Passion, the Words of Psalm 34 were fulfilled: “He guards all His bones, not one of them is broken.” And while David hid in safety in the cave of Adullam, Christ was placed dead in the cave of the garden tomb.

And yet the Psalm declares “My soul shall make its boast in the Lord, the humble shall hear of it and be glad...” That gladness, that boast, is in His victory over death, His conquest of sin, and His glorious resurrection, the hope of all men. So the Psalmist writes “I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

He is shown to be the True Anointed King, King of heaven and earth. And He hides in enemy territory no more. He ascended into heaven, and there He reigns for eternity. So David writes “Oh fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him.”

And the Psalmist includes a Divine Promise for you: “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.” In Christ, all your sins are forgiven. And to you He gives a better sword than the sword of Goliath – you have the sword of the Word.

And still the Psalm bids more: “Oh taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man who trusts in Him!” And according to His Promise, David’s Son and David’s Lord bids you taste and see that He is good. He bids you take and eat, take and drink, of the Holy Eucharist, the better Bread than the Bread of the Presence, for in it Christ is truly present. In faith you eat and drink, and you proclaim with the Psalmist “I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth!”