

mild, and plenteous in mercy;" and, 1 Peter 2, "if yet you have tasted that the Lord is sweet;" and in 2 Cor. 1, "the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation." These two apparently contradictory attributes of God are, however, easily reconciled. God is sweet to the upright of heart, to those that fear him; he is rough and terrible to the crooked of heart, and to those that despise him. Hence the Prophet, in another Psalm, exclaims, "how good is God to Israel, the them that are of a right heart;" for what is quite level seems rough to one with a crooked heart, and all those are crooked in heart, who will not conform themselves to the Will of God; and hence we read in Psalm 102, "as a father had compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him; his mercy is from eternity, and unto eternity upon them that fear him;" an expression used by the Virgin, in her Canticle, when she sang, "and his mercy is from generation to generation, to them that fear him." If anyone, then, will begin to direct his heart, and make it conformable to God's will, and to fear nothing so much as offending God, he will, at once, begin to how sweet God is; and in him will be realized the conclusion of the Psalm, "his mercy endureth forever, and his truth to generation and generation."

**END OF PSALM 99**

## *You are Psalms*

Some people think you never get discouraged, but the fact is, when you do, you know where to run. Your prayers are open and honest because you realize that God already knows your heart, He's just waiting to hear you spill it. And when you do, what starts out as heavy ends up becoming a song of praise. You may struggle... and often you do... but each time, you grow in your understanding of God's faithfulness. You're just a song waiting to happen.

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## **PSALMS** **(SONGS OF PRAISE)**

**TRUST**  
**IN THE**  
**LORD** *and do good;*  
*dwell in the land and*  
*enjoy safe pasture.*  
PSALM 36: 3

**PSALM NUMBER: 99**

**All are invited to rejoice in God the Creator of all.**

- 1. Sing joyfully to God, all the earth: serve ye the Lord with gladness. Come in before his presence with exceeding great joy.**
- 2. Know ye that the Lord he is God: he made us, and not we ourselves. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.**
- 3. Go ye into his gates with praise, into his courts with hymns: and give glory to him. Praise ye his name:**
- 4. For the Lord is sweet, his mercy endureth forever, and his truth to generation and generation.**

*The Psalms are songs of praise and cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.). They deal with selected events of that period and provide us with the thoughts and feelings of those who went through the experiences recorded. After being made a Cardinal by Pope Clement VIII, Saint Robert Bellarmine, prepared for posterity his very own commentary on each of the Psalms. Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.*

## **PSALM NUMBER: 99**

### **EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM**

1. “Sing joyfully to God, all the earth: serve ye the Lord with gladness. Come in before his presence with exceeding great joy.” The Sing joyfully means, as we have frequently repeated, to praise with loud and joyful voice and to serve with gladness means to be obedient through love, and not through fear. “Sing joyfully to God all the earth.” All you worshipers of the true God, in whatever part of the world you may be cast, praise him. Good and bad are to be found all over the world: in the wheat will be found the cockle, and thorns among the lilies. And as the wicked, when they do not succeed according to their wishes, are always ready to blaspheme and murmur against God, so it is meet that the good throughout the world, whatever may happen to them, whether for or against them, should praise and bless him; for, as St. Paul says, “we know that to them that love God all things work together unto good, to such as, according to his purpose, are called to be saints.” – “Serve ye the Lord with gladness.” Serve him by obeying him freely, and not as if you were under coercion— with the joy of freemen, and not with the bitterness of slaves. For, as St. Augustine expresses it: truth delivered us, but love has made us slaves; and he that is a slave from love is one with pleasure. The principal reason, however, for serving God with pleasure consists in love being the summary of his precepts, and nothing is sweeter than love. Besides, the service of God is a profitable thing to us, and of no profit to him. “Come in before his presence with exceeding great joy.” We are bound to praise God everywhere, but especially when we enter his house, “a house of prayer,” where we see God himself in his sacred things, and he, by a special providence, looks on and hears us, according to 2Par. 7, “my eyes also shall be open, and my ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place.” The Prophet, therefore, admonishes them “to come in before his presence,” into the house of God, where they can specially see him, and he them, and to come “with exceeding great joy,” in high spirits, so that God may see their ardent desire for him.

2. “Know ye that the Lord he is God: he made us and not we ourselves.

We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.” Nothing tends so much to stir up that devotion suited to the house of God, as an attentive consideration of God’s greatness and his gifts. “Know ye that the Lord he is God.” Consider, and, after serious consideration, being it known to you, that the God you worship, and to whom you come to offer your tribute of prayer and praise, is the true God, than whom nothing greater or better can be imagined. The him you owe your whole life and existence; for “he made us, and not we ourselves;” he is the primary source of our being; for though parents beget children, they get them through God’s will only. How many in the world sigh and long for children, and are still denied them; and, on the other hand, how many would enjoy the married state without the burden of children, and still have children thrust upon them. Most justly, then, did the holy mother of the Maccabees say to his sons, “I know not how you were formed in my womb, for I neither gave you breath, nor soul, nor life; neither did I frame the limbs of every one of you, but the Creator of the world that formed the nativity of man, and that formed out the origin of all.” – “We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” He now reminds them of another of God’s favors, for which they are bound to thank and praise him, because he not only created us, but he also directs and supports us. “We are his people,” directed by God special Providence; “and the sheep of his pasture;” supported by the food of his word, then nourishes us as rich pastures support the sheep that feed on them.

3. “Go ye into his gates with praise, into his courts with hymns: and give glory to him. Praise ye his name.” Enter into his house with praise and thanksgiving, acknowledging you owe all to him, and have received everything from him.

4. “For the Lord is sweet, his mercy endureth forever, and his truth to generation and generation.” The Prophet now enumerates three of God’s attributes as a further reason for being praised and glorified by all. God’s sweetness, mercy and veracity which are so connected that one would seem to be the source of the other. “The Lord is sweet,” and, therefore, inclined to mercy; his mercy causes him to promise pardon, and his veracity causes him to fulfill his promise. “For the Lord is sweet.” An extraordinary attribute of that omnipotent and tremendous majesty that dwells in light inaccessible, that is terrible above all gods, who taketh away the spirit of the princes, and of whom the apostle says, “it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;” and yet, most truly is it said of him, “the Lord is sweet.” This is not the only passage that says so. It is frequently repeated in the Scriptures, Psalm 33, “O taste and see that the Lord is sweet;” and in Psalm 85, “for thou, O Lord, art sweet, and