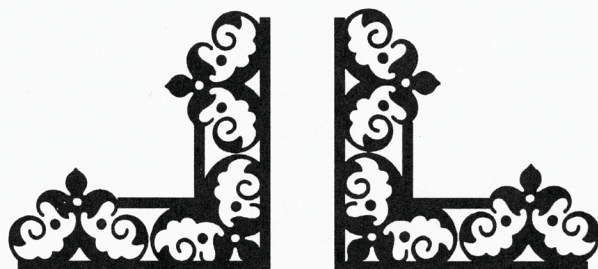


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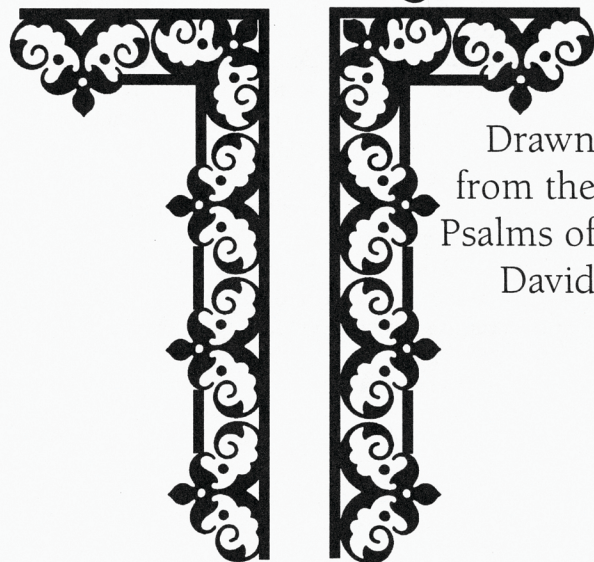
Sacred Prayers Drawn  
from the Psalms of  
David



The Peter Martyr Library  
Volume Three



# Sacred Prayers



Drawn  
from the  
Psalms of  
David

Peter Martyr Vermigli

Translated and Edited  
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[3<sup>r</sup>] Sacred Prayers  
Drawn from the Psalms of David  
written by Peter Martyr

FROM PSALM I:

Take away from us, O great and good God, wicked plans and their attendant sins. Do not let us fall into an evil and shameful life. Likewise keep our souls far from contemning piety and scorning virtues. Instead of these plagues grant that we may constantly meditate on your law and your sacred writings. Then we will not, like the wicked, be carried about by every wind of impulse and doctrine as are light flakes of dust and worthless rubbish. Rather like trees planted by streams of water, endowed with faith and the life of the spirit, may we also bear the outward fruit of good works, and may whatever we do prosper and give praise and glory to your name and [3<sup>r</sup>] add to our salvation. Finally may we, in accord with your mercy, both stand up and be absolved before the court of your judgment after the wicked have already fallen. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

FROM THE SAME PSALM:

Almighty God, we already understand quite clearly how serious troubles and woeful disasters so afflict the Church because we have often yielded to the counsels of the wicked when we should have turned away from the moment we recognized them. We have in no way turned aside from the path of sinners but have followed their path closely with our constant transgressions against your commandments. Moreover, for a long time we have contemned sound admonitions and healthy practices. We have neglected with considerable laziness and even insolence and have derided whatever your word offered to us. It is no wonder that now we have to undergo every heavy, irksome, and bitter experience instead of the happiness and tranquil peace that for so long we have, alas, misused. But now, O God, we flee to you as suppliants, confessing the evil deeds we have done, and we ask with urgent and ardent prayers that [4<sup>r</sup>] you be kind and forgive us the sins that we have committed in our stupidity and wickedness. Make our souls as devoted as possible to your law so that

we may ponder in our hearts day and night nothing except the words of your Holy Scriptures. That way we shall bring forth in due season sweet fruit, employing our faith in your word, and we will not be robbed of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, our efforts will always have a blessed outcome. But now we are hard pressed by our sins and are not unlike husks blown up and down by the winds of tribulation. At least, good Father, grant this: that our life may not be wasted in evil like the wicked. Rather, like the cause of the just, may you defend our life with the highest care and protection so that we may stand at the judgment and gathering of the just and that we may not fail in our cause. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FROM THE SAME PSALM:

Since it has already been explained to us, O almighty God, that our happiness while we live here depends in large measure on how we beware of evil advice and profligate behavior and flee the company of those who [4<sup>v</sup>] spurn and deride everything and on how such plagues are replaced by wondrous zeal for the divine law on which we meditate and reflect night and day. Since we realize we have strayed far from this goal of our salvation, indeed have sinned grievously against this, we ask you that in your mercy you forgive our failures and deign to make us henceforward fruitful plants by the continual study and use of your word. May we not only bear fruit in your Church while we live, but may we also be able to pass successfully our judgment in the other world before you, who knows perfectly the way of the just. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FROM PSALM 2:

In this time, O great and good God, we feel that not only the Antichrist but all the power and force of the world has conspired against you and your Christ—namely those who think that the Gospel and the reformation of the Church are intolerable chains and a heavy yoke, so that they try by every device to break apart communities of believers and reject all discipline. But since you [5<sup>r</sup>] dwell in heaven and since the plotting of the devil and sinful flesh are not hidden from you, you laugh at their useless schemes, render vain their efforts, and make them instead the joke and laughingstock of your elect. Make them realize your anger, and may they at last be filled with terror by the fury of your wrath so that they cannot destroy your Church. You have put Jesus Christ, our only savior, over the Church so that he may reign in it mighty and invincible by his word and spirit. Graciously grant to us, your children, even though we are unworthy and disloyal, enough faith and constancy that we may have him

as our only king and confess the same. May we have no doubts that we are his nation, people, and heritage. May we rightly understand that he is endowed with such strength and power that he punishes those he wishes with a power stronger than iron and brings them low like clay pots. O God, convert the kings of the earth to yourself so that they may understand and acknowledge and embrace and kiss your Son lest, his wrath being kindled, they perish on the spot. When it seems good to you, make blessed forever those who have really committed themselves to your faith. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

[5<sup>v</sup>] FROM THE SAME PSALM:

Regardless of how much the devil rages, O great and good God, or the worldly powers rise up daily, or the flesh conspires with its slaves against the kingdom of your only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, still we know and hold firmly as part of our steadfast faith that you mock and scorn all such things—you who are mighty to crush them in your wrath and anger as soon as it pleases you. Since we are sometimes weak in our faith, so that driven by various fears we obey your commandments less than we ought, we beseech you that in your goodness you show us your favor so that we may be firmly convinced that your Son is our king and redeemer and holds complete power at your side over all things. When you begot him, you handed over all the nations for him to rule rightfully as his heritage. Grant us now finally to realize that and learn it so well that by serving you with all fear and honor we may not be smashed on the last day like a clay pot by the rod of your anger. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

[6<sup>r</sup>] FROM PSALM 3:

O great and good God, the forces of those who have risen up against your Church have grown beyond measure. Many already dare to attack her and cruelly rebel against her, relying on this one idea which they have decided upon among themselves, that we could no longer hope for salvation from you, as if you had completely abandoned your people and stripped them of every protector and defense. We do not indeed deny, when we look upon the sins with which we have offended you, that we fully merit being deprived of your help and being exposed to insults, reproaches, and injuries from the enemies of your name. Nonetheless, because of the faith which through your mercy survives in us, we dare to approach you and ask that you deign to supply us amid the reproaches of our enemies with enough of the Spirit and with enough constancy that we may not doubt that you will be the only protection, honor, and vindication of your people. If we have begged your help

in prayers, we will be strengthened by that trust, and you will undoubtedly look favorably on us from your heavenly dwelling. When we are safe under your protection, our fear will leave us so completely that, even though [6v] vast hosts of enemies besiege us, we will take our sleep and get up as usual while we courageously rely on you alone. Arise then, O God, in accord with this beginning of our trust, and as you were wont to do in times past, smash the teeth of those who pit themselves against you lest they be able to wound your Church at their whim. Show us that salvation comes from you and that in your goodness you are still able to help your people in their extreme distress. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FROM THE SAME PSALM:

O almighty God, day by day the forces of Satan and of all the powers opposing us seem to be growing, and they are trying to overturn upon us the kingdom of your Son. They try to drive us to despair, as if we could no longer find salvation in you.

Nonetheless, even though we feel ourselves terribly burdened by our sins, we lift up our heads and our hands to you, who are our shield and our glory. We beseech you, because you are merciful, forgive what we have done wrongly and answer graciously the prayers and vows that we pour forth before you. Then, having been called away from dead works and [7r] relying strongly on your graciousness, we will not fear the infinite hosts of the enemies of your name since our faith teaches us that you have already struck and smashed their jaws. Grant us, good Father, to recognize how abundant is your blessing upon us, and may we be utterly convinced that our salvation depends upon you alone. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FROM PSALM 4:

We call upon you, almighty God, hard pressed by troubles and dangers, so that, helped by your aid, we may finally attain a free and happy escape from our present sufferings. We admit that we are unworthy of your help since we have turned away from you frequently and painfully. But we beg you to deign to examine not our individual actions but the worthiness of our cause. Since you are wont to vindicate the justice of your words, may you now protect powerfully your worship and Gospel, after having also corrected and punished us as you wish. We now weep before you because the mighty of this world have united for a supreme effort to drag down the glory of the Gospel and your worship into shame, [7v] indeed into nothingness, because of the mindless enthusiasms and false hopes which they have set their hearts on. We

hope that you, O God, will reveal and show to them the nature of the true Church, which you have chosen for yourself and which you listen to when full of faith it calls upon you with its prayers and cries. Perhaps they may gain understanding and even be moved and take heed not to sin against that Church. May they take thought, even in their beds, how they should regard the Church, and perhaps they will grow quiet and can be led to offer sacrifices of true justice with her. But now they are blinded and want nothing so much as to discharge their rage against her; they regard destroying her as the highest good. But every time we worship you in spirit and in truth, O God, we have prayed repeatedly to you for the salvation of our enemies. We heartily rejoiced when good and happy things happened to them. Grant then in your mercy that they may finally allow us to live in peace and tranquillity; grant, I say, that we may find rest in you alone and that we may dwell with you in safety, putting our confidence in you. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FROM THE SAME PSALM:

O God, in you is all our justice; since [8r] you are good, you have always been wont to hear those who call upon you and to lead them from their troubles to a better fortune. We beseech you not to be deaf to those who beg your help and not to allow our glory, which is our true devotion, to be reduced to shame by any overwhelming power of this world. We have indeed sinned against you, and very seriously, but in your kindness prevent vanity and untruthfulness from overcoming us. But since you have chosen for yourself those you wish to save, make the grace and favor of your countenance so shine upon us that we may rejoice even in the good fortune of our enemies. Grant, best of fathers, that upheld by a stout faith we may find rest in you alone and that we may be gathered to a safe refuge by you alone. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FROM PSALM 5:

We fly to you, almighty God, in our daily prayers, and we put before you each morning our requests, not unmindful of how you hate iniquities and detest sin to an astonishing degree. Although we do not deny that our sins have us in their grip (for we feel very keenly how they pull us down), [8v] still we approach you relying on the abundance of your great goodness. We beseech you that you forgive all the ways we have sinned against you and that henceforward you lead us in your justice and innocence lest the enemies of our salvation, in whom there is nothing upright and every vice, prevail against us. May their designs come to naught, may their might and efforts come to ruin,



so that trusting in you we may enjoy a solid happiness while you protect, favor, and surround us with your goodwill like a shield. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FROM PSALM 6:

We undoubtedly deserve, O almighty God, to be punished severely for the evils that we have done and for our infinite sins, but we beseech you, relying on your great mercy, that you do not punish us in your wrath and anger. Good Father, we are shaken and are almost crushed in spirit when we think about our sins and your justice. We beg you not to thrust us down into hell as we have merited by our evil deeds, seeing that there we will not be able to sing unto you nor offer you praise, as our enemies in wondrous wise desire to happen. [97] O God, look upon the tears of those who trust in you and make the authors of iniquity draw back from us. Lastly, hear us so that all who work against our salvation and your glory may be brought to shame and cast down. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FROM PSALM 7:

You have known, O great and good God, how eagerly the enemies of our salvation attack us day and night. They desire, unless you assist us, to turn us over for eternal destruction, after having cruelly torn us and devoured us like wild beasts. But as we trust in you alone, so we beg that you may wish to stand by us. We do not try to justify our cause in your presence, as though we had done nothing of the things they charge us with, but we are convinced that they have been forgiven us by your mercy, through the intercession of our mediator, Jesus Christ. Therefore we pray that you arise and direct our help and defend us like a strong shield so that these same evils may recoil upon the authors of these temptations, deceit and malice. But we exalt you and proclaim your name in elegant praises. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

[97] FROM THE SAME PSALM:

It is indeed an outstanding gift to live in the observance of your commandments, O almighty God, but one that cannot in the least happen to those from whose eyes you do not withdraw the veil of darkness, for otherwise the secrets of your law are completely invisible to the eyes of those gripped by blindness. We therefore beg help and light from you for our weakness and ignorance so that while we spend this life as pilgrims you do not hide from us the pure and rightful understanding of your commandments. It is through our own fault that we have so far been too little educated in that understand-



ing; we therefore have fallen into these reproaches, into this contempt, and into these detractions. On top of the dangers and afflictions that now disquiet and burden your Church, there have been added insults against doctrine, curses against true devotion, and terrible blasphemies against your name. Pardon your people and forgive, O God, what they have committed against you and raise up the fallen by your word and promises. Every single day we boldly plead our case before you. We beg that you hear us and immediately strengthen our failing faith and hope with new benefits. [*10r*] Do not put to shame those who call upon you, so that once more at peace and more than fully restored we may run full speed in the path of your commandments. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FROM PSALM 8:

O great and good God, everything that you have created in heaven and on earth for our help and great advantage attests clearly how wondrous and magnificent is your name. Granted that your goodness reaches out to and is revealed in all things, we nonetheless grow in this conviction because on this topic we can promise ourselves nothing that is not splendid; you desire to nourish us and devote yourself to favor us with the greatest kindness right from the infancy of human offspring. For while infants are being nourished and are beginning to talk, they give us clear proof of your goodness. The wicked are put to shame by these miracles every time they denigrate your goodness and providence. The heavens could be seen as a work worthy of your artistry, but a great and wonderful sign of your goodness is seen in the fact that you are so willing to come down to take care of a frail mortal with so much solicitude. [*10v*] Hence we are stirred rightly and repeatedly, even though we have sinned and lived unworthily of you and of our calling, to beseech you with the greatest confidence that you do not permit your Church to be overwhelmed by her present woes. If you have lifted up man, otherwise so lowly in his nature, so that he is a little less than the angels, I beg you to be even more mindful of those whom you have already gathered to yourself as your children and to whom you have willed in your mercy to make subject and subservient all the works of your hands, so that you do not allow them to be ground under heel by the wicked. You have always been accustomed to watch over the children of men with your care; now come to us too with your help when we need it so badly. Deliver us, we pray, so that all may thereby acknowledge your name to be as wonderful as it really is and as deserving every kind of respect. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## FROM THE SAME PSALM:

From the things which have come to be both in heaven and on earth through your power and providence, O almighty God, your magnificence and glory manifest themselves not just well but excellently. Your [*III*] power reveals itself even better and stirs the souls (which are heavier than lead) in children and babies. We are wretched and cast off, not because of the effort and care with which you fashioned us, but because of our own sins and infinite guilt which we ourselves have accumulated. We pray nonetheless that you be not angry with us over them but rather that you come to us frequently, as you used to do, and make those whom you wanted to be a little less than the angels sharers in your own divine nature. And since you have set us up as rightful lords over all your creatures, grant that we may use them to the praise and glory of your name so that your word and Gospel may be spread to all mortals. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## FROM PSALM 9:

If you, O God, uphold our cause and defend us from the enemies of your name and of human salvation, we shall recount and proclaim your magnificent deeds with our whole hearts and the greatest joy. Due to our own fault we are afflicted by temptations and similar troubles, but through your goodness and mercy we implore you that as [*III*] you used to be the refuge of those who flee to you in their sufferings, so you may neither desert us nor seem to have pushed off into oblivion these prayers which we earnestly pour forth to you. Have mercy on us, O God, and take us far from the gates of death lest they swallow us. With your aid we shall proclaim your praise in the Church because it was not in vain that we placed our hopes in you. Arise then lest wickedness, injustice, and sin prevail against us. Grant that rightly mindful of our condition we may always be subject to your will with a modest and humble heart. Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

## FROM THE SAME PSALM:

It often happened in the age of our fathers, O almighty God, that your people were filled with wondrous gladness and, rejoicing to the full, extolled your name in song, celebrated it with the highest praises, and did so with their whole heart because thanks to your protection their enemies turned their backs in battle, fell and perished before your face. More than once you decided in favor of your saints or upheld their cause. Many times you rebuked and destroyed the Gentiles who had agreed among themselves to turn the lovely cities of your people over to utter destruction, [*III*] and you destroyed wicked

men of that sort so that even their name was wiped out. Therefore since you reign forever and keep your tribunal always open so that you can investigate the spilling of the blood of your saints, do not at this time, O God, spurn us or forget our petitions. We know well that we have sinned and offended your majesty in many ways. We are now sorrowful in our hearts and confess our sins openly, but because of the confidence we have in you, which has grown out of the unmerited gifts you have conferred upon our fathers, we come to you and beg you to have mercy on your Church. We beseech you to look upon her affliction and rescue her from the gates of death so that she may grow more fervent day by day in celebrating your praise. Show your wrath against those who are unmindful of you. May they perish by their own evil tricks and devices, and may those who eagerly and violently seek the destruction of your people be caught up in their own snares. But may we, who are poor and afflicted, still continue living under your protection. Arise, O God, and do not permit miserable men to prevail against you and your holy Gospel. Strike terror into your enemies so they may realize what it is to attack piety and religion. [12v] Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FROM PSALM 10:

Because we believe, O great and good God, that you are not only the highest good but also goodness itself, we are aflame with the desire that you do not turn your favor away from us, even though that sometimes seems the case. Although we do not doubt that our sins have merited such punishment, still we pray that, because you are good and merciful, you will forgive us our sins. We pray that you will still favor our cause, even though we do not merit it, for the glory of your name so that the wicked will realize that they were wrong in deciding that you do not exist and that you would never trace back to their hands the crimes they have mapped out. They are entrapping, oppressing, slaying, and horribly destroying holy men, for they have already convinced themselves that you are unconcerned about human affairs. Come to those who call upon you and mercifully hear to their prayers so that after you have set holy men free they may teach the proud and violent to act with restraint since it will be clear that you watch over the Church with utmost care. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

[13v] FROM THE SAME PSALM:

Gracious Father, it might seem that in these dreadful days you have put an enormous distance between yourself and your people so that you have closed your eyes and averted your gaze from what the wicked Antichrists in

their consummate pride and total perversity are doing to your people, seeing that everything they attempt enjoys great success. As a result, they treat your people according to their whim, they hurl insults against you and have even come to the firm conviction that God does not exist. Since you seem to have exempted them from any punishment, they think that they will never be shaken. They promise themselves continuous successes so that they take no account at all of their perjuries, deceits, injuries, and wickedness, and they kill off your faithful people in public and in secret. They attack, afflict, and crush your Church. O God, they think you do not care about her. We have now fully merited your averting your eyes from our troubles and have sinned seriously so that you should not take account of our sufferings. We have been utterly ungrateful for your precious benefits and have misused your calling, Gospel, and sacraments, [13<sup>v</sup>] spurning the opportunity you have given us, even though we should devote ourselves to serving you according to your word—we acknowledge all this and the other countless outrages we have committed against you. Now we earnestly beg and beseech pardon for them so that at last you may rise up and with your hand hold back the sinner from the curses that he has launched against you and your teaching. In our misery we commend ourselves to you who are wont to assist those who are otherwise helpless and orphans. Break at last the strength of the wicked, give ear to the pleas of the afflicted, and avenge at last the oppressed so that freed from all these fears they may give you in your Church the thanks which they owe because of your mercy. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FROM PSALM II:

In you, O great and good God, we put all our trust and protection, and therefore when our flesh, human prudence, and wicked men work against us, when our cause is already lost, and when we have no hope of defending true doctrine and the holy Gospel, we still do not thereupon conclude that we should despair of your mercy and might. We see how [14<sup>r</sup>] the enemies of your name have bent the bow of their strength and have prepared their arrows to pierce us. We acknowledge, moreover, that we have lived in such a way as to have merited every one of these troubles and disasters. We have not followed you, as obedient children should have. Alas, so far we have always been in rebellion against your commandments. But now we humbly beg pardon for our sins. We dare to make this prayer because we rely on your goodness and mercy since you are the one who has his court and most holy throne in heaven. From there you are wont to observe everything that is done on earth; accordingly you can now look into the justice of this cause and see the