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Sing your Way Through Temptations

[St. Augustine](#)



Let us sing *alleluia* here on earth, while we are still anxious and worrying, so that we may one day be able to sing it there in heaven, without any worry or care. Why anxious and worrying here? You must want me to be anxious, Lord, when I read, *Is not man's life on earth a trial and a temptation?* You must want me to worry when temptation is so plentiful that the Prayer itself tells us to worry, when we say, *Forgive us our*

trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us. Every day we are petitioners, every day we are trespassers. Do you want me to throw care to the winds, Lord, when every day I am requesting pardon for sins and assistance against dangers? After all, when I have said, because of past sins, *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us,* I must immediately go on to add, because of future dangers, *Lead us not into temptation.* And how can a people be in a good way, when they cry out with me, *Deliver us from evil?* And yet, my brethren, in this time that is still evil, let us sing *alleluia* to the good God, who does deliver us from evil.

Even here, among the dangers, among the trials and temptations of this life, both by others and by ourselves let *alleluia* be sung. *God is faithful, he says, and he will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able to endure.* So even here let us sing *alleluia.* Man is still a defendant on trial, but God is faithful. He did not say "he will not permit you to be tempted" but *he will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able to endure; and with the temptation he will also make a way out, so that you may be able to endure it.* You have entered into temptation; but God will also make a way out so that you do not perish in the

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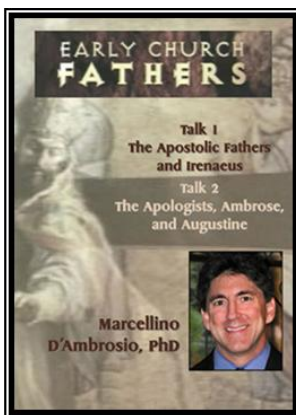
temptation; so that like a potter's jar you may be shaped by the preaching and fired into strength by the tribulation. But when you enter the temptation, bear in mind the way out: because God is faithful, *God will watch over you and guard your going in and your coming out.*

Furthermore, when this body has become immortal and imperishable, when all temptation has been done away with; because *the body is dead* – why is it dead? – *Because of sin. But the spirit is life, because of justice.* So do we leave the body dead, then? No, but listen: *But if the Spirit of him who raised Christ from the dead dwells within you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies.* So you see: now the body receives its life from the soul, but then it will receive it from the Spirit.

O! what a happy *alleluia* there, how carefree, how safe from all opposition, where nobody will be an enemy, where no-one will ever cease to be a friend! God's praises sung there, sung here – here, by the anxious; there, by the carefree – here, by those who will die; there, by those who will live for ever – here, in hope; there, in reality – here, on our journey; there, in our homeland.

So now, my brethren, let us sing, not to delight our leisure, but to ease our toil. In the way that travellers are in the habit of singing, sing, but keep on walking. What does it mean, “keep on walking”? Go onward always – but go onward in goodness, for there are, according to the Apostle, some people who go ever onward from bad to worse. If you are going onward, you are walking; but always go onward in goodness, onward in the right faith, onward in good habits and behaviour. Sing, and walk onwards.

This excerpt from a sermon by St. Augustine (Sermo 256, I.2.3.: PL 38, 1191-1193) is used in the Roman Office of Readings for Saturday in the 34th week of ordinary time, which is the last day of the liturgical year.



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