

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

God is my shield and defense; he is the savior of the true in heart.

Psalm 7:11



Last fall, I visited a German-speaking Lutheran Church in Barcelona, Spain, where twentieth-century pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer had served for a short time. He eventually returned to Germany, took part in acts of resistance against the Nazis and was imprisoned and executed as a result. Bonhoeffer was a rare voice of resistance among German Christians, and so this small community of mostly elderly, German-speaking Spaniards cherish his writings and memory.

The sermon that Sunday was about a remarkable poem that Bonhoeffer wrote to his fiancé from prison shortly before his execution. This poem, which has since been made into a hymn, speaks directly to his fiancé with longing:

“I long to live these fleeting days beside you,” and it describes his heart as “crushed by the weight of bitter days.” And yet, he also describes his profound sense of being accompanied, harbored and surrounded by the presence of angels:

*And when the silence deep spreads all around us,
Then let us hear those swelling tunes begin
From world unseen which all about us widens
As all Your children raise their highest hymns.¹*

Today's readings

Psalm 7:6–11 | Jeremiah 11:18–20

John 7:37–52

How do you perceive and experience moments of spiritual guidance during times of adversity?

1. Translation by the Rev. Timothy M. Boerger