

Psalms 46

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea

Dear family members, brothers and sisters, distinguished mourners.

The Psalmist sings of unimaginable destruction and suffering. What for him was a symbol of certainty and permanence is now completely upside down.

And it resonates in us today, in this place. It sounds familiar to us today. Because the farewell to sister Pavla Klimešová caught us not prepared, it came unexpectedly and suddenly. So, in this sense, the Psalmist's words are not an exaggeration to us at all. He says: the earth has capsized — and we feel we have lost our firm footing and solid ground. We read: the foundations of the mountains have moved in the heart of the seas – and we are experiencing that the foundation of our own lives – namely, the relationship with a loved one – has fallen apart and it has touched our own hearts.

It's the hardest moment of our life. We stayed with our pain and memories. It's like a piece of us disappeared in the farewell.

We're here together, unhinged and sad. But you know what? Try to imagine Pavla sitting here with us right now. Somewhere over there in the middle bench. And try to imagine her typical voice commenting on these services. This situation, which hurts us so

much, and it's going to take us a long time to recover. I imagine her making some kind of apt and sharp remark. A statement kind of on the edge.

Because Pavla Klimešová was a strong woman. The kind that the Book of Proverbs says is rarer than gold and precious stones. Brave with the best kind of bravery – the courage to stand up to the adversities she was facing in her life. Whether it was persecution of the political regime, health problems, or various life disappointments.

When we think of her, we can imagine what the Bible means when it says, "I wish you were cold or hot!" Because Paula did not stay lukewarm in her opinions or in her actions. She went into things with passion, to the fullest.

I imagine she would have warned me that all the collapsing certainties that we've read about and are experiencing are not in the psalm as an autotelic list of disasters. It's not a list of quakes we should be frightened of because the whole thing is accompanied by a protest sentence: "We will not be afraid, even if...". That it's actually a very brave confession in the face of the horrors of death that are shaking our lives. A confession that also invites us: Don't worry, even if...

I know Pavla is not here with us today, and she won't be. And that really hurts us. But maybe there's some of her courage and bravery with us that she's given us - in conversations, in how she was facing up issues, in the way she's dealt with things, in the way she's done her job, how she's lived her life.

Well, of course, she wasn't a perfect person. But she was a woman who accepted life as both as a challenge and as a gift.

This brings us to the beginning of today's Psalm, which speaks of refuge, strength, and help with God. In short, about faith. The whole beginning is: God is our refuge, our strength, our help in tribulation is always very proven. That's why we won't be afraid...

Take a good note - the psalm does not shy away from the fact that tribulation is present in our lives. We can't avoid suffering and misery. And we cannot avoid death and its filthy paws, these are on us not only at the end of our lives, but every day in the form of fear, helplessness, injustice, hatred, hopelessness, disease and the like. But we have a place to draw strength, and we can draw strength not to be afraid of them, to fight them, to overpower them.

Even today, many imagine faith as an escape to the world's heights or depths, as an escape from the troubles of life. And some might even wish that it was the case. So that they can escape from this often a bleak world into some better world and dream-reality.

Sister Pavla Klimešová took the other way. The relationship with God was the source of her bravery. God was to her a force in which she faced what life brought. He was a helper in the tribulations. And he was a refuge. Not a hideout in which to hide from the adversity of the world, but a refuge, a place where weary pilgrims can come, warriors can come to replenish supplies, to regroup, to draw inspiration for further advancement, for further struggles.

However, there is one more thing that has not been said. We were reminded of our courage and bravery. And the faith that is

at its origin and is the source. But what is the fulfillment of this courage? Where's it going? What's its purpose? Aim?

The apostle Paul explains it perfectly aptly in his famous speech: "What if I could speak all languages of humans and even of angels? If I did not love others, I would be nothing more than a noisy gong. What if I could prophesy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge? And what if I had faith that moved mountains? I would be nothing, unless I loved others."

Paul shows us that everything we value, admire, what we brag about can be doubted, can be futile and empty if it is not associated with love.

Love is – simply said – openness to other people. And the Bible insists that love is not emotion, feeling, flare-up. Love is a decision for the good of another person.

And I think that everyone who met sister Pavla Klimešová remembers not only her bravery, courage or sense of humor, but her openness to other people. Her desire to help, as her profession was one of the proofs, but also her relationship with people in our church and in her family.

Surely even in this love she was not flawless. But even in it, she struggled for better understanding, forgiveness, and acceptance of others.

I believe that the inspiration for all her struggles, for her love and dedication, was the love of God as we know it through Christ.

Together, we believe that this love of God generously forgives our mistakes, our shortcomings, and our sins. We believe that —

as we will remember in a few days — this love of God for us is stronger than death itself.

Based on this hope and with gratitude, we think of sister Pavla, and let us be assured that, as in life and death, she belongs to our Lord. Amen