

*Hrvatín Gabrijel Jurišić*CHRISTIAN PRAYER IN *SUSANNA*

Marulić's *Susanna* is noteworthy for its numerous linguistic and artistic qualities, but it is also pregnant with deeper religious meanings. One of them is the Christian message of »*Declina a malo et fac bonum*« (»*Turn from evil and do good*«) /Ps. 37:27/, which Marulić conveys in such a way that, on one hand, it stresses the horrible physical presence of sin, and on the other the sublime beauty of our friendship with God. Emphasizing faculties and pursuits such as faith, marital fidelity, hope in God's mercy and providence, he underlines the importance of prayer.

The poet preys to God on his own at the beginning and end of the epic (lines: 1-10; 777-780). He also prays through the people (519-524), Susanna's husband Joachim (498-502) and Susanna (399-412), who firmly believe that God will answer their ardent invocations. When this occurs, they heartily thank God (617-618). This was particularly true in the instance of the falsely accused and condemned Susanna.

Based on his analysis of the epic, the author concludes that in Marulić's texts God always answers sincere and humble prayers. This is in perfect accord with one of the fundamental messages and tenets of the Old and New Testaments. It is the undivided opinion of the Church and theologians that prayer is the pivotal feature of Christianity, being one of the postulates of true Christian life and a meaningful relationship between man and God. This explains why the poet, along with other important messages, strongly stresses the essence and effectiveness of prayer.