



Through the prayers of our holy fathers and mother, O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things. Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life, come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One!

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Your Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3x) Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Lord, have mercy. (3x) Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Come, let us worship God our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God.

PSALM 66 (65 LXX)
Praise to God for His great works

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth,
and sing the glory of His Name,
give to Him glorious praise.
Say to God, “How great are Your works.
In the greatness of Your power,
Your enemies bow down before You.
Let all the earth worship You,
and sing praises to You,
sing praises to Your Name.”
Come and behold the works of God:
He is great in His plans beyond the sons of men.
He turned the sea into dry land,
they passed through the river on foot.
There we rejoiced in Him,
Who rules by His power forever,
His eyes keep watch on the nations –
let not the rebellious exalt themselves.
Bless our God, O nations,
let the sound of His praise be heard,
Who has kept us among the living,
and has not let our feet slip.
For You, O God, have tested us,
You have tested us in the fire,
as silver is purified by fire.
You brought us into the trap,
You laid burdens on our backs,
You let people ride over our heads.
We went through fire and water,
yet You have brought us out to a refreshing place.
I will come into Your house with burnt offerings,
I will pay You my vows,
which I promised with my lips

and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble.
I will offer to You burnt offerings of fatlings,
with incense of the sacrifice of rams.
I will make an offering of bulls and goats.
Come and hear, all you that fear God,
and I will tell what He has done for me.
I cried aloud to Him,
and exalted Him with my tongue.
If I had contemplated injustice in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.
But truly God has listened,
He has given heed to the words of my prayer.
Blessed is God,
for He has not rejected my prayer,
nor removed His mercy from me.

Please continue praying for Irina Gozick.

*Today we will be praying hymns called stichera from the section of Vespers called
“Lord, I call” of Thursday in the Fifth Week of Great Lent.*

Of mine own free will, I put off the beauty of the virtues through my first transgression, but through Your humble descent, O Word of God, I have been clothed with beauty once again. For You have not despised me though I am defiled by grievous passions and thieves have left me wounded on the road, but by Your almighty power, You have kept me safe, granting me Your help, O greatly merciful Lord.

O martyrs of the Lord, you sanctify every place and heal every manner of illness. And now we entreat you, to pray that our souls may be delivered from the traps of the enemy.

Affixed, upon the Cross, O Lord, You have torn up the record of Adam’s sin by the divine lance. Shred then my bonds, O Word, that I may offer with faith a sacrifice of praise to You. For rejoicing I have now come to the goodly acceptable time of the Fast, which You have appointed for the salvation of

all.

Shining with the radiance of fasting, Moses once beheld the glory of God. Follow then his example, O my humble soul, and with deeds of abstinence and prayer serve Him Who for your sake stretched out His hands upon the Cross, that you may partake of divine delight.

We venerate Your life-giving Cross, O Christ, upon which in Your inexpressible and boundless goodness towards us, You have illumined our souls. Therefore we praise You without ceasing, asking that we may complete the course of the Fast with courage and joy, and through it attain, O Lord, to the glory of Your Passion, by which You have saved us.

PRAYERS TO END THE PANDEMIC OF CORONAVIRUS

Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

O God Almighty, Lord of heaven and earth, and of all creation visible and invisible: In Your inexpressible goodness, look down upon us, Your people gathered in Your Holy Name. Be our helper and defender in this day of affliction, for You know all our weaknesses and hear our cry in repentance and contrition of heart. O loving Lord, deliver us from the impending threat of the coronavirus. Send Your angel to watch over us and protect us. Grant health and recovery to those suffering from this virus. Guide the hands of the physicians and heal Your servants through them. Grant wisdom to those who are working on the vaccine for this virus. And preserve those who are healthy. Enable us to continue to serve our suffering brothers and sisters in peace that together we may glorify Your most honorable and majestic Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, in Your loving care, You traveled through towns and villages healing every disease and sickness, and at Your command, the sick were made well: Yourself now come to our aid, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, and grant us to experience the miracle Your healing love.

THURSDAY, APRIL 2
FIFTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT

Comfort the families of those who are sick or have died. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care. And as they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another.

Guide the hands of the doctors and nurses and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. And impart Your wisdom on the researchers working on the vaccine for coronavirus.

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim immunity to a disease that knows no boundaries. Instill the fear of You in the leaders of our nation and other nations of the world. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks.

O Master and Lord, our Savior, Healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow. Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, stay with us as we patiently endure and mourn, persist and prepare.

For You are a merciful and loving God, and to You we give glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

PRAYER FOR DOCTORS AND NURSES

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Lover of mankind, Physician of our souls and bodies, You endured the pain of our infirmities, and by Your wounds we are healed. You gave sight to the man born blind and straightened the woman who was bent over for 18 years. You gave speech and sight to the mute man who was possessed by demons. You not only forgave the paralyzed man his sins, but healed him to walk. You restored the withered hand of a man in the synagogue and stopped the flow of blood of a woman who bled for 12 years. You raised Jairus' daughter back to life and resurrected Lazarus who was dead four days. You heal every infirmity under the sun: Yourself now, O Lord, grant Your grace to all the doctors, nurses, physicians, and researchers, who have labored and studied hour

upon hour, to go into all the world, and also to heal by the talent You have given to each of them. Strengthen them by Your strength, that they may not fear evil or disease. Enlighten them to do no evil by the works of their hands, and preserve them and those they serve in peace. For You are our God, and to You we give glory together with Your Father, Who has no beginning, and Your Most Holy, Good, and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 18:20-33

²⁰Then the Lord said, “How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! ²¹I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know.” ²²So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. ²³Then Abraham came near and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” ²⁶And the Lord said, “If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.” ²⁷Abraham answered, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Will You destroy the whole city for lack of five?” And He said, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.” ²⁹Again Abraham spoke to the Lord, “Suppose forty are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of forty I will not do it.” ³⁰Then Abraham said, “Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there.” He answered, “I will not do it, if I find thirty there.” ³¹Abraham said, “Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.” The Lord answered, “For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.” ³²Then Abraham said, “Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there.” He answered, “For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.” ³³And the

Lord went His way, when He had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

Proverbs 16:17-17:17

- ¹⁷ The highway of the upright avoids evil;
those who guard their way preserve their lives.
- ¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction,
and a haughty spirit before a fall.
- ¹⁹ It is better to be of a lowly spirit among the poor
than to divide the spoil with the proud.
- ²⁰ Those who are attentive to a matter will prosper,
and happy are those who trust in the Lord.
- ²¹ The wise of heart is called perceptive,
and pleasant speech increases persuasiveness.
- ²² Wisdom is a fountain of life to one who has it,
but folly is the punishment of fools.
- ²³ The mind of the wise makes their speech judicious,
and adds persuasiveness to their lips.
- ²⁴ Pleasant words are like a honeycomb,
sweetness to the soul and health to the body.
- ²⁵ Sometimes there is a way that seems to be right,
but in the end it is the way to death.
- ²⁶ The appetite of workers works for them;
their hunger urges them on.
- ²⁷ Scoundrels concoct evil,
and their speech is like a scorching fire.
- ²⁸ A perverse person spreads strife,
and a whisperer separates close friends.
- ²⁹ The violent entice their neighbors,
and lead them in a way that is not good.
- ³⁰ One who winks the eyes plans perverse things;
one who compresses the lips brings evil to pass.
- ³¹ Gray hair is a crown of glory;

it is gained in a righteous life.

³² One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
and one whose temper is controlled than one who captures a city.

³³ The lot is cast into the lap,
but the decision is the Lord's alone.

17 ¹ Better is a dry morsel with quiet
than a house full of feasting with strife.

² A slave who deals wisely will rule over a child who acts shamefully,
and will share the inheritance as one of the family.

³ The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold,
but the Lord tests the heart.

⁴ An evildoer listens to wicked lips;
and a liar gives heed to a mischievous tongue.

⁵ Those who mock the poor insult their Maker;
those who are glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

⁶ Grandchildren are the crown of the aged,
and the glory of children is their parents.

⁷ Fine speech is not becoming to a fool;
still less is false speech to a ruler.

⁸ A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of those who give it;
wherever they turn they prosper.

⁹ One who forgives an affront fosters friendship,
but one who dwells on disputes will alienate a friend.

¹⁰ A rebuke strikes deeper into a discerning person
than a hundred blows into a fool.

¹¹ Evil people seek only rebellion,
but a cruel messenger will be sent against them.

¹² Better to meet a she-bear robbed of its cubs
than to confront a fool immersed in folly.

¹³ Evil will not depart from the house
of one who returns evil for good.

¹⁴ The beginning of strife is like letting out water;
so stop before the quarrel breaks out.

¹⁵ One who justifies the wicked and one who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord.

¹⁶ Why should fools have a price in hand to buy wisdom, when they have no mind to learn?

¹⁷ A friend loves at all times, and kinsfolk are born to share adversity.

SAINT OF THE DAY

Saint Cuthbert, Wonderworker of Britain

Saint Cuthbert, the wonderworker of Britain, was born in Northumbria around 634. Very little information has come down to us about Cuthbert's early life, but there is a remarkable story of him when he was eight.

As a child, Cuthbert enjoyed games and playing with other children. He could beat anyone his own age, and even some who were older, at running, jumping, wrestling, and other exercises. One day he and some other boys were amusing themselves by standing on their heads with their feet up in the air. A little boy who was about three years old chided Cuthbert for his inappropriate behavior. "Be sensible," he said, "and give up these foolish pranks."

Cuthbert and the others ignored him, but the boy began to weep so piteously that it was impossible to quiet him. When they asked him what the matter was, he shouted, "O holy bishop and priest Cuthbert, these unseemly stunts in order to show off your athletic ability do not become you or the dignity of your office." Cuthbert immediately stopped what he was doing and attempted to comfort the boy.

On the way home, he pondered the meaning of those strange words. From that time forward, Cuthbert became more thoughtful and serious. This incident reveals Cuthbert as God's chosen vessel (2 Timothy 2:20-21), just like Samuel, David, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and others who, from an early age, were destined to serve the Lord.

As an adult, Cuthbert decided to give up his life in the world and advanced to better things. He entered the monastery at Melrose in the valley of the Tweed, where he was received by the abbot Saint Boisil. Cuthbert was accepted into the community and devoted himself to serving God. His

fasting and vigils were so extraordinary that the other monks marveled at him. He often spent entire nights in prayer, and would not eat anything for days at a time.

A few years later, Saint Eata chose some monks of Melrose to live at the new monastery at Ripon. Among them was Cuthbert. Both Eata and Cuthbert were expelled from Ripon and sent back to Melrose in 661 because they (and some other monks) refused to follow the Roman calculation for the date of Pascha. The Celtic Church, which followed a different, older reckoning, resisted Roman practices for a long time. However, in 664 the Council of Whitby determined that the Roman customs were superior to those of the Celtic Church, and should be adopted by all.

Cuthbert was chosen to be abbot of Melrose after the death of Saint Boisil, guiding the brethren by his words and by his example. He made journeys throughout the surrounding area to encourage Christians and to preach the Gospel to those who had never heard it. Sometimes he would be away from the monastery for a month at a time, teaching and preaching. He also worked many miracles, healing the sick and freeing those who were possessed by demons.

Cuthbert was a true father to his monks, but his soul longed for complete solitude, so he went to live on a small island (Saint Cuthbert's Isle), a short distance from Lindisfarne. After gaining victory over the demons through prayer and fasting, the saint decided to move even farther away from his fellow men. In 676, he retired to Inner Farne, an even more remote location. Cuthbert built a small cell which could not be seen from the mainland. A few yards away, he built a guest house for visitors from Lindisfarne. Here he remained for nearly nine years.

A Council at Twyford, with the holy Archbishop Theodore presiding, elected Cuthbert Bishop of Hexham in 684. Letters and messengers were sent to inform him of the council's decision, but he refused to leave his solitude. King Ecgfrith and Bishop Trumwine went to him in person, entreating him in Christ's Name to accept. At last, Cuthbert came forth and went with them to the council. With great reluctance, he submitted to the will of the council and accepted the office of bishop. Almost immediately,

he exchanged Sees with Saint Eata, and became Bishop of Lindisfarne while Saint Eata went to Hexham.

Bishop Cuthbert remained as humble as he had been before his consecration, avoiding finery and dressing in simple clothing. He fulfilled his office with dignity and graciousness, while continuing to live as a monk. His virtue and holiness of life only served to enhance the authority of his position.

His life as Bishop of Lindisfarne was quite similar to what it had been when he was prior of that monastery. He devoted himself to his flock, preaching and visiting people throughout his diocese, casting out demons, and healing all manner of diseases. He served as a bishop for only two years, however.

Though he was only in his early fifties, Cuthbert felt the time of his death was approaching. He laid aside his archpastoral duties, retiring to the solitude of Inner Farne shortly after the Feast of the Lord's Nativity in 686 to prepare himself. He was able to receive visitors from Lindisfarne at first, but gradually he weakened and was unable to walk down to the landing stage to greet them.

His last illness came upon him on February 27, 687. The pious priest Herefrith came to visit him that morning. When he was ready to go back, he asked Cuthbert for his blessing to return. The saint replied, "Do as you intend. Get into your boat and return safely home."

Cuthbert also gave Father Herefrith instructions for his burial. He asked to be laid to rest east of the cross that he himself had set up. He told him where to find a stone coffin hidden under the turf. "Put my body in it," he said, "and wrap it in the cloth you will find there." The cloth was a gift from Abbess Verca, but Cuthbert thought it was too fine for him to wear. Out of affection for her, he kept it to be used as his winding sheet.

Herefrith and the others, however, wanted to bury Cuthbert in their church with proper honor. Therefore, Herefrith went back to Cuthbert and asked for permission to do this. Cuthbert said that he wanted to be buried there at the site of his spiritual struggles, and he pointed out that the peace of the brethren would be disturbed by the number of pilgrims who would

come to Lindisfarne to venerate his tomb.

Herefrith insisted that they would gladly endure the inconvenience out of love for Cuthbert. Finally, the bishop agreed to be buried in the church on Lindisfarne so the monks would always have him with them, and they would also be able to decide which outsiders would be allowed to visit his tomb.

After passing the evening in prayer, Cuthbert sat up and received Holy Communion from Father Herefrith. He surrendered his holy soul to God on March 20, 687 at the time appointed for the Midnight Office prayers.

Eleven years later, Saint Cuthbert's tomb was opened and his relics were found to be incorrupt. In the ninth century, the relics were moved to Norham, then back to Lindisfarne. Because of the threat of Viking raids, Saint Cuthbert's body was moved from place to place for seven years so that it would not be destroyed by the invaders. The tomb was opened again on August 24, 1104, and the incorrupt and fragrant relics were placed in the newly-completed cathedral.

In 1537 three commissioners of King Henry VIII came to plunder the tomb and desecrate the relics. Saint Cuthbert's body was still incorrupt, and was later reburied. The tomb was opened again in 1827. A pile of bones was found in the outer casket, probably the relics of the various saints which had been collected seven centuries before, then replaced after the Protestant commissioners had completed their work.

In the inner casket was a skeleton wrapped in a linen shroud and five robes. In the vestments a gold and garnet cross was found, probably Saint Cuthbert's pectoral cross. Also found were an ivory comb, a portable wood and silver altar, a stole (epitrachilion), pieces of a carved wooden coffin, and other items. These may be seen today in the Dean and Chapter library of Durham Cathedral. The tomb was opened again in 1899, and a scientific examination determined that the bones were those of a man in his fifties, Cuthbert's age when he died.

Today Saint Cuthbert's relics lie beneath a simple stone slab on the site of the original medieval shrine in the Chapel of the Nine Altars. The relics and the treasures in the Library make Durham an appropriate place for

pilgrims to visit.

TWO PRAYERS TO SAINT CUTHBERT

Troparion

While still in your youth, you laid aside all worldly cares,
and took up the sweet yoke of Christ,
and you were shown forth in truth
to be nobly radiant in the grace of the Holy Spirit.
Therefore, God established you as a rule of faith
and shepherd of His radiant flock,
O Godly-minded Cuthbert,
converser with angels and intercessor for us all.

Kontakion

Having surpassed your brethren in prayers, fasting and vigils,
you were found worthy to entertain an angel in the form of a pilgrim.
And having shown forth with humility as a bright lamp set on high,
you received the gift of working wonders.
And now as you dwell in the Heavenly Kingdom,
our righteous father Cuthbert,
intercede with Christ our God that our souls may be saved.

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure,
and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more
glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without corruption you gave
birth to God the Word. True Theotokos we magnify you.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers and mother, O Lord Jesus Christ,
our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

