



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

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! (3x)

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 51 (50 LXX)
A prayer of repentance

Have mercy on me, O God, in Your great mercy,
and in the abundance of Your compassions
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my lawlessness,
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
Against You alone have I sinned,
and done evil before You,
so that You are justified in Your words
and victorious in Your judgment.
For, behold, I was conceived in iniquity,
and in sin my mother gave birth to me.
For, behold, You love truth,
You revealed to me the unknown
and secret things of Your wisdom.
Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I will be cleansed.
Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
Make me to hear joy and gladness,
let the bones that You have humbled rejoice.
Turn Your face away from my sins,
and blot out all my transgressions.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right Spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from Your presence,
and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
and establish me with Your guiding Spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
and sinners will return to You.
Rescue me from bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation,
and my tongue will rejoice at Your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise,
for if You had desired sacrifice, I would have given it,
You will not take pleasure in whole burnt offerings.
The sacrifice to God is a broken spirit,
a broken and humbled heart God will not despise.
Do good, O Lord, to Zion, in Your good pleasure,
and let the walls of Jerusalem be rebuilt.
Then You will be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness,
with offerings and whole-burnt offerings,
then bulls will be offered on Your altar.

Aposticha of Wednesday of second week of Pascha

The Cross was affixed on Golgotha and blossomed forth incorruption for us from the ever-flowing well-spring, from the side of the Savior.

Verse: To You have I lifted up my eyes, for You dwell in heaven. Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hands of their masters, as the eyes of the handmaid look to the hands of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, until He has mercy on us.

Come O people, let us hymn and worship Christ, glorifying His Resurrection from the dead. For He is our God, Who has redeemed the world from the deceits of the adversary.

Verse: Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for greatly are we filled with abasement. Greatly has our soul been filled with it.

O how excellent is the trade you made, O saints, for having given your blood you inherited the heavens. And tried but for a season, you rejoice eternally. Truly great is the trade you made. For disdaining things corruptible, you received things incorruptible, and rejoicing now with the angels, you unceasingly praise the consubstantial Trinity.

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

“O Thomas, touch My side with your hand,” says Christ, “and come, feel the imprints of the nails. Examine them in faith, believe in Me, and do not

be unbelieving.” And when Thomas touched the Master with his finger, he cried out aloud, “You are my God and Lord, O compassionately loving One, glory to You.”

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Acts 4:13-22

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus. ¹⁴ When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵ So they ordered them to leave the council while they discussed the matter with one another. ¹⁶ They said, “What will we do with them? For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But to keep it from spreading further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” ¹⁸ So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; ²⁰ for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.” ²¹ After threatening them again, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people, for all of them praised God for what had happened. ²² For the man on whom this sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old.

John 5:17-24

¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father is still working, and I also am working.” ¹⁸ For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God. ¹⁹ Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. ²⁰ The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. ²¹ Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life,

so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes. ²² The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, ²³ so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.

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.

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.

SAINT OF THE DAY

Virgin Martyrs Agapé, Irene and Chionia, in Illyria (304)

Agapé, Irene, and Chionia were sisters who lived at the end of the third century to the beginning of the fourth century, near the Italian city of Aquilea. They were left orphaned at an early age.

The young women led a pious Christian life and they turned down many offers of marriage. Their spiritual guide was the priest Xeno. It was revealed to him in a vision that he would die very soon, and that the holy virgins would suffer martyrdom. Also at Aquilea and having a similar vision was the Great Martyr Anastasia, who visited the sisters and urged them to endure all things for Christ. Soon what was predicted in the vision came to pass. The priest Xeno died, and the three virgins were arrested and brought to trial before the emperor Diocletian (284-305).

Saint Chionia (“snow” in Greek) preserved the purity of her baptism according to the words of the Prophet-King David, “You will wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (*Psalms 51:7*).

Saint Irene (“peace” in Greek) preserved the peace of Christ within herself and manifested it to others, according to the Savior’s word, “My peace I give you” (*John 14:27*).

Saint Agapé (“love” in Greek) loved God with all her heart, and her neighbor as herself (*Matthew 22:37-39*).

Seeing the youthful beauty of the sisters, the emperor urged them to deny Christ and he promised to find them illustrious bridegrooms from his entourage. The holy sisters replied that their only Bridegroom was Christ, for Whom they were ready to suffer. The emperor demanded they renounce Christ, but neither the elder sisters, nor the youngest, would consent. They called the pagan gods mere idols made by human hands, and they preached faith in the true God.

By order of Diocletian, who was leaving for Macedonia, the holy sisters were also to be brought there. And they brought them to the court of the governor Dulcitus.

When he saw the beauty of the holy martyrs, he was aroused with impure passion. He put the sisters under guard, and he told them that they would receive their freedom if they agreed to fulfill his desires. But the holy martyrs replied that they were prepared to die for their Heavenly Bridegroom, Christ.

Then Dulcitus decided to have his way by force. When the holy sisters arose at night to glorify the Lord in prayer, Dulcitus came to the door and tried to enter, but an invisible force prevented him. He staggered about, unable to find his way out. Then he fell down in the kitchen among the cooking utensils, the pots and pans, and he was covered all over with soot. The servants and the soldiers recognized him only with difficulty. When he saw himself in a mirror, he then realized that the holy martyrs had made a fool of him, and he decided to take his revenge on them.

At his court, Dulcitus gave orders to strip the holy martyrs. But the soldiers were not able to do this, no matter how much they tried. Their clothing seemed to be stuck to the bodies of the holy virgins. During the trial Dulcitus suddenly fell asleep, and no one could rouse him. Just as they carried him into his house, he immediately awoke.

When they reported to the emperor Diocletian everything that had happened, he became angry with Dulcitus and he gave the holy virgins over to Sisinius for trial. He began with the youngest sister, Irene. Seeing that she remained unyielding, he sent her to prison and then attempted to sway Chionia and Agape. He also failed to make them renounce Christ, and Sisinius ordered that Agape and Chionia be burned. On hearing the sentence, the sisters gave thanks to the Lord for their crowns of martyrdom. In the fire, Agape and Chionia surrendered their pure souls to the Lord.

When the fire went out, everyone saw that the bodies of the holy martyrs and their clothing had not been scorched by the fire, and their faces were beautiful and peaceful, as if they were asleep. On the day following, Sisinius gave orders to bring Irene to court. He threatened her with the fate of her older sisters and he urged her to renounce Christ. Then he threatened to hand her over for defilement in a brothel. But the holy martyr answered, "Even if my body is defiled by force, my soul will never be defiled by

renouncing Christ.”

When the soldiers of Sisinius led Irene to the brothel, two luminous soldiers overtook them and said, “Your master Sisinius commands you to take this virgin to a high mountain and leave her there, and then return to him and report to him that you have fulfilled his command.” And the soldiers did so.

When they reported back to Sisinius, he flew into a rage, since he had given no such orders. The luminous soldiers were angels of God, saving the holy martyr from defilement. Sisinius went to the mountain with a detachment of soldiers and saw Saint Irene on the summit. For a long while they searched for the way to the top, but they could not find it. Then one of the soldiers wounded Saint Irene with an arrow. The martyr cried out to Sisinius, “I mock your impotent malice, and I go my Lord Jesus Christ pure and undefiled.” Having given thanks to the Lord, she lay down upon the ground and surrendered her soul to God on the very day of Holy Pascha (+ 304).

The Great Martyr Anastasia heard about the end of the holy sisters, and she buried their bodies with reverence.

TROPARION AND KONTAKION TO SAINTS AGAPÉ, IRENE AND CHIONIA

Troparion

Sisters in the flesh united in the Spirit,
you wrestled with the prince of evil and endured your martyrdom.
O holy and blessed Agapé, Irene, and Chionia,
pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

Kontakion

Bright mirrors of virginity,
radiant with your martyrdom,
you fill the Church with light and dispel the darkness of evil,
O Agapé, Irene, and Chionia, Christ’s precious jewels.

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.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! (3x)

