

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.

During Great Lent Psalms are read at every service. After each set of Psalms there are special hymns, called Sessional Hymns. Today we will pray just two Psalms along with two sets of these Sessional Hymns from the Matins service for the Thursday in the third week of Great Lent. And also a section called Aposticha.

PSALM 1

The two ways

Blessed are those who do not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of evil people.

But their will is in the Law of the Lord,
and on His Law they meditate day and night.

They are like the trees planted by the streams of water,
which produce their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither,
and all that they do, they prosper.

The wicked are not so, but they are like the dust
that the wind drives away from the face of the earth.
Therefore, the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous,
for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

SESSIONAL HYMNS

O disciples of the Savior, unwavering beacons illumining the world,
illumine my soul blinded by sin. Grant me to be a participant in the Lord's
day, keeping the salvific commandments, and delivered from the darkness
of hell where no light shines, that I may glorify you.

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

O holy Lady, pure Mother of our God, inexpressibly you gave birth to the
Creator of all. Together with the holy apostles pray to Him at all times, that
in His goodness He may deliver us from the passions and grant us the
remission of sins.

PSALM 3

The Lord helps His people

O Lord, why do those who afflict me multiply?

Many rise up against me, many say to me,

“There is no salvation for you in your God.”

But You, O Lord, are my protector, my glory,
and the One Who lifts up my head.

I cry aloud to the Lord, and He hears me from His holy mountain.

I lie down and sleep, I wake again, for the Lord supports me.

I am not afraid of ten thousands of people
who have set themselves against me all around.

Arise, O Lord, and save me, O my God.

For You strike all, who for no reason, are my enemies,

You break the teeth of the wicked.

Salvation belongs to the Lord,
may Your blessing be on Your people.

SESSIONAL HYMNS

O divine apostles, beacons shining upon all the world, we pray you to illumine us who sing your praises, that we may diligently observe the time of the Fast, and be granted to look upon the Wood of the life-giving Cross and to venerate it with pure eyes and lips, crying aloud with joy, “O Lord, glory to You.”

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

O Virgin Theotokos, the blessed hope of the world: I ask for your great protection. Have compassion on your defenseless people: pray the merciful God that our souls may be delivered from every danger, for you alone are blessed.

APOSTICHA

Like the Prodigal I have fallen from the Father’s sonship, and as a slave I have eaten with swine, yet their food did not satisfy me. But now I return to You, Whom I wickedly forsook, O compassionate Father. For rightly turning back in repentance, I cry aloud to You, “O Father, I have sinned against heaven and before You: as I return to You, grant Your great mercy.”

Verse: We were filled in the morning with Your mercy, O Lord, and we rejoiced and were glad. In all our days, let us be glad in the days that You

humble us, in the years we saw evils. And look upon Your servants, and upon Your works, and guide us. And let the brightness of the Lord our God be upon us, and the works of our hand Yourself guide aright upon us.

Great wonders has our God done for His saint and His elect. Rejoice and be glad, all you His servants: For He has prepared for you crowns of glory and His Kingdom. We entreat you not to forget us.

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

O Theotokos, you are the true vine that has budded forth for us the Fruit of life. We pray you, O Sovereign Lady, together with the holy apostles and all the saints intercede, that God have mercy upon our souls.

Verse: It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to chant to Your Name, O Most High, to proclaim in the morning Your mercy, and Your truth by night.

PRAYER 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.

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

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

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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 OF SAINT EPHRAIM

O Lord and Master of my life, give me not a spirit of sloth, despair, lust
of power, and idle talk. (*prostration*)

But give rather a spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Your
servant. (*prostration*)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not
to judge my brother and sister, for blessed are You unto ages of ages. Amen.
(*prostration*)

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 7:11-8:3

¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. ¹² The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³ On the very same day Noah with his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons entered the ark, ¹⁴ they and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind – every bird, every winged creature. ¹⁵ They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶ And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the Lord shut him in. ¹⁷ The flood continued forty days on the earth, and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸ The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth. And the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹ The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰ The waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. ²¹ And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings. ²² Everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³ God blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, human beings and animals and creeping things and birds of the air. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. ²⁴ And the waters swelled on the earth for one hundred fifty days.

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ² The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³ and the waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had abated.

Proverbs 10:1-22

- ¹ A wise child makes a glad father,
but a foolish child is a mother's grief.
- ² Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit,
but righteousness delivers from death.
- ³ The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry,
but He thwarts the craving of the wicked.
- ⁴ A slack hand causes poverty,
but the hand of the diligent makes rich.
- ⁵ A child who gathers in summer is prudent,
but a child who sleeps in harvest brings shame.
- ⁶ Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
- ⁷ The memory of the righteous is a blessing,
but the name of the wicked will rot.
- ⁸ The wise of heart will heed commandments,
but a babbling fool will come to ruin.
- ⁹ Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,
but whoever follows perverse ways will be found out.
- ¹⁰ Whoever winks the eye causes trouble,
but the one who rebukes boldly makes peace.
- ¹¹ The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
- ¹² Hatred stirs up strife,
but love covers all offenses.
- ¹³ On the lips of one who has understanding wisdom is found,
but a rod is for the back of one who lacks sense.
- ¹⁴ The wise lay up knowledge,
but the babbling of a fool brings ruin near.
- ¹⁵ The wealth of the rich is their fortress;
the poverty of the poor is their ruin.
- ¹⁶ The wage of the righteous leads to life,
the gain of the wicked to sin.

17 Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life,
but one who rejects a rebuke goes astray.

18 Lying lips conceal hatred,
and whoever utters slander is a fool.

19 When words are many, transgression is not lacking,
but the prudent are restrained in speech.

20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver;
the mind of the wicked is of little worth.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many,
but fools die for lack of sense.

22 The blessing of the Lord makes rich,
and He adds no sorrow with it.

SAINTS OF THE DAY

42 Martyrs of Ammoria in Phrygia

During a war between the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus (829-842) and the Saracens (Arab Muslims), the Saracens managed to besiege the city of Ammoria (in Galicia in Asia Minor). As a result of treason on the part of the military commander Baditses, Ammoria fell, and forty-two of its generals were taken captive and sent off to Syria.

During the seven years of their imprisonment, their captors tried in vain to persuade them to renounce Christianity and accept Islam. The captives stubbornly resisted all their seductive offers and bravely held out against terrible threats. After many torments that failed to break the spirit of the Christian soldiers, they were condemned to death, in hopes of shaking the determination of the saints before executing them. The martyrs remained steadfast, saying that the Old Testament Prophets bore witness to Christ, while Mohammed called himself a prophet without any other witnesses to support his claim.

One of the captives, Theodore, had renounced the priestly office to become a general. His captors taunted him, “We know that you forsook the priestly office, became a soldier and shed blood in battle. You can have no hope in Christ, Whom you abandoned voluntarily, so accept Mohammed.” But the martyr replied, “You do not speak truthfully when you say that I

abandoned Christ. Moreover, I left the priesthood because of my own unworthiness. Therefore, I must shed my blood for the sake of Christ, so that He might forgive the sins that I have committed against Him.”

The executioners took each one separately and led him off to be beheaded, then threw the bodies into the River Euphrates. In the service to them, these holy passion-bearers are glorified as: the “all-blessed” Theodore, the “unconquered” Callistus, the “valliant” Constantine, the “wondrous” Theophilus and “the most-strong” Basoes. Saints Aetius and Melissenus were also among the martyrs.

TWO PRAYERS TO THE HOLY MARTYRS

Troparion

Your forty-two holy martyrs, O Lord, through their sufferings have received incorruptible crowns from You, our God. For having Your strength, they laid low their adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons. Through their intercessions, save our souls!

Kontakion

O Forty-two holy martyrs of Ammoria, you contended for the sake of Christ on earth. You were revealed as crown-bearing martyrs, and have been received into the life of the joy of heaven. Since you overthrew all the wiles of the enemy by your sufferings and the blood of your wounds, you continually send down from on high remission of sins to those who praise you.

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.