

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 31 (30 LXX)

The Lord – a fortress in adversity

In You, O Lord, I hope, may I never be ashamed,
in Your righteousness deliver and rescue me.

Incline Your ear to me, rescue me speedily.

Be a God Who protects me,
and a house of refuge to save me.

For You are my strength and my refuge,

for Your Name's sake lead me and guide me,
bring me out of the trap that is hidden for me,
for You are my protector.
Into Your hands I surrender my spirit,
for You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.
You hate those who maintain their empty vanities,
but I hope in the Lord.
I will exult and rejoice in Your mercy,
because You have seen my humiliation,
You have saved my soul from distress,
and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy,
You have set my feet in a wide place.
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am afflicted,
my eye is troubled with anger, my soul and body also.
For my life is spent with grief,
and my years with sighing,
my strength is weakened with poverty,
and my bones waste away.
I am the scorn of all my enemies,
especially to all my neighbors,
an object of fear to my acquaintances,
those who see me in the street flee from me.
I am forgotten like one who is dead,
I have become like a broken vessel.
For I hear the whispering of many living all around,
as they scheme together against me,
as they plot to take my soul.
But as for me, I hope in You, O Lord,
I say, "You are my God."
My times are in Your hands,
deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.
Let Your face shine upon Your servant,
save me in Your mercy.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25
FOURTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT

Do not let me be ashamed, O Lord, for I call on You,
let the wicked be ashamed and brought down to hell.
Let the lying lips become speechless
that speak lawlessness against the righteous
with pride and contempt.
How abundant is Your mercy, O Lord,
which You have hidden for those who fear You,
and accomplished for those who hope in You,
in the sight of everyone.
In the secret place of Your presence
You hide them from human plots,
You hold them safe under Your shelter
from contentious tongues.
Blessed is the Lord,
for He has wondrously shown His mercy to me
when I was beset as a city under siege.
But I said in my alarm, "I am driven far from Your sight."
But You heard my supplications
when I cried out to You for help.
Love the Lord, all you His saints.
For the Lord seeks out truth,
and repays those who act with exceeding pride.
Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all who hope in the Lord.

*Today we will be praying Aposticha from Wednesday Matins in the Fourth Week of
Great Lent.*

Having come to the middle point of Lent, on the path that leads to Your precious Cross, grant that we may see that day prefigured by Abraham, in which he rejoiced on the mountain, having received Isaac back alive as if from a tomb. Delivered from the enemy by faith, may we share in Your mystical supper, calling upon You in peace, "O our light and Savoir, glory

to You.”

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 for the days when You humbled us, for the years when 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 guide aright upon us.

O invincible martyrs of Christ, having triumphed over falsehood by the power of the Cross, you gained the reward of the grace of eternal life. You felt no terror when threatened by the tyrants, and when you suffered torment, you rejoiced. And now your blood has become the healing of our souls. Pray that our souls may be saved.

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

Having reached the middle of the sea of abstinence, let us look forward to the haven of salvation, the season of Your voluntary Passion, O Lord. In Your loving-kindness and Your mercy, grant us also to behold in peace the day of Your glorious Resurrection.

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.

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 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.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 9:18-10:1

¹⁸ The sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. ¹⁹ These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was populated. ²⁰ Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. ²¹ He drank some of the wine and became drunk, and he lay uncovered in his tent. ²² And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. ²³ Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. ²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said, "Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers." ²⁶ He also said, "Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem; and let Canaan be his slave. ²⁷ May God make space for Japheth, and let him live in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave." ²⁸ After the flood Noah lived three hundred fifty years. ²⁹ All the days of Noah were nine hundred fifty years; and he died. **10** ¹ These are the descendants of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth and children were born to them after the flood.

Proverbs 12:23-13:9

²³ One who is clever conceals knowledge,
but the heart of a fool broadcasts folly.

²⁴ The hand of the diligent will rule,
while the lazy will be put to forced labor.

²⁵ Anxiety weighs down the human heart,
but a good word cheers it up.

²⁶ The righteous gives good advice to friends,
but the way of the wicked leads astray.

²⁷ The lazy do not roast their game,
but the diligent obtain precious wealth.

²⁸ In the path of righteousness there is life,
in walking its path there is no death.

13 ¹ A wise child loves discipline,
but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

² From the fruit of their words good persons eat good things,
but the desire of the treacherous is for wrongdoing.

³ Those who guard their mouths preserve their lives;
those who open wide their lips come to ruin.

⁴ The appetite of the lazy craves, and gets nothing,
while the appetite of the diligent is richly supplied.

⁵ The righteous hate falsehood,
but the wicked act shamefully and disgracefully.

⁶ Righteousness guards one whose way is upright,
but sin overthrows the wicked.

⁷ Some pretend to be rich, yet have nothing;
others pretend to be poor, yet have great wealth.

⁸ Wealth is a ransom for a person's life,
but the poor get no threats.

⁹ The light of the righteous rejoices,
but the lamp of the wicked goes out.

SAINT OF THE DAY

Saint Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome

Gregory the Dialogist, Pope of Rome, was born in Rome around the year 540. His grandfather was Pope Felix, and his mother Sylvia and aunts Tarsilla and Emiliana were also numbered among the saints by the Roman Church. Having received a most excellent secular education, he attained high government positions.

Leading a God-pleasing life, he yearned for monasticism with all his soul. After the death of his father, Gregory used his inheritance to establish six monasteries. At Rome he founded a monastery dedicated to the holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called, where he received monastic tonsure. Later, on a commission of Pope Pelagius II, Gregory lived for a while in Constantinople. There he wrote his Commentary on the Book of Job.

After the death of Pope Pelagius, Gregory was chosen to the Roman See. For seven months he would not consent to accept this service, considering himself unworthy. He finally accepted consecration only after the persistent entreaties of the clergy and flock.

Wisely leading the Church, Gregory worked tirelessly in propagating the Word of God. Gregory compiled the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts in the Latin language, which before him was known only in the verbal tradition. Affirmed by the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681), this liturgical service was accepted by all the Orthodox Church, and is served today on Wednesdays and Fridays of Great Lent.

He zealously struggled against the Donatist heresy (who argued that Christian clergy must be faultless for their ministry to be effective and their prayers and sacraments to be valid; as opposed to God acting through the clergy by His grace). Gregory also converted the inhabitants of Brittany, pagans and Goths, who had been adhering to the Arian heresy, to the True Faith.

Gregory has left behind numerous written works. After publishing of his book, “Dialogues Concerning the Life and Miracles of the Italian Fathers” (*Dialogi De Vita Et Miraculis Patrum Italiorum*), he came to be called “the Dialogist.” His “Pastoral Rule” book (*Liber Regulae Pastoralis*) was, and still

is, well-known guidance for clergy. In this work, Gregory describes the model of the true pastor. His letters (848 in number), dealing with moral guidance, have also survived.

Gregory headed the Church for thirteen years, ministering to all the needs of his flock. He was characterized by an extraordinary love of poverty, for which he was granted a vision of the Lord Himself.

Pope Saint Gregory the Great, as he is also known, died in 604, and his relics rest in the cathedral of the holy Apostle Peter in the Vatican.

TWO PRAYERS TO SAINT SOPHRONIUS

Troparion

Receiving divine grace from God on high, O glorious Gregory,
and strengthened with its power,
you willed to walk in the path of the Gospel, O most blessed hierarch.
Therefore, you have received from Christ the reward of your labors.
Entreat Him that He may save our souls.

Kontakion

O father Gregory,
you showed yourself to be an imitator of Christ, the chief Shepherd,
guiding the orders of monks to the fold of heaven.
You taught the flock of Christ His commandments.
Now you rejoice and dance with them in the mansions of heaven.

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.