

THURSDAY, MARCH 26  
FOURTH WEEK OF GREAT LENT

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**T**hrough 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 100 (99 LXX)

*A song of praise for the Lord's faithfulness to His people*

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness,  
come before His presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God.

He made us, and not we ourselves,  
we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving,  
and His courts with praise.  
Give thanks to Him, praise His Name,  
for the Lord is good, His mercy endures forever,  
and His truth endures to all generations.

*Today we will be praying hymns from Vespers of Thursday in the Fourth Week of Great Lent and to the Saint Nicephorus, whose memory we celebrate today called stichera at “Lord, I call”*

*Verse:* If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You.

Counted worthy to venerate the ever-blessed Cross, by which You have saved us, O Lord, we hymn Your loving-kindness and fervently pray, “Bestow upon us all, O Savior, the joy of Your salvation, granting us to look in penitence upon Your Resurrection and Your holy sufferings.”

*Verse:* For Your Name’s sake I wait for You, O Lord. My soul waits for Your word, my soul hopes on the Lord.

Outstretched upon the Cross, You endured death, slaying death and raising up the dead by Your life-giving word. Therefore I entreat You, “Restore to life, O Lord, my soul which is dead through sin, grant me compunction, and deliverance from wickedness, during these Your holy days of abstinence, O Lover of mankind.”

*Verse:* From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord.

Counted worthy to look upon Your holy Cross with joy and to venerate it, we entreat You, O God our Savior, “Strengthened by the Fast may we come also to Your most pure Passion, and falling down, may we worship and praise Your Crucifixion, the spear, the sponge, and reed, by which You have made us immortal, leading us back to the sweetness of Paradise, O Lover of mankind. Therefore with thanksgiving we now glorify You.”

*Verse:* For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.

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The streams of your wisdom, O holy Nicephorus, drawn from spiritual clouds, pour out a fountain of Orthodoxy upon the world. And we, the faithful, drawing sweetness from it, turn away from the emissions of heresy as from the bitter waters of Marah.

*Verse:* Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him all people.

Lying in the tomb, your most pure body did not in any way decay, but was found to be whole, O most blessed Nicephorus. And bearing it forth with zeal, those nurtured by Orthodoxy rejoiced, gloriously blessing you, O divinely wise one.

*Verse:* For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.

The Church honored with the name of the Apostles, received you, O most blessed one, for through your godly actions you became a temple of God, and after your interment you are again interred in a sacred manner, burying all the fetid foolish ranting of the heretics.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Tempest-tossed on the abyss of transgressions, fleeing to the calm haven of your most pure supplication, I cry out to you, O Mother of God, “Save me, O immaculate one, extending your mighty right hand to your servant!”

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Upon beholding the Lamb lifted up upon the Cross, the immaculate Virgin cried aloud, weeping, “O my Child most sweet, what is this new and most glorious sight? How is it that You, holding all things in Your hand, have been nailed to the Tree in the flesh?”

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 10:32-11:9*

<sup>32</sup> These are the families of Noah's sons, according to their genealogies, in their nations. And from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood. **11** <sup>1</sup> Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. <sup>2</sup> And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. <sup>3</sup> And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. <sup>4</sup> Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves. Otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the

whole earth.” <sup>5</sup>The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. <sup>6</sup>And the Lord said, “Look, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. Nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup>Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” <sup>8</sup>So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. <sup>9</sup>Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

*Proverbs 13:19-14:6*

<sup>19</sup> A desire realized is sweet to the soul,  
but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.

<sup>20</sup> Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise,  
but the companion of fools suffers harm.

<sup>21</sup> Misfortune pursues sinners,  
but prosperity rewards the righteous.

<sup>22</sup> The good leave an inheritance to their children’s children,  
but the sinner’s wealth is laid up for the righteous.

<sup>23</sup> The field of the poor may yield much food,  
but it is swept away through injustice.

<sup>24</sup> Those who spare the rod hate their children,  
but those who love them are diligent to discipline them.

<sup>25</sup> The righteous have enough to satisfy their appetite,  
but the belly of the wicked is empty.

**14** <sup>1</sup> The wise woman builds her house,  
but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.

<sup>2</sup> Those who walk uprightly fear the Lord,  
but one who is devious in conduct despises Him.

<sup>3</sup> The talk of fools is a rod for their backs,  
but the lips of the wise preserve them.

<sup>4</sup> Where there are no oxen, there is no grain;

abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.

<sup>5</sup> A faithful witness does not lie,  
but a false witness breathes out lies.

<sup>6</sup> A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain,  
but knowledge is easy for one who understands.

#### SAINT OF THE DAY

##### *Transfer of the relics of Saint Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople*

Saint Nicephorus was a dignitary at the court of the empress Irene (797-802), and then after receiving monastic tonsure, he became known for his piety. In the year 806, he was elevated to the patriarchal throne. The saint was a zealous defender of the holy Icons. When the Iconoclast emperor Leo the Armenian (813-820) came to rule, the saint in 815 was exiled to Prokonnis, where he died in the year 828.

In the year 846 the holy relics of Patriarch Nicephorus were opened, and were found incorrupt and fragrant. The relics were transferred from Prokonnis to Constantinople and placed for one day in the main cathedral Hagia Sophia, and then transferred to the Church of the Holy Apostles. The saint's hands are preserved in the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos.

The saint left behind three writings against Iconoclasm. The main Feast of Saint Nicephorus is celebrated on June 2, but today we commemorate the finding and transfer of his holy relics.

#### TWO PRAYERS TO SAINT NICEPHORUS

##### *Troparion*

Your fragrant relics have been revealed as godly treasure  
filled with life for the Church.

On their august translation  
we receive the gifts of the Spirit.

O righteous father Nicephorus,  
entreat Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

*Kontakion*

The choir of patriarchs, honors your holy memory  
with praises and hymns, O Nicephorus,  
for it received your spirit at your translation, O glorious one.  
Therefore, today the Church magnifies Christ the King,  
glorifying Him as the only Lover of mankind.

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.

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