



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.

Hymns at "Lord, I call" from Vespers of Monday of the fifth week of Pascha

Verse: If You will mark iniquities O Lord, Lord, who can stand? For with Your there is forgiveness.

The holy Mid-feast of the Savior's Resurrection has now appeared like the brightness of noon, shining upon the world with the divine grace of Christ's arising, flashing forth with incorruption's unerring signs revealing His Ascension into the heights. The most bright feast of Pentecost is manifestly radiant with the Holy Spirit's descent to us. Therefore it bestows upon our souls peace and great mercy.

Verse: For Your Name's sake I have waited patiently for You, O Lord. My soul has patiently waited for Your word, my soul has hoped in the Lord.

Having reached the feast of Mid-Pentecost, the Lord now imparts the streams of His great compassion, like to a Divine River of Glory, crying aloud to all, "All who thirst, come to Me and draw forth abundantly. For I am a well-spring of sympathy and an abyss of mercy, pouring forth forgiveness upon the world, purging sins, and expunging maladies." And He saves all who keep His Resurrection's memorial, and protects those who honor and with love celebrate His Ascension in glory, granting to our souls peace and great mercy.

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

Having stood within the Temple's court, He Who is the

uncircumscribable God and Lord, Who by nature is God, and for our sake became incarnate, and circumscribed in the flesh poured forth for all mankind vivifying teachings, saying, “Be purified in your souls. Quench the burning heat of the passions. Let no one be deprived of this draught, for upon those who drink I bestow the divine grace of an immortal and better heavenly Kingdom, which you will share with Me, the Creator, and thus be glorified.”

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

You, the Wisdom of God, came to the Temple at Mid-feast, teaching and reproving the disobedient Jews, the Pharisees, and Scribes, and with boldness You said to them, “Those who thirst, let them come to Me and drink living water, and you will never again thirst for eternity. From those who believe in My goodness, rivers of eternal life will pour out.” O how great is Your goodness and compassion, O Christ our God! Glory to You.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

Acts 12:12-17

¹² As soon as he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many had gathered and were praying. ¹³ When he knocked at the outer gate, a maid named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴ On recognizing Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the gate, she ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the gate. ¹⁵ They said to her, “You are out of your mind!” But she insisted that it was so. They said, “It is his angel.” ¹⁶ Meanwhile Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the gate, they saw him and were amazed. ¹⁷ He motioned to them with his hand to be silent, and described for them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he added, “Tell this to James and to the believers.” Then he left and went to another place.

John 8:42-51

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent

me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. ⁴⁴ You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶ Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷ Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God."

⁴⁸ The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" ⁴⁹ Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and he is the judge. ⁵¹ Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death."

PRAYERS DURING 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

Great Martyr Irene

Saint Irene was born in the city of Magedon in Persia during the fourth century. She was the daughter of Licinius, the pagan ruler of a certain small kingdom, and his wife Licinia, and at birth her parents named her Penelope. Penelope was very beautiful, and her father kept her isolated in a high tower from the time she was six so that she would not be exposed to Christianity. He also placed thirteen young maidens in the tower with her. An old tutor by the name of Apellian was appointed to give her the best possible education. Apellian was a Christian, and during her lessons, he told the girl about Christ the Savior and taught her about the Christian Faith and Christian virtues.

When Penelope reached adolescence, her parents began to think about her marriage. One night Penelope beheld the following vision: a dove entered the tower with an olive branch in its beak, depositing it on the table. An eagle also flew in carrying a wreath of flowers, and left it on the table. Then a raven flew in through another window and dropped a snake on the table. In the morning Penelope woke up and wondered about the meaning of the things she had seen. She related them to her tutor Apellian and he explained that the dove symbolized her superior education, and that the olive branch represented the grace of God which is received in Baptism. The eagle and the olive branch indicated success in her future life. The snake signified that she would experience suffering and sorrow.

At the end of the conversation Apellian said that the Lord wished to

betroth her to Himself and that Penelope would undergo much suffering for her heavenly Bridegroom. After this Penelope refused marriage, was baptized by the priest Timothy, and he named her Irene (which means *peace*). She even urged her own parents to become Christians. Shortly after being baptized, she smashed all her father's idols to pieces.

Since Irene had dedicated herself to Christ, she refused to marry any of the suitors her father had chosen for her. When Licinius learned that his daughter refused to worship the pagan gods, he was furious. He attempted to turn her from Christ by having her tortured. She was tied up and thrown beneath the hooves of wild horses so that they might trample her to death, but the horses remained motionless. Instead of harming the saint, one of the horses charged Licinius, seized his right hand and tore it from his arm. Then it knocked Licinius down and began to trample him to death. This caused a great deal of confusion among the people there but Irene consoled them with the words of Christ, "All things are possible to the one who believes" (*Mark 9:23*). And indeed, with wondrous faith, she prayed and through her prayers Licinius rose unharmed in the presence of many eyewitnesses with his hand intact. Then, Licinius and his wife were baptized as Christians, along with almost 3000 others who turned away from the worship of inanimate idols. Licinius abandoned his domain and lived in the tower he had built for his daughter. There he spent the rest of his life in repentance.

Irene lived in the house of her teacher Apellian, and she began to preach Christ among the pagans, leading them to the path of salvation.

When Sedekias, the new prefect of the city, heard of the miracles performed by the saint, he summoned Apellian and questioned him about Irene's manner of life. Apellian replied that Irene, like other Christians, lived in strict temperance, devoting herself to constant prayer and reading holy books. Sedekias summoned the saint to him and urged her to stop preaching about Christ. He also attempted to force her to sacrifice to the idols. Irene staunchly confessed her faith before the prefect, not fearing his wrath, and prepared to undergo suffering for Christ. By order of Sedekias she was thrown into a pit filled with vipers and serpents. The saint spent ten days in

the pit and remained unharmed, for an angel of the Lord protected her and brought her food. Sedekias ascribed this miracle to sorcery, and he subjected Irene to many other tortures, but she remained unharmed. Under the influence of her preaching and miracles even more people were converted to Christ, and turned away from the worship of inanimate idols.

Sedekias was deposed by his son Sapor, who persecuted Christians with an even greater zeal than his father had done. Irene went to her home town of Magedon in Persia to meet Sapor and his army, and ask him to end the persecution. When he refused, Irene prayed and his entire army was blinded. She prayed again and they received their sight once more. In spite of this, Sapor refused to recognize the power of God. Because of his insolence, he was struck and killed by a bolt of lightning.

After this, Irene walked into the city and performed many miracles. She returned to the tower built by her father, accompanied by the priest Timothy. Through her teaching, she converted five thousand people to Christ.

Next, the saint went to the city of Callinicus (possibly on the Euphrates River in Syria). The ruler of that place was King Numerian, the son of Sebastian. When she began to teach about Christ, she was arrested and tortured by the pagan authorities. They enclosed her inside three bronze oxen, one after another, which were heated until they were red-hot. When the Great-martyr was placed within the third ox, it began to walk about, and then it split asunder. Irene emerged from it as if from the fires of hell. This resulted in thousands of souls converting to the faith of Christ.

Sensing the approach of death, Numerian instructed his eparch Babdonus to continue torturing the saint in order to force her to sacrifice to idols. Once again, the tortures were ineffective, and many people turned to Christ.

Christ's holy martyr then traveled to the city of Constantina, forty miles northeast of Edessa. By 330, the Persian king Sapor II (309-379) had heard of Irene's great miracles. To prevent her from winning more people to Christ, she was arrested, beheaded, and then buried.

Saint Irene led thousands of people to Christ through her preaching, and by her example. The Church continues to honor her memory and to seek

her heavenly intercession. She is invoked by those wishing to effect a swift and happy marriage. In Greece, she is also the patron saint of policemen. Saint Irene is also one of the twelve Virgin Martyrs who appeared to Saint Seraphim of Sarov and the Diveyevo nun Eupraxia on the Feast of the Annunciation in 1831. By her holy prayers, may the Lord have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

TROPARION AND KONTAKION OF SAINT ATHANASIUS

Troparion

Your lamb Irene calls out to You, O Jesus, in a loud voice,
“I love You, my Bridegroom, and in seeking You I endure suffering.
In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in You,
and I died so that I might live with You.
Accept me as a pure sacrifice,
for I have offered myself in love.”
Through her prayers save our souls, since You are merciful.

Kontakion

Adorned with the beauty of virginity,
you became more beautiful in your struggle, O virgin-martyr Irene.
You were empurpled by the flow of your blood,
having destroyed the temptation of godlessness.
Therefore you received the prize of victory from the hand of your Creator.

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

The angel cried to the Lady full of grace,
“Rejoice, O pure Virgin. Again I say, Rejoice.
Your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb.
With Himself He has raised all the dead.
Rejoice, all people.”

Shine! Shine! O new Jerusalem!
The glory of the Lord has shone on you.
Exult now and be glad, O Zion.

Be radiant, O pure Theotokos,
in the resurrection of your Son.

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)

