

The Kneeling Prayers of Pentecost



THE FIRST PRAYER

O Lord, who art immaculate, undefiled, unoriginate, invisible, incomprehensible, inscrutable, unchanging, unsurpassable, immeasurable, forbearing, who alone hast immortality, who dwellest in light unapproachable, who hast made heaven and earth and the sea, and all created things therein, who grantest unto all men their petitions before they ask, we pray Thee and beseech Thee, O Master, who lovest mankind, the Father of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and of Mary, the ever-virgin and most glorious Theotokos, who first did teach in words and afterwards did show by deeds, when he endured his saving passion, who did give us, thy humble and sinful and unworthy servants, an example, whereby we should offer unto Thee prayers with the bending of the neck and knees, both for our own sins and for the ignorance of the people: Do Thou thyself, who art great in mercy and lovest mankind, hearken to us in that day when we shall call upon Thee, and especially on this day of Pentecost, on which, after our Lord Jesus Christ had ascended into the heavens and had sat down at the right hand of Thee, the God and Father, he did send down upon his holy disciples and apostles the Holy Spirit, which did also sit upon each of them, and they were filled with his inexhaustible grace, and they spake with other tongues of Thy greatness, and they prophesied. Hearken, therefore, to us now who pray to Thee, and remember us, humble and condemned as we are, and turn again the captivity of our souls, Thou that hast Thine own compassion as intercessor for us. Receive us who fall down before Thee and cry: We have sinned. We have cleaved unto Thee from our birth, even from our mother's womb. Thou art our God, but since our days have passed in vanity, we have been stripped of Thine help, we have been deprived of every defense. But emboldened by Thy compassions, we call out: Remember not the sins of our youth and our ignorance and cleanse Thou us of our secret sins, cast us not away in time of old age; when our strength faileth, forsake us not. Before we return to the earth, make us worthy to turn again unto Thee, and attend to us in favor and grace. Measure our transgressions according to Thy compassion, set the depth of Thy compassions against the multitude of our offenses. Look down from thy holy heights, O Lord, upon Thy people here present who await of Thee rich mercy. Visit us in Thy goodness. Deliver us from the power of the devil. Make firm our lives with Thy holy and sacred laws. Entrust Thy

people to a faithful guardian angel. Gather us all into Thy kingdom. Grant pardon to those that hope in Thee. Forgive them and us our sins. Purify us by the operation of Thy Holy Spirit. Destroy the snares set for us by the enemy. Blessed are Thou, O Lord, Master Almighty, who hast lightened the day with the light of the sun and hast illuminated the night with flashes of fire, who hast vouchsafed us to pass through the length of the day and to draw near to the beginning of the night; hearken to our prayer and to that of all Thy people; and having pardoned us all our voluntary and involuntary sins receive our evening supplications; and send down the multitude of Thy mercy and compassions upon thine inheritance. Wall us in with Thy holy angels. Arm us with the armor of Thy righteousness. Make a bulwark about us with Thy truth. Guard us with Thy power. Deliver us from every oppression and every plot of the adversary. Grant us also that the present evening with the coming of the night and all the days of our life may be perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless, without stumbling-blocks, without fantasy, through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints, who have in all ages been well-pleasing unto thee.

THE SECOND PRAYER

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, who hast given Thy peace to men and, being present still in this life, dost ever grant the gift of the all-holy Spirit to the faithful, as an inheritance that cannot be taken away, Thou didst send down today in a manner most clear, this grace upon Thy holy disciples and apostles, and didst open their lips with tongues of fire. Through them every race of man hath received, through the hearing of the ear, the knowledge of God in our own languages. We have been enlightened by the light of the Spirit, and we have been freed from delusion as from darkness, and through the distribution of the perceptible tongues of fire and the wondrous operation of the same, we have been taught the faith that is in Thee, and we have been illumined so as to praise Thee with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in one Godhead and Power and Authority. For Thou art the Brightness of the Father, the express Image, inalterable and immovable, of His essence and nature, the Fountain of wisdom and of grace.

Open Thou also the lips of me, the sinner, and teach me how I ought and for what I must pray. For Thou knowest the multitude of my sins, but thy compassion shall overcome the enormity thereof. For lo, in fear I stand before Thee; into the sea of Thy mercy have I cast the desperation of my soul. Govern my life, Thou that governest all creation with Thy word and with the unutterable power of Thy wisdom. O tranquil Haven of the storm-tossed, and make known to me the way wherein I should walk. Grant to my reasoning the Spirit of Thy wisdom, and give the Spirit of understanding to my foolishness. Overshadow my deeds with the Spirit of Thy fear, and renew a right Spirit within me. And with they governing spirit, establish my faltering mind that, being guided every day by Thy good Spirit toward what is useful, I may be vouchsafed to keep Thy commandments and always to remember Thy glorious coming-again, which shall search out our deeds. Despise me not, lest I be deceived by the corrupting pleasures of the world, but enable me to yearn for the enjoyment of the treasures of that to come. For Thou hast said, O Master, that whatsoever may be asked in Thy name shall be freely received from Thy co-eternal God and Father. I, the sinner, therefore, at the descent of Thy Holy Spirit, do supplicate Thy goodness: Do Thou render unto me whatsoever I have asked unto salvation. Yea, O Lord, the good and abundant Giver of every benefit, for Thou art He that grantest most abundantly that which we ask. Thou art He that sinlessly became the compassionate, merciful partaker of our flesh and, to those that bend their knees before Thee, dost Thou graciously bend down and become the propitiation of our sins. Grant then, O Lord, Thy compassions to Thy people. Harken to us from Thy holy heaven. Sanctify them by the power of Thy saving right hand. Shelter them with the shelter of Thy wings. Despise not the works of Thy hands. Against Thee only do we sin, but Thee alone do we also adore. We know not how to worship a strange god, nor how to stretch forth our hands to any other god, O Master. Forgive us our offenses, and accept our prayers with the bending of our knees; extend to us all the hand of Thine aid, and receive the prayer of all as an acceptable incense, rising before Thy most-good kingdom.

O Lord, Lord, who deliverest us from every arrow that flieth by day, deliver us also from everything that walkest in darkness. Receive the lifting up of our hands as an evening sacrifice. Vouchsafe us also to pass without reproach the course of the night untempted of evil things, and redeem us from every disturbance and dread that cometh to us from the devil. Grant unto our souls contrition and unto our thoughts care concerning the trial of Thy fearful and righteous judgment. Nail our flesh to the fear of Thee, and mortify our earthly members, that even in the quietness of sleep, we may be illumined by the contemplation of Thy judgments. Withdraw from us every unseemly fantasy and injurious desire. Raise us up at the time of prayer confirmed in the faith and progressing in Thy commandments.

THE THIRD PRAYER

O ever-flowing Fountain of life and light, creative Power and co-eternal with the Father, who hast most excellently fulfilled the whole dispensation of the salvation of mortals, Christ our God, who didst burst the indestructible bonds of death and the bolts of hades and hast trampled down the multitude of evil spirits; who didst offer thyself as a blameless victim, giving Thine immaculate body as a sacrifice, unblemished and inviolate of all sin and, through that dread and indescribable act of sacrifice, bestowing eternal life upon us; who didst descent into hades and break down its eternal bars, showing forth the way up to those who sat in the lower world; who with allurements of divine wisdom, didst entice the author of evil, the dragon of the abyss, and with cords of gloom didst bind him in hades in unquenchable fire, and didst confine him in outer darkness by Thine infinite might; Thou, who art the greatly glorified Wisdom of the Father, didst manifest Thyself as a great Helper to the oppressed and didst enlighten those that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death; Thou, Lord of eternal glory and beloved Son of the Father most high, Light everlasting of Light everlasting, Sun of righteousness: Hearken to us who pray unto Thee, and give rest of the souls of Thy servants, our fathers and brethren, who have fallen asleep before us, and our other kinsmen after the flesh, and all Thine own who are in the faith, of whom we now make memorial, for in Thee is the power over all, and in Thine hand Thou holdest all the ends of the earth.

Almighty Master, God of the fathers and Lord of mercies, Maker of the race of mortals and immortals and of every nature of man, of that which is brought together and again put asunder of life and of the end of life, of sojourning here and of translation there, who dost measure the years of life and set the times of death, who bringest down to hades and raisest up, binding, in infirmity and releasing unto power, dispensing present things according to need and ordering those to come as is expedient, quickening with the hope of resurrection, those that are smitten with the sting of death. Thyself, O Master of all, God our Saviour, the Hope of all the ends of the earth and of those who are far off upon the sea, who, on this last and great saving day of Pentecost, didst show forth to us the mystery of the Holy Trinity, consubstantial and co-eternal, undivided and unmingled, and didst pour out the descent and presence of Thy holy and life-giving Spirit in the form of tongues of fire upon Thy holy apostles, appointing them to be the evangelists of our pious faith and showing them to be confessors and preachers of the true theology; who also, on this all-perfect and saving feast, dost deign to receive oblations and supplications for those bound in hades, and grantest unto us the great hope that respite and comfort will be sent down from Thee to the departed from the grief that doth bind them. Hearken to us, Thy humble and piteous ones who pray, and give rest to the souls of Thy servants who have fallen asleep before us in a place of brightness, a place of verdure, a place of repose, whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away; and do thou place their souls in the tabernacles of the righteous; and make them worthy of peace and repose. For the dead praise Thee not, O Lord, neither do those in hades dare to offer Thee confession, but we, the living, bless Thee and supplicate Thee and offer propitiatory prayers and sacrifices for their souls.

O God, who art great and eternal, holy and lovest mankind, who hast vouchsafed us also to stand at this hour before Thine unapproachable glory, that we may hymn and praise Thy wonders: Be gracious to us, Thine unworthy servants, and grant us grace that, with contrite heart and without presumption, we may offer Thee the thrice-holy glorification and thanksgiving for Thy great gifts which Thou hast granted and dost ever grant us. Remember, O Lord, our infirmity, and destroy us not for our transgressions, but be merciful to our humility, that, fleeing from the darkness of sin, we may walk in the day of righteousness and, clothed with the armor of light, may persevere unassailed from every attack of the evil one, so that with boldness we may glorify Thee in all things, the only true God and Lover of mankind. For

Thine in truth is the great mystery, O Master and Maker of all, both the temporary dissolution of Thy creatures and their restoration thereafter, and of eternal rest. We confess Thy grace in all things, in our coming into this world and in our going forth therefrom, which things faithfully pledge unto us, through Thine unfailing promise, our hopes of the resurrection and of life incorruptible, which we shall receive hereafter at Thy second coming. For Thou art both the Author of our resurrection and the impartial Judge of those that have lived and the Lover of mankind and the Master and Lord of recompense, who didst partake with us, on equal terms, of flesh and blood, through Thine extreme condescension, and of our irreproachable passions, wherein Thou didst willingly submit to temptation, since Thou dost possess tenderness and compassion, and Thyself, having suffered temptation, art become for us, who are tempted, the Helper which Thou Thyself hadst promised to be; and therefore Thou hast led us to Thy passionlessness. Receive, therefore, O Master, our prayers and supplications and give rest to all the fathers and mothers and children and brothers and sisters of each of us and to any other of our kindred and of our people and to every soul that hath gone to rest before in the hope of resurrection unto life everlasting. Set their spirits and their names in the book of life, in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the land of the living, in the kingdom of heaven, in a paradise of bliss, leading all, by Thy radiant angels, into Thy holy abode, raising up also with Thee our bodies in the day which hath been appointed according to Thy holy and unfailing promise. There is, therefore, O Lord, no death unto Thy servants, when we go forth from the body and come unto Thee, our God, but a change from things most sorrowful unto things most good and most sweet, and rest and joy. And, though we have sinned against Thee, be gracious unto us and unto them, for none is pure of stain in Thy sight, though his life be but for one day, except Thou alone, who didst reveal Thyself sinless on the earth, O Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we all hope to obtain mercies and the forgiveness of sins. Do Thou, therefore, as the good God who lovest man, remit, forgive, pardon them and us our offenses voluntary and involuntary, those done with knowledge or in ignorance, those manifest or unnoticed, those of deed or of thought, of word, those of all our acts and movements; and to those who have been taken from us give freedom and respite, and bless us who are here present, granting a good and peaceful ending to us and to all Thy people, and open to us Thy tender mercies and Thy love of mankind at Thy dread and fearful coming again, and make us worthy of Thy kingdom.

O great and most high God, who alone hast immortality and dwellest in light unapproachable, who hast made all creation in wisdom, who hast divided the light from the darkness and hast appointed the sun to rule the day, the moon and stars also to rule the night, who hast vouchsafed unto us sinners at this present hour also to come before Thy presence with confession and to offer unto Thee our evening praise: Do Thou Thyself, O Lord who lovest mankind, direct our prayer as incense before Thee, and accept it as a savour of sweet smelling fragrance, and grant that we may pass the present evening and the coming night in peace. Endue us with the armour of light. Deliver us from the terror of the night and from everything that walketh in darkness, and grant that the sleep which Thou hast appointed for the repose of our weakness may be free from every imagination of the devil. Yea, O Master of all, Bestower of good things, may we, being moved to compunction upon our beds, call to remembrance Thy name in the night, that enlightened by meditation on Thy commandments, we may rise up in joyfulness of soul to glorify Thy goodness, offering up unto Thy tender love prayers and supplications for our sins and for those of all Thy people, whom do thou visit in mercy, through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos.

