

## A Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, you who are present in all places and filling all things, the treasury of blessings and Giver of life: come and abide in us. Cleanse us from all impurity, and save our souls, O Gracious Lord.

## Trisagion Prayer

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. *(3 times)*  
Glory to the Father... now and always... Amen.

All-holy Trinity have mercy on us. Lord, pardon our sins. Master forgive us our transgressions. Holy One visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake. Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Glory to the Father... now and always... 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. Amen.

## A Lenten Prayer

Almighty Lord, You have created all things in wisdom. In Your inexpressible providence and great goodness You have brought us to these saving days, for the cleansing of our souls and bodies, for control of our passions, in the hope of the Resurrection.

After the forty days You delivered into the hands of Your servant Moses the tablets of the law in characters divinely traced. Enable us also, O benevolent One, to fight the good fight, to complete the course of the fast, to keep the faith inviolate, to crush underfoot the heads of unseen tempters, to emerge victors over sin and to come, without reproach, to the worship of Your Holy Resurrection.

For blessed and glorified is Your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forevermore. Amen.

## The Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian

*During Great Lent, we customarily we make a prostration at the sign ❖*

Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of laziness, meddling, the desire for power, and idle talk. ❖ Give me instead, a pure and humble spirit, the will to be patient with other people and to love them. ❖ Yes, O Lord and King, let me realize my own mistakes and keep me from judging others. For You are blessed now and forevermore. Amen.

# The Lenten journey 2013



## *Seek First His Kingdom*

During Great Lent we try to do what we should be doing all the time. The Lenten season, therefore, is most particularly a time for seeking the Kingdom of God. This is the teaching of Jesus.

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ... Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." [Matthew 6:25, 31-33]

One of the greatest tragedies today is that people who call themselves Christians present the Christian faith and life in ways directly opposed to the teaching of the Lord. They not only imply but openly but proclaim that God exists to make life go better for His followers in this

world. They say that you can come before God and “name it and claim it.” Health, wealth, happiness, prosperity in this world are what, according to them, the Lord primarily promises and provides. All this and heaven too!

It is certainly true that the Lord loves His faithful people and cares for them. Indeed, He loves and cares for everyone, including the wicked, the selfish and the ungrateful.<sup>1</sup> But a faithful follower of Christ who loves God the Father and is filled with His Holy, Spirit will never come to Him looking for the good things of this life. He will come seeking the Kingdom of God which, according to St. Paul, is “not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). And while seeking the Kingdom, he knows that he will get whatever else he needs as well. But he leaves that up to the Lord.

Commenting on the Lord’s Prayer, St. Isaac the Syrian gives the same teaching that we find in St. John Cassian. It is filled with warnings, which we must heed and obey.<sup>2</sup>

*Do not be inept in your petitions lest you grieve God by your ignorance. Learn to pray properly, that you may be esteemed worthy of glorious things. Seek from Him what is really valuable; He will not withhold them. Then you will receive honor from Him because of the choice of your wise will.*

*The honor of the King is diminished by those who seek from Him contemptible things.*

*When a man seeks from a king a measure full of dung, he will not only be despised by his despicable request, exposing thus his ignorance, but he also insults the king by his insipid demand; Such also is he who asks corporeal things from God.*

*Do not seek from God that which He is anxious to give us even when we do not beg for it, which He does not withhold even from those who are wholly alien to any knowledge of Him and even do not know that He exists. Do not use vain repetitions as the pagans do . . . and give no thought saying “What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, at with what shall we be clothed?” Your Father knows that you also have need of all these things.*

*If your Father takes care of the birds...how much more will He take care of you? But ask from God the Kingdom and righteousness, then He will add these things too.*

*And if He is slow in granting your request, and you ask without receiving promptly, do not be distressed. For you are not wiser than God. When you remain spiritually as you are, it is either because your*

*behavior does not agree with your request, or because the ways of your heart diverge from the aims of your prayer, or because your inner state is childish in comparison with the greatness of the things of God. It is not fitting that the great things of God should fall into our hands easily, lest the gift of God be thought to be of little worth because it is acquired without difficulty. All that is gathered by labor is guarded with care.*

*Thirst after Jesus. Then He will satisfy you with His love. Shut your eyes to the precious things of this world, then you will be deemed worthy of the peace given by God to reign in your heart. Restrain yourself from the allurements that are shining before your eyes, then you will be deemed worthy yourself to shine with spiritual joy.<sup>3</sup>*

As the Church teaches us to sing:

*Having despised the satisfaction of passions, my humble soul, be nourished by the food of good deeds. Take joy in the sweetness of fasting, avoiding the woe of earthly sweetness, and be enriched forever.*

*My soul is blinded, darkened by the drunkenness of passion; In no way can I look to You, O God. Therefore, be bountiful to me and enlighten me and open to me the gates of true repentance.<sup>4</sup>*

*Become as lightning, O my soul. Receive the flashing rays of abstinence, and flee the darkness of sin that, through the divine Spirit of God, the light of forgiveness may enlighten you as the rising sun.<sup>5</sup>*

Fr. Thomas Hopko, in The Lenten Spring

---

<sup>1</sup> “Love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.” Luke 6:35

<sup>2</sup> “You see what is the method and form of prayer proposed to us by the Judge Himself, Who is prayed to by it. it is a form which contains no petition for riches, not thought of honors, no request for power and might, no mention of bodily health and of temporal life. For He Who is the Author of Eternity would have people ask Him nothing uncertain, nothing paltry, nothing temporal. And so, a person will offer the greatest insult to His Majesty and Bounty if he leaves on one side these eternal petitions and chooses rather to ask of Him something transitory and uncertain.” The First Conference of Abbot Isaac: On Prayer, ch. 24

<sup>3</sup> “Third Treatise on the Behavior of Excellence,” St. Isaac of Syria.

<sup>4</sup> Matins, 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of Great Lent

<sup>5</sup> Matins, 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of Great Lent