

# *Compline*

*With Life of St. Mary of Egypt &  
Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete  
Thursday Evening - 5<sup>th</sup> Week of Lent*

PRIEST: Blessed is our God always now and ever and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

PRIEST: Glory to You, our God. Glory to You.

O heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who are in all places and fill all things, the Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O good One.

## *Trisagion Prayers*

PEOPLE: 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.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, 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.

PRIEST: For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory: of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

READER: Lord, have mercy. (12x)

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 and fall down before 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.

*The reader continues with the following Psalms:*

***Psalm 51 (LXX 50)***

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight - that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sins my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast 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 uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart - these, O God, You will not despise. Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

***Psalm 70 (LXX 69)***

Make haste, O God, to deliver me! Make haste to help me, O Lord! Let them be ashamed and confounded who seek my life; let them be turned back and confused who desire my hurt. Let them be turned back because of their shame, who say, "Aha, aha!" Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; and let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified!" But I am poor and needy; make haste to me, O God! You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay.

***Psalm 143 (LXX 142)***

Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, and in Your righteousness, do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no one living is righteous. For the enemy has persecuted my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me dwell in darkness, like those who have long been dead. Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is distressed. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands. I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty land. Answer me speedily, O Lord; my spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, lest I be like those who go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Your loving-kindness in the morning, for in You do I trust;

cause me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my soul to You. Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies; in You I take shelter. Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness. Revive me, O Lord, for Your name's sake! For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. In Your mercy cut off my enemies, and destroy all those who afflict my soul; for I am Your servant.

### *The Little Doxology*

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men.

We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give thanks to You for Your great glory.

O Lord King, heavenly God, Father Almighty; O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and O Holy Spirit.

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, Who take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us, You Who take away the sins of the world

Receive our prayer, You Who sit at the right hand of the Father, and have mercy on us.

For You only are holy, You only are the Lord, O Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Every evening I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever; yes, forever and ever.

Lord, You have been our refuge from generation to generation. I said: "Be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."

Lord, I have fled to You; teach me to do Your will, for You are my God.

For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we shall see light.

Continue Your mercy to those who know You.

Grant, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin.

Blessed are You, O Lord the God of our Fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever. Amen.

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have set our hope on You.

Blessed are You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes.

Blessed are You, O Master; make me to understand Your statutes.

Blessed are You, O holy One; enlighten me with Your statutes.

Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever; despise not the works of Your hands.

To You belongs worship, to You belongs praise, to You belongs glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### *The Nicene Creed*

PEOPLE: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made;

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man;

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried;

And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;

And ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father;

And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets;

And I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead,

And the life of the world to come. Amen.

### ***“It is Truly Right”***

PEOPLE: It is truly right to bless you, O Theotokos, who are ever blessed and all-blameless, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, who without corruption gave birth to God the Word, and are truly Theotokos, we magnify you.

### ***The Life of our Holy Mother Mary of Egypt***

*By St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem*

*(560-638; Patriarch from 634-638)*

*NOTE: The following is split into two halves so that two readers recite it.*

READER 1: The Life of our Holy Mother Mary of Egypt. Father, bless.

PRIEST: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

READER: Amen.

“It is good to hide the secret of a king, but it is glorious to reveal and preach the works of God; so said the Archangel Raphael to Tobit when he performed the wonderful healing of his blindness. Actually, not to keep the secret of a king is perilous and a terrible risk, but to be silent about the works of God is a great loss for the soul. And I, says St. Sophronios, in writing the Life of St. Mary of Egypt, am afraid to hide the works of God by silence. Remembering the misfortune threatened to the servant who hid his God-given talent in the earth, I am bound

to pass on the holy account that has reached me. And let no one think, continues St. Sophronios, that I have had the audacity to write untruth or doubt this great marvel -- may I never lie about holy things! If there do happen to be people who, after reading this record, do not believe it, may the Lord have mercy on them because, reflecting on the weakness of human nature, they consider impossible these wonderful things accomplished by holy people. But now we must begin to tell this most amazing story, which has taken place in our generation.

There was a certain elder in one of the monasteries of Palestine, a priest of holy life and speech, who from childhood had been brought up in monastic ways and customs. This elder's name was Zosimas. He had been through the whole course of the ascetic life and in everything he adhered to the rule once given to him by his tutors as regard spiritual labors. He had also added a good deal himself while laboring to subject his flesh to the will of the spirit. And he had not failed in his aim. He was so renowned for his spiritual life that many came to him from neighboring monasteries and some even from afar. While doing all this, he never ceased to study the Divine Scriptures. Whether resting, standing, working or eating food (if the scraps he nibbled could be called food), he incessantly and constantly had a single aim: always to sing of God, and to practice the teaching of the Divine Scriptures. Zosimas used to relate how, as soon as he was taken from his mother's breast, he was handed over to the monastery where he went through his training as an ascetic until he reached the age of fifty-three.

After that, he began to be tormented with the thought that he was perfect in everything and needed no instruction from anyone, saying to himself mentally: "Is there a monk on earth who can be of use to me and show me a kind of asceticism that I have not accomplished? Is there a man to be found in the desert who has surpassed me?"

Thus thought the elder, but suddenly an angel appeared to him and said: "Zosimas, valiantly have you struggled, as far as this is within the power of man; valiantly have you gone through the ascetic course. But there is no man who has attained perfection. Before you lay unknown struggles greater than those you have already accomplished. That you may know how many other ways lead to salvation, leave your native land like the renowned patriarch Abraham and go to the monastery by the River Jordan."

Zosimas did as he was told. He left the monastery in which he had lived from childhood, and went to the River Jordan. At last he reached the community to which God had sent him. Having knocked at the door of the monastery, he identified himself to the monk who was the porter, and the porter told the abbot. On being admitted to the abbot's presence, Zosimas made the usual monastic prostration and prayer. Seeing that he was a monk the abbot asked: "Where do you come from, brother, and why have you come to us poor old men?" Zosimas replied: "There is no need to speak about from where I have come, but I have come, father, seeking spiritual profit, for I have heard great things about your skill in leading souls to God."

"Brother," the abbot said to him, "Only God can heal the infirmity of the soul. May He teach you and us His divine ways and guide us. But as it is the love of Christ that has moved you to visit us poor old men, then stay with us, if that is why you have come.

May the Good Shepherd Who laid down His life for our salvation fill us all with the grace of the Holy Spirit.”

After this, Zosimas bowed to the abbot, asked for his prayers and blessing, and stayed in the monastery. There he saw the elders proficient both in action and the contemplation of God, aflame in spirit, working for the Lord. They sang incessantly, they stood in prayer all night; work was ever in their hands and psalms on their lips. Never an idle word was heard among them; they knew nothing about acquiring temporal goods or the cares of life. But they had one desire -- to become in body like corpses. Their constant food was the Word of God, and they sustained their bodies on bread and water, as much as their love for God allowed them. Seeing this, Zosimas was greatly edified and prepared for the struggle that lay before him.

Many days passed and the time drew near when all Christians fast and prepare themselves to worship the Divine Passion and Resurrection of Christ. The monastery gates were kept always locked and only opened when one from the community was sent out on some errand. It was a desert place, not only unvisited by people of the world but even unknown to them.

There was a rule in that monastery which was the reason why God brought Zosimas there. At the beginning of the Great Fast, on Forgiveness Sunday, the priest celebrated the Divine Liturgy and all partook of the holy body and blood of Christ. After the Liturgy, they went to the refectory and would eat a little Lenten meal.

Then all gathered in church and after praying earnestly with prostrations, the elders kissed one another and asked forgiveness. And each made a prostration to the abbot and asked his blessing and prayers for the struggle that lay before them. After this, the gates of the monastery were thrown open, and, singing, “The Lord is my light and my Savior; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defender of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” and the rest of that psalm, all went out into the desert and crossed the River Jordan. Only one or two brothers were left in the monastery, not to guard the property, for there was nothing to rob, but so as not to leave the church without Divine Service. Each took with him as much as he could or wanted in the way of food, according to the needs of his body: one would take a little bread, another some figs, another dates or wheat soaked in water. And some took nothing but their own bodies covered with rags and fed when nature forced them to it on the plants that grew in the desert.

After crossing the River Jordan, they all scattered far and wide in different directions. And this was the rule of life they had, and which they all observed -- neither to talk to one another, nor to know how each one lived and fasted. If they did happen to catch sight of one another, they went to another part of the country, living alone and always singing to God, and at a definite time eating a very small quantity of food. In this way they spent the whole of the Fast and used to return to the monastery a week before the Resurrection of Christ, on Palm Sunday. Each one returned having his own conscience

as the witness of his labor, and no one asked another how he had spent his time in the desert. Such were rules of the monastery. Every one of them, while in the desert struggled with himself before God, the Judge of the struggle, not seeking to please men and fast before the eyes of all. For what is done for the sake of men, to win praise and honor, is not only useless to the one who does it but sometimes the cause of great punishment.

Zosimas did the same as all. And he went far, far into the desert with a secret hope of finding some father who might be living there and who might be able to satisfy his thirst and longing. And he wandered on tireless, as if hurrying on to some definite place. He had already walked for twenty days and when the sixth hour came he stopped and, turning to the East, he began to sing the Sixth Hour service and recite the customary prayers. He used to break his journey thus at fixed hours of the day to rest a little, to chant psalms while standing and to pray on bent knees.

And as he sang thus without turning his eyes from the heavens, he suddenly saw to the right of the hillock on which he stood the semblance of a human body. At first he was confused thinking he beheld a vision of the devil, and even started with fear. But, having guarded himself with the sign of the Cross and banished all fear, he turned his gaze in that direction and in truth saw some form gliding southward. It was naked, the skin dark as if burned up by the heat of the sun; the hair on its head was white as a fleece, and not long, falling just below its neck.

Zosimas was so overjoyed at beholding a human form that he ran after it in pursuit, but the form fled from him. He followed. At length, when he was near enough to be heard, he shouted: "Why do you run from an old man and a sinner? Slave of the True God, wait for me, whoever you are; in God's name I tell you, for the love of God, for Whose sake you are living in the desert."

The woman said: "Forgive me for God's sake, but I cannot turn towards you and show you my face, Abba Zosimas. I am a woman and naked, as you see, with the uncovered shame of my body. But if you would like to fulfill one wish of a sinful woman, throw me your cloak so that I can cover my body and can turn to you and ask for your blessing."

Here terror seized Zosimas, for he heard that she called him by name. But he realized that she could not have done so without knowing anything of him if she had not had the power of spiritual insight. He at once did as he was asked. He took off his old, tattered cloak and threw it to her, turning away as he did so. She picked it up and was able to cover at least a part of her body.

Then she turned to Zosimas and said: "Why did you wish, Abba Zosimas, to see a sinful woman? What do you wish to hear or learn from me, you who have not shrunk from such great struggles?"

Zosimas threw himself on the ground and asked for her blessing. She likewise bowed

down before him. And thus they lay on the ground prostrate, asking for each other's blessing. And one phrase alone could be heard from both: "Bless me!"

After a long while the woman said to Zosimas: "Abba Zosimas, it is you who must give blessing and pray. You are dignified by the order of priesthood and for many years you have been standing before the holy altar and offering the sacrifice of the Divine Mysteries."

This flung Zosimas into even greater terror. At length with tears he said to her: "O mother, filled with the spirit, by your mode of life it is evident that you live with God and have died to the world. The Grace granted to you is apparent -- for you have called me by name and recognized that I am a priest, though you have never seen me before. Grace is recognized not by one's orders, but by gifts of the Spirit, so give me your blessing for God's sake, for I need your prayers."

Then giving way before the wish of the elder, the woman said: "Blessed is God Who cares for the salvation of men and their souls."

Zosimas answered: "Amen."

And both rose to their feet. Then the woman asked the elder: "Why have you come, man of God, to me who am so sinful? Why do you wish to see a woman naked and devoid of every virtue? Though I know one thing -- the Grace of the Holy Spirit has brought you to render me a service in time. Tell me, father, how are the Christian peoples living? And the kings? How is the Church guided?"

Zosimas said: "By your prayers, mother, Christ has granted lasting peace to all. But, fulfill the unworthy petition of an old man and pray for the whole world and for me who am a sinner, so that my wanderings in the desert may not be fruitless."

She answered: "You who are a priest, Abba Zosimas, it is you who must pray for me and for all, for this is your calling. But as we must all be obedient, I will gladly do what you ask."

And with these words she turned to the East, and raising her eyes to Heaven and stretching out her hands, she began to pray in a whisper. One could not hear separate words, so that Zosimas could not understand anything that she said in her prayers. Meanwhile he stood, according to his own word, all in a flutter, looking at the ground without saying a word. And he swore, calling God to witness, that when at length he thought that her prayer was very long, he took his eyes off the ground and saw that she was raised about a forearm's distance from the ground and stood praying in the air. When Zosimas saw this, even greater terror seized him and he fell on the ground weeping and repeating many times, "Lord, have mercy."

And while lying prostrate on the ground he was tempted by a thought: Is it not a spirit, and perhaps her prayer is hypocrisy?

But at the very same moment the woman turned around, raised the elder from the ground and said: "Thoughts, tempting you about me, trouble you, Abba, telling you I am a spirit, and that my prayer is feigned. Know, Holy Father, that I am only a sinful woman,

though I am guarded by Holy Baptism. And I am not a spirit but earth and ashes, and flesh alone.”

And with these words she guarded herself with the Sign of the Cross on her forehead, eyes, mouth and breast, saying: “May God defend us from the evil one and from his designs, for fierce is his struggle against us.”

Hearing and seeing this, the elder fell to the ground and, embracing her feet, he said with tears: “I beg you, by the Name of Christ our God, Who was born of a Virgin, for Whose sake you have stripped yourself, for Whose sake you have exhausted your flesh, do not hide from your slave, who you are and whence and how you came into this desert. Tell me everything so that the marvelous works of God may become known. A hidden wisdom and a secret treasure -- what profit is there in them? Tell me all, I implore you, for not out of vanity or for self-display will you speak but to reveal the truth to me, an unworthy sinner. I believe in God, for Whom you live and Whom you serve. I believe that He led me into this desert so as to show me His ways in regard to you. It is not in our power to resist the plans of God. If it were not the will of God that you and your life would be known, He would not have allowed me to see you and would not have strengthened me to undertake this journey, one like me who never before dared to leave his cell.”

Much more said Abba Zosimas. But the woman raised him and said: “I am ashamed, Abba, to speak to you of my disgraceful life; forgive me for God’s sake! But as you have already seen my naked body I shall likewise lay bare before you my work, so that you may know with what shame and obscenity my soul is filled. I was not running away out of vanity, as you thought, for of what have I to be proud -- I who was the chosen vessel of the devil? But when I start my story you will run from me, as from a snake, for your ears will not be able to bear the vileness of my actions. But I shall tell you all without hiding anything, only imploring you first of all to pray incessantly for me, so that I may find mercy on the Day of Judgment.”

The elder wept and the woman began her story. “My native land, holy father, was Egypt. Already during the lifetime of my parents, when I was twelve years old, I renounced their love and went to Alexandria. I am ashamed to recall how there I at first ruined my maidenhood and then unrestrainedly and insatiably gave myself up to sensuality. It is more becoming to speak of this briefly, so that you may just know my passion and my lechery. For about seventeen years, forgive me, I lived like that. I was like a fire of public debauch. And it was not for the sake of gain -- here I speak the pure truth. Often when they wished to pay me, I refused the money. I acted in this way so as to make as many men as possible to try to obtain me, doing free of charge what gave me pleasure. Do not think that I was rich and that was the reason why I did not take money. I lived by begging, often by spinning flax, but I had an insatiable desire and an irrepressible passion for lying in filth. This was life to me. Every kind of abuse of nature I regarded as life.

“That is how I lived. Then one summer I saw a large crowd of Libyans and Egyptians running towards the sea. I asked one of them, ‘Where are these men hurrying to?’ He replied, ‘They are all going to Jerusalem for the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross, which takes place in a few days.’ I said to him, ‘Will they take me with them if I wish to go?’ ‘No one will hinder you if you have money to pay for the journey and for food.’ And I said to him, ‘To tell you the truth, I have no money, neither have I food. But I shall go with them and shall go aboard. And they shall feed me, whether they want to or not. I have a body -- they shall take it instead of pay for the journey.’ I was suddenly filled with a desire to go, Abba, to have more lovers who could satisfy my passion. I told you, Abba Zosimas, not to force me to tell you of my disgrace. God is my witness, I am afraid of defiling you and the very air with my words.”

Zosimas, weeping, replied to her: “Speak on for God’s sake, mother, speak and do not break the thread of such an edifying tale.”

And, resuming her story, she went on: “That youth, on hearing my shameless words, laughed and went off. While I, throwing away my spinning wheel, ran off towards the sea in the direction which everyone seemed to be taking. And, seeing some young men standing on the shore, about ten or more of them, full of vigor and alert in their movements, I decided that they would do for my purpose (it seemed that some of them were waiting for more travelers while others had gone ashore). Shamelessly, as usual, I mixed with the crowd, saying, ‘Take me with you to the place you are going; you will not find me superfluous.’ I also added a few more words calling forth general laughter. Seeing my readiness to be shameless, they readily took me aboard the boat. Those who were expected came also, and we set sail at once.

“How shall I relate to you what happened after this? Whose tongue can tell, whose ears can take in all that took place on the boat during that voyage! And to all this I frequently forced those miserable youths even against their will. There is no mentionable or unmentionable depravity of which I was not their teacher. I am amazed, Abba, how the sea stood our licentiousness, how the earth did not open its jaws, and how it was that hell did not swallow me alive, when I had entangled in my net so many souls. But I think God was seeking my repentance. For, He does not desire the death of a sinner but magnanimously awaits his return to Him. At last we arrived in Jerusalem. I spent the days before the festival in the town, living the same kind of life, perhaps even worse. I was not content with the youths I had seduced at sea and who had helped me to get to Jerusalem; many others -- citizens of the town and foreigners -- I also seduced.

“The holy day of the Exaltation of the Cross dawned while I was still flying about, hunting for youths. At daybreak I saw that everyone was hurrying to the church, so I ran with the rest. When the hour for the holy elevation approached, I was trying to make my way in with the crowd which was struggling to get through the church doors. I at last squeezed through with great difficulty almost to the entrance of the temple, from which the life-giving Tree of the Cross was being shown to the people. But when I trod

on the doorstep through which everyone passed, I was stopped by some force which prevented my entering. Meanwhile I was brushed aside by the crowd and found myself standing alone in the porch. Thinking that this had happened because of my woman's weakness, I again began to work my way into the crowd, trying to elbow myself forward. But in vain I struggled. Again my feet trod on the doorstep over which others were entering the church without encountering any obstacle. I alone seemed to remain unaccepted by the church. It was as if there was a detachment of soldiers standing there to oppose my entrance. Once again I was excluded by the same mighty force and again I stood in the porch.

“Having repeated my attempt three or four times, at last I felt exhausted and had no more strength to push and to be pushed, so I went aside and stood in a corner of the porch. And only then with great difficulty it began to dawn on me, and I began to understand the reason why I was prevented from being admitted to see the life-giving Cross. The word of salvation gently touched the eyes of my heart and revealed to me that it was my unclean life which barred the entrance to me. I began to weep and lament and beat my breast, and to sigh from the depths of my heart.

“And so I stood weeping when I saw above me the icon of the most holy Mother of God. And turning my bodily and spiritual eyes to her I said: ‘O Lady, Mother of God, who gave birth in the flesh to God the Word, I know, O how well I know, that it is no honor or praise to you when one so impure and depraved as I looks up to your icon, O Ever-Virgin, who kept your body and soul in purity. Rightly do I inspire hatred and disgust before your virginal purity. But I have heard that God Who was born of you became man on purpose to call sinners to repentance. Then help me, for I have no other help. Order the entrance of the church to be opened to me. Allow me to see the venerable Tree on which He Who was born of you suffered in the flesh and on which He shed His holy Blood for the redemption of sinners and for me, unworthy as I am. Be my faithful witness before your son that I will never again defile my body by the impurity of fornication, but as soon as I have seen the Tree of the Cross I will renounce the world and its temptations and will go wherever you wilt lead me.’

“Thus I spoke and, as if acquiring some hope in firm faith and feeling some confidence in the mercy of the Mother of God, I left the place where I stood praying. And I went again and mingled with the crowd that was pushing its way into the temple. And no one seemed to thwart me; no one hindered my entering the church. I was possessed with trembling, and was almost in delirium. Having gotten as far as the doors which I could not reach before—as if the same force which had hindered me cleared the way for me—I now entered without difficulty and found myself within the holy place. And so it was that I saw the life-giving Cross. I saw too the Mysteries of God and how the Lord accepts repentance. Throwing myself on the ground, I worshipped that holy earth and kissed it with trembling.

“Then I came out of the church and went to her who had promised to be my security, to

the place where I had sealed my vow. And bending my knees before the Virgin Mother of God, I addressed to her such words as these: ‘O loving Lady, you have shown me your great love for all men. Glory to God Who receives the repentance of sinners through you. What more can I recollect or say, I who am so sinful? It is time for me, O Lady, to fulfill my vow, according to your witness. Now lead me by the hand along the path of repentance!’

“And at these words I heard a voice from on high: ‘If you cross the Jordan you will find glorious rest!’ Hearing this voice and having faith that it was for me, I cried to the Mother of God: ‘O Lady, Lady, do not forsake me!’

“With these words I left the porch of the church and set off on my journey. As I was leaving the church a stranger glanced at me and gave me three coins, saying: ‘Sister, take these.’ And, taking the money, I bought three loaves and took them with me on my journey, as a blessed gift. I asked the person who sold the bread: ‘Which is the way to the Jordan?’ I was directed to the city gate which led that way. Running onward, I passed the gates and still weeping went on my journey.

“Those I had met I asked the way, and after walking for the rest of that day, (I think it was nine o’clock when I saw the Cross) I at last reached at sunset the Church of St. John the Baptist which stood on the banks of the Jordan. After praying in the temple, I went down to the Jordan and rinsed my face and hands in its holy waters. I partook of the holy and life-giving Mysteries in the Church of the Forerunner and ate half of one of my loaves. Then, after drinking some water from the Jordan, I lay down and passed the night on the ground. In the morning I found a small boat and crossed to the opposite bank. I again prayed to Our Lady to lead me where she wished. Then I found myself in this desert and since then up to this very day I am estranged from all, keeping away from people and running away from everyone. And I live here clinging to my God Who saves all who turn to Him from faintheartedness and storms.”

*NOTE: Here ends the first half of the Life, and the Second Reader begins the other half.*

## ***Part 2***

READER: The continuation of the Life of our Holy Mother Mary of Egypt.

Zosimas asked her: “How many years have gone by since you began to live in this desert?”

She replied: “Forty-seven years have already gone by, I think, since I left the holy city.”

Zosimas asked: “But what food do you find?”

The woman said: "I had two and a half loaves when I crossed the Jordan. Soon they dried up and became hard as rock. Eating a little I gradually finished them after a few years."

Zosimas asked: "Can it be that without getting ill you have lived so many years thus, without suffering in any way from such a complete change?"

The woman answered: "You remind me, Zosimas, of what I dare not speak. For when I recall all the dangers which I overcame, and all the violent thoughts which confused me, I am again afraid that they will take possession of me."

Zosimas said: "Do not hide from me anything; speak to me without concealing anything."

And she said to him: "Believe me, Abba, seventeen years I passed in this desert fighting wild beasts -- mad desires and passions. When I was about to partake of food, I used to begin to regret the meat and fish of which I had so much in Egypt. I regretted also not having wine which I loved so much; for I drank a lot of wine when I lived in the world, while here I had not even water. I used to burn and succumb with thirst. The mad desire for decadent and ungodly songs also entered me and confused me greatly, edging me on to sing satanic songs which I had learned once. But when such desires entered me I struck myself on the breast and reminded myself of the vow which I had made when going into the desert. In my thoughts I returned to the icon of the Mother of God which had received me and to her I cried in prayer. I implored her to chase away the thoughts to which my miserable soul was succumbing. And after weeping at length and beating my breast I used to see light at last which seemed to shine on me from everywhere. And after the violent storm, lasting calm descended.

"And how can I tell you about the thoughts which urged me on to fornication, how can I express them to you, Abba? A fire was kindled in my miserable heart which seemed to burn me up completely and to awake in me a thirst for embraces. As soon as this craving came to me, I flung myself on the earth and watered it with my tears, as if I saw before me my witness, who had appeared to me in my disobedience, and who seemed to threaten punishment for the crime. And I did not rise from the ground (sometimes I lay prostrate for a day and a night) until a calm and sweet light descended and enlightened me and chased away the thoughts that possessed me. But always I turned to the eyes of my mind to my Protectress, asking her to extend help to one who was sinking fast in the waves of the desert. And I always had her as my helper and the acceptor of my repentance. And thus I lived for seventeen years amid constant dangers. And since then even until now the Mother of God helps me in everything and leads me as it were by the hand."

Zosimas asked: "Can it be that you did not need food and clothing?"

She answered: "After finishing the loaves I had, of which I spoke, for seventeen years I have fed on herbs and all that can be found in the desert. The clothes I had when I crossed the Jordan became torn and worn out. I suffered greatly from the cold and greatly from the extreme heat. At times the sun burned me up and at other times I shivered from the frost, and frequently falling to the ground I lay without breath and

without motion. I struggled with many afflictions and with terrible temptations. But from that time until now the power of God in numerous ways had guarded my sinful soul and my humble body. When I only reflect on the evils from which our Lord has delivered me I have imperishable food for hope of salvation. I am fed and clothed by the all-powerful Word of God, the Lord of all. For it is not by bread alone that man lives. And those who have stripped off the rags of sin have no refuge, hiding themselves in the clefts of the rocks.”

Hearing that she cited words of Holy Scripture, from Moses and Job, Zosimas asked her: “And so have you read the psalms and other books?”

She smiled at this and said to the elder: “Believe me, I have not seen a human face ever since I crossed the Jordan, except yours today. I have not seen a beast or a living being ever since I came into the desert. I never learned from books. I have never even heard anyone who sang and read from them. But the word of God which is alive and active, by itself teaches man knowledge. And so this is the end of my tale. But, as I asked you in the beginning, so even now I implore you for the sake of the Incarnate word of God, to pray to the Lord for me who am such a sinner.”

Thus concluding here tale she bowed down before him. And with tears the elder exclaimed: “Blessed is God Who creates the great and wondrous, the glorious and marvelous without end. Blessed is God Who has shown me how He rewards those who fear Him. Truly, O Lord, You do not forsake those who seek You!”

And the woman, not allowing the elder to bow down before her, said: “I beg you, holy father, for the sake of Jesus Christ our God and Savior, tell no one what you have heard, until God delivers me of this earth. And now depart in peace and again next year you shall see me, and I you, if God will preserve us in His Great Mercy. But for God’s sake, do as I ask you. Next year during Lent do not cross the Jordan, as is your custom in the monastery.”

Zosimas was amazed to hear that she knew the rules of the monastery and could only say: “Glory to God Who bestows great gifts on those who love Him.”

She continued: “Remain, Abba, in the monastery. And even if you wish to depart, you will not be able to do so. And at sunset of the holy day of the Last Supper, put some of the life-giving Body and Blood of Christ into a holy vessel worthy to hold such Mysteries for me, and bring it. And wait for me on the banks of the Jordan adjoining the inhabited parts of the land, so that I can come and partake of the life-giving Gifts. For, since the time I communicated in the temple of the Forerunner before crossing the Jordan even to this day I have not approached the Holy Mysteries. And I thirst for them with irrepressible love and longing. Therefore, I ask and implore you to grant me my wish, bring me the life-giving Mysteries at the very hour when our Lord made His disciples partake of His Divine Supper. Tell John the Abbot of the monastery where you live. Look to yourself and to your brothers, for there is much that needs correction. Only do not say this now, but when God guides you. Pray for me!”

With these words she vanished into the depths of the desert. And Zosimas, falling down on his knees and bowing down to the ground on which she had stood, sent up glory and

thanksgiving to God. And, after wandering through the desert, he returned to the monastery on the day all the brothers returned.

For the whole year he kept silent, not daring to tell anyone of what he had seen. To himself he prayed God to show him again the face that he desired. When the first Sunday of the Great Fast came, all went out into the desert with the customary prayers and the singing of psalms. Only Zosimas was held back by illness; he lay in a fever. And then he remembered what the saint had said to him: "And even if you wish to depart, you will not be able to do so."

Many days passed and, at last recovering from his illness, he remained in the monastery. And when the monks returned and the day of the Last Supper dawned, he did as he had been ordered. Placing some of the most pure Body and Blood into a small chalice and putting some figs and dates and lentils soaked in water into a small basket, he departed for the desert and reached the banks of the Jordan and sat down to wait for the saint. He waited for a long while and then began to doubt.

Then raising his eyes to Heaven, he began to pray: "Grant me O Lord, to behold that which You have allowed me to behold once. Do not let me depart in vain, being the burden of my sins."

And then another thought struck him: "And what if she does come? There is no boat; how will she cross the Jordan to come to me who am so unworthy?"

And as he was pondering thus he saw the holy woman appear and stand on the other side of the river. Zosimas got up rejoicing and glorifying and thanking God. And again the thought came to him that she could not cross the Jordan. Then he saw that she made the sign of the Cross over the waters of the Jordan (and the night was a moonlight one, as he related afterwards) and then she at once stepped onto the waters and began walking across the surface towards him.

And when he wanted to prostrate himself, she cried to him while still walking on the water: "What are you doing, Abba, you are a priest and carrying the divine Gifts!" He obeyed her, and on reaching the shore she said to the elder: "Bless, father, bless me!"

He answered her trembling, for a state of confusion had overcome him at the sight of the miracle: "Truly God did not lie when He promised that when we purify ourselves we shall be like Him. Glory to You, Christ our God, Who has shown me through this Your slave how far away I stand from perfection."

Here the woman asked him to say The Creed and The Lord's Prayer. He began; she finished the prayer and, according to the custom of that time, gave him the kiss of peace. Having partaken of the Holy Mysteries, she raised her hands to Heaven and sighed with tears in her eyes, exclaiming: "Now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, O Lord, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation."

Then she said to the elder: "Forgive me, Abba, for asking you, but fulfill another wish of mine. Go now to the monastery and let God's grace guard you. Next year come again to the same place where I first met you. Come for God's sake, for you shall again see me, for such is the will of God."

He said to her: "From this day on I would like to follow you and always see your holy face. But now fulfill the one and only wish of an old man and take a little of the food I have brought for you."

And he showed her the basket, while she just touched the lentils with the tips of her fingers, and taking three grains she said that the Holy Spirit guards the substance of the soul unpolluted. Then she said: "Pray, for God's sake pray for me and remember a miserable wretch."

Touching the saint's feet and asking for her prayers for the Church, the kingdom and himself, he let her depart with tears, while he went off sighing and sorrowful, for he could not hope to vanquish the invincible. Meanwhile she again made the Sign of the Cross over the Jordan, and stepped onto the waters and crossed over as before. And the elder returned filled with joy and terror, for he had not asked the saint her name. But he decided to do so next year.

And when another year had passed, he again went into the desert. He reached the same spot but could see no sign of anyone. So, raising his eyes to Heaven as before, he prayed: "Show me, O Lord, Your pure treasure, which You have concealed in the desert. Show me, I pray You, the angel in the flesh, of which the world is not worthy."

Then on the opposite bank of the river, her face turned towards the rising sun, he saw the saint lying dead. Her hands were crossed according to custom and her face was turned to the East. Running up he shed tears over the saint's feet and kissed them, not daring to touch anything else.

For a long time he wept. Then reciting the appointed psalms, he said the burial prayers and thought to himself: "Must I bury the body of a saint? Or will this be contrary to her wishes?"

And then he saw words traced on the ground by her head: "Abba Zosimas, bury on this spot the body of humble Mary. Return to dust that which is dust and pray to the Lord for me, who departed in April, on the first day, on the very night of our Lord's Passion, after having partaken of the Divine Mysteries." St. Mary fell asleep in the Lord in 522 A.D.

Reading this, the elder was glad to know the saint's name. He understood also that, as soon as she had partaken of the Divine Mysteries on the shore of the Jordan, she was at once transported to the place where she died. The distance which Zosimas had taken twenty days to cover, Mary had evidently traversed in an hour and had at once surrendered her soul to God. Then Zosimas thought: "It is time to do as she wished. But how am I to dig a grave with nothing in my hands?"

And then he saw nearby a small piece of wood left by some traveler in the desert. Picking it up he began to dig the ground. But the earth was hard and dry and did not yield to the efforts of the elder. He grew tired and was covered with sweat. He sighed from the depths of his soul and, lifting up his eyes, he saw a big lion standing close to the saint's body and licking her feet. At the sight of the lion he trembled with fear, especially when he called to mind Mary's words that she had never seen wild beasts in the desert. But guarding himself with the Sign of the Cross, the thought came to him

that the power of the one lying there would protect him and keep him unharmed. Meanwhile the lion drew nearer to him, expressing affection by every movement.

Zosimas said to the lion: “The Great One ordered that her body was to be buried. But I am old and have not the strength to dig the grave, for I have no spade and it would take too long to go and get one. So can you carry out the work with your claws? Then we can commit to the earth the mortal temple of the saint.”

While he was still speaking the lion with his front paws began to dig a hole that was deep enough to bury the body. Again the elder washed the feet of the saint with his tears and, calling on her to pray for all, covered the body with earth in the presence of the lion. It was as it had been, naked and uncovered by anything but the tattered cloak which had been given to her by Zosimas and with which Mary, turning away, had managed to cover part of her body. Then both departed. The lion went off into the depth of the desert like a lamb, while Zosimas returned to the monastery, glorifying and blessing Christ our Lord. And on reaching the monastery he told all the brothers about everything and all marveled on hearing of God’s miracles. And with fear and love they kept the memory of the saint.

Abbot John, as St. Mary had previously told Abba Zosimas, found a number of things wrong in the monastery and got rid of them with God’s help. And Saint Zosimas died in the same monastery, almost attaining the age of one hundred, and passed to eternal life. The monks kept this story without writing it down and passed it on by word of mouth to one another. But I (adds Sophronios) as soon as I heard it, wrote it down. Perhaps someone else, better informed, has already written the life of the Saint, but as far as I could, I have recorded everything, putting truth above all else. May God Who works amazing miracles and generously bestows gifts on those who turn to Him with faith, reward those who seek light for themselves in this story, who hear, read and are zealous to write it, and may He grant them the lot of blessed Mary together with all who at different times have pleased God by their pious thoughts and labors.

And let us also give glory to God, the eternal King, that He may grant us also His mercy in the Day of Judgment for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom belongs all glory, honor, dominion and worship with the Eternal Father and the Most Holy and Life-giving Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## *The Great Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete*

### *Wednesday*

#### *Ode 1*

#### Tone 6

*Irmos* He is for me unto salvation Helper and Protector. He is my God and I glorify Him, God of my fathers is He and I exalt Him, for He is greatly glorified.

**Refrain** Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. (*Bow*)

*From my youth, O Savior, I have rejected Your commandments. Ruled by the passions, I have passed my whole life in heedlessness and sloth. Therefore, I cry to You, O Savior, even now at the end: Save me.*

*I lie as an outcast before Your gate, O Savior. In my old age cast me not down empty into hell; but, before the end comes, in Your love grant me remission of sins.*

*As the Prodigal, O Savior, I have wasted all my substance in riotous living, and I am barren of the virtues of holiness. In my hunger I cry: O compassionate Father, come quickly out to meet me and take pity on me.*

*I am the man who fell among thieves, even my own thoughts; they have covered all my body with wounds, and I lie beaten and bruised. But come to me, O Christ my Savior, and heal me.*

*The Priest saw me first, but passed by on the other side; the Levite looked on me in my distress but despised my nakedness. O Jesus, sprung from Mary, come to me and take pity on me.*

Holy Mother Mary [of Egypt} pray to God for us.

*Grant me the light of grace, from God's providence on high, that I may flee from the darkness of the passions and sing fervently the joyful tale of your life, O Mary.*

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

*Trinity beyond all being, worshipped in Unity, take from me the heavy yoke of sin, and in Your compassion grant me tears of compunction.*

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion O Theotokos, the hope and protection of those who sing your praises, take from me the heavy yoke of sin and, pure Lady, accept me in repentance.*

## **Ode 2**

*Irmos See now, see that I am God, Who rained down manna in the days of old, and made springs of water flow from the rock for My people in the wilderness, by My right hand and by My power alone.*

**Refrain** Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. *(Bow)*

*“See now, see that I am God”: Give ear, my soul, to the Lord as He cries to you; forsake your former sins, and fear Him as Your Judge and God.*

*To whom shall I liken you, O soul of many sins? Alas! to Cain and to Lamech. For you have stoned your body to death with your evil deeds, and killed your mind with disordered longings.*

*Call to mind, my soul, all who lived before the law. You have not been like Seth, or followed Enoch, who was translated to heaven, or Noah; but you are found destitute, without a share in the life of the righteous.*

*You alone, O my soul, have opened the windows of the wrath of Your God, and you have flooded, as the earth, all your flesh and deeds and life; and you have remained outside the ark of salvation.*

Holy Mother Mary [of Egypt] pray to God for us.

*With all eagerness and love you have run to Christ, turning from your former past of sin, finding your food in the trackless wilderness, and fulfilling in purity the commandments of God.*

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

*O Trinity uncreated and without beginning, O undivided Unity, accept me in repentance and save me, a sinner. I am Your creation, reject me not; but spare me and deliver me from the fire of condemnation.*

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion Most pure Lady, Mother of God, the hope of those who run to you and the haven of the storm-tossed: Pray to the merciful God, your Creator and your Son, that He may grant His mercy even to me.*

### **Ode 3**

*Irmos O Lord, upon the rock of Your commandments make firm my wavering heart, for You alone are holy and Lord.*

**Refrain** Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. *(Bow)*

*O wretched soul, you have not inherited the blessing of Shem, nor have you received, like Japheth, a spacious domain in the land of forgiveness.*

*O my soul, depart from sin, from the land of Haran, and come to the land that Abraham inherited, which flows with incorruption and eternal life.*

*You have heard, my soul, how Abraham in days of old left the land of his fathers and became a wanderer; follow him in his choice.*

*At the oak of Mamre the Patriarch gave hospitality to the angels, and in his old age he inherited the reward of the promise.*

*You know, O my miserable soul, how Isaac was offered mystically as a new and exceptional sacrifice to the Lord; follow him in his choice.*

*You have heard – O my soul be watchful! – how Ishmael was driven out as the child of a bondwoman. Take heed, lest the same thing happen to you because of your lust.*

Holy Mother Mary [of Egypt] pray to God for us.

*I am held fast, O Mother, by the tempest and billows of sin; but keep me safe and lead me to the haven of divine repentance.*

Holy Mother Mary [of Egypt] pray to God for us.

*O holy Mary, offer your prayer of supplication to the compassionate Theotokos, and through your intercessions open to me the door that leads to God.*

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

*O simple Unity praised in Trinity of Persons, uncreated Nature without beginning, save us who in faith worship Your power.*

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion O Mother of God, without knowing man, you have given birth within time to the Son, Who was begotten outside time from the Father; and, strange wonder! You nursed a Child while still remaining a virgin.*

## Ode 4

*Irmos The Prophet heard of Your coming, O Lord, and he was afraid: how You were to be born of a Virgin and revealed to men, and he said: "I have heard the report of You and I was afraid." Glory to Your power, O Lord.*

**Refrain** Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. *(Bow)*

*I have defiled my body, I have stained my spirit, and I am all covered with wounds; but as physician, Christ, heal both body and spirit for me through repentance. Wash, purify, and cleanse me, O my Savior, and make me whiter than snow.*

*Your body and Your blood, O Word, You have offered at Your crucifixion for the sake of all: Your body to refashion me, Your blood to wash me clean; and You have given up Your spirit, O Christ, to bring me to Your Father.*

*O compassionate Lord, You have worked salvation in the midst of the earth, that we might be saved. You were crucified of Your own will upon the Tree; and Eden, closed till then, was opened. Things above and things below, the creation and all the peoples have been saved and worship You.*

*May the blood from Your side be to me a cleansing fountain, and may the water that flows with it be a drink of forgiveness. May I be purified by both, O Word, anointed and refreshed, having as chrism and drink Your words of life.*

*As a chalice, O my Savior, the Church has been granted Your life-giving side, from which there flows down to us a twofold stream of forgiveness and knowledge, representing the two Covenants, the Old and the New.*

*I am deprived of the bridal chamber, of the wedding and the supper; for lack of oil my lamp has gone out; while I slept the door was closed; the supper has been eaten; I am bound hand and foot, and cast out.*

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

*Undivided in Essence, unconfused in Persons, I confess You as God: Triune Deity, one in kingship and throne; and to You I raise the great thrice-holy hymn that is sung on high.*

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion You gave birth and are a virgin, and in both you remain by nature inviolate. He Who is born makes new the laws of nature, and the womb brings forth without travail. When God so wills, the natural order is overcome; for He does whatever He wishes.*

### **Ode 5**

*Irmos From the night I seek You early, O Lover of mankind; give me light, I pray, and guide me in Your commandments, and teach me, O Savior, to do Your will.*

**Refrain** Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. *(Bow)*

*In my soul and body, O Lord, I have become like Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of the cruel Pharaoh; my will is heavy and my mind is drowned beneath the waters. But do come to my aid.*

*Woe is me! I have defiled my mind with filth. But I pray to You, O Master: Wash me clean in the waters of my tears, and make the garment of my flesh white as snow.*

*When I examine my actions, O Savior, I see that I have gone beyond all men in sin; for I knew and understood what I did; I was not sinning in ignorance.*

*Spare the work of Your hands, O Lord. I have sinned, forgive me; for You alone are pure by nature, and none except You is free from defilement.*

*You Who are God, O Savior, were fashioned as I am for my sake. You have performed miracles, healing lepers, giving strength to the paralyzed, stopping the flow of blood when the woman touched the hem of Your garment.*

**Refrain** Holy Mother Mary [of Egypt] pray to God for us.

*Crossing the stream of Jordan, you have found peace, escaping from the deadening pleasures of the flesh. Deliver us also from them, holy Mary, by your intercessions.*

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

*We glorify You, O Trinity, the one God. Holy, holy, holy, are You: Father, Son and Spirit, simple Essence and Unity, worshipped forever.*

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion* O Virgin inviolate and Mother who has not known man, from you has God, the Creator of the ages, taken human flesh, uniting to Himself the nature of mankind.

### **Ode 6**

*Irmos* With my whole heart I cried to the all-compassionate God; and He heard me from the lowest depths of hell, and brought my life out of corruption.

***Refrain*** Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. (*Bow*)

*Rise up and make war upon the passions of the flesh, as Joshua against Amalek, ever gaining the victory of the Gibeonites, your deceitful thoughts.*

*O my soul, pass through the flowing waters of time like the Ark of old, and take possession of the land of promise; for God commands you.*

*As You have saved Peter when he cried out "Save me," come quickly, O Savior, before it is too late, and save me from the beast. Stretch out Your hand and lead me up from the deep of sin.*

*I know You as a calm haven, O Lord, Lord Christ; come quickly, before it is too late, and deliver me from the lowest depths of sin and despair.*

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

*"I am the Trinity, simple and undivided, yet divided in Persons, and I am the Unity, by Nature one," says the Father and the Son and the divine Spirit.*

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion* Your womb bore God for us, fashioned in our shape. O Theotokos, pray to Him as the Creator of all, that we may be justified through your intercessions.

### ***Kontakion: Tone 6***

*My soul, O my soul, rise up! Why are you sleeping? The end draws near and soon you shall be troubled. Watch then, that Christ your God may spare you, for He is everywhere present and fills all things.*

## Ode 7

*Irmos We have sinned, we have transgressed, we have done evil in your sight; we have not kept or followed your commandments. But reject us not utterly, O God of our fathers.*

***Refrain** Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. (Bow)*

*By deliberate choice, my soul, you have incurred the guilt of Manasseh, setting up the passions as idols and multiplying abominations. But with fervent heart emulate his repentance and acquire compunction.*

*Alas, my soul! You have rivaled Ahab in guilt. You have become a dwelling place of fleshly defilements and a shameful vessel of the passions. But groan from the depths of your heart, and confess your sins to God.*

*Heaven is closed to you, my soul, and a famine from God has seized you; for you have been disobedient, as Ahab was to the words of Elijah the Tishbite. But imitate the widow of Zarephath, and feed the Prophet's soul.*

*Elijah once destroyed with fire a hundred of Jezebel's servants, and he slew the prophets of shame, as a rebuke to Ahab. But flee from the example of both of them, my soul, and be strong.*

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

*O simple and undivided Trinity, O holy and consubstantial Unity: You are praised as Light and Lights, one Holy and three Holies. Sing, O my soul, and glorify Life and Lives, the God of all.*

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion We praise you, we bless you, we venerate you, O Mother of God; for you have given birth to one of the undivided Trinity, your Son and God; and you have opened the heavenly places to us on earth.*

## Ode 8

*Irmos The hosts of heaven give Him glory; before Him tremble cherubim and seraphim; let everything that has breath and all creation praise Him, bless Him, and exalt Him above all forever.*

***Refrain** Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. (Bow)*

*O righteous Judge and Savior, have mercy on me and deliver me from the fire that threatens me and from the punishment that I deserve to suffer at the judgment. Before the end comes, grant me remission through virtue and repentance.*

*Like the Thief I cry to You, "Remember me;" like Peter I weep bitterly; like the Publican I call out, "Forgive me, Savior;" like the Harlot I shed tears. Accept my lamentation, as once You accepted the entreaties of the woman of Canaan.*

*O Savior, heal the putrefaction of my humbled soul, for You are the one Physician; apply plaster and pour in oil and wine - works of repentance, and compunction with tears.*

*Like the woman of Canaan I cry to You, "Have mercy on me, Son of David." Like the woman with the flow of blood, I touch the hem of Your garment. I weep as Martha and Mary wept for Lazarus.*

We bless the Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

*Father without beginning, co-eternal Son, and loving Comforter, the Spirit of righteousness; Begetter of the Word of God, Word of the eternal Father, Spirit living and creative: O Trinity in Unity, have mercy on me.*

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion As from purple silk, O undefiled Virgin, the spiritual robe of Emmanuel, His flesh, was woven in your womb. Therefore, we honor you as true Theotokos.*

### **Ode 9**

*Irmos Conception without seed; nativity past understanding, from a Mother who never knew a man; childbearing undefiled. For the birth of God makes both natures new. Therefore, as Bride and Mother of God, with true worship all generations magnify you.*

**Refrain** Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. (Bow)

*Healing sickness, Christ the Word preached the good tidings to the poor. He cured the crippled, ate with publicans, and conversed with sinners. With the touch of His hand, He brought back the departed soul of Jairus' daughter.*

*The Publican was saved and the Harlot turned to chastity, but the Pharisee with his boasting was condemned. For the first cried, "Be merciful," and the*

second, "Have mercy on me;" but the third said, boasting, "I thank you, O God," and other words of madness.

*Zacchaeus was a publican, yet he was saved; but Simon the Pharisee went astray, while the Harlot received remission and release from Him Who has the power to forgive sins. Make haste, O my soul, to follow her example.*

*O wretched soul, you have not acted like the Harlot, who took the alabaster box of precious ointment, and anointed with tears and wiped with her hair the feet of the Lord. And He tore in pieces the record of her previous sins.*

*You know, O my souls, how the cities were cursed to which Christ preached the Gospel. Fear their example, lest you suffer the same punishment. For the Master likened them to Sodom and condemned them to Hell.*

*Be not overcome by despair, my soul; for you have heard of the faith of the woman of Canaan, and how through it her daughter was healed by the word of God. Cry out from the depth of your heart, "Save me also, Son of David," as she once cried to Christ.*

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

*Let us glorify the Father, let us exalt the Son, and with faith let us worship the Spirit of God, undivided Trinity and Unity in Essence. Let us adore Light and Lights, Life and Lives, giving light and life to the ends of the earth.*

*Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

*Watch over your City, all-pure Mother of God. For by you she reigns in faith, by you she is made strong; by you she is victorious, putting to flight every temptation, despoiling the enemy and ruling her subjects.*

**Refrain** *Holy Father Andrew, pray to God for us.*

*Venerable Andrew, father thrice-blessed, shepherd of Crete, cease not to offer prayer for us who sing your praises; that we may be delivered from all danger and distress, from corruption and sin, who honor your memory with faith.*

**Katavasia** *Conception without seed; nativity past understanding, from a Mother who never knew a man; childbearing undefiled. For the birth of God makes both natures new. Therefore, as Bride and Mother of God, with true worship all generations magnify you.*

*And the rest of Compline.*

***Trisagion Prayers***

***5<sup>th</sup> Week Lent***

***Kontakion of the Canon: Tone 6***

*My soul, O my soul, rise up! Why are you sleeping? The end draws near and soon you shall be troubled. Watch then, that Christ your God may spare you, for He is everywhere present and fills all things.*

***Forty-fold "Lord, have mercy"***

***The Prayer of the Hours***

PRIEST: O Lord, Who at all times and at every hour, both in heaven and on earth, are worshipped and glorified, O Christ our God, long-suffering, abundant in mercy and compassion; Who love the just and show mercy to sinners; Who call all men to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Receive also our supplications at this present hour, and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set aright our minds; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all disaster, wrath, and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels, that guided and guarded by their host we may attain to the unity of the faith and to the comprehension of Your ineffable glory; for blessed are You unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

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.

More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, who without corruption gave birth to God the Word, and are truly Theotokos, we magnify you.

Bless, father, in the name of the Lord.

PRIEST: May God have compassion on us and bless us; may He show the light of His countenance on us and be merciful to us.

PEOPLE: Amen.

***The Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian***

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faintheartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. (*prostration*)

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Your servant. (*prostration*)

O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother; for You are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen. (*prostration*)

*Then bow twelve times, saying each time:*

O God, be gracious to me, a sinner.

*The prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian is then said once more, with only one prostration at the end.*

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (*12x*)

READER: Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

### ***The Evening Prayer to the Mother of God***

READER: O Lady, Bride of God, spotless, blameless, pure, and immaculate Virgin, who without corruption, by Your glorious birth-giving, have united God the Word to man and joined the fallen nature of our race to heavenly things; who alone are the hope of the hopeless, the help of those who do battle; the ready help of those who flee to you and the refuge of all Christians: Despise me not, an accursed sinner, though I have rendered myself unworthy by my shameful thoughts, words, and deeds, and through habitual idleness have become a slave to the pleasures of life; but as the Mother of God who love mankind, mercifully have compassion on me, a sinner and a prodigal, and receive my prayer, though it be offered to you by unworthy lips; and using your boldness as a mother, plead with your Son, our Lord and Master, that He may open to me also the tender compassion of His goodness so as to overlook my numberless transgressions and turn me to repentance and show me to be a zealous doer of His commandments. And because you are merciful, compassionate, and benevolent, be ever near me in this present life as an ardent help and protection, defending me from the assaults of adversaries and leading me to salvation. And at the time of my departure from this life, care for my miserable soul, and drive far from it the dark visions of evil demons; and in the fearful day of judgment, deliver me from eternal punishment, and present me as an heir of the ineffable glory of your Son, our God. May this be my lot, O Lady, most-holy Theotokos, through your mediation and help, through the grace and love toward mankind of your only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom are due all glory, honor and worship, with His unoriginate Father and His all-holy and good and life giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

### ***The Evening Prayer to Christ***

READER: And grant us, O Master, when we depart to sleep, repose of body and soul; and protect us from the murky sleep of sin and from all the dark pleasures of the night. Calm the impulses of passions, and quench the fiery darts of evil which are craftily thrown against us; check the turbulence of our flesh, and still all earthly and material thoughts. And grant us, O God, a watchful mind, a

prudent reason, a vigilant heart, a tranquil sleep free from all fantasies of Satan. Raise us up again at the time of prayer strengthened in Your commandments, holding steadfastly within us the remembrance of Your judgments. Grant us grace to glorify You all through the night, that we may praise and bless and glorify Your all-honorable and majestic name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

### ***Concluding Prayers***

PRIEST: O most glorious, ever-virgin, blessed Theotokos, present our prayer to your Son our God, and intercede with Him that through you He may save our souls.

The Father is my Hope;

The Son is my Refuge;

The Holy Spirit is my Protection;

O Holy Trinity: Glory to You.

In you, O Mother of God, I place all my hope; keep me under your protection.

### ***The Prayer to the Guardian Angel***

PRIEST: O holy Angel who accompany my wretched soul and lowly life, forsake me not, and depart not from me because of my extravagance and wickedness. Do not give access to the evil demon to rule with his might this mortal body of mine, but hold me by my wretched, feeble hand; lead me in the path of salvation. Indeed, O holy Angel of God, guardian and protector of my wretched soul and body, forgive me everything by which I have previously saddened you all the days of my life. And though this day I have sinned, still be my shelter this night. Keep me from all the wiles of the enemy, that I may not anger God with any sin. Intercede with the Lord for me, that He may confirm me in His fear and show me to be a worthy servant of His goodness.

PEOPLE: Amen.

### ***The Little Dismissal***

PRIEST: Glory to You, O Christ, our God and our hope, glory to You.

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

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Father, bless.

PRIEST: May Christ our true God,...have mercy on us and save us for He is good and loves mankind.

### ***Mutual Forgiveness***

PRIEST: O God, be gracious to me, a sinner, and have mercy on me. (3x)

PRIEST: Forgive me, a sinner.

PEOPLE: God forgive you, father.

*The Concluding Litany*

PRIEST: Let us pray for the peace of the world.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for pious and Orthodox Christians.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for our father, (*metropolitan or archbishop or bishop*), *N.*, and all our brethren in Christ.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for the civil authorities of this land.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for the welfare of our armed forces.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for our fathers and brethren absent from among us.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for those who hate us and those who love us.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for those who are kind to us and minister to us.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for those who have requested our prayers, unworthy as we are.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for the deliverance of captives.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for travelers by land and sea and air.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for those who lie in sickness.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And let us pray also for abundance of the fruits of the earth.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for the soul of every Orthodox Christian.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Let us bless God-fearing leaders, Orthodox bishops, the founders of this holy church, our parents and teachers, and all our fathers and brethren gone before us, the Orthodox who here and everywhere lie asleep in the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Let us also say for ourselves.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

PRIEST: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us and save us.

PEOPLE: Amen.

*“Awed by the Beauty” is sung only if the Icon of the Mother of God is present.*

### ***Awed by the Beauty: Tone 3***

Awed by the beauty of your virginity, and the exceeding radiance of your purity, Gabriel stood amazed and cried to you, O Mother of God: “What praise may I offer you that is worthy of your beauty? By what name shall I call you? I am lost and bewildered; but I shall greet you as I was commanded. Rejoice, you who are full of grace.”





*St. Zosimas & Mary of Egypt*