✠ Saint Athanasius recommends that we sing Psalm 5 for prayer and supplication. For this also, he recommends that we sing Psalms 140, 141, 142, 145.

✠ This psalm is read at the First Hour. It is the "fixed psalm" of this hour. Vv. 8-13 are often said by clergy on entering the Altar of the Temple, during Entrance Prayers ; vv. 8-9 are used similarly by bishops, as they enter the Temple at the greeting. Since everyone who enters the Temple may say the same prayers as do the clergy, then the people likewise may repeat these verses. See the note on verse 8.

✠ Saint Athanasius recommends that when we see the attempts by the wicked to ensnare us, then we ought to wake up early and to sing Psalm 5.

"*Morning supplication of the Church*"

"*A morning prayer for guidance*"

"*The joy of life indwelt by God*"

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1 For the End. About her who receives the heritage. A psalm by David.

V 1 About the Inscription : in the Masoretic (Hebrew) text, the Inscription is : "To the choirmaster : for the flutes. A psalm of David".

✠ About "*for the End*" : see the note about "*for the End*" on Psalm 4:1.

✠ Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that the Church is she "*who receives the heritage*". The inheritance is the Kingdom of Heaven. He also says that the Church, as the Bride of Christ, addresses this psalm to God. It is her voice that cries out to the Lord (see verse 2).

> ✣ Saint Augustine, referring to Psalm 15:5-6, adds that the Church receives eternal life as her inheritance through our Lord Jesus Christ so as to possess God Himself, who feeds us and supports us.

✠ About "*heritage*" : the dictionary meaning is a relative of "*inheritance*", but it has a broader application. It means : features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, that were created in the past and still have historical importance. This is the one occurrence of this word in the Psalter.

[Τὰ ῥήματά μου Verba mea auribus]

2 Give ear to my utterances, O LORD ;/ understand my cry.

V 2 About "*give ear*" (divine) : see Psalms 16:1 ; 38:13 ; 53:4 ; 54:2 ; 83:9 ; 85:6 ; 139:7 ; 142:1.

✠ About "*understand*" : see the note about "*understand*" on Psalm 2:10.

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3 Give heed to the voice of my supplication,/ O my King and my God ;/ for to You shall I make my prayer, O LORD.

V 3 About "*give heed ... supplication*" : Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that we must follow the example of the silent prayer from the heart of Hannah (see 1 Kingdoms 1:2-2:21, and especially 1:10-13) and adopt the posture of a supplicant. Our prayer may never include even the suggestion of any accusation against anyone. We must simply and plainly be asking with the attitude of love.

✣ According to *The Orthodox Study Bible*, Saint Cyprian of Carthage recognises in the prayer of Hannah the silent and heartfelt prayer of the Church as she pours out her prayer icon and modestly from her heart.

✠ About "*give heed*" : see Psalms 16:1 ; 60:2 ; 85:6 ; 141:7.

✠ About "*voice of my supplication*" : see Psalms 27:2, 6 ; 30:23 ; 65:19 ; 85:6 ; 114:1 ; 129:2 ; 139:7 ; 140:1.

✠ About "*voice*" : see the note about "*voice*" on Psalm 3:5.

✠ About "*supplication*" (noun) : see Psalms 6:10 ; 16:1 ; 21:25 ; 27:2, 6 ; 30:23 ; 33:16 ; 38:13 ; 39:2 ; 54:2 ; 60:2 ; 65:19 ; 85:6 ; 87:3 ; 101:1, 18 ; 105:44 ; 114:1 ; 118:169 ; 129:2 ; 139:7 ; 140:1 ; 141:3, 7 ; 142:1 ; 144:19. See the note about "*make supplication*" on Psalm 29:9.

✠ About "*my King and my God*" : see Psalms 67:25 ; 83:4 ; 144:1 ; see also the note about "*King*" on Psalm 2:6.

✠ About "*God*" : see verse 5 ; see the note about "*God*" on Psalm 3:3.

✠ About "*to You shall I make my prayer*" : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus reminds us that every Christian believer and the whole Church are beset by temptations and attacks of all sorts. It is by constantly invoking the Lord's help that all survive and persist. He cautions us to keep in mind that the Scriptures show us that we must all call out to the Lord for help, and depend on Him to protect and to save us.

✠ About "*make ... prayer*" : see 1 Kingdoms 2:9 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 31:6 ; 71:15 ; 108:4 ; see also the note about "*prayer*" on Psalm 4:2 (noun).

✠ About "*Lord*" : see the note about "*Lord*" on Psalm 1:2.

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4 In the morning You will hear my voice ;/ in the morning I shall stand beside You,/ and You will look upon me ;

V 4 Saint Athanasius understands this verse as meaning that I shall see the divine and holy mysteries that the Lord has prepared for those who love Him.

✠ About "*in the morning*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that whereas others delay coming to prayer until countless other things are first accomplished, she who inherits rises at dawn to bless the Lord. Like the sun, she rises first thing to pay homage to the Lord. Moreover, he says that while we sleep, the rest of creation pays homage to the Lord. He says that if we wash our bodies upon awakening, how much more important it is to wash the soul before anything else. See Wisdom of Solomon 16:28.

⁜ Saint Athanasius advises that whenever we notice evil-doers setting a trap for us, and we want the Lord to hearken to our prayer, then we ought to sing (or at least to say) Psalm 5 at dawn.

⁜ Saint Jerome refers to the light of the Lord, which purifies the heart and scatters darkness and shadows. After the rising of the true Light in our hearts, the Lord will hear us as we stand beside Him.

⁜ Saint Bede of Jarrow comments that when the night of this present life has passed, and the morning of the life to come dawns, then we will have no further need of light from books. The true Light of the World will enlighten us. [See Apocalypse 21:23.]

⁜ Traditionally at daybreak, the believer is at worship. The placement of this psalm in the First Hour coincides with the rising of the sun, which always refers us to Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, to His Resurrection, and to the Second Advent. About "Sun of Righteousness" or another relative title "Orient" : see Malachi 3:20 ; Luke 1:78-79 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2).

⁜ See 2 Moses 29:39 ; 3 Moses 6:13 ; 4 Moses 28:4 ; Psalms 54:18 ; 58:17 ; 87:14 ; 91:3 ; 118:148 ; Wisdom of Sirach 39:5 ; Daniel 6:11 ; Mark 1:35.

✠ About "*I shall stand beside You*" : Father P Reardon notes that the Greek and Latin words "better preserve the original sense of standing in proper order in the presence of God".

✠ About "*You will look upon me*" : the French translation by Archimandrite Placide (Deseille) gives "je contemplerai" (I shall contemplate).

✠ In this verse, the word-and-concept order is repeated thrice, and reversed twice. This is a sort of chiastic poetic intensification of the concept itself.

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5 for You, indeed, are not a God delighting in lawlessness./
One working evil shall not sojourn near You,

V 5 About "*not ... delighting in lawlessness*" : see Wisdom of Sirach 15:20.

✠ About "*God*" : see the note on verse 3.

✠ About "*delighting in*" : there are three verbs which have approximately the same meaning, perhaps with a slightly different nuance in Greek, which are all translated with approximately the same words in English. These are : θέλω, *thelō* ; κατατρυφάω, *katatryphaō* ; τέρπω, *terpō*. In this verse, it is *thelō*.

⁜ Since the English dictionary meaning of "delight in" is "to get a lot of pleasure from", it is clear that, following the words of Saint Nikolaj (Velimirović), knowing the Law of God, being rooted in the Will of God (which expresses the love of God) does give great pleasure to the person whose personal focus is in this Law. This is further supported by the French translation by

Archimandritee Placide (Deseille), who uses "*se complaire*", which is translated into English as "to delight in or to revel in something or doing something".

✣ See Psalms 17:20 ; 21:9 ; 34:9 ; 36:4, 11, 23 ; 39:7 ; 40:12 ; 67:4 ; 111:1 ; 118:14 ; 146:10.

✠ About "*lawlessness*" : see the note on verse 6 ; see Psalms 7:15 ; 17:5, 24 ; 30:19 ; 31:5 ; 35:3, 4, 5 ; 37:19 ; 38:12 ; 40:7 ; 44:8 ; 48:6 ; 50:4, 5, 7 ; 54:4, 10, 11 ; 56:2 ; 58:4, 5 ; 63:7 ; 68:28 ; 72:19 ; 88:23 ; 93:2, 23 ; 106:17, 42 ; 108:14 ; 118:133, 150 ; 128:3 ; 138:24 ; Isaiah 33:15 ; Jeremiah 6:13.

✠ About "*one working* [doing] *evil*" : Saint Augustine explains that such persons have a habit of sinning, and therefore cannot bear the light of true understanding. They carry their own night around with them, and they recoil from light.

✣ See Psalms 14:4 ; 21:17 ; 25:5 ; 36:1, 8, 9 ; 63:3 ; 73:3 ; 91:12 ; 93:16 ; 104:15 ; 118:115.

✠ About "*... not sojourn near You*" : see the initial note on verse 6 ; see also Matthew 7:23 ; 25:41 ; Luke 13:27.

✠ About "*sojourn*" : see the note about "*sojourn*" on Psalm 14:1 ; see Psalm 30:14 ; 55:7 ; 60:5 ; 93:17 ; 104:23 ; 119:6. See also the notes about "*sojournings*" on Psalm 54:16. See the note about "*sojourner*" on Psalm 38:13.

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6 nor shall transgressors of the law continue before Your eyes :/
You have hated all those working lawlessness.

V 6 The second phrase of the previous verse, the first phrase of this verse, and both parts of the following verse in their repetition of the concept emphasise its essence by providing a substantial poetic intensification.

✠ About "*transgressors of the law*" : this translates the noun-form of the Greek word παράνομος, *paranomos*, meaning "the transgressor". The root word *para* means "beyond", "distinct from ", "diametrically opposite", "beside", "against", "near" "rather than". All these are possible nuances regarding the mistreatment of the law.

✣ See Psalms 35:2 ; 36:7 ; 85:14 ; 118:85, 113.

✠ About "*Your eyes*" : see the note about "*His eyes ... needy*" on Psalm 10:4 ; see 5 Moses 11:12 ; 5 Moses 32:10 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 3 Kingdoms 9:3 ; 2 Chronicles 16:9 ; Psalms 17:25 ; 30:23 ; 31:8 ; 32:18 ; 33:16 ; 65:7 ; 138:16 ; Proverbs 5:21 ; 15:3 ; Wisdom of Sirach 15:19 ; Amos 9:8 ; Jonah 2:5 (Matins Canticle 6) ; 1 Peter 3:12.

✠ About "*You have hated*" : Saint Jerome asks rhetorically : "Who is hated by God ?" He answers that it is the evil-doer. He continues that this, however, has not to do with those who fall into sin and who "miss the mark". Rather, it has to with those who have actually become sin. Those who insist on persevering in sin are those who have become sin, because they do so as their way of life. On the contrary, those who abandon the ways of sin are loved by the Lord.

✣ See Psalm 30:7 ; Proverbs 1:19 ; 11:19 ; 12:24 ; 5:9, 10, 28 ; 17:16 ; Wisdom of Solomon 14:9 ; Wisdom of Sirach 15:13 ; Amos 5:21 ; Zechariah 8:17 ; Malachi 1:3 ; Apocalypse 2:6, 15.

✠ About "*hate*" : According to the usual dictionary interpretation, "*hate*" as a noun or as a verb implies an emotion of intense or passionate dislike ; an extreme aversion, hostility, detestation loathing ; abhorrence ; execration ; an antipathy ; a revulsion ; an abomination. Hatred does not require logic and it may reject logic or "common sense". It is thus irrational. Although some believe that hate is the opposite of love, the true opposite of love is fear. We are exhorted in the Scriptures and in the words of the Fathers to beware of fear. Since fear is at the root of hatred, there is a close relationship between fear and hate, and both are irrational. Sometimes, the intensity of the emotion provokes a desire to destroy the object of hatred, which is why there is often violence associated with the emotion. Saint Augustine demonstrated the balance of the path of the Christian believer with his saying : "With love for mankind and hatred of sins". The Apostle Paul also reminds us : "'Be angry, and do not sin' : do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27). It is useful to recall that "wrath" is an extreme form of anger. These passionate definitions and expressions describe in the first place the emotional activity of fallen human beings. By extension, these definitions describe how human beings consistently project their fallen perceptions onto God, and in self-deception imagine that God has passions as do humans. It is crucial that the words of the Apostle John be kept in mind as seen in 1 John 4. Both here, and in the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13, it is seen that the environment of God is purely and simply love. We can see from 5 Moses 6:5 and from the words of our Saviour in Matthew 22:37 and Luke 10:27 that love is expected to be the foundation of our relationship with the Lord. The nature of this God-rooted love is refined in 1 John 4:18 : "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love". No negative passion can emanate from the Lord God, who is the source of love and whose nature is love.

✠ About "*those working lawlessness*" : see the note on Psalm 6:9 ; see also Psalms 13:4 ; 35:13 ; 52:5 ; 57:3 ; 58:3, 6 ; 91:8, 10 ; 93:4, 16 ; 100:8 ; 118:3 ; 124:5 ; 140:4, 9.

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7 You will destroy all those speaking the lie :/ a deceitful man of blood, the LORD loathes.

V 7 About "*You will destroy*" : Saint Augustine explains that this phrase does not necessarily mean that the Lord destroys. Rather, those whose habit is to sin and to lie are in fact willingly stealing away from existence and creeping into non-existence. He further comments that through our fallen nature we human beings have become liars by habit. At worst, we can become ourselves a lie. He exhorts us that if we wish to be truthful, then we must call out for help to the Lord. With His help, we begin to be healed and we become truthful. In Him, we can become true in the several meanings of that word. He further underlines the fact that any lie has no being, no existence. "If what is is spoken, truth is spoken ; but if what is not is spoken, it is a lie". He also reminds us that "*a lying mouth will destroy one's soul*" (Wisdom of Solomon 1:11).

✣ Blessed Jerome believed that the worker of evil (murderer, cunning), though hated by God, is still alive (*i.e.*, capable of repentance and amendment). The liar (an aspect of the heretical teacher) perishes altogether. This person is self-destroyed by the lie, and this person destroys others nearby. The heretical teacher destroys and kills as many souls as he seduces by the lie, including himself.

✠ About "*destroy*" : see 2 Moses 15:9 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 32:28 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 20:11 ; 82:18 ; 118:95 ; 142:12 ; Isaiah 26:14 (Matins Canticle 5). See also the note about "*do not destroy*" on Psalm 25:9.

✠ About "*the lie*" : see the note about "*lie*" on Psalm 4:3.

✠ About "*deceitful*" : see Psalms 11:3, 4 ; 16:1 ; 23:4 ; 30:19 ; 42:1 ; 51:6 ; 108:2 ; 119:2, 3. (This list includes adjectives and adverbs.) See the note about "*deceived*" on verse 10.

✠ About "*man of blood*" : see 2 Kingdoms 16:7 ; Psalm 25:9 ; 54:24 ; 138:19 ; Isaiah 1:15 ; 59:3, 7.

✠ About "*blood*" : see Psalms 50:16

✠ About "*loathes*" : see Psalms 13:1 ; 52:2 ; 55:6 ; 105:40 ; 106:18 ; 118:163. See the note about "*hated*" on verse 6 ; see also the note about "*anger*" and "*fury*" on Psalm 2:5.

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8 But as for me, in the multitude of Your mercy/ I shall come into Your house :/ I shall worship towards Your holy temple in fear of You.

V 8 About "*mercy*" : Saint Cyril of Jerusalem informs catechumens that the sum of our sins is not greater than the magnitude of God's mercies. Our wounds are not beyond the skill of the Great Physician. We surrender to Him with faith, and we tell Him of our ills.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that the Church has been gathered together from all the previously described sinners ; and therefore, her rescuing is due completely to God's mercy, wonderful loving-kindness and ineffable goodness. However, there are those who still refuse this mercy and this love.

✣ Saint Cæsarius of Arles exhorts us not to despair of the Lord's mercy, even after we have committed a hundred, or even thousands of sins. We ought never to allow ourselves to believe that we can have committed such sins that are beyond God's mercy (contrary to the frequent lament of many people). He reminds us not to focus on the multitude of our sins, but rather to gaze upon the Divine Physician. What can close the door to Divine Mercy is our readiness to believe that God is either unwilling or unable to have compassion on us. This is a patent lie. Although the Lord both wills to show mercy because He is Good, and He is able because He is Omnipotent, yet He does not force us because of His compassion, love and patience.

✣ Saint Nikolaj (Velimirović) wrote : "Truly, the name of the Lord's justice is mercy" (*Prayers by the Lake*, #2).

✣ Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) reminds us that "*mercy*" refers to the bridging of the gulf between God's righteousness and the fallen creation. Anyone who asks God to "have mercy" is lamenting his own helplessness, and at the same time is giving a cry of hope. The request addresses the sin, but also its overcoming. The one who thus prays affirms that God in His glory accepts us even though we are sinners, and that He indeed asks us to accept the fact that God has accepted us.

✣ Schemamonk John (Alekseyev) of New Valamo, in a letter, comments that there is no sin which

could conquer God's mercy. He adds that, compared with God's mercy, all our sins (whatever they may be) are tantamount to a handful of sand thrown into the great ocean.

❖ See, for instance, Micah 7:18-19 ; Isaiah 38:17 ; 43:25 ; Jeremiah 38:34 ; 40:8 ; Hebrews 8:12.

✣ Archimandrite Placide (Deseille) comments that the word "*hesed*" manifests the loving fidelity of God to the bilateral covenant made with His people.

✣ "*Mercy*" translates the Hebrew word *hesed* and the Greek word ἔλεος, *eleos*. This word's meaning refers to a relationship between persons which is manifested in concrete actions of love by a person towards another person or persons or creatures. It is a covenant term used to describe the character of those who know and love God. Other words such as "kindness", "loving-kindness", "mercy", "compassion", "loyalty" and "loyal love", are all words which together describe this relationship and behaviour. It does not describe a mood or feeling, but rather a state of being.

✣ See the note on Psalm 22:6. See also 1 Moses 24:12 ; Ruth 1:8 ; Psalms 30:8, 22 ; 31:10 ; 32:5, 18, 22 ; 35:8 ; 56:11 ; 58:17, 18 ; 60:8 ; 62:4 ; 68:14 ; 102:4, 11, 17 ; 113:9 ; 118:64 ; 129:7 ; 135 ; 137:2, 8 ; 140:5 ; 142:8, 12 ; 143:2 ; 146:11 ; Wisdom of Solomon 15:1 ; Wisdom of Sirach 2:18 ; 18:10 ; Habakkuk 2:2 (Matins Canticle 4) ; Jonah 3:9 (Matins Canticle 6) ; Lamentations 3:28 ; Daniel 3:35, 38, 42 ;

Luke 1:50, 54 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 1) ; Luke 1:72 (Matins Canticle 2).

✣ About "*mercy*" as a concept : see Psalms 129:3 ; 142:2.

✠ About "*I shall come into Your house...*" : these words would naturally and habitually come to mind whenever one enters the Holy Temple. The words are liturgically prescribed for the clergy in certain places, and they are always appropriate for all the faithful as they enter the Temple to pray.

✣ Saint Augustine says metaphorically that he enters the house as a stone which is part of that house, which is God's holy Temple. Although we enter the house, we are at the same time part of this house. See 1 Corinthians 3:17.

✠ About "*come into*" : see Psalms 42:4 ; 65:13 ; 70:16 ; 72:17 ; 99:4 ; 117:19, 20 ; 131:3, 7.

✠ About "[*Your*] *house*" (God's house) : see the note on Psalm 95:1 ; see also Psalms 25:8 ; 29:1 ; 35:9 ; 41:5 ; 51:10 ; 54:15 ; 64:5 ; 65:13 ; 68:10 ; 83:5, 11 ; 133:1 ; 134:2.

✠ About "*worship*" : see 2 Moses 34:14 ; 5 Moses 26:10 ; 32:43, (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Chronicles 16:28 ;

Psalms 21:28, 30 ; 28:2 ; 65:4 ; 85:9 ; 94:6 ; 95:9 ; 96:7 ; 98:5, 9 ; 131:7 ; 137:2 ; Matthew 4:10 ; John 4:23-24.

✠ About "*... towards Your holy temple*" : see 3 Kingdoms 8:42, 46 ; Psalms 27:2 ; 137:2 ; Jonah 2:5, 8 : Daniel 6:11.

✠ About "*temple*" : see the note on Psalm 10:4 ; see also Psalms 17:7 ; 26:4 ; 27:2 ; 28:9 ; 44:16 ; 64:5 ; 67:30 ; 78:1 ; 137:2 ; 143:12 ; Jonah 2:5, 8 (Matins Canticle 6) ; Habakkuk 2:20 ; Daniel 3:53 (Matins Canticle 7).

✠ About "*fear of You*" (of the Lord) : see the note about "*fear*" on Psalm 2:11.

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9 O LORD, lead me on the way in Your righteousness, because

of my enemies./ Make straight my way before Your Face ;

V 9 About "*lead me on the way*" : this phrase translates a single Greek word of complex meaning. The verb ὁδηγέω, *hodēgeō*, means "to lead one upon his way". The word includes the verb ἡγέομαι, *hēgeomai*, which means "to lead the way", "to go before" (and it is the root of the word "hegumen" or "igumen", hence this title for an abbot or abbess). It includes also the word ὁδός, *hodos*, which means "way", "road", "path". The translation "*lead me on the way*" is stronger in implication than merely to use "guide me on the way", because the one leading personally goes ahead, on the path. A guide, however, may accompany at the side, be nearby, or even give directions in writing.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that since we require guidance to travel anywhere on earth, how much more are we in need of the guidance of Divine Grace in this present life on our way to Heaven. Therefore, not only ought we to reach out to hold the Lord's Right Hand, but also to strive to be worthy of being taken by that Hand.

✣ Saint Augustine uses a Latin text which gives "guide my journey in Your sight", which may add a helpful perspective. He says that this journey is one which is made not by making any change of geographical location on earth. It is important that we take flight within, to our conscience, to our heart, to the place where God sees. To travel and to reach the journey's end is simply to desire it with all our heart.

✣ Saint Jerome considers that "*the way*" is the reading of the Holy Scriptures. He adds that it is crucial that our reading of these words be in harmony with the Grace of God, since everyone whose understanding becomes faulty falls down in God's path.

✣ See Psalms 24:5 , 9 ; 26:11 ; 30:4 ; 44:5 ; 59:11 ; 60:3 ; 66:5 ; 72:24 ; 85:11 ; 118:35 ; 138:24 ; 142:10.

✠ About "*Your righteousness*": see 2 Moses 15:13 (Matins Canticle 1) ; Psalms 7:18 ; 21:32 ; 30:2 ; 34:24, 28 ; 35:7, 11 ; 39:11 ; 49:6 ; 50:16 ; 68:28 ; 70:2, 15, 16, 19, 24 ; 71:1 ; 87:13 ; 88:17 ; 96:6 ; 97:2 ; 102:17 ; 118:7, 40, 62, 106, 123, 142, 144, 160, 164 ; 142:1, 11 ; 144:7.

✠ About "*enemies*" : Although it may not always appear so to others, it is not necessarily so that I am an enemy to another or others, but that another or others choose(s) to be an enemy to me. Although the word "enemy" often appears in the plural, it may sometimes be treated in the singular, with reference to the person of Satan (the devil), the "Adversary" (see 1 Peter 5:8). Although he is the Adversary, we must be careful not in any way to consider him as an equal opposite to the Lord. Rather, the devil is an insubstantial and powerless liar, who has only such power as we allow him to have over us. Because of our weakness and our inability to trust God, it took the Incarnation of the Logos and His Death and Resurrection to overcome this slavery (see Hebrews 2:14-15).

✣ See the notes about "*enemies*" on Psalms 6:8, 11 ; 7:5 ; 20:9 ; 43:6 ; see also 2 Moses 15:6 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 32:27, 31, 41, 43 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Kingdoms 2:1 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 8:3 ; 9:4, 7, 14, 26 ; 12:3, 5 ; 16:9, 13 ; 17:1, 4, 18, 41, 49 ; 24:2, 19 ; 56:2, 6, 11 ; 29:2 ; 30:9, 12, 16 ; 36:20 ; 37:17, 20 ; 40:3, 6, 8 ; 41:11 ; 43:11 ; 44:6 ; 53:7, 9 ; 55:3, 10 ; 58:2, 11 ; 65:3 ; 67:2, 22, 24 ; 68:5, 19 ; 70:10 ; 71:9 ; 77:53, 61, 66 ; 79:7 ; 80:15, 16 ; 82:3 ; 88:11, 24, 52 ; 91:10, 12 ; 96:3 ; 101:9 ; 104:24 ; 105:10, 41, 42 ; 107:14 ; 109:1, 2 ; 111:8 ; 117:7 ; 118:98, 139 ; 126:5 ; 131:18 ; 135:24 ; 137:7 ; 138:21, 22 ; 142:9, 12 ; Daniel 2:32 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:71, 72 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2).

✠ About "*make straight*" : here, and elsewhere in the Psalter are words such as "straighten", "direct" and

"uprightness", which refer to God and His Law and the making of things right, hence "*straight*".

✣ Words such as "inclining", "bending", "crooked", and "twisted", which address the result of the Fall, are found in the Scriptures.

✣ See the note about "*straight path*" on Psalm 26:11 ; see also Psalm 118:9 ; Wisdom of Solomon 9:18 ; Wisdom of Sirach 2:6 ; Isaiah 26:7 ; Hebrews 12:13.

✠ About "*before Your Face*" : this phrase translates the Greek ἐνώπιόν σου, *enōpion sou*. This may give a meaning similar to "in Your presence", although the meaning is less focussed then. The root of the Greek word ἐνώπιον, *enōpion* is ὤπς, *ōps*, which means "eye", "face", "countenance". Sometimes the phrase is tranlated as "before ... eyes" because the word "eyes" appears with this Greek word. This word in Greek is also sometimes translated as "before me", "in the presence of", "in the face of". "Face-to-face" conveys Homer's use of its root meaning, "look in the face", which stresses the importance of the sense of sight in this encounter. In the Greek, there is in this psalter a specific word for "*face*", which is πρόσωπον, *prosōpon*. See the note about "*Face*" on Psalm 4:7.

✣ See Psalms 9:20, 25 ; 14:4 ; 17:7, 13, 23, 25 ; 18:15 ; 21:26, 28, 30 ; 22:5 ; 35:3 ; 37:18 ; 38:6 ; 40:13 ; 49:3, 8 ; 50:5, 6 ; 53:5 ; 55:9, 14 ; 60:8 ; 61:9 ; 67:4, 5, 8 ;68:23 ; 71:9, 14 ; 72:16 ; 78:11 ; 85:9, 14 ; 87:3 ; 95:6 ; 97:6 ; 99:2 ; 110:7 ; 105:23 ; 114:9 ; 118:169, 170 ; 140:2 ; 141:3 ; 142:2 ; Daniel 3:38, 40 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:75, 76 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2).

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10 for there is no truth in their mouth :/ their heart is futile ;/
their throat is an open tomb ;/ with their tongues have they deceived.

V 10 About "*no truth*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that this verse refers to those who live a lie, and those whose mouths and minds are revealed as being destitute of any good. He also observes that our mouth/throat must be not a tomb but a treasury. A tomb corrupts. A treasury preserves. He exhorts our hearts, therefore, to guard the treasure that lasts forever : the search for wisdom. [See Matthew 6:21.]

✣ Saint Jerome reminds us that those who are heretical do not have Christ the Truth on their lips because they do not have Him in their heart. It is because they have chosen ideas and teachings that veer away from Christ the Truth that they have become distorted.

✠ About "*truth*" : see Psalms 11:2 ; 14:2 ; 24:5, 10 ; 25:3 ; 29:10 ; 30:6, 24 ; 35:6 ; 39:11, 12 ; 42:3 ; 44:5 ; 50:8 ; 53:7 ; 56:4, 11 ; 60:8 ; 68:14 ; 70:22 ; 83:12 ; 84:11, 12 ; 85:11 ; 87:12 ; 88:2, 3, 6, 9, 15, 25, 34, 50 ; 90:4 ; 91:3 ; 95:13 ; 97:3 ; 99:5 ; 107:5 ; 110:7, 8 ; 113:9 ; 116:2 ; 118:30, 43, 75, 86, 90, 138, 142, 151, 160 ; 131:11 ; 137:2 ; 142:1 ; 144:18 ; 145:6 ; Isaiah 26:10 (Matins Canticle 5) ; Daniel 3:28

(Matins Canticle 7) ; John 14:6 ; 16:13 ; 17:17.

✠ Within these four phrases, four parts of the body are mentioned (mouth, heart, throat, tongue), each of which, and all together can become a source of evil to oneself and others.

✠ About "*heart*" : see the note about "*heart*" on Psalm 4:3.

✠ About "*futile*" (adjective) : see Psalms 59:13 ; 61:10 ; 93:11 ; 107:13 ; Jonah 2:9 (Matins Canticle 6).

✠ About "*with their ... deceived*" : see the notes on Psalms 11:3, 4 ; 14:3 ; see also Psalms 9:28 ; 27:3 ; 30:19 ;

35:3 ; 49:19 ; 51:4, 6 ; 108:2 ; 119:2-3 ; Wisdom of Sirach 5:13-14 ; 6:1 ; Isaiah 59:3-4 ; Jeremiah 9:2-7 ; Romans 3:13 ; James 1:26 ; 3:6, 8.

✠ About "*deceived*" : see Psalms 14:3 ; 35:3 ; 76:3 ; 104:25. See the note about "*deceitful*" on verse 7.

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11 Judge them, O God./ Let them fall because of their deliberations./
In accordance with the multitude of their impieties, thrust them out,/
for they have embittered You, O LORD.

V 11 About "*judge*" : Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that the Greek verb κρίνω, *krinō*, "to judge" has several meanings in Scripture. It can mean "to do justice", "to punish", "to investigate", "to examine" (according to certain criteria), "to ponder", "to catalogue". He says that in this case, it means "to investigate" the circumstances in which a Jew, an Elamite or a Scythian, for example, can be assigned a greater or lesser guilt.

✣ See the note about "*judging*" on Psalm 2:10.

✠ About "*God*" : see the note on verse 3.

✠ About "*let them fall ...*" : see the note about "falling into the hole" on Psalm 7:16.

✠ About "*deliberations*" : see the note about "*deliberations*" on Psalm 9:23.

✠ About "*impieties*" : see the note about "*impiety*" on Psalm 72:6 ; see Psalms 31:5 ; 64:4 ; see also the note about "*impious*" on Psalm 1:1.

✠ About "*thrust them out*" : see Psalms 35:13 ; 48:15.

✠ About "*embittered*" : Saint John Chrysostom explains that the Prophet David is not concerned about any injuries that he has suffered or suffers. Rather, he grieves only about bad things done to and against the Lord. This is the characteristic behaviour of the saints as well.

✣ The life of righteousness is always opposed spiritually by negative principalities and powers who oppose those living in the light of love. The opponents may also be friends, family, neighbours, the envious, the jealous, and enemies. This opposition may come in the form of distraction leading to forgetfulness. This antipathy to righteousness embitters God, as it were, although it is very incorrect and dangerous to attribute human passions and emotions to God.

✣ See 5 Moses 32:16 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 65:7 ; 77:17, 40, 56 ; 104:28 ; 105:7, 33, 43 ; 106:11.

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12 But may they be glad – all those hoping on You :/ unto the age
shall they exult,/ and You will pitch Your tent amongst them./
They shall boast in You – all those loving Your Name,

V 12 About "*may they be glad*" : Saint John Chrysostom tells us that the gladness that is from the Lord is

unchanging and it has strong roots. It is lasting and it is not disturbed by any unforeseen event. Rather, by means of the obstacles themselves, it becomes yet more lifted up. He refers us to the steadfast example of the apostles whose love in the Lord grew in proportion to the difficulties and afflictions they endured. He also calls our attention to the Dominical words : "*Your joy no one will take from you*" (John 16:22). He says that this assures us of the indissolubility of this joy.

✣ Saint Augustine explains this line by saying that the eternal gladness of the righteous will come to be when the righteous are the Temple of God, and when He who dwells in them will be their joy.

✣ See the note about "*be glad*" on Psalm 9:3 ; see also 5 Moses 32:43 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 1 Kingdoms 2:1 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 13:7 ; 15:9 ; 18:9 ; 20:2, 7 ; 30:8 ; 31:11 ; 32:21 ; 33:3 ; 34:15, 27 ; 39:17 ; 42:4 ; 44:9 ; 45:5 ; 47:12 ; 62:12 ; 63:11 ; 65:6 ; 66:5 ; 67:4 ; 69:5 ; 76:4 ; 84:7 ; 85:4 ; 88:43 ; 89:14, 15 ; 91:5 ; 96:8, 12 ; 103:15, 34 ; 104:38 ; 105:5 ; 106:42 ; 112:9 ; 117:24 ; 121:1 ; Isaiah 26:19 (Matins Canticle 5).

✠ About "*hoping*" : see the note about "*hope*" on Psalm 4:6.

✠ About "*the age*" : "*the age*" is an expression, used in several manners and in several sorts of combinations in the Psalter (and throughout the Scriptures), in order to express indefinite future, endless time and the Kingdom of Heaven. Variants include "*unto an age*", "*unto an age of an age*", "*unto the ages*". Sometimes, in liturgical and other texts, we can see "ages of ages", or "forever", "forevermore" or "forever and ever" used to express this concept.

✣ See the note about "*unto the age, and to the age of the age*" on Psalm 9:37.

✣ See 2 Moses 15:18 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 32:40 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 9:6, 8, 37 ; 11:8 ; 14:5 ; 18:10 ; 20:5, 7 ; 21:27 ; 24:6 ; 27:9 ; 28:10 ; 29:7 ; 30:2 ; 32:11 ; 36:18, 27, 28, 29 ; 40:4 ; 43:9 ; 44;3, 7, 18 ; 47:15 ; 48:12, 20 ; 51:10, 11 ; 60:5, 8, 9 ; 70:1 ; 71:17, 19 ; 72:12, 26 ; 74:10 ; 76:8 ; 77:69 ; 78:13 ; 80:16 ; 82:18 ; 83:5 ; 84:6 ; 85:12 ; 88:2, 3, 5, 29, 30, 37 , 38, 53 ; 89:2 ; 91:8, 9 ; 92:2 ; 99:5 ; 101:13, 29 ; 102:9, 17 ; 103:5, 31 ; 105:31, 48 ; 109:4 ; 110:3, 5, 8, 9, 10 ; 111:3, 6, 9 ; 112:2 ; 113:6 ; 118:44, 89, 93, 98, 111, 112, 142, 144, 152, 160 ; 120:8 ; 124:1, 2 ; 130:3 ; 131:12, 14 ; 132:3 ; 134:13 ; 144:1, 2, 21 ; 145:7, 10 ; 148:6 ; Daniel 3:26, 52-26 (Matins Canticle 70 ; Daniel 3:57-88 (Matins Canticle 8) ; Luke 1:55 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 1).

✠ About "*exult*" : see the note about "*exult*" on Psalm 2:11.

✠ About "*pitch ... tent*" : this is a translation of a verb-form (κατασκηνόω, *kataskēnaō*) of the noun σκηνή, *skēnē*, which means "*tent*". As "*pitch Your tent*", the verb-form could be translated as "You will tabernacle". One can generally understand by the context when the Tabernacle itself is intended. The term "*pitch Your tent*" expresses an understanding of taking up long-term residence (in the context of nomadic societies), but also understanding that there are regular necessary moves. Such moves, which included longer pauses, were the case after the establishment of the Temple in a tent in the Sinai wilderness. This was the case also upon settling in the Land of Canaan, when the Ark of the Covenant remained in a tent until the Temple was constructed. As long as the Children of Israel also lived mostly in tents, this keeping of the worship of the Lord in a tent emphasised the Lord's presence amongst, and identification with, His chosen.

✣ The nun Maria Boulding O.S.B. explains that, in fact, there is a relationship between this word "*pitch your tent*" and "*sojourn*", and that as the Hebrew people moved about in tents as sojourners, so did the Lord move along with them in the "Tent of Meeting". See the references in 2 Moses, chapters 25-31; 33:7-11 ; 36:8-39 ; and chapters 37-40.

✣ See Psalms 7:6 ; 14:1 ; 15:9 ; 22:2 ; 36:3, 27, 29 ; 64:5 ; 67:17, 19 ; 68:37 ; 73:2 ; 77:60 ; 84:10 ; 101:29 ; 119:5 ; 138:9.

✠ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that these words convey to us that the Lord (our Guardian, Protector, Shelter) shall dwell in us, and we thus become the abode of God ("*Theophor*"). This text prefigures the Eucharistic mystery and our path to deification.

✣ See 3 Moses 26:12 ; 4 Moses 35:34 ; Zechariah 2:14 ; Ezekiel 37:27 ; John 1:14 ; 14:20, 23 ; 15:4-5 ; 17:23 ; Romans 8:9, 11 ; 1 Corinthians 3:16 ; 6:19 ; 2 Corinthians 6:16 ; Galatians 2:20 ;

Ephesians 3:17 ; Colossians 1:27 ; 1 John 3:24 ; Apocalypse 3:20 ; 21:3.

✠ About "*boast*" : Saint John Chrysostom tells us that only those who love the Lord and boast in Him can exult in Him. Only they can truly rejoice and find happiness. To boast in Him is a greater honour than any crown or earthly reward. Nothing at all can disrupt this honour, not even death, since at this time it shines even more brightly. Those who take pride in the things of this life and of this fallen world are in fact enjoying themselves only in dreams and fantasy.

✣ See 1 Kingdoms 2:10 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Psalms 31:11 ; 48:7 ; 88:18 ; 149:5 ; Proverbs 11:6 ; Jeremiah 9:22-23.

✠ About "*those loving Your Name*" : see Psalms 68:37 ; 118:132.

✠ About "*Name*" (of God) : Saint John of Kronstadt clarifies for us that "the Name of God is God Himself". He refers us to Psalms 19:2 ; 141:8. The Lord is utterly simple Being and Spirit. He is completely contained in one word or thought. He is always and everywhere in all creatures. If we only call upon His Name, we call upon Him, Himself, and we shall be saved. He refers us to Acts 2:21.

✣ See the notes about "*Name*" on Psalms 8:2 ; 43:21 ; see 2 Moses 15:3 (Matins Canticle 1) ; 5 Moses 32:3 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 7:18 ; 8:10 ; 9:11 ; 12:6 ; 17:50 ; 19:2, 6, 8 ; 21:23 ; 22:3 ; 24:11 ; 28:2 ; 30:4 ; 32:21 ; 33:4 ; 39:5 ; 43:27 ; 47:11 ; 51:11 ; 53:3, 8 ; 60:6, 9 ; 62:3 ; 65:2, 4 ; 67:5 ; 68:31, 27 ; 71:19 ; 73:7, 10, 18, 21 ; 74:2 ; 75:2 ; 78:6, 9 ; 82:19 ; 85:9, 11, 12 ; 88:13, 17, 25 ; 90:14 ; 91:2 ; 95:2, 8 ; 98:3, 6 ; 99:4 ; 101:16, 22 ; 102:1 ; 104:1, 3 ; 105:8, 47 ; 108:21 ; 110:9 ; 112:1, 2, 3 ; 114:4 ; 115:4, 8 ; 117:10, 11, 12, 26 ; 118:55, 132 ; 121:4 ; 123:8 ; 128:8 ; 129:5 ; 1134:1, 3, 13 ; 137:2 ; 139:14 ; 141:8 ; 142:11 ; 144:1, 2, 21 ; 148:5, 13 ; 149:3 ; Proverbs 18:10 ; Malachi 1:11 ; Isaiah 26:13 (Matins Canticle 5) ; Daniel 3:26, 34, 43, 52 (Matins Canticle 7) ; Luke 1:49 (Canticle 9, Part 1) ; Acts 2:21 ; 3:16 ; 4:12 ; Philippians 2:9-10. See the note about "*Name of the Lord*" on Psalm 7:18.

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13 for it is You that will bless the righteous one./ O LORD, You have crowned us as with a shield of good-pleasure.

V 13 About "*it is You that will bless* : Saint Augustine tells us that the righteous are blessed when they are glorying in God and being indwelt by God.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom amplifies this statement considerably by saying that this blessedness is greater and more important than anything else. It is this blessed state that sustained Job in his suffering and made him more blessed than anyone else ; and it is this same blessedness that sustains us in every trial and tribulation. He continues by saying that whether we are praised to

the heights or condemned to the depths by other humans, it is being blessed by the Lord and living in praise of Him which is most important for us.

✠ About "*bless*" : see the notes on Psalms 15:7 ; 27:9 ; 33:2 ; see also 1 Moses 12:2, 3 ; 14:19 ; 2 Kingdoms 7:11-12, 18, 20, 21, 29 ; Psalms 25:12 ; 28:11 ; 36:22 ; 44:3 ; 62:5 ; 64:12 ; 65:8 ; 66:2 ; 102:1-2, 20-22 ; 106:38 ; 111:2 ; 113:20, 21, 23 ; 131:15 ; 133:1 ; Proverbs 3:36 ; Isaiah 19:25 ; Daniel 3:51 (Matins Canticle 7). See also the notes on Psalms 3:9 (noun) ; 17:47 (adjective).

✠ About "*righteous one*" : see 1 Kingdoms 2:9 (Canticle 3) ; Psalms 7:10 ; 10:3, 5 ; 30:19 ; 33:22 ; 36:12, 16, 21, 25, 26, 30, 32 ; 54:23 ; 57:12 ; 63:11 ; 74:10 ; 91:13 ; 93:21 ; 96:11 ; 111:6 ; 140:5. See also the note about "*righteous*" (plural) on Psalm 1:5.

✠ About "*crowned us as with a shield*" : Saint Jerome reminds us that God is our crown and our shield. It is crucial that we keep this in mind and remain under His authority and protection.

✣ Saint John Chrysostom, citing Psalm 102:4, mentions that the shield of blessing (good-pleasure) is the best of all shields, the best defence for the righteous one, a victory wreath woven of mercy and compassion. He recalls that Job was thus sustained and protected as he continued to sing the praises of the Lord. His hymns of thanksgiving were a spiritual sacrifice, and he remains an uplifting example for us.

✣ Saint Augustine reminds us that in the face of the multitudinous temptations and attacks of the evil adversary, there is but one weapon, the invincible shield that drives back all enemies – the fact that "*If God is for us, who can be against us* ?" (Romans 8:31) We can be protected and overcome all obstacles not by any of our own merits, strengths or virtues, but only through living in the power and protection of God's love for us.

✣ About "*crowned*" : see Psalm 20:4 ; Proverbs 4:8 ; Wisdom of Solomon 5:16 ; 1 Corinthians 9:25 ; Philippians 4:1 ; 2 Timothy 4:8 ; Hebrews 2:9 ; 1 Peter 5:4.

✠ About "*good-pleasure*" : Cassiodorus draws our attention to the significance of the placement of this word at the end of this psalm. This one expression expresses the Lord's ineffable kindnesses. The Lord's estimation of us and His disposition towards us is not dependent upon our efforts to be pleasing. We cannot earn His "*good-pleasure*". Rather, it is He who enables us to be pleasing.

✣ See Psalms 18:15 ; 50:20 ; 68:14 ; 88:18 ; 105:4 ; 140:5 ; 144:16.

O Good Lord, before it is offered, You know the sigh of an exhausted heart.
We ask that You make of us the temple of the Paraclete,
so that we may be granted protection
by the shield of heavenly benevolence. — Roman

PSALM 6

✠ This psalm is written in the form of a Lament.

✣ See the note about "lament" in the introduction to Psalm 3.

✠ This psalm is also identified as a Penitential Psalm.

✣ This is the first of the seven penitential psalms. The others are : 31, 37, 50, 105, 129, 142.

✠ This psalm is read fully at Great Compline. This psalm is used (verse 2) for the Alleluia Verse at Monday Vespers in the Apostles' and Nativity Fasts. It is used (verses 3, 6) as the Prokeimenon in the Moleben for the Sick.

"*Supplication of the sinner*"

"*A cry in anguish of body and soul*"

"*Faith receives the answer to prayer*"

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1 For the End. In hymns. About the Ogdoad (Eighth). A psalm by David.

V 1 About the Inscription : in the Masoretic (Hebrew) text, the Inscription is : "To the choirmaster : with stringed instruments ; according to the Sheminith. A psalm of David". Some versions lack "according to the Sheminith". The French "Ecumenical Translation of the Bible" (TOB) gives this Inscription as : "To the choirmaster : with eight-stringed instruments. Psalm of David". Some speculate that "sheminith" refers to a lyre-like stringed instrument. Others say that it means "octave", supposedly denoting the lowest note sung by men's voices (see 1 Chronicles 15:21).

✠ About "*for the End*" : see the note about "*for the End*" on Psalm 4:1.

✠ About "*in hymns*" : this suggests that the psalm is sung to the Lord in the manner of a hymn.

✣ See Psalms 39:4 ; 53:1 ; 54:1 ; 60:1 ; 64:2 ; 66:1 ; 70:6 ; 75:1 ; 99:4 ; 117:14 ; 118:171 ; 136:3 ; Matins Canticle 9, Part 1, Inscription. See the note about "*sing hymns*" on Psalm 64:14.

✠ About "*the Eighth*": "*The Eighth*" here (and most often) refers to the Eighth Day, the Last Day, the Day of the Kingdom. This Day embraces all days. See the note on Psalm 11:1.

✣ Saint Gregory of Nyssa explains that "*the eighth*" refers us to the Day of Resurrection, the Day of the Kingdom. In contrast with the current age, in which the repetition of seven days governs our life, "*the eighth*" Day will be one day. On that Day, the light will be not of the sun, but rather of the Divine Light.

✣ Saint Augustine interpreted that "*the Eighth*" cannot be other than the eternity of the end of the ages. If time is the rhythmic repetition of the seven days, then "the Eighth" means departing from time and passing into existence beyond the ebb and flow of time. It refers also to the Last Day, the Day of Judgement which will lead the holy ones not to temporal activities, but rather to life eternal.

[Κύριε, μὴ τῷ θυμῷ Domine, ne in furore]

2 O LORD, do not reprove me in Your fury,/ nor in Your anger instruct me.

V 2 About this verse : Saint Augustine shows us that the one who prays these words simply desires healing. Where good health is, neither is death to be feared, nor any painful surgical remedy.

✠ About "*Lord*" : see the note about "*Lord*" on Psalm 1:2.

✠ About "*reprove*" : Saint Athanasius advises us that when we sense the Lord's displeasure, we ought to say Psalm 6. He also recommends Psalm 37.

✣ About "*reprove*" : see Psalms 37:2 ; 49:8, 21 ; 93:10 ; 104:14 ; 140:5.

✠ About "*fury*" and "*anger*" : Saint John Chrysostom points out that, although the words "*fury*", and "*anger*" are used, we are not to take these words in the sense of human passion. The words are used to make an impression on materialistic people, for the benefit of the listeners. Seeing, hearing and hunger, are used in the same way. Having first made a connexion with the people's basic understanding, God, in other ways, leads them to understand Him as being passionless. Saint John rhetorically asks us that since devoted philosophers are able to remain detached from anger, then how much more must it be so with the ineffable and incomprehensible Lord ? In correction (or instruction), God behaves as does a surgeon who, in cutting and in cauterising, uses these methods so as to heal. Although pain may be involved, it is for the purpose of restoring wholeness in a manner that may seem to us to be expressing anger. In a similar way, when He has mercy on us, He does so in accordance with the particularities of each person. He alone sees the heart of each, and He alone knows the circumstances of each. Thus, the Lord begins with us according to our limited, anthropomorphic understanding, and through this He leads us to a deeper, better understanding.

✣ Saint John Cassian energetically laments the fact that many people try to find in the Scriptures an excuse to be angry and furious. They therefore take literally an attribution to God of these emotions. He expresses dismay that people find it possible to attribute a taint of human passion to the Eternal God and Source of all purity.

✣ Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus interprets this plea to mean that the Lord is not asked to bypass a needed correction, but He is rather asked to accomplish the correction without anger or wrath. The request is to be corrected as by a father, rather than a judge ; as by a physician, rather than a torturer. The request is that the correction be not in the spirit of "let the punishment fit the crime", but rather that justice be tempered with compassion.

✣ See the notes about "*anger*" and "*fury*" on Psalm 2:5.

✠ About "*instruct*" : see the note about "*be instructed"* on Psalm 2:10.

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3 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak./ Heal me, O LORD,

for my bones were stirred up,

V 3 About "*have mercy*" : Saint John Chrysostom reminds us that we are all in need of mercy, no matter how great and good our deeds may be or have been. He further reminds us that no matter what great good we have done, none of us can be found righteous before God. Righteousness is not something which can be attained by striving, but rather by asking for and receiving the Lord's mercy.

✣ See 2 Moses 33:19 ; see the notes about "*have mercy*" on Psalms 9:14 ; 50:3 ; see Psalms 24:16 ; 25:11 ; 26:7 ; 29:11 ; 30:10 ; 40:5, 11 ; 55:2 ; 56:2 ; 66:2 ; 85:3, 16 ; 118:29, 58, 132 ; 122:3. See also the note about "*mercy*" on Psalm 5:8.

✠ About "*weak*" : Saint John Chrysostom comments that King David seems to hint that this is the weakness that comes from temptations and that this is a substantial claim for needing mercy and loving-kindness. Saint John further says that in order to burn, a furnace requires fuel. Removing the fuel takes away the heat. Thus, in order to help us in the struggle with temptations, he exhorts us to fast moderately, to pray unceasingly, to consult spiritual elders, and to keep mindful of the coming Judgement. Doing this does not add fuel to any fire.

✣ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that the weakness limits a person's own ability. Thus, King David knows that he cannot save himself and that he needs God's help.

✣ The Prophet, as an example to us, recognises his weakness, his need for God's help. He sees that his own waywardness has affected him to the core, and that he cannot change without God's aid.

✣ See 2 Kingdoms 2:10 (Matins Canticle 3).

✠ About "*heal*" : Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea explains that every fault grows out of our weakness. Therefore, we beseech the Healer, the Son of God ; and the Lord's Wisdom frees us from unreasonableness and foolishness. His righteousness frees us from our unrighteousness. His truth frees us from our lies. Thus, He heals us.

✣ See 5 Moses 32:39 (Matins Canticle 2) ; 4 Kingdoms 20:5 ; Psalms 29:3 ; 40:5 ; 102:3 ; 106:20 ; 146:3 ; Hosea 6:1 ; 7:1 ; 11:3 ; Jeremiah 17:10.

✠ About "*stirred up*" : Saint John Chrysostom says that the stirring-up, the shaking, means being beset by afflictions. He further notes for us that when we suffer from spiritual disturbances and illnesses, these do have a negative effect on our bodies as well. For him, it is both a spiritual and a physical concern. Both in Hebrew and Christian mentality, the body and spirit are a unit. About healing, he reassures us that divine power prevails over nature, illness, wickedness and all evil.

✣ Saint Augustine reminds us that the stirred-up bones are not mere physical bones, but rather the firm support of the soul, the interior strength, which is stirred up.

✣ About "*stirred up*" : see verses 4, 11 ; see also the note about "*stir ... up*" on Psalm 2:5.

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4 and my soul was greatly stirred up./ But You, O LORD, until when ?

V 4 About "*my soul was greatly stirred up*" : see John 11:33 ; 12:27.

✠ About "*soul*" : see verse 5 ; see the note about "*soul*" on Psalm 3:3.

✠ About "*stirred up*" : see the note on verse 3 ;

✠ About "*until when*" : Saint John Chrysostom explains that this question does not suggest a person who shows resentment and bad grace ; but rather, it suggests a person who feels suffering and grief, and who doubts his ability to bear the burden of temptation.

✣ Archimandrite Lazarus (Moore) suggests that these words mean : "But where are You, O Lord ? How long am I to suffer ?"

✣ See Psalms 78:5 ; 88:47 ; 89:13 ; 93:3. See the note about "*how long*" on Psalm 4:3.

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5 Turn about, O LORD ; rescue my soul./ Save me, for the sake of Your mercy ;

V 5 About "*turn about*" : Saint John Chrysostom mentions that here the righteous is concerned that the Lord would "*turn about*". It is not that He ever turns away, but that He always turns towards us. He is always merciful and propitious.

✣ See the notes about "*turn about*" on Psalms 7:13 ; 79:4 ; see Tobit 13:6 ; Psalms 13:7 ; 21:28 ; 22:3 ; 50:15 ; 58:7, 15 ; 89:13 ; 93:15 ; 103:9 ; 114:7 ; 125:1, 4.

✠ About " *O Lord*" : Saint John Chrysostom offers us the understanding that the word "Lord" is repeated in verses 4 and 5 because the King David is calling as a child might to the Source of ineffable loving-kindness. He says that this question comes not from resentment, but rather from King David's self-perceived inability to bear the temptations and sufferings, and his resulting grief.

✠ About "*rescue*" : see Psalms 7:2 ; 17:1, 18, 20, 30, 44, 49 ; 21:5, 9, 21 ; 24:20 ; 30:2, 16 ; 32:19 ; 33:5, 8, 18, 20 ; 36:40 ; 38:9 ; 39:14 ; 40:2 ; 42:1 ; 50:16 ; 53:9 ; 55:14 ; 56:5 ; 58:3 ; 59:7 ; 68:15, 19 ; 70:2, 4, 11 ; 78:9 ; 80:8 ; 81:4 ; 85:13 ; 88:49 ; 90:3, 14 ; 96:10 ; 105:43 ; 106:6, 20 ; 107:7 ; 108:22 ; 114:4 ; 118:170 ; 119:2 ; 123:7 ; 139:2 ; 141:7 ; 143:7, 11 ; Luke 1:74 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2).

✠ About "*soul*" : see the note on verse 4.

✠ About "*save*" : Saint John Chrysostom explains that we ask for this rescue so that we may become righteous, and not be preoccupied with the material which decays, but rather with salvation which is eternal.

✣ Saint Augustine says that King David is asking that he be saved, not according to any of his own merits or in proportion to what he may deserve. Rather, he is asking that he be saved in proportion to the Lord's abundant mercy.

✣ See the note about "*save*" on Psalm 3:8.

✠ About "*mercy*" : Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus supports Saint Augustine's perception of "*save me*". He emphasises the importance of "*mercy*" in this verse, since it makes clear that we depend completely on the Lord's mercy and compassion.

✣ See the note about "*mercy*" on Psalm 5:8 ; see also Luke 5:32.

6 for in death there is no-one remembering You ;/ and in Hadēs,
who shall confess You ?

V 6 About "*death*" : Saint John Chrysostom explains that this verse does not imply that our existence does not last beyond this present life. The Prophet David is aware of the general resurrection. However, it may simply mean that after our departure from this life there may be no time for repentance.

✣ Saint Gregory of Nazianzus reminds us that it is better to be corrected now, in this life, than after death. It is during this life that we truly have the opportunity for repentance and the doing of good. Saint Jerome adds to these words that in this world, the Lord acts towards us with mercy and compassion. However, in the world to come, He acts as Judge.

✣ Saint Gregory of Nyssa explains to us that in this life we are given to sow seeds and nurture them [see Matthew 13:3-23 ; 25:14-30], and that on the Eighth Day (of the Kingdom), we will present to the Lord the fruits of our sowing. Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus supplements these words by cautioning us that what we sow in this life, we will reap on that Eighth Day [see Galatians 6:7-9].

✣ See the Orthodox Study Bible note on 4 Moses 21:9 ; see also the note about "*death*" on Psalm 88:49 ; see also Psalms 7:14 ; 9:14 ; 12:4 ; 17:5, 6 ; 21:16 ; 22:4 ; 32:19 ; 33:22 ; 36:32 ; 43:20 ; 48:15 ; 54:5, 16 ; 55:14 ; 67:21 ; 72:4 ; 77:50 ; 87:7 ; 106:10, 14, 18 ; 114:3, 8 ; 115:6 ; 117:18 ; Habakkuk 3:13 (Matins Canticle 3) ; Luke 1:79 (Matins Canticle 9, Part 2) ; Luke 2:26.

✠ About "*Hadēs*" : The spelling is thus, in order to show that the pronunciation should be "hade-eez", and to show that the "e" is the Greek "eta". "*Hadēs*" is a word which appears in Greek, Latin and English. It has a similar meaning to the Hebrew word *Sheol*. It refers to the place of the dead, the nether-world, where the departed retain only the faintest semblance of life. In Greek, it means "unseen". The origin of the term may come from the name of a very deep lake in Mesopotamia. In some cultures, persons in anger still wish someone to the bottom of this lake. When the word "Tartary" may be encountered, it implies the lowest level of Hadēs, reserved for criminals. "Hell", differently, implies *Gehenna*, the place of perpetual burning (from the name of the small valley once used as a rubbish-dump or midden at Jerusalem, where once children were sacrificed to Moloch). Gehenna, then, implies the images of the river, or the lake of fire. It may be described as that state of the greatest resistance to God's love. It may further be said that God's love is everywhere, and it is the resisting that burns. Since Adam, death is the result of sin (see Romans 6:23). Death of the body is one sort, death of the soul/heart is another. Hadēs, the realm of the dead, is understood as a place of shadows, inactivity, and uncertainty, of separation. Yet, there are indications that there is no actual separation from God's love – it seems to be so only from our rebellious perspective. Other words in the psalms which imply a reference to "*Hadēs*" include : the pit, perdition, decay, corruption.

✣ See the note about "*Hadēs*" on Psalm 138:8 ; see 4 Moses 16:33 ; 5 Moses 32:22 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 9:18 ; 15:10 ; 17:6 ; 29:4 ; 30:18 ; 48:15, 16 ; 54:16 ; 85:13 ; 87:4 ; 88:49 ; 93:17 ; 113:25 ; 114:3 ; 14:7 ; Job 7:9 ; Proverbs 1:13 ; 15:12 ; Wisdom of Sirach 17:22 ; Hoesea 13:14 ; Jonah 2:3 (Matins Canticle 6) ; Isaiah 38:18 ; Baruch 2:17 ; 3:11 ; 1 Peter 3:19. See also the notes about "*the pit*" on Psalm 27:1 ; about "*perdition*" on Psalm 87:12 ; about "*decay*" on Psalm 102:4.

✠ About "*confess*": Saint Augustine explains that "*confess*" has two uses, namely with regard to sin or with regard to praise. When things go badly for us, it is for us to confess our sins. When things go well for us, it is for us to confess praise to God. Regardless, he says, we must constantly confess.

✣ This word is the English translation of ἐξομολογέομαι, *eksomologeomai*. This Greek verb may also mean "to acknowledge", "to admit", "to give thanks", "to sing praises". As a noun, it means "confession", and "an open declaration", hence its major use throughout the Psalter in "confession of faith", "the praise of God", and "confession of sins".

✣ See the notes on Psalms 9:2 ; 137:1 ; see Psalms 7:18 ; 17:50 ; 27:7 ; 29:5, 10, 13 ; 32:2 ; 24:18 ; 41:6, 12 ; 42:4, 5 ; 43:9 ; 44:18 ; 51:11 ; 53:8 ; 56:10 ; 66:4, 6 ; 70:22 ; 73:19 ; 74:2 ; 75:11 ; 85:12 ; 87:11 ; 88:6 ; 91:2 ; 94:2 ; 96:12 ; 98:3 ; 99:4 ; 104:1 ; 105:1, 47 ; 106:1, 8, 15, 21, 31 ; 107:4 ; 108:30 ; 110:1 ; 117:1, 19, 21, 28, 29 ; 118:7, 62 ; 121:4 ; 135:1, 2, 3, 26 ; 137:2, 4 ; 138:14 ; 139:14 ; 141:8 ; 144:10. See also the note about "*confession*" (noun) on Psalm 41:5.

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7 I became weary in my groaning./ Every night I shall wash my couch :/ with my tears I shall drench my bed.

V 7 About this verse : Saint John Chrysostom brings our attention to the fact that it is the great King David who says these words and allows us to see the depth of his own repentance. Saint John reminds us that we are given to see this groaning and weeping so that we will understand that the loving-kindness of the Lord is to be accompanied by our own actions. Saint John does not address these comments only to monks, but to everyone. He continues to emphasise that we must pray in such a manner as to be heard. In order to be heard, we must be worthy to receive [see 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12] ; we must pray in accordance with the Lord's laws [see 3 Moses 19:18 ; 5 Moses 6:4-5 ; Mark 12:30-31] ; we must pray with persistence [see Luke 18:1-8] ; we must avoid focussing on what is earthly [see the Eucharistic Cherubic Hymn] ; we must seek only what is for our true benefit [see Matthew 6:9-13 ; 7:11 ; Luke 11:13] ; we must offer our ow n greatest utmost efforts [see 2 Kingdoms 12:16, 22 ; Matthew 5:4].

✠ About "*became weary*" : see Psalms 68:4 ; Job 16:7.

✠ About "*groaning*" : see 2 Moses 2:24 ; Psalms 11:6 ; 30:11 ; 37:9, 10 ; 78:11 ; 101:6, 21 ; Job 23:2 ; Jeremiah 51:33 ; Acts 7:34 ; Romans 8:26.

✠ About "*every night*" : Saint Nikolaj (Velimirović) explains to us that daytime repentance is revealed chiefly in the doing of good works, and night-time repentance is revealed in prayers, sighs and tears (which is more suitable to and possible in the night). He adds that repentance is not only for an hour or a day ; but rather it must be the central preoccupation of our whole lives.

✠ About "*night*" : see Psalms 15:7 ; 16:3 ; 18:3 ; 76:3, 5, 7 ; 77:14 ; 89:4 ; 90:5 ; 91:3 ; 103:20 ; 104:39 ; 118:55, 62 ; 120:6 ; 129:6 ; 133:2 ; 135:9 ; 138:11, 12 ; Isaiah 26:9 (Matins Canticle 5) ; Daniel 3:72 (Matins Canticle 8).

✠ About "*tears*" : Saint Paulinus of Nola addresses a poem to the Lord, in which he asks that his heart of stone be broken by the Lord. He wonders who can provide him a spring so that streams of tears may gush from his heart, and thus enable him better to lament his deeds and days. Indeed, he says that he requires a river to lament how his life has been spent in falling short of the mark of the Lord's love and commandments. He asks our Saviour Jesus Christ to break his stony heart so that a stream of devotion

and praise might gush out.

✣ See Psalms 38:13 ; 41:4 ; 55:9, 14 ; 79:6 ; 114:8 ; 125:5.

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8 My eye was disturbed because of fury./ I became old amongst all my enemies.

V 8 About "*my eye*" : see Psalm 9:29 ; 12:4 ; 16:2, 8, 11 ; 17:28 ; 18:9 ; 24:15 ; 25:3 ; 30:10 ; 34:19, 21 ; 35:2 ; 37:11 ; 53:9 ; 68:4, 24 ; 76:5 ; 78:10 ; 87:10 ; 90:8 ; 91:12 ; 93:9 ; 100:3, 5, 6, 7 ; 113:13 ; 114:8 ; 117:23 ; 118:18, 37, 82, 123, 136, 148 ; 120:1 ; 122:1, 2 ; 130:1 ; 131:4 ; 134:16 ; 140:8 ; 144:15.

✠ About "*was disturbed*" : see Psalm 30:10 ; Job 17:7.

✠ About "*fury*" (not Divine) : Pope Saint Gregory the Great explains that in quarrels, the light of the soul, which is the light of good intention, becomes "*disturbed*".

✣ In the human context, "*fury*" suggests a wild or violent anger, which may imply punishment.

✣ See 5 Moses 32:24 (Matins Canticle 2) ; Psalms 9:35 ; 30:10 ; 36:8 ; 57:5 ; 123:3.

✠ About "*enemies*" : Saint John Chrysostom reminds us (referring to Ephesians 6:12) that we are not addressing earthly enemies, but rather the fallen spiritual powers who seek our death. He also comments that nothing ages us so much as does sin.

✣ Saint Augustine suggests that the Prophet David speaks of enemies which are either the vices themselves, or men and women who refuse to turn about to the Lord. He says that it is a special gift to be able to live amongst such persons and situations without deviating from the way of the Lord's commandments.

✣ See the note about "*enemies*" on Psalm 5:9.

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9 Stand away from me, all those working lawlessness,/ for the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.

V 9 About "*stand away*" : Saint John Chrysostom notes that avoiding association with the wicked is an important way leading to goodness. Moreover, as evil cannot abide being in the presence of the Lord, so evil may flee from the presence of the Lord within us.

✣ Saint Augustine comments that we will be separated on the Day of Judgement. However, even though we are now all together in social gatherings as grain and chaff mixed together on the open threshing-floor, they will not be carried away together by the wind. The heavier grains remain in place, and the insubstantial chaff flies away in the wind.

✣ See the note about "*... not sojourn near you*" on Psalm 5:5.

✠ About "*those working lawlessness*" : the workers of "*lawlessness*" (iniquity) may be humans, but the

spiritual ones must also be taken into account.

✣ See the note about "*those working lawlessness*" on Psalm 5:6.

✠ About "*weeping*" : see Psalms 29:6 ; 83:7 ; 101:10. See the note about "*weep*" on Psalm 94:6.

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10 The LORD has heard my supplication :/ my prayer has the LORD accepted.

V 10 God has heard the plea of the penitent. God gives victory over temptation, and death.

✠ Metropolitan Bartholomew (Anania) comments that there are two related words used in this verse, but with specific meanings. "*Supplication*" (δέησις, *deēsis*) indicates intercessory prayer for others (the word used in the icon named "deisis" : the Righteous Judge who hears the prayer of the Theotokos and of the Forerunner for humanity). "*Prayer*" (προσευχή, *prosevkhē*) generally indicates personal prayer.

✠ About "*supplication*" : see the note on Psalm 5:3.

✠ About "*prayer*" : see the note about "*prayer*" on Psalm 4:2.

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11 May all my enemies be put to shame and be greatly stirred up :/ swiftly may they be turned back and be greatly put to shame.

V 11 About "*enemies*" : Saint Jerome comments that the Prophet David is not praying against his enemies. Rather, he prays for them, so that by this prayer, they might immediately, deeply and fervently blush with shame and repentance.

✣ Saint Augustine explains that the Lord has heard the supplication, and the perfected heart of the Prophet and King is now praying for the enemies. That his heart asks that the enemies be turned back and be put to shame is his prayer for the repentance of the enemies. Unless we blush with shame, we cannot properly repent.

✣ See the note about "*enemies*" on Psalm 5:9.

✠ About "*be put to shame*" : Archimandrite Placide (Deseille) writes in a similar manner as did the Fathers. He adds the words of Cassiodorus, who said that "*be put to shame*" means that King David is asking that the enemies be enlightened by such compunction that now, with an opened understanding, they will blush at their former behaviour, and understand the toxicity of their former actions.

✣ See Psalms 24:3 ; 34:4, 26 ; 36:19 ; 52:6 ; 69:3 ; 70:13, 24 ; 82:18 ; 85:17 ; 96:7 ; 108:28 ; 128:5.

✠ About "*stirred up*" : see the note on verse 3.

✠ About "*swiftly*" : Saint John Chrysostom advises us that when we see a small movement of a passion, we ought not to see it as insignificant, but rather to consider that what develops from it could lead to the worst abuses. It is similar to how we become alarmed and panic-stricken when we see a spark make a fire

at home, and we run about in order to quench the blaze. Because evil sets the soul afire more seriously than this fire, we must not neglect to extinguish the early signs of evil, to prevent its growing worse. Thus, the enemies are the passions, which are to be restrained immediately. It is clear that neglected sins and passions become much worse when their presence is ignored and the remedy neglected. He pointedly reminds us that if Judas had restrained his love of wealth before it became an action, then he would not have gone on to tamper with the funds of the apostolic community. If he had stopped there, then he would not have gone on to the ultimate betrayal.

O God, the Listener of all, listen to the suppliant voice of our tears,
and grant to our infirmities perpetual protection ;
that, while You worthily accept the sigh of our labour,
You may always console us with Your mercy. — Roman
