

THE SERVICES
OF THE
HOURS
-
THE
GREAT
BOOK
OF THE
HOURS
-
GREAT
HOROLOGION

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PRAYERS OF PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

The prayers of this service, for those who are frequently receiving holy communion, are, sometimes, divided amongst each day of the week. On the day on which you are to partake of the immaculate Body and precious Blood of Christ, say (these are usually in private.) :

Reader : O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the prayers of Your most pure Mother, and of all the saints, have mercy on us.

Reader : Amen.

* O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who are everywhere, and fulfil all things ; Treasury of good things, and Provider of Life, come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

* [We do not read "Heavenly King" in paschaltide. We say "Christ is risen.." (three times). From Ascension to Pentecost, we read the tropar of Ascension.]

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

(three times)

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit, and heal our infirmities, for Your Name's sake.

LORD, have mercy. LORD, have mercy. LORD, have mercy.

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

Our Father, who are in the heavens, hallowed be Your Name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven ; give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors ; and bring us not to the test, but rescue us from the evil one.

[Presbyter : For Yours are the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.]

Reader : Amen.

Lord, have mercy. *(twelve times)*

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

O come, let us worship God, our King. Come, let us worship, and fall down before Christ, our King, and our God. Come, let us worship, and fall down before Christ, Himself, our King, and our

God.

(with three metanias)

PSALM 22

The LORD is my shepherd, and I shall lack nothing. He has pitched my tent in a place of green pasture, and by restful water has He nourished me. He has turned my soul about ; He has guided me into the paths of righteousness, for His Name's sake. Even if I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for You are with me – Your rod, and Your staff have consoled me. You have prepared a table before me in the face of those who oppress me. You have dressed my head with oil, and Your cup, which inebriates me, how exquisite it is. Your mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for length of days.

Psalm 23

The earth is the LORD's, and its fulness – the whole world, and all who dwell in it. He Himself laid its foundations upon the seas, and upon the rivers has He made it steady. Who shall go up to the mountain of the LORD, and who shall stand on His holy place ? The one who is innocent of hands, and pure of heart ; who has not received his soul for futility, who has not sworn cunningly to his neighbour. This one shall receive blessing from the LORD, and signs of mercy from God his Saviour. Such is the generation of those who seek the LORD, of those who seek after the Face of the God of Jacob. Raise your gates, you princes, and be lifted up, you everlasting gates, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory ? He is the LORD, strong and powerful, the LORD, powerful in war. Raise your gates, you princes, and be lifted up, you everlasting gates, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory ? It is the LORD of Hosts. He is indeed the King of Glory.

PSALM 115

Ibelieved, therefore I spoke ; for I have been greatly humbled. I said in my ecstasy, "All Men are liars". What shall I repay to the LORD, for all with which He has rewarded me? I shall take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I shall repay my vows to the LORD, before all His people. Precious before the LORD, is the death of His holy ones. O LORD, I am Your servant, I am Your servant, and the son of Your hand-maid. You have broken my bonds asunder ; to You shall I offer a sacrifice of praise and call upon the name of the LORD. I shall repay my vows to the LORD, before all His people ; in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem.

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

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory be to You, O God. (*three times*)

Then, the following **Tropars** in *Tone 6* :

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

O Lord, born of a Virgin, disregard my iniquities. Cleanse my heart, and make it a temple fit for Your most pure Body and Blood. Turn me not away from Your presence, for Your mercy cannot be measured.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

How dare I partake of Your holy things, unworthy as I am ; for, if I make bold to draw near amongst those who are worthy, and have not on a wedding garment, I only procure the condemnation of my most sinful self. O Lord, cleanse my corrupted soul, and save me, for You love Man.

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

Great is the multitude of my transgressions, O Theotokos. Seeking salvation I turn to you, O pure one. Visit my ailing soul, and pray to your Son, and our God, that He may grant me remission of my evil deeds, for You alone are blessed.

Or, on Great and Holy Thursday, the following tropar instead :

Tropar of Great Holy Thursday

Tone 8

When the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of their feet before the supper, then the impious Judas was darkened, ailing with avarice ; and to the lawless judges he betrayed You, the righteous Judge. Behold, O lover of money, this man who, because of money, hanged himself : flee from the greedy soul, which dared such things against the Master. O LORD, who are good towards all men : glory be to You.

When you intend, O Man, to eat the Master's Body, approach with fear, lest you be burned – for It is fire. Before drinking the divine Blood in Communion, make peace with those who have grieved you.

Only then, may you dare to eat the Mystical Food.

*If the Canon of *Preparation has not been read the previous evening, it may be read now.*

Lord, have mercy.

(forty times, with as many prostrations as desired)^{1 2}

¹ O Man, who desire to eat the Body of the Lord, draw near in fear, lest you be consumed – for it is fire. Before drinking the Blood of God for communion, be reconciled with those who have grieved you ; and then, with

Before partaking of the Dread Sacrifice, the life-giving Body of the Master, pray, trembling, in this manner :

1.

Of Saint Basil the Great

O Lord, and Master, Jesus Christ, our God, the spring of life, and immortality, the Creator of everything visible, and invisible, Son co-existing without beginning, with the Father without beginning, You have come in these latter days because of Your exceeding goodness ; You have put on our human flesh, and You were crucified and buried for us thankless and graceless men ; and through Your own blood, You have refashioned our nature corrupted by sin.³ And now, O Immortal King, accept the repentance of me the sinner, and incline Your ear to me, and hear my words. “I have sinned, O Lord,⁴ I have sinned before Heaven and before Your Face, and I am not worthy to gaze at Your glory”. I have irritated Your goodness, I have transgressed Your commandments, I have not obeyed Your ordinances ; but, O Lord, since You forbear evil, and are long-suffering and of great mercy,⁵ You have not given me over to destruction for my iniquities, but have ever awaited my return. O Lover of Man, You have said by Your prophet, “I have no delight in the death of the sinner, but that he turn about and live” ; for You do not wish, O Master, that the work of Your hands perish, neither do You take pleasure in the destruction of Men ; but You desire that all be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. Therefore, although I am unworthy both of and of earth, and of this transient life, having wholly submitted myself to sin and made Your image unprofitable and enslaved to pleasures ; yet, being Your creature and of Your fashioning, I do not despair of my salvation in my wretchedness; but made bold by Your immeasurable

boldness, eat of the sacramental food. Before partaking of the Dread Sacrifice of the life-giving Body of the Lord, in this manner, and with fear and trembling, pray :

² For those who are regularly, and frequently, receiving Holy Communion, it is sometimes customary to divide the prayers, and to say them separately, through each of the days of the week. One might well follow this pattern :
Monday : Prayer 1 ; Tuesday : Prayer 2 ; Wednesday : Prayer 3 ; Thursday : Prayers 4, 5 ; Friday : Prayers 7, 8 ; Saturday : Prayers 6, 10, 11. These may follow the above introductory prayers. (Before week-day Liturgies : Prayers 9, 10, 11.)

³ 1 Timothy 1:17

⁴ Saint Luke 15:18

⁵ Saint Luke 6:35 ; Psalm 23: 8 ; 2 Peter 2:8

compassion, I draw near. Receive me, O Christ, the Lover of Man, as You received the prostitute, the thief, the tax-collector and the prodigal. Take away the heavy burden of my sins, for You take away the sin of the world. You heal the infirmities of Men. You call to Yourself and give rest to those who grow weary and are heavy laden. You have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Cleanse me from every stain of flesh and spirit. Teach me to complete holiness in fear of You ; that having the pure testimony of my own conscience, and welcoming a share in Your holy things, I may be united with Your Body and Blood, and may have You to dwell and endure in me, with the Father and Your Holy Spirit. O Lord Jesus Christ my God, may the communion of Your most pure and life-giving mysteries not bring me into judgement, nor may I become weak in soul and body by partaking in an unworthy manner ; but grant me even to my very last breath to welcome a share in Your holy things without condemnation, and by them to receive communion of the Holy Spirit as a provision for eternal life, and an acceptable answer at Your dread judgement seat ; that I, together with all Your chosen ones, may also be a partaker of the undefiled good things which You have prepared for those who love You, O Lord, in whom You are glorified unto the ages.

Amen.

2. (3. *in Greek*)

Of Saint John Chrysostom

O Lord my God, I know that I am not worthy nor sufficiently fit that You come under the roof of the house of my soul, for it is entirely desolate and fallen in ruin, and You will not find in me a place worthy to lay Your head. As you humbled Yourself from on high for our sake, so now take the same measure as my humility. As You accepted to lie in a cavern, in a manger of dumb beasts, so now accept to enter into the manger of my dumb soul, and into my stained body. And as You did not deem it unworthy to enter and to eat with sinners in the house of Simon the leper, so now accept to enter into the house of my soul, humble and leprous and sinful ; and, as You did not push away the sinful prostitute, like unto me, who came towards You and touched You, so be compassionate upon me, the sinner who comes to You and touches You. And as You did not abhor the kiss of her cursed and unclean mouth, do not abhor my mouth, more unclean and more accursed than hers, nor my stained and shamed and impure lips, nor my still more impure tongue. Rather, let the fiery coal of Your most pure Body and Your most precious Blood be for me sanctification, illumination, and strengthening of my humble soul and body, relief from the burden of my many transgressions, protection against every action of the devil, repulsion and hindrance for my wicked and evil habits, mortification of my passions,

accomplishment of Your commandments, increase of Your Divine Grace, and attaining of Your Kingdom. I do not come to You in presumption, O Christ my God, but made bold by Your unspeakable goodness, lest I stray far away from Your community, O Master, and become prey for the rational wolf. Therefore, I pray You, O Master, for You alone are holy, sanctify my soul and body, my mind and heart, my reins, and my entrails. Renew me entirely. Implant Your fear in my members, and let Your sanctification never be erased from me. Be my helper and support ; govern my life in peace, and deem me worthy to stand at Your right hand with all Your saints ; by the prayers and intercessions of Your most pure Mother, of Your immaterial servants, the immaculate angelic powers, and of all the saints who from all ages have been well-pleasing to You. Amen.

3. (8. In Greek) Of Saint Simeon Metaphrastes (The Translator)

Only pure and undefiled Lord, because of the inexpressible compassion of Your love for Man, You assumed our entire composition from the pure and virgin blood of her who gave birth to You beyond nature, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the good-will of the ever-existing Father. O Christ Jesus, Wisdom of God and Peace and Power, through the human nature which You assumed, You suffered the life-giving and saving passion – the Cross, the nails, the spear, death itself. Put to death in me the soul-destroying passions of the body. Through Your burial You spoiled the kingdom of Hadēs. With good thoughts, bury in me the evil counsels of the devil, and disperse the spirits of evil. Through Your life-bringing Resurrection, You raised up the First Father who had fallen. Raise me up who have slipped down in sin, and instruct me in the way of repentance. Through Your glorious ascension, You made to be divine the flesh which You assumed, and You placed it with honour on the throne at the Father's right hand. Make me worthy to receive a share at the right hand with the saved, through communion of Your holy mysteries. Through the coming of Your Holy Spirit, the Comforter, You made Your sanctified disciples to be honourable vessels. Show me also to be the receptacle of His coming. You are about to come again to judge the world in righteousness. Be pleased that I may go to meet you in the clouds, my Maker and Creator, with all Your saints ; that I may glorify and praise You without end, together with Your Father who is without beginning, and Your most holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

4. (6. in Greek)

Of Saint John of Damascus

O Lord and Master, Jesus Christ our God, who alone have power to forgive Men from their sins, for You are good and love all Men, disregard all my faults done in knowledge or in ignorance ; and make me worthy without condemnation to have communion of Your divine and glorious and immaculate and life-giving mysteries. Let them not be for my punishment, nor for the increase of my sins ; but let them be for my purification and sanctification, as a pledge of the life and Kingdom to come, a wall and a help and the overthrow of every adversary, and the blotting out of my many transgressions ; for You are a God of mercy and compassion and love for Man, and to You we send up glory, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.
Amen.

5. (2. in Greek)

Of Saint Basil the Great

(Not all books include this prayer.)

I know, O Lord, that I have communion unworthily of Your immaculate Body and Your most precious Blood – that I am guilty, eat and drink condemnation to myself, not discerning Your Body and Blood, O my Christ and God ; but daring upon Your compassion, I come to You that have said, “He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him”. Be compassionate, therefore, O Lord, and do not make an example of me, the sinner, but deal with me in accordance with Your mercy, and let Your holy things be for my healing and purification ; for illumination and protection ; for the repulsion of every imagination, evil deed, and demonic energy which works through my reasoning in my members. Let them be for boldness and love for You ; for the correction and stability of my life ; for the increase of virtue and perfection ; for the fulfilment of Your commandments ; for the communion of the Holy Spirit, as provision for eternal life ; for a good and acceptable answer at Your dread judgement seat ; but not for judgement or condemnation.
Amen.

6. (7. in Greek)

Of Saint Simeon the New Theologian

From foul lips and a vile heart, from an impure tongue and a foul soul, receive my intercession, O my Christ, and do not push aside my words, my ways nor my shamelessness. Grant me boldness, O my Christ, to say what I have resolved ; even more – teach me what to do and say. I have sinned more than the harlot who, on learning where You were lodging, bought myrrh and came boldly to anoint Your feet, O my God, my Master, and my Christ. As You did not push her away when

she came in eagerness of heart, so, O Word, do not abhor me ; but give me Your feet to hold, to kiss, and to anoint boldly with a stream of tears as a precious ointment. Purify me with my tears, O Word, and purify me with them. Remit my faults and grant me forgiveness. You know the multitude of my evils – You know also my wounds ; You see my scars ; You know also my faith. You see my eagerness and hear my groanings. Nothing is hidden from You, my God, my Maker, my Redeemer – not even a tear-drop or part of that drop. Your eyes have seen my unformed being. In Your book, You have inscribed things yet undone. See my humility. See each of my toils and all of my sins. Forgive me, O God of all, that with a pure heart, trembling reasonings, and a contrite soul, I may partake of Your immaculate and most pure mysteries, which enliven and deify all who eat and drink of them with a pure heart. You have said, O Master, “Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood abides in me and I in him”. Absolutely true is every word of my Master and God. When I partake of Your divine and deifying Grace, I am no longer alone – I am with You, my Christ, the Light of the Triple Sun which illumines the world. May I not remain alone – without You, O Life-giver, my Breath, my Life and my Joy, the Salvation of the world. I approach You, therefore, with tears, as You see, and a contrite soul. I entreat to receive redemption from my faults. May I partake uncondemned of Your life-giving and spotless mysteries, that You may abide, as You have said, with me, the thrice-wretched. May the deceiver not find me without Your Grace, and seize me deceitfully and lead me, deceived, from Your deifying words. Therefore, I fall down before You, and fervently I cry out, “As You received the prodigal, and the prostitute who came to You, O Compassionate One, so receive me, prodigal and fornicator”. With a contrite soul I approach You now. I know, O Saviour, that no-one has fallen from You as I have, nor done the deeds that I have worked ; but I also know that neither the greatest of my faults nor the multitude of my sins surpass the long-suffering of my God, and His extreme love for Man. Through Your merciful compassion You cleanse and brighten those who repent with fervour, making them abundant partakers of Light and communicants of Your Divinity. To the astonishment of angels and human reasoning, You converse with them often as with Your true friends. This makes me bold, O my Christ, this gives me wings. Emboldened by the wealth of Your generosity towards us, with both joy and trepidation, I who am grass, partake of fire. O strange wonder. I am sprinkled inexpressibly with dew and am not burned, as the bush burned of old without being consumed. With grateful thoughts and a grateful heart, with my grateful members, my soul and my flesh, I now worship, magnify and glorify You, my God, for blessed are You, now, and

unto the ages.
Amen.

7. (*not in Greek*) Of Saint John Chrysostom

O God, absolve, remit, and pardon me my transgressions – as many sins as I have committed by word or action or thought, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously ; forgive me everything, since You are good and the Lover of Man. And by the prayers of Your most pure Mother, of your spiritual servants, the holy angelic powers, and of all Your saints, who from all ages have been well-pleasing to You, be pleased to allow me to receive Your most pure Body and Your most precious Blood for the healing of my soul and body, and the purification of my evil thoughts ; for Yours are the Kingdom, and the power and the glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

8. (*4. in Greek*) Of Saint John Chrysostom

I am not fit, O Master and Lord, that You enter under the roof of my soul ; yet inasmuch as You desire to inhabit me as the Lover of Man, I approach with boldness. You have commanded, let the doors be opened which You alone have created, and You shall enter with Your love for Man, just as You are. You shall enter and illumine my darkened reasoning. I believe that You will do this ; for You did not avoid the prostitute who came to You with tears, nor did You reject the tax-collector who repented, nor did You shove back the thief who acknowledged Your Kingdom, nor did You abandon the repentant persecutor Paul, even as he was ; but all that are drawn to you by repentance, You assigned to the choir of Your friends, You that alone are blessed, now, and unto the endless ages.

Amen.

9. (*5. in Greek*) Of Saint John Chrysostom

O Lord Jesus Christ my God, absolve, forgive, be propitious to and pardon me, Your sinful and useless and unworthy servant, my faults, errors, and failures – as many as I have committed against You from my youth up to this present day and hour, in knowledge or ignorance, in words or actions or reasonings, thoughts, purposes and in all my senses. By the intercessions of Your Mother, the most pure and Ever-virgin Mary, who gave birth to You without human seed – my only hope that will not put me to shame, my protector and salvation – deem me worthy to have communion without condemnation of Your most pure,

immortal, life-giving, and awesome mysteries – for the forgiveness of sins and life eternal, for sanctification, illumination, strength, healing, and health of soul and body ; for the most perfect removal and destruction of my evil thoughts and reflections and assumptions, phantasies by night, brought by dark and evil spirits ; for Yours are the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, and the honour, and the worship, with the Father and Your Holy Spirit, now, and ever and unto the ages of ages.
Amen.

10. (9. in Greek) Of Saint John of Damascus

Istand before the doors of Your temple, and I do not stand away from fearful thoughts. However, O Christ my God, as You have justified the tax-collector, and have had mercy on the woman of Canaan, and have opened the gates of paradise to the thief ; so open to me the bowels of Your love for Man ; and receive me as I come and touch You, as You received the sinful woman, and the woman with the flow of blood ; for the first held Your immaculate feet and received the release of her sins, and the second just touched the hem of Your garment and easily received healing ; but I, who am pitiful, daring to receive Your whole Body, may I not be burned. Rather, receive me as You have received them, and illuminate the senses of my soul, burning up my sinful crimes by the intercessions of her who gave birth to You without human seed, and of the heavenly angelic powers, for You are blessed unto the ages of ages.
Amen.

11. (10. in Greek) Of Saint John Chrysostom

Ibelieve, O Lord, and I confess, that You are truly the Christ, the Son of the living God, who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first. I believe also that this is truly Your own immaculate Body, and that this is truly Your own precious Blood. Therefore, I supplicate You, Have mercy upon me, and forgive my failures, both voluntary and involuntary, of word and of deed, committed in knowledge or in ignorance ; and make me worthy to partake without condemnation of Your most pure Mysteries, for the remission of my sins, and unto life eternal. Amen.

Of Your Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant ; for I will not speak of Your Mystery to Your enemies, neither like Judas will I give You a kiss ; but like the thief will I confess You, “Remember me, O Lord, in Your Kingdom”.

May the communion of Your holy Mysteries be neither to my judgement, nor to my condemnation, O Lord, but to the healing of soul and body.
Amen.

As you approach to partake, say silently these verses of Saint Simeon Metaphrastes :

Behold, I draw near to the Divine Communion. Burn me not as I partake, O Creator, for You are a fire which burns the unworthy. Rather, cleanse me of all corruption.

And then say :

Of Your Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant ; for I will not speak of Your Mystery to Your enemies, neither like Judas will I give You a kiss ; but like the thief will I confess You, "Remember me, O Lord, in Your Kingdom".

And then :

Be awed, O Man, when you see the deifying Blood. It is a coal which burns the unworthy. The divine Body both deifies and nourishes me. It deifies the spirit and wondrously nourishes the mind.

And then the following Tropars :

With longing have You charmed me, O Christ, and with Your divine love have You changed me. Burn completely my sins with a spiritual fire, and deem me worthy to be filled and delighted with You, that I may joyfully magnify Your two comings, O Good One.

How shall I, who am unworthy, enter into the radiance of Your saints ? If I dare to enter the bridal chamber, my garment accuses me ; for it is not a wedding garment, and the angels will bind me and cast me out. Cleanse, O Lord, the filth of my soul, and save me, for You love Man.

And this prayer :

O Master, Lover of Man, O Lord Jesus Christ my God, may these holy things not be to my condemnation, though I am unworthy of them. May they be for the purification and sanctification of my soul and body, and a pledge of the life and Kingdom that are to come.

But as for me, it is good to cleave to God, and put the hope of my salvation in the Lord.

And then, again :

Of Your Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant ; for I will not speak of Your Mystery to Your enemies, neither like Judas will I give You a kiss ; but like the thief will I confess You, "Remember me, O Lord, in Your Kingdom".

[THE END OF PRAYERS BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION]