

**FIFTH WEDNESDAY (OR THURSDAY) OF GREAT LENT  
LITTLE COMPLINE WITH THE LIFE OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT AND  
THE GREAT CANON OF REPENTANCE BY ST. ANDREW OF CRETE**

**\*\*INSTRUCTIONS\*\***

*This service can be offered either on Wednesday or Thursday of the fifth week of Great Lent. An icon of the Theotokos may be placed on a stand in the middle of the solea. The church is darkened save for lit candles. No censer is needed. The curtain and Holy Doors are closed for the entire service. Instructions for reading the Life of St. Mary of Egypt and singing the Great Canon follow below in this text. The priest wears a purple epitrachelion over his exorasson and starts Little Compline in front of the icon.*

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

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Glory to Thee, O God, glory to Thee.

O heavenly King, the Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art in all places, and fillest all things, Treasury of good things, and Giver of life, come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain; and save our souls, O good One.

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (*thrice*)

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

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

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

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

Choir: Amen.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*twelve times*)

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

- *A metanoia is made after each verse below.*

Come, let us worship and fall down before God our King.

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

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

- *The Priest goes to stand at the chanters stand.*

#### PSALM 50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy Great Mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness. O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with whole-burnt offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure unto Zion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be built up. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

#### PSALM 69

O God, be attentive unto helping me; O Lord, make haste to help me. Let them be shamed and confounded that seek after my soul. Let them be turned back and brought to shame that desire evils against me. Let them be turned back straightway in shame that say unto me: Well done! Well done! Let them be glad and rejoice in Thee all that seek after Thee, O God, and let them that love Thy salvation say continually: The Lord be magnified. But as for me, I am poor and needy; O God, come unto mine aid. My helper and my deliverer art Thou, O Lord; make no long tarrying.

#### PSALM 142

O Lord, hear my prayer, give ear unto my supplication in Thy truth; hearken unto me in Thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath humbled my life down to the earth. He hath sat me in darkness as those that have been long dead, and my spirit within me is become despondent; within me my heart is troubled. I remembered days of old, I meditated on all Thy works, I pondered on the creations of Thy hands. I stretched forth my hands unto Thee; my soul thirsteth after Thee like a waterless land. Quickly hear me, O Lord; my spirit hath fainted away. Turn not Thy face away from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Thy mercy in the morning; for in Thee have I put my hope. Cause me to know, O Lord, the way wherein I should walk; for unto Thee have I lifted up my soul. Rescue me from mine enemies, O Lord; unto Thee have I fled for refuge. Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. Thy good Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness; for Thy name's sake, O Lord, shalt Thou quicken me. In Thy righteousness shalt Thou bring my soul out of affliction, and in Thy mercy shalt Thou utterly destroy mine enemies. And Thou shalt cut off all them that afflict my soul, for I am Thy servant.

### THE LITTLE DOXOLOGY (Plain Reading)

- + Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men.
- + We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee; we give thanks unto Thee for Thy great glory.
- + O Lord, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty; O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit.
- + O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, Who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us; O Thou Who takest away the sins of the world.
- + Receive our prayer, O Thou Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, and have mercy on us.
- + For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, O Jesus Christ, to the Glory of God the Father. Amen.
- + Every night will I bless Thee, and I will praise Thy Name forever; yea, forever and ever.
- + Lord, Thou hast been our refuge in all generations. I said: Be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.
- + Lord, I have fled unto Thee: teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God.
- + For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light.
- + O continue Thy loving-kindness unto them that know Thee.
- + Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin.
- + Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers, and praised and glorified be Thy Name forever. Amen.
- + Let Thy mercy, O Lord: be upon us, as we do put our hope in Thee.
- + Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.
- + Blessed art Thou, O Master; make me to understand Thy statutes.
- + Blessed art Thou, O Holy One; enlighten me with Thy statutes.
- + Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. O despise not the works of Thy hands. To Thee belongeth worship, to Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### THE NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried. And on the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose Kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### THEOTOKION (Plain Reading)

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, who art ever-blessed and all-blameless, and the mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the

Seraphim. Thou who without corruption didst bear God the Word; and art truly Theotokos: we magnify thee.

**THE GREAT CANON OF REPENTANCE**  
**BY ST. ANDREW, BISHOP OF CRETE**  
**(c.650 – c.726; BISHOP FROM c.685 – c.726)**

- NOTE: *The Great Canon is chanted in Tone Six. Only at the words “Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me” do we make one prostration. For all other verses, we make no prostrations.*

ODE ONE

He is my Helper and Protector, and hath become my Salvation. This is my God and I will glorify Him, the God of my fathers and I will exalt Him, for gloriously has He been glorified. (*repeat*)

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Where shall I begin to weep for the actions of my wretched life? What first-fruit shall I offer, O Christ, in this my lamentation? But in Thy compassion grant me forgiveness of sins.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Come, wretched soul, with thy flesh to the Creator of all. Make confession to Him, and abstain henceforth from thy past brutishness; and offer to God tears of repentance.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have rivaled in transgression Adam the first-formed man, and I have found myself stripped naked of God, of the eternal Kingdom and its joy, because of my sins.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Woe to thee, miserable soul! How like thou art to the first Eve! For thou hast looked in wickedness and was grievously wounded; thou hast touched the tree and rashly tasted the deceptive food.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Instead of the visible Eve, I have the Eve of the mind: the passionate thought in my flesh, showing me what seems sweet; yet whenever I taste from it, I find it bitter.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Adam was justly banished from Eden because he disobeyed one commandment of Thine, O Savior. What then shall I suffer, for I am always rejecting Thy words of life?

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

By my own free choice have I incurred the guilt of Cain's murder. I have killed my conscience, bringing the flesh to life and making war upon the soul by my wicked actions.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O Jesus, I have not been like Abel in his righteousness. Never have I offered Thee acceptable gifts or godly actions, a pure sacrifice or an unblemished life.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Like Cain, O miserable soul, we too have offered, to the Creator of all, defiled actions and a polluted sacrifice and a worthless life: and so we also are condemned.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

As the potter molds the clay, Thou hast fashioned me, giving me flesh and bones, breath and life. But accept me in repentance, O my Maker and Deliverer and Judge.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I confess to Thee, O Savior, the sins I have committed, the wounds of my soul and body, which murderous thoughts, like thieves, have inflicted inwardly upon me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Though I have sinned, O Savior, yet I know that Thou art full of loving-kindness. Thou dost chastise with mercy and art fervent in compassion. Thou dost see me weeping and dost run to meet me, like the Father calling back the Prodigal Son.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of all, take from me the heavy yoke of sin, and in Thy compassion give me tears of compunction.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

It is time for repentance: to Thee I come, my Creator. Take from me the heavy yoke of sin, and in Thy compassion give me tears of compunction.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Reject me not, O Savior; cast me not away from Thy presence. Take from me the heavy yoke of sin and in Thy compassion grant me remission of sins.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

All mine offenses, voluntary and involuntary, manifest and hidden, known and unknown, do Thou forgive, O Savior, for Thou art God; be merciful and save me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I fall down, Jesus, at Thy feet: I have sinned against Thee, be merciful to me. Take from me the heavy yoke of sin, and in Thy compassion, O God, accept me in repentance.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Enter not into judgment with me, bringing before me the things I should have done, examining my words and correcting my impulses. But in Thy mercy overlook my sins and save me, O Lord Almighty.

#### FOR SS. MARY AND ANDREW IN TONE SIX

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

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

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

Bowing before the divine laws of Christ, thou hast drawn near to Him, forsaking the unbridled longings of sensual pleasure; and in the fear of God thou hast gained all the virtues as if they were one.

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

Through thine intercessions, O Andrew, deliver us from shameful passions and, we pray thee, make us now partakers of Christ's Kingdom; for with faith and love we sing thy praises.

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

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

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

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

#### ODE TWO

Attend, O Heaven, and I shall speak and sing in praise of Christ Who took flesh from a Virgin and came to dwell among us. (*repeat*)

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Attend, O Heaven, and I shall speak; give ear, O earth, to the voice of one who repents before God and sings His praise.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Look upon me, God my Savior, with Thy merciful eye, and accept my fervent confession.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

More than all men I have sinned; I alone have sinned against Thee. But as God take pity on Thy creation, O Savior.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I am surrounded by the storm of sin, O compassionate Lord. But stretch out Thine hand to me, as once thou hast to Peter.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I offer to Thee, O merciful Lord, the tears of the Harlot. Take pity on me, O Savior, in Thy compassion.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

With the lusts of passion I have darkened the beauty of my soul, and turned my whole mind entirely into dust.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have torn the first garment that the Creator wove for me in the beginning, and now I lie naked.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have clothed myself in the torn coat that the serpent wove for me by his counsel, and I am ashamed.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I looked upon the beauty of the tree and my mind was deceived, and now I lie naked and ashamed.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

All the ruling passions have ploughed upon my back, making long furrows of wickedness.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have lost the beauty and glory with which I was first created; and now I lie naked and ashamed.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Sin has stripped me of the robe that God once wove for me, and it has sewed for me garments of skin.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I am clothed with the raiment of shame as with fig leaves, in condemnation of my self-willed passions.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I am clad in a garment that is defiled and shamefully bloodstained by a life of passion and self-indulgence.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have stained the garment of my flesh, O Savior, and defiled that which was made in Thine image and likeness.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have fallen beneath the painful burden of the passions and the corruption of material things; and I am hard pressed by the enemy.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Instead of freedom from possessions, O Savior, I have pursued a life in love with material things, and now I wear a heavy yoke.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have adorned the idol of my flesh with a many-colored coat of shameful thoughts, and I am condemned.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have cared only for the outward adornment, and neglected that which is within—the tabernacle fashioned by God.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

With my lustful desires I have formed within myself the deformity of the passions and disfigured the beauty of my mind.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have discolored with the passions the first beauty of the image, O Savior. But seek me, as once Thou hast sought the lost coin, and find me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Like the Harlot I cry to Thee: I have sinned, I alone have sinned against Thee. Accept my tears also as sweet ointment, O Savior.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Like David, I have fallen into lust and I am covered with filth; but wash me clean, O Savior, by my tears.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Like the Publican I cry to Thee: Be merciful, O Savior, be merciful to me. For no child of Adam has ever sinned against Thee as I have sinned.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have no tears, no repentance, no compunction; but as God do Thou Thyself, O Savior, bestow them on me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Lord, Lord, at the Last Day shut not Thy door against me; but open it to me, for I repent before Thee.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O Lover of mankind, who desirest that all men shall be saved, in Thy goodness call me back and accept me in repentance.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Give ear to the groaning of my soul, and accept the tears that fall from mine eyes; O Lord, save me.

*Most Holy Theotokos, save us.*

O Theotokos undefiled, Virgin alone worthy of all praise, intercede fervently for our salvation.

## ODE TWO, PART II

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

‘See now, see that I am God’: give ear, my soul, to the Lord as He cries to thee; forsake thy former sin, and fear Him as thy Judge and God.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

To whom shall I liken thee, O soul of many sins? Alas! To Cain and to Lamech. For thou hast stoned thy body to death with thine evil deeds, and killed thy mind with thy disordered longings.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Call to mind, my soul, all who lived before the Law. Thou hast not been like Seth, or followed Enos or Enoch, who was translated to Heaven, or Noah; but thou art found destitute, without a share in the life of the righteous.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou alone, O my soul, hast opened the windows of the wrath of thy God, and thou hast flooded, as the earth, all thy flesh and deeds and life; and thou hast remained outside the Ark of salvation.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

‘I have slain a man to my grief and wounding,’ said Lamech, ‘and a young man to my hurt’; and he cried aloud lamenting. Dost thou not tremble then, my soul, for thou hast defiled thy flesh and polluted thy mind?

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Ah, how I have emulated Lamech, the murderer of old, slaying my soul as if it were a man, and my mind as if it were a young man. With sensual longings I have killed my body, as Cain the murderer killed his brother.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Skillfully hast thou planned to build a tower, O my soul, and to establish a stronghold for thy lusts; but the Creator confounded thy designs and dashed thy devices to the ground.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I am wounded and smitten: see the enemy's arrows which have pierced my soul and body. See the wounds, the open sores and the injuries, that cry out to God against the blows inflicted by my freely chosen passions.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Roused to anger by their transgressions, the Lord once rained down fire from Heaven and burnt up the men of Sodom. And thou, my soul, hast kindled the fire of Gehenna, and there to thy bitter sorrow thou shalt burn.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Know and see that I am God, searching out men's hearts and punishing their thoughts, reproofing their actions and burning up their sins; and in My judgment I protect the orphan, the humble and the poor.

#### FOR SS. MARY AND ANDREW IN TONE SIX

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

Sunk in the abyss of wickedness, O Mary, thou hast lifted up thine hands to the merciful God. And, as to Peter, in His loving-kindness He stretched out His hand to thee in help, seeking in every way thy conversion.

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

With all eagerness and love hast thou run to Christ, turning from thy former path of sin, finding thy food in the trackless wilderness, and fulfilling in purity the commandments of God.

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

Let us see, O my soul, let us see the love of our God and Master for mankind; and before the end comes, with tears let us fall down before Him, crying: At the prayers of Andrew, O Savior, have mercy upon us.

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

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

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

Most pure Lady, Mother of God, hope of those who run to thee and the haven of the storm-tossed: pray to the merciful God, thy Creator and thy Son, that He may grant His mercy even to me.

#### ODE THREE

Upon the unshaken rock of Thy commandments, O Christ, make firm Thy Church. (REPEAT)

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The Lord, my soul, once rained down fire from Heaven and consumed the land of Sodom.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O my soul, flee like Lot to the mountain, and take refuge in Zoar before it is too late.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Flee from the flames, my soul, flee from the burning heat of Sodom, flee from destruction by the fire of God.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I confess to Thee, O Savior: I have sinned, I have sinned against Thee. But in Thy compassion absolve and forgive me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I alone have sinned against Thee, I have sinned more than all men; reject me not, O Christ my Savior.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou art the Good Shepherd: seek me, the lamb that has strayed, and do not forget me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou art my beloved Jesus, Thou art my Creator; in Thee shall I be justified, O Savior.

*God the Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.*

O God, Trinity in Unity, save us from error and temptation and distress.

*Most Holy Theotokos, save us!*

Hail, womb that held God! Hail, throne of the Lord! Hail, Mother of our Life!

### ODE THREE, PART II

O Lord, upon the rock of Thy commandments make firm my wavering heart, for Thou alone art holy and Lord. (*repeat*)

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

For me Thou art the Fountain of life and the Destroyer of death; and from my heart I cry to Thee before the end: I have sinned, be merciful to me and save me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have followed the example, O Savior, of those who lived in wantonness in the days of Noah; and like them I am condemned to drown in the Flood.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned against Thee; be merciful to me. For there is no sinner whom I have not surpassed in my offenses.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O my soul, thou hast followed Ham, who mocked his father. Thou hast not covered thy neighbor's shame, walking backwards with averted face.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O wretched soul, thou hast not inherited the blessing of Shem, nor hast thou received, like Japhet, a spacious domain in the land of forgiveness.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou hast heard, my soul, how Abraham in days of old left the land of his fathers and became a wanderer: follow him in his choice.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou knowest, O my miserable soul, how Isaac was offered mystically as a new and unwonted sacrifice to the Lord: follow him in his choice.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou hast heard—O my soul, be watchful—how Ishmael was driven out as the child of a bondwoman. Take heed, lest the same thing happen to thee because of thy lust.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O my soul, thou hast become like Hagar the Egyptian: thy free choice has been enslaved, and thou hast borne as thy child a new Ishmael, stubborn willfulness.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou knowest, my soul, the ladder that was shown to Jacob, reaching up from earth to Heaven. Why hast thou not provided a firm foundation for it through thy godly actions?

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Follow the example of Melchizedek, the priest of God, the king set apart, who was an image of the life of Christ among men in the world.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Turn back, wretched soul, and lament, before the fair-ground of life comes to an end, before the Lord shuts the door of the bridal chamber.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Do not look back, my soul, and so be turned into a pillar of salt. Fear the example of the people of Sodom, and take refuge in Zoar.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Flee, my soul, like Lot from the burning of sin; flee from Sodom and Gomorrah; flee from the flame of every brutish desire.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on me, I cry to Thee, when Thou comest with Thine angels to give to every man due return for his deeds.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Reject not, O Master, the prayer of those who sing Thy praises, but in Thy loving-kindness be merciful and grant forgiveness to them that ask with faith.

FOR SS. MARY AND ANDREW IN TONE SIX

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

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

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

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

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

Through thy prayers grant even to me forgiveness of trespasses, O Andrew, Bishop of Crete, best of guides, leading us to the mysteries of repentance.

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

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

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

O Mother of God, without knowing man thou hast given birth within time to the Son, Who was begotten outside time from the Father; and—strange wonder—thou givest suck while still remaining Virgin.

**THE LIFE OF OUR HOLY MOTHER MARY OF EGYPT  
BY ST. SOPHRONIOS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM  
(560-638; PATRIARCH FROM 634-638)**

- NOTE: “The Life” is split into two halves so that two readers recite it.

First Reader: The Life of our Holy Mother Mary of Egypt. Father, bless.

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

First Reader: Amen.

*“It is good to hide the secret of a king, but it is glorious to reveal and preach the works of God;” (Tobit 12:7)* so said the Archangel Raphael to Tobit when he performed the wonderful healing of his blindness. Actually, not to keep the secret of a king is perilous and a terrible risk, but to be silent about the works of God is a great loss for the soul. And I (says St. Sophronios), in writing the Life of St. Mary of Egypt, am afraid to hide the works of God by silence. Remembering the misfortune threatened to the servant who hid his God-given talent in the earth (*Matthew 25:18-25*), I am bound to pass on the holy account that has reached me. And let no one think (continues St. Sophronios) that I have had the audacity to write untruth or doubt this great marvel—may I

never lie about holy things! If there do happen to be people who, after reading this record, do not believe it, may the Lord have mercy on them because, reflecting on the weakness of human nature, they consider impossible these wonderful things accomplished by holy people. But now we must begin to tell this most amazing story, which has taken place in our generation.

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

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

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

Zosimas did as he was told. He left the monastery in which he had lived from childhood, and went to the River Jordan. At last he reached the community to which God had sent him. Having knocked at the door of the monastery, he identified himself to the monk who was the porter, and the porter told the abbot. On being admitted to the abbot's presence, Zosimas made the usual monastic prostration and prayer. Seeing that he was a monk the abbot asked: *"From where do you come, brother, and why have you come to us poor old men?"*

Zosimas replied: *"There is no need to speak about from where I have come, but I have come, father, seeking spiritual profit, for I have heard great things about your skill in leading souls to God."*

*"Brother,"* the abbot said to him, *"Only God can heal the infirmity of the soul. May He teach you and us His divine ways and guide us. But as it is the love of Christ that has moved you to visit us poor old men, then stay with us, if that is why you have come. May the Good Shepherd Who laid down His life for our salvation fill us all with the grace of the Holy Spirit."*

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

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

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

Then all gathered in church and after praying earnestly with prostrations, the elders kissed one another and asked forgiveness. And each made a prostration to the abbot and asked his blessing and prayers for the struggle that lay before them. After this, the gates of the monastery were thrown open, and, singing, *“The Lord is my light and my Savior; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defender of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”* (Psalm 26:1) and the rest of that psalm, all went out into the desert and crossed the River Jordan. Only one or two brothers were left in the monastery, not to guard the property (for there was nothing to rob), but so as not to leave the church without Divine Service. Each took with him as much as he could or wanted in the way of food, according to the needs of his body: one would take a little bread, another some figs, another dates or wheat soaked in water. And some took nothing but their own bodies covered with rags and fed when nature forced them to it on the plants that grew in the desert.

After crossing the River Jordan, they all scattered far and wide in different directions. And this was the rule of life they had, and which they all observed—neither to talk to one another, nor to know how each one lived and fasted. If they did happen to catch sight of one another, they went to another part of the country, living alone and always singing to God, and at a definite time eating a very small quantity of food. In this way they spent the whole of the Fast and used to return to the monastery a week before the Resurrection of Christ, on Palm Sunday. Each one returned having his own conscience as the witness of his labor, and no one asked another how he had spent his time in the desert. Such were rules of the monastery. Every one of them whilst in the desert struggled with himself before God, the Judge of the struggle, not seeking to please men and fast before the eyes of all. For what is done for the sake of men, to win praise and honor, is not only useless to the one who does it but sometimes the cause of great punishment.

Zosimas did the same as all. And he went far, far into the desert with a secret hope of finding some father who might be living there and who might be able to satisfy his thirst and longing. And he wandered on tireless, as if hurrying on to some definite place. He had already walked for twenty

days and when the sixth hour came he stopped and, turning to the East, he began to sing the Sixth Hour service and recite the customary prayers. He used to break his journey thus at fixed hours of the day to rest a little, to chant psalms while standing and to pray on bent knees.

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

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

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

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

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

Zosimas threw himself on the ground and asked for her blessing. She likewise bowed down before him. And thus they lay on the ground prostrate, asking for each other’s blessing. And one phrase alone could be heard from both: *“Bless me!”*

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

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

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

Zosimas answered: *“Amen.”*

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

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

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

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

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

But at the very same moment the woman turned around, raised the elder from the ground and said: *“Thoughts, tempting you about me, trouble you, Abba, telling you I am a spirit, and that my prayer is feigned. Know, holy father, that I am only a sinful woman, though I am guarded by Holy Baptism. And I am not a spirit but earth and ashes, and flesh alone.”*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*“The holy day of the Exaltation of the Cross dawned while I was still flying about, hunting for youths. At daybreak I saw that everyone was hurrying to the church, so I ran with the rest. When the hour for the holy elevation approached, I was trying to make my way in with the crowd which was struggling to get through the church doors. I at last squeezed through with great difficulty almost to the entrance of the temple, from which the life-giving Tree of the Cross was being shown to the people. But when I trod on the doorstep through which everyone passed, I was stopped by some force which prevented my entering. Meanwhile I was brushed aside by the crowd and found myself standing alone in the porch. Thinking that this had happened because of my woman’s weakness, I again began to work my way into the crowd, trying to elbow myself forward. But in vain I struggled. Again my feet trod on the doorstep over which others were entering the church without encountering any obstacle. I alone seemed to remain unaccepted by the church. It was as if there was a detachment of soldiers standing there to oppose my entrance. Once again I was excluded by the same mighty force and again I stood in the porch.*

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

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

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

*“Then I came out of the church and went to her who had promised to be my security, to the place where I had sealed my vow. And bending my knees before the Virgin Mother of God, I addressed to her such words as these: ‘O loving Lady, thou hast shown me thy great love for all men. Glory to God Who receives the repentance of sinners through thee. What more can I recollect or say, I who am so sinful? It is time for me, O Lady, to fulfill my vow, according to thy witness. Now lead me by the hand along the path of repentance!’*

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

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

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

#### ODE FOUR

The prophet heard of Thy coming, O Lord, and he was afraid: how Thou was to be born of a Virgin and revealed to men and he said: I have heard the report of Thee and I was afraid. Glory to Thy power, O Lord. (*repeat*)

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O righteous Judge, despise not Thy works; forsake not Thy creation. I have sinned as a man, I alone, more than any other man, O Thou Who lovest mankind. But as Lord of all Thou hast the power to pardon sins.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The end draws near, my soul, the end draws near; yet thou dost not care or make ready. The time grows short, rise up: the Judge is at the door. The days of our life pass swiftly, as a dream, as a flower. Why do we trouble ourselves in vain?

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Awake, my soul, consider the actions which thou hast done; set them before thine eyes, and let the drops of thy tears fall. With boldness tell Christ of thy deeds and thoughts, and so be justified.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

No sin has there been in life, no evil deed, no wickedness, that I have not committed, O Savior. I have sinned as no one ever before, in mind, word and intent, in disposition, thought and act.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

For this I am condemned in my misery, for this I am convicted by the verdict of my own conscience, which is more compelling than all else in the world. O my Judge and Redeemer, Who knowest my heart, spare and deliver and save me in my wretchedness.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The ladder which the great Patriarch Jacob saw of old is an example, O my soul, of approach through action and of ascent in knowledge. If, then, thou dost wish to live rightly in action and knowledge and contemplation, be thou made new.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

In privation Jacob the Patriarch endured the burning heat by day and the frost by night, making daily gains of sheep and cattle, shepherding, wrestling, and serving, to win his two wives.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

By the two wives, understand action and knowledge in contemplation. Leah is action, for she had many children; and Rachel is knowledge, for she endured great toil. For without toil, O my soul, neither action nor contemplation will succeed.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Be watchful, O my soul, be full of courage like Jacob the great Patriarch, that thou mayest acquire action with knowledge, and be named Israel, 'the mind that sees God'; so shalt thou reach by contemplation the innermost darkness and gain great merchandise.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The great Patriarch had the twelve Patriarchs as children, and so he mystically established for thee, my soul, a ladder of ascent through action, in his wisdom setting his children as steps, by which thou canst mount upwards.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou hast rivaled Esau the hated, O my soul, and given the birthright of thy first beauty to the supplanter; thou hast lost thy father's blessing and in thy wretchedness been twice supplanted, in action and in knowledge. Therefore, repent now.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Esau was called Edom because of his raging love for women; burning always with unrestrained desires and stained with sensual pleasure, he was named 'Edom', which means the red heat of a soul that loves sin.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou hast heard, O my soul, of Job justified on a dung-hill, but thou hast not imitated his fortitude. In all thine experiences and trials and temptations, thou hast not kept firmly to thy purpose but has proved inconstant.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Once he sat upon a throne, but now he sits upon a dung-hill, naked and covered with sores. Once he was blessed with many children and admired by all, but suddenly he is childless and homeless. Yet he counted the dung-hill as a palace and his sores as pearls.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

A man of great wealth and righteous, abounding in riches and cattle, clothed in royal dignity, in crown and purple robe, Job became suddenly a beggar, stripped of wealth, glory and kingship.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

If he who was righteous and blameless above all men did not escape the snares and pits of the deceiver, what wilt thou do, wretched and sin-loving soul, when some sudden misfortune befalls thee?

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thy Body and Thy Blood, O Word, Thou hast offered at Thy Crucifixion for the sake of all: Thy Body to refashion me, Thy Blood to wash me clean; and Thou hast given up Thy spirit, O Christ, to bring me to Thy Father.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O Creator, Thou hast worked salvation in the midst of the earth, that we might be saved. Thou wast crucified of Thine own will upon the Tree; and Eden, closed until then, was opened. Things above and things below, the creation and all the peoples have been saved and worship Thee.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

May the Blood from Thy side be to me a cleansing fount, and may the Water that flows with it be a drink of forgiveness. May I be purified by both, O Word, anointed and refreshed, having as chrism and drink Thy words of life.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The time of my life is short, filled with trouble and evil. But accept me in repentance and call me back to knowledge. Let me not become the possession and food of the enemy; but do Thou, O Savior, take pity on me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Now I speak boastfully, with boldness of heart; yet all to no purpose and in vain. O righteous Judge, Who alone art compassionate, do not condemn me with the Pharisee; but grant me the abasement of the Publican and number me with him.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I know, O compassionate Lord, that I have sinned and violated the vessel of my flesh. But accept me in repentance and call me back to knowledge. Let me not become the possession and food of the enemy; but do Thou, O Savior, take pity on me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have become mine own idol, utterly defiling my soul with the passions. But accept me in repentance and call me back to knowledge. Let me not become the possession and food of the enemy; but do Thou, O Savior, take pity on me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have not hearkened to Thy voice, I have not heeded Thy Scripture, O Giver of the Law. But accept me in repentance and call me back to knowledge. Let me not become the possession and food of the enemy; but do Thou, O Savior, take pity on me.

#### FOR SS. MARY AND ANDREW IN TONE SIX

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

Thou hast lived a bodiless life in the body, O holy Mary, and thou hast received great grace from God. Protect us who honor thee with faith and, we entreat thee, deliver us by thy prayers from every trial.

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

Thou wast brought down into an abyss of great iniquity, yet not held fast within it: but with better intent thou hast mounted through action to the height of virtue, past all expectation: and the angels, O Mary, were amazed at thee.

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

O Andrew, renowned among the fathers, glory of Crete, as thou standest before the Trinity supreme in Godhead, in thy prayers do not forget to ask that we may be delivered from torment; for we call upon thee with love as our advocate in Heaven.

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

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

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

Thou givest birth and art a virgin, and in both thou remainest by nature inviolate. He Who is born makes new the laws of nature, and the womb brings forth without travail. When God so wills, the natural order is overcome; for He does whatever He wishes.

#### ODE FIVE

From the night I seek Thee early, O Lover of mankind; give me light, I pray Thee, and guide me in Thy commandments, and teach me, O Savior, to do Thy will. (*repeat*)

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

In night have I passed all my life: for the night of sin has covered me with darkness and thick mist. But make me, O Savior, a son of the day.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

In my misery I have followed Reuben's example, and have devised a wicked and unlawful plan against the most-high God, defiling my bed as he defiled his father's.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I confess to Thee, O Christ my King: I have sinned; I have sinned like the brethren of Joseph, who once sold the fruit of purity and chastity.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

As a figure of the Lord, O my soul, the righteous and gentle Joseph was sold into bondage by his brethren; but thou hast sold thyself entirely to thy sins.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O miserable and wicked soul, imitate the righteous and pure mind of Joseph; and do not live in wantonness, sinfully indulging thy disordered desires.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Once Joseph was cast into a pit, O Lord and Master, as a figure of Thy Burial and Resurrection. But what offering such as this shall I ever make to Thee?

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou hast heard, my soul, of the basket of Moses: how he was borne on the waves of the river as if in a shrine; and so he avoided the bitter execution of Pharaoh's decree.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou hast heard, wretched soul, of the midwives who once killed in its infancy the manly action of self-control: like great Moses, then, be suckled on wisdom.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O miserable soul, thou hast not struck and killed the Egyptian mind, as did Moses the great. Tell me, then, how wilt thou go to dwell through repentance in the wilderness empty of passions?

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Moses the great went to dwell in the desert. Come, seek to follow his way of life, my soul, that in contemplation thou mayest attain the vision of God in the bush.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Picture to thyself, my soul, the rod of Moses striking the sea and making hard the deep by the sign of the Holy Cross. Through the Cross thou also canst do great things.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Aaron offered to God fire that was blameless and undefiled, but Hophni and Phinehas brought to Him, as thou hast done, my soul, strange fire and a polluted life.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Spare, O spare the work of Thine hands, O Lord. I have sinned, forgive me: for Thou alone art pure by nature, and none save Thee is free from defilement.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou Who art God, O Savior, wast for my sake fashioned as I am. Thou hast performed miracles, healing lepers, giving strength to the paralyzed, stopping the issue of blood when the woman touched the hem of Thy garment.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O wretched soul, do as the woman with an issue of blood: run quickly, grasp the hem of the garment of Christ, so shalt thou be healed of thine afflictions and hear Him say: Thy faith has saved thee.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O my soul, do as the woman who was bowed down to the ground. Fall at the feet of Jesus, that He may make thee straight again; and thou shalt walk upright upon the paths of the Lord.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou art a deep well, O Master: make springs gush forth for me from Thy pure veins, that like the woman of Samaria I may drink and thirst no more; for from Thee flow the streams of life.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O Master and Lord, may my tears be unto me as Siloam: that I also may wash clean the eyes of my heart, and with my mind behold Thee, the pre-eternal Light.

FOR SS. MARY AND ANDREW IN TONE SIX

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

O blessed saint, with a love beyond compare thou hast longed to venerate the wood of the Cross, and thy desire was granted. Make me also worthy to attain the glory on high.

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

Crossing the stream of the Jordan, thou hast found peace, escaping from the deadening pleasures of the flesh. Deliver us also from them, holy Mary, by thine intercessions.

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

Best of shepherds, chosen above all others, O wise Andrew, with great love and fear I beseech thee: through thine intercessions may I receive salvation and eternal life.

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

We glorify Thee, O Trinity, the one God. Holy, holy, holy, art Thou: Father, Son, and Spirit, simple Essence and Unity, worshipped forever.

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

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

ODE SIX

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I offer to Thee in purity, O Savior, the tears of mine eyes and groanings from the depths of my heart, crying: 'I have sinned against Thee, O God; be merciful to me.'

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Like Dathan and Abiram, O my soul, thou hast become a stranger to thy Lord; but from the lowest depth of hell cry out, 'Spare me', that the earth may not open and swallow thee up.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Raging as a maddened heifer, O my soul, thou art become like Ephraim. As a hart from the nets rescue then thy life, gaining wings through action and the mind's contemplation.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O my soul, the hand of Moses shall be our assurance, proving how God can cleanse a life full of leprosy and make it white as snow. So do not despair of thyself, though thou art leprous.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The waves of my sins, O Savior, have returned and suddenly engulfed me, as the waters of the Red Sea engulfed the Egyptians of old and their charioteers.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Like Israel before thee, thou hast made a foolish choice, my soul; instead of the divine manna thou hast senselessly preferred the pleasure-loving gluttony of the passions.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The swine's meat, the flesh-pots and the food of Egypt thou hast preferred, my soul, to the food of Heaven, as the ungrateful people did of old in the wilderness.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O my soul, thou hast valued the wells of Canaanite thoughts more than the veined Rock, Jesus, the Fountain of Wisdom from which flow the rivers of divine knowledge.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

When Thy servant Moses struck the rock with his rod, he prefigured Thy life-giving side, O Savior, from which we all draw the water of life.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Like Joshua, the son of Nun, search and spy out, my soul, the land of thine inheritance and take up thy dwelling within it, through obedience to the Law.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

As Thou hast saved Peter when he cried out, 'Save me', come quickly, O Savior, before it is too late, and save me from the beast. Stretch out Thine hand and lead me up from the deep of sin.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O Savior, I am the coin marked with the King's likeness, which Thou hast lost of old. But, O Word, light Thy lamp, Thy Forerunner, and seek and find again Thine image.

#### FOR SS. MARY AND ANDREW IN TONE SIX

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

Thy soul on fire, O Mary, thou hast ever shed streams of tears, to quench the burning of the passions. Grant the grace of these thy tears to me also, thy servant.

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

Through the perfection of thine earthly life, O Mother, thou hast gained a heavenly freedom from the sinfulness of passion. In thine intercessions pray that this same freedom may be given to those who sing thy praises.

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

Shepherd and bishop of Crete, intercessor for the inhabited earth, to thee I run, O Andrew, and I cry: Deliver me, father, from the depths of sin.

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

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

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

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

- *NOTE: Here the Second Reader begins the second half of “The Life.”*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Zosimas said: *“Do not hide from me anything; speak to me without concealing anything.”*

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

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

Zosimas asked: *“Can it be that you did not need food and clothing?”*

*She answered: “After finishing the loaves I had, of which I spoke, for seventeen years I have fed on herbs and all that can be found in the desert. The clothes I had when I crossed the Jordan became torn and worn out. I suffered greatly from the cold and greatly from the extreme heat. At times the sun burned me up and at other times I shivered from the frost, and frequently falling to the ground I lay without breath and without motion. I struggled with many afflictions and with terrible temptations. But from that time until now the power of God in numerous ways had guarded my sinful soul and my humble body. When I only reflect on the evils from which our Lord has delivered me I have imperishable food for hope of salvation. I am fed and clothed by the all-powerful Word of God, the Lord of all. For it is not by bread alone that man lives. And those who have stripped off the rags of sin have no refuge, hiding themselves in the clefts of the rocks.” (Job 24; Heb. 11:38)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

With these words she vanished into the depths of the desert. And Zosimas, falling down on his knees and bowing down to the ground on which she had stood, sent up glory and thanksgiving to God. And, after wandering through the desert, he returned to the monastery on the day all the brothers returned.

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

Many days passed and, at last recovering from his illness, he remained in the monastery. And when the monks returned and the day of the Last Supper dawned, he did as he had been ordered. Placing some of the most-pure Body and Blood into a small chalice and putting some figs and dates and lentils soaked in water into a small basket, he departed for the desert and reached the banks of the Jordan and sat down to wait for the saint. He waited for a long while and then began to doubt. Then raising his eyes to Heaven, he began to pray: *“Grant me O Lord, to behold that which Thou hast allowed me to behold once. Do not let me depart in vain, being the burden of my sins.”*

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

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

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

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

Here the woman asked him to say The Creed and The Lord’s Prayer. He began; she finished the prayer and, according to the custom of that time, gave him the kiss of peace. Having partaken of the Holy Mysteries, she raised her hands to Heaven and sighed with tears in her eyes, exclaiming: *“Now Thou lettest Thy servant depart in peace, O Lord, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.”*

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

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

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

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

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

Then on the opposite bank of the river, her face turned towards the rising sun, he saw the saint lying dead. Her hands were crossed according to custom and her face was turned to the East. Running up he shed tears over the saint’s feet and kissed them, not daring to touch anything else. For a long time, he wept. Then reciting the appointed psalms, he said the burial prayers and thought to himself: *“Must I bury the body of a saint? Or will this be contrary to her wishes?”*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### KONTAKION OF THE GREAT CANON IN TONE SIX

My soul, O my soul, rise up! Why art thou sleeping? The end draws near and soon thou shalt be troubled. Watch, then, that Christ thy God may spare thee, for He is everywhere present and fills all things.

### ODE SEVEN

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have sinned, I have offended, and I have set aside Thy commandments, for in sins have I progressed, and to my sores I have added wounds. But in Thy compassion have mercy upon me, O God of our fathers.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The secrets of my heart have I confessed to Thee, my Judge. See my abasement, see my affliction, and attend to my judgment now; and in Thy compassion have mercy upon me, O God of our fathers.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

When Saul once lost his father's asses, in searching for them he found himself proclaimed as king. But watch, my soul, lest unknown to thyself thou prefer thine animal appetites to the Kingdom of Christ.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

David, the forefather of God, once sinned doubly, pierced with the arrow of adultery and the spear of murder. But thou, my soul, art more gravely sick than he, for worse than any acts are the impulses of thy will.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

David once joined sin to sin, adding murder to fornication; yet then he showed at once a twofold repentance. But thou, my soul, hast done worse things than he, yet thou hast not repented before God.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

David once composed a hymn, setting forth, as in an icon, the action he had done; and he condemned it, crying: 'Have mercy upon me, for against Thee only have I sinned, O God of all. Do Thou cleanse me.'

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

When the Ark was being carried in a cart and the ox stumbled, Uzzah did no more than touch it, but the wrath of God smote him. O my soul, flee from his presumption and respect with reverence the things of God.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou hast heard of Absalom, and how he rebelled against nature; thou knowest of the unholy deeds by which he defiled his father David's bed. Yet thou hast followed him in his passionate and sensual desires.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thy free dignity, O my soul, thou hast subjected to thy body; for thou hast found in the enemy another Ahitophel, and hast agreed to all his counsels. But Christ Himself has brought them to nothing and saved thee from them all.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Solomon the wonderful, who was full of the grace of wisdom, once did evil in the sight of Heaven and turned away from God. Thou hast become like him, my soul, by thine accursed life.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Carried away by sensual passions, he defiled himself. Alas! The lover of wisdom became a lover of harlots and a stranger to God. And thou, my soul, in mind hast imitated him through thy shameful desires.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O my soul, thou hast rivaled Rehoboam, who paid no attention to his father's counselors, and Jeroboam, that evil servant and renegade of old. But flee from their example and cry to God: I have sinned, take pity on me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Alas, my soul! Thou hast rivaled Ahab in guilt. Thou hast become a dwelling-place of fleshly defilements and a shameful vessel of the passions. But groan from the depths of thy heart, and confess thy sins to God.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I fall before Thee, and as tears I offer Thee my words. I have sinned as the Harlot never sinned, and I have transgressed as no other man on earth. But take pity on Thy creature, O Master, and call me back.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have discolored Thine image and broken Thy commandments. All my beauty is destroyed and my lamp is quenched by the passions, O Savior. 'But take pity on me,' as David sings, and 'restore to me Thy joy.'

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Turn back, repent, uncover all that thou hast hidden. Say unto God, to Whom all things are known: Thou alone knowest my secret, O Savior; 'have mercy on me', as David sings, 'according to Thy mercy.'

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

My days have vanished as a dream of one awaking; and so, like Hezekiah, I weep upon my bed, that years may be added to my life. But what Isaiah will come to me, O my soul, except the God of all?

#### FOR SS. MARY AND ANDREW IN TONE SIX

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

Raising thy cry to the pure Mother of God, thou hast driven back the fury of the passions that violently assailed thee, and put to shame the enemy who sought to make thee stumble. But give thy help in trouble now to me also, thy servant.

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

He Whom thou hast loved, O mother, Whom thou hast desired, in Whose footsteps thou hast followed; He it was Who found thee and gave thee repentance, for He is God compassionate. Pray, O Mary, to Him without ceasing, that we may be delivered from passions and distress.

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

Set me firmly on the rock of faith, O father, through thine intercessions; fence me round with fear of God, O Andrew; grant repentance to me now, I beseech thee, and deliver me from the snare of the enemies that seek my life.

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

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

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

We praise thee, we bless thee, we venerate thee, O Mother of God: for thou hast given birth to One of the undivided Trinity, thy Son and God, and thou hast opened the heavenly places to us on earth.

#### ODE EIGHT

The hosts of Heaven give Him glory: before Him tremble the cherubim and seraphim; let everything that has breath and all creation praise Him, bless Him and exalt Him above all forever.  
(repeat)

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have sinned, O Savior, have mercy on me. Awaken my mind and turn me back; accept me in repentance and take pity on me as I cry: I have sinned against Thee, save me; I have done evil, have mercy on me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Riding in the chariot of the virtues, Elijah was lifted up to Heaven, high above earthly things. Reflect, O my soul, on his ascent.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

With the mantle of Elijah, Elisha made the stream of Jordan stand still on either side: but in this grace, my soul, thou hast no share, by reason of thy greed and uncontrolled desires.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Elisha once took up the mantle of Elijah, and received a double portion of grace from the Lord: but in this grace, my soul, thou hast no share, by reason of thy greed and uncontrolled desires.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The Shunammite woman gladly entertained the righteous Prophet: but in thy house, my soul, thou hast not welcomed stranger or traveler; and so thou shalt be cast out weeping from the bridal chamber.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O wretched soul, always thou hast imitated the unclean thoughts of Gehazi. Cast from thee, at least in thine old age, his love of money. Flee from the fire of hell, turning away from thy wickedness.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou hast followed Uzziah, my soul, and hast his leprosy in double form: for thy thoughts are wicked, and thine acts unlawful. Leave what thou hast, and hasten to repentance.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O my soul, thou hast heard how the men of Nineveh repented before God in sackcloth and ashes. Yet thou hast not followed them, but art more wicked than all who sinned before the Law and after.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou hast heard, my soul, how Jeremiah in the muddy pit cried out with lamentations for the city of Zion and asked to be given tears. Follow his life of lamentation and be saved.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Jonah fled to Tarshish, foreseeing the conversion of the men of Nineveh; for as a prophet he knew the loving-kindness of God, but he was jealous that his prophecy should not be proved false.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

My soul, thou hast heard how Daniel stopped the mouths of the wild beasts in the lions' den; and thou knowest how the Children with Azarias quenched through their faith the flames of the fiery furnace.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

All the names of the Old Testament have I set before thee, my soul, as an example. Imitate the holy acts of the righteous and flee from the sins of the wicked.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Like the Thief I cry to Thee: ‘Remember me’; like Peter I weep bitterly; like the Publican I call out: ‘Forgive me, Savior’; like the Harlot I shed tears. Accept my lamentation, as once Thou hast accepted the entreaties of the woman of Canaan.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O Savior, heal the putrefaction of my humbled soul, for Thou art the one Physician; apply plaster and pour in oil and wine—works of repentance and compunction with tears.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Like the woman of Canaan, I cry to Thee, ‘Have mercy on me, Son of David.’ Like the woman with an issue of blood, I touch the hem of Thy garment. I weep as Martha and Mary wept for Lazarus.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

As precious ointment, O Savior, I empty on Thine head the alabaster box of my tears. Like the Harlot, I cry out to Thee, seeking Thy mercy: I bring my prayer and ask to receive forgiveness.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

No one has sinned against Thee as I have; yet accept even me, compassionate Savior, for I repent in fear and cry with longing: Against Thee alone have I sinned; I have transgressed, have mercy on me.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Spare the work of Thine own hands, O Savior, and as shepherd seek the lost sheep that has gone astray. Snatch me from the wolf and make me a nursling in the pasture of Thine own flock.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

When Thou sittest upon Thy throne, O merciful Judge, and revealest Thy dread glory, O Christ, what fear there will be then! When the furnace burns with fire, and all shrink back in terror before Thy judgment-seat.

#### FOR SS. MARY AND ANDREW IN TONE SIX

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

The Mother of the Light that never sets illumined thee and freed thee from the darkness of the passions. O Mary, who hast received the grace of the Spirit, give light to those who praise thee with faith.

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

The holy Zosimas was struck with amazement, O Mother, beholding in thee a wonder truly strange and new. For he saw an angel in the body and was filled with astonishment, praising Christ unto all ages.

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

Since thou hast boldness before the Lord, O Andrew, honored renown of Crete, I beseech thee, intercede that I may find deliverance from the bonds of iniquity through thy prayers, O teacher, glory of holy monks.

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

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

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

As from purple silk, O undefiled Virgin, the spiritual robe of Emmanuel, His flesh, was woven in thy womb. Therefore, we honor thee as Theotokos in very truth.

### ODE NINE

Conception without seed; nativity past understanding, from a Mother who never knew a man; child-bearing undefiled. For the birth of God makes both natures new. Therefore, as Bride and Mother of God, with true worship all generations magnify thee. (*repeat*)

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

My mind is wounded, my body has grown feeble, my spirit is sick, my speech has lost its power, my life is dead; the end is at the door. What shalt thou do, then, miserable soul, when the Judge comes to examine thy deeds?

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I have put before thee, my soul, Moses' account of the creation of the world, and after that all the recognized Scriptures that tell thee the story of the righteous and the wicked. But thou, my soul, hast followed the second of these, not the first, and hast sinned against God.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The Law is powerless, the Gospel of no effect, and the whole of Scripture is ignored by thee; the prophets and all the words of the righteous are useless. Thy wounds, my soul, have been multiplied, and there is no physician to heal thee.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

I bring thee, O my soul, examples from the New Testament, to lead thee to compunction. Follow the example of the righteous, turn away from the sinful, and through prayers and fasting, through chastity and reverence, win back Christ's mercy.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Christ became a child and shared in my flesh; and willingly He performed all that belongs to my nature, only without sin. He set before thee, my soul, an example and image of His condescension.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Christ became man, calling to repentance thieves and harlots. Repent, my soul: the door of the Kingdom is already open, and Pharisees and publicans and adulterers pass through it before thee, changing their life.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Christ saved the Wise Men and called the Shepherds; He revealed as martyrs a multitude of young children; He glorified the Elder and the aged Widow. But thou, my soul, hast not followed their lives and actions. Woe to thee when thou art judged!

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The Lord fasted forty days in the wilderness, and at the end of them He was hungry, thus showing that He is man. Do not be dismayed, my soul! If the enemy attacks thee, through prayer and fasting drive him away.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Christ was being tempted; the devil tempted Him, showing Him the stones that they might be made bread. He led Him up into a mountain, to see in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. O my soul, look with fear on what happened; watch and pray every hour to God.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The Dove Who loved the wilderness, the Lamp of Christ, the voice of one crying aloud, was heard preaching repentance; but Herod sinned with Herodias. O my soul, see that thou art not trapped in the snares of the lawless, but embrace repentance.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The Forerunner of Grace went to dwell in the wilderness, and Judea and all Samaria ran to hear him; they confessed their sins and were baptized eagerly. But thou, my soul, hast not imitated them.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Marriage is honorable, and the marriage-bed undefiled. For on both Christ has given His blessing, eating in the flesh at the wedding in Cana, turning the water into wine and revealing His first miracle, to bring thee, my soul, to a change of life.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Christ gave strength to the paralyzed man, and he took up his bed; He raised from the dead the young man, the son of the widow, and the centurion's servant; He appeared to the woman of Samaria and spoke to thee, my soul, of worship in spirit.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

By the touch of the hem of His garment, the Lord healed the woman with an issue of blood; He cleansed lepers and gave sight to the blind and made the lame walk upright; He cured by His word the deaf and the dumb and the woman bowed to the ground, to bring thee, wretched soul, to salvation.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The Publican was saved and the Harlot turned to chastity, but the Pharisee with his boasting was condemned. For the first cried 'Be merciful', and the second, 'have mercy on me'; but the third said, boasting, 'I thank Thee, O God', and other words of madness.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Thou knowest, O my soul, how the cities were cursed to which Christ preached the Gospel. Fear their example, lest thou suffer the same punishment. For the Master likened them to Sodom and condemned them to hell.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

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

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O Son of David, with Thy word Thou hast healed the possessed: take pity on me, save me and have mercy. Let me hear Thy compassionate voice speak to me as to the thief: 'Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise, when I come in My glory.'

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

A thief accused Thee, a thief confessed Thy Godhead: for both were hanging beside Thee on the Cross. Open to me also, O Lord of many mercies, the door of Thy glorious Kingdom, as once it was opened to Thy thief who acknowledged Thee with faith as God.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

The creation was in anguish, seeing Thee crucified. Mountains and rocks were split from fear, the earth quaked, and hell was despoiled; the light grew dark in the daytime, beholding Thee, O Jesus, nailed in the flesh.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

Do not demand from me worthy fruits of repentance, for my strength has failed within me. Give me an ever-contrite heart and poverty of spirit, that I may offer these to Thee as an acceptable sacrifice, O only Savior.

*Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.*

O my Judge Who dost know me, when Thou comest again with the angels to judge the whole world, look upon me then with Thine eye of mercy and spare me; take pity on me, Jesus, for I have sinned more than any other man.

### FOR SS. MARY AND ANDREW IN TONE SIX

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

By thy strange way of life thou hast struck all with wonder, both the hosts of angels and the gatherings of mortal men; for thou hast surpassed nature and lived as though no longer in the body. Like a bodiless angel thou hast walked upon the Jordan with thy feet, O Mary, and crossed over it.

*Holy Mother Mary, pray to God for us.*

O holy Mother, call down the gracious mercy of the Creator upon us who sing thy praises, that we may be set free from the sufferings and afflictions that assail us; so without ceasing, delivered from temptations, we shall magnify the Lord Who has glorified thee.

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

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

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

Trinity in one Essence, Unity in three Persons, we sing Thy praises; we glorify the Father, we magnify the Son, we worship the Holy Spirit, truly one God by nature, Life and Lives, Kingdom without end.

*Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

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

### HEIRMOS OF THE NINTH ODE IN TONE SIX

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

- *The Priest stands before the Holy Doors, facing east.*

### THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (*thrice*)

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

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

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

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

Choir: Amen.

**KONTAKION OF THE GREAT CANON (Plain Reading)**

My soul, O my soul, rise up! Why art thou sleeping? The end draws near and soon thou shalt be troubled. Watch, then, that Christ thy God may spare thee, for He is everywhere present and fills all things.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*forty times*)

Reader: O Christ our God, Who art worshipped and glorified at all times at every hour both in heaven and on earth; Who art long-suffering and plenteous in mercy and compassion; Who lovest the just man and showest mercy upon the sinner; and Who callest all men to repentance through the promise of blessings to come; receive, O Lord, at this very hour our supplications, and direct our lives in the way of Thy commandments: sanctify our souls, purify our bodies, set our minds aright, cleanse our thoughts; deliver us from all affliction, trouble, and distress; compass us about with Thy holy angels, that, guided and guarded by them, we may attain unto the unity of the Faith, and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory; for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Thou who without corruption didst bear God the Word; and art truly Theotokos: we magnify thee.

Bless, Father, in the Name of the Lord.

Priest: May God have compassion upon us and bless us; may He show the light of His countenance upon us and be merciful unto us.

Reader: Amen.

**THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN**

Priest: O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, meddling, lust of power, and idle talk. (*Prostration*)

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to me, Thy servant. (*Prostration*)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother; for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen. (*Prostration*)

Priest: O God, be gracious unto me, a sinner. (*Twelve times with a metanoia each time.*)

### THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

- *Only one prostration is made at the end of this reciting.*

Priest: O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, meddling, lust of power and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*twelve times*)  
Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

### PRAYER OF PAUL THE CENOBITE TO THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

- *This can be read by the Priest or Reader in front of the icon of the Virgin on the Iconostasis.*

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

Reader: Amen.

### PRAYER OF THE MONK ANTIOCHUS TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

- *This can be read by the Priest or Reader in front of the icon of Christ on the Iconostasis.*

And grant unto us, O Master, when we depart to sleep, repose of body and soul; and protect us from the murky sleep of sin and from all the dark pleasures of the night. Calm the impulses of passions, and quench the fiery darts of evil which are craftily thrown against us; check the turbulence of our flesh, and still all earthly and material thoughts. And grant us, O God, a watchful mind, a prudent reason, a vigilant heart, a tranquil sleep free from all the fantasies of Satan. Raise us up again at the time of prayer strengthened in Thy commandments, holding steadfastly within us the remembrance of Thy judgments. Grant us grace to glorify Thee all through the night that we may praise, and bless, and glorify Thine all-honorable and majestic Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

- *The first person then says:*

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

- *The second person then says:*

The Father is my Hope; the Son is my Refuge; the Holy Spirit is my Protection. O Holy Trinity: Glory to Thee.

- *The first person then says:*

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

#### PRAYER TO OUR GUARDIAN ANGEL

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

Reader: Amen.

- *Standing on the solea, and facing the icon of Christ on the iconostasis, the Priest says:*

#### THE DISMISSAL

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to Thee.

Choir: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy (*thrice*). Father, bless.

- *Facing the congregation, the Priest says:*

Priest: May Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; at the supplication the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, Nicholas the Wonderworker, archbishop of Myra in Lycia; *of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community*; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of our righteous Mother Mary of Egypt and our God-bearing Father Zosimas; of our Fathers among the Saints Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem and Andrew, Bishop of Crete, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

Choir: Amen.

- *Standing before the Holy Doors, facing east, the priest makes three metanoias, saying each time.*

Priest: O God, be gracious unto me, a sinner, and have mercy on me.

- *The priest turns west and bows to the people, saying:*

Priest: Forgive me, a sinner.

People: God forgive thee, holy father.

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

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*after each petition until noted*)

Priest: And for pious and Orthodox Christians.

Priest: And for our father and metropolitan, N., (our bishop, N.,) and for all our brotherhood in Christ.

Priest: And for the civil authorities of this land.

Priest: And for the welfare of our armed forces.

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

Priest: And for those who hate us, and those who love us.

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

Priest: And for those who have requested our prayers, unworthy though we be.

Priest: And for the deliverance of captives.

Priest: And for travelers by land, sea and air.

Priest: And for those who lie in sickness.

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

Priest: And for the soul of every Orthodox Christian.

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

Priest: And let us say also for ourselves.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

- *The faithful come forward to reverence the icon of the Theotokos, receive the blessing of the priest and kiss his right hand.*
- *If this service is sung on the fifth Wednesday of Great Lent, the following is chanted.*

THEOTOKION IN TONE TWO ([EL MASSIH](#)) ([KARAM](#))  
(\*\**When he took Thee*\*\*)

All those who with faith flee unto thee, \* with thy mighty hand dost thou shelter, O pure one, as thou art good; \* no one else have we who sin as a perpetual \* intercessor for us with God \* in dangers and sorrows, \* we who have been burdened down with our abundant sins, \* Mother of God in the highest. \* Wherefore, we all fall down before thee; \* rescue us, thy servants, from adversities.

- *If this service is sung on the fifth Thursday of Great Lent, the following is chanted.*

STAVRO-THEOTOKION IN TONE ONE ([EL MASSIH](#)) ([KARAM](#))

(\*\**O all-lauded Martyrs*\*\*)

On seeing Thine unjust slaughter, O Christ, \* Thy pure Mother cried in grief: O most sweet Child, how is it that Thou diest lawlessly? \* How is it that Thou, Who \* hast suspended all the earth \* upon the floods of waters, art now Thyself suspended from the Tree? \* O most merciful Benefactor, \* do not leave me, \* Thy Mother and handmaid, alone.

- *The choir can repeat the theotokia as often as necessary, read the Synaxarion for the day and sing the apolytikia below. After all have passed, the Priest faces the icon of Christ and says:*

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

Choir: Amen.

THE SYNAXARION (**Plain Reading**)

On the fifth Thursday of the Great Fast, we sing, according to the ancient tradition, the order of the Great Canon of Repentance.

*Verses*

Verily, Jesus, will I now sing unto Thee the Great Canon;  
Grant Thou me tears of contrition and awe.

This reverential and compunctionate canon is “great” not only because of the large number of troparia, but because of the mystical thoughts, insights and pious references it contains. Andrew, bishop of Crete, composed the Great Canon of Repentance in the seventh century. He artistically included the entire history of the Old and New Testaments into one sacred song in order to urge all souls to perform good deeds and to shun evil ones, thus returning to God through repentance.

By the intercessions of Saint Andrew of Crete, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT IN TONE EIGHT ([CHANT](#)) ([CHORAL](#))

In thee the image was preserved with exactness, O Mother; for taking up thy cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thy deeds thou didst teach us to overlook the flesh, for it passeth away, but to attend to the soul since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous Mary, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.

[APOLYTIKION OF ST. ZOSIMAS OF PALESTINE IN TONE EIGHT](#)

The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundred-fold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father Zosimas, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

[APOLYTIKION OF ST. SOPHRONIOS OF JERUSALEM IN TONE FOUR](#)

Thy work of justice did show thee to thy congregation as a canon of faith, the likeness of humility and teacher of abstinence, O Father and Patriarch Sophronios. Wherefore, by humility thou didst achieve exaltation, and by thy meekness richness. Intercede, therefore, with Christ to save our souls.

### APOLYTIKION FOR ST. ANDREW OF CRETE IN TONE EIGHT

Thou hast shown thyself, O God-inspired Andrew of Crete, as a guide to the Orthodox Faith, a teacher of true worship and purity, O star of the universe and companion of the bishops, O wise one. Through thy light thou hast enlightened all, O harp of the Spirit. Therefore, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

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