

A Prayer to the Holy Spirit

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

Trisagion Prayer

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

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

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

A Lenten Prayer

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

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

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

The Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian

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

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

The Lenten journey 2013



Not to Be Served, But To Serve

The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim petitions the Lord against the spirit of lust of power. For it to have been included in this supplication, this spirit must be one which applies to everyone in a particularly subtle and crafty way.

Why should we pray against lust of power? We are not great and important people. There is little temptation for us to wield authority and to exercise force. There is little chance that we can lord it over others and exert our ideas and desires. We are normal people, regular folks, plain and simple. Or so we think.

The fact is that we exercise authority and wield power all the time: in our homes, in our churches, in our work, in society generally. And even if this power were small and of little effect – though it is not at all – we could still fall victim to lusting after the ability to get our own way, to do what we want, to impose our own ideas, to enact our own programs, to manipulate others, and to have them in our control. We do this all the

time, and we are usually not even aware of it. If we would just examine our thoughts through the course of a day, however, and analyze our involvement in things, we would be convinced of it. We desire to enforce our will and to get our way in almost everything we do.

Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and on earth. He has it eternally as the Son and Word of God by whom all things are created and in whom all things hold together. And He has earned it as a man when, coming on earth in human flesh, He humbled Himself in obedience to His Father unto death for the sake of the world's salvation.

Jesus has all power and authority. He can call legions of angels and wipe out the entire universe (Matt. 26:51; John 19:10-11). But He does not do this. Instead He reveals what power and authority really are in their divine content and perfect expression by serving His Father and His people, and by loving them “the end” (John 13:1).

When He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and resumed His place, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” (John 13:12-17)

And Jesus called them to Him and said to them, “You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42-45)

Human beings are created to imitate the loving humility of God Himself, the divine service revealed to the world in the person of Jesus, the Son of God in human flesh. The disciples of Jesus are called to imitate their Master and Lord in His self-emptying sacrifice of love upon the Cross.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on

Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)

In the rock opera Jesus Christ Superstar there is at least one good scene. The people are screaming at Jesus to show His power and authority in signs and wonders and miracles for their benefit. Jesus cuts them off, and in a soft and gentle voice declares: “Neither you Simon, nor the fifty thousand, nor the Romans, nor the Jews, nor Judas, nor the Twelve, nor the priests, nor the scribes, nor doomed Jerusalem itself, understand what power is, understand what glory is, understand at all, understand at all...”

Do we yet understand? Do we understand anything at all? Do we see, and want to see, that power and glory are to obey God and to seek His will in order to do it? Do we see and believe that power is fulfilled in meekness and authority in service? Do we comprehend and accept the fact that the Author of Life Himself, Jesus the Son of God, being made like us His brethren in every respect, being tempted as we are tempted in order to be with us in our temptations, was Himself made perfect as a man through what He suffered for our sake? (see Hebr. 2 :10-18) Are we yet persuaded by this vision? Are we yet convinced of this logic? Are we yet ready to learn from Him who is “gentle and lowly in heart,” to take His yoke upon ourselves so that we may find rest for our souls? (see Matt. 11:28-30) These are questions which the Lenten season asks us everyday.

You manifested humility, O Christ, as the way of genuine nobility by emptying Yourself and taking the form of a slave. You did not hear the self-praising prayers of the Pharisee, but you received the broken sighs of the publican as a blameless sacrifice. Therefore I cry out to You:

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, and save me, O Savior. [Matins of the 4th Monday in Lent]

We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One, and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God. Of Your good will You were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, and to deliver Your creatures from bondage of the Enemy. Therefore with thankfulness we cry out to You: *With joy have You filled all things, O our Savior, in that You have come to save the world.*¹

Fr. Thomas Hopko, in The Lenten Spring

¹ From the Apolytikion of the 1st Sunday of Great Lent.