

The Office at the Parting of the Soul from the Body

Then the Priest begins: Holy God, Holy Mighty Holy Immortal One, have mercy upon us.
(*Thrice.*)

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

O all-holy Trinity, have mercy upon us. O Lord, wash away our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice.*) Glory ... now, and ever ...

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.

Lord, have mercy. (Twelve times.)

O come, let us worship God our King.

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

O come, let us worship and fall down before the Very Christ, our King and our God. (*Three reverences.*)

PSALM 50

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies do away mine offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged. Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me. But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts, and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly. Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Turn thy face from my sins, and put out all my misdeeds. Make 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. O give me the comfort of thy help again, and stablish me with thy free Spirit. Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver

me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou that art the God of my health; and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness. Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall show thy praise. For thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee; but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise. O be favourable and gracious unto Sion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations; then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

A Canon of Prayer to the All-undefiled Birth-giver of God, with Theme-Songs (Irmos) in the Sixth Tone, on behalf of a man whose soul is departing, and who cannot speak.

Canticle 1

(Irmos): When Israel passed on foot over the deep, as it had been dry land, and beheld their pursuer Pharaoh engulfed in the sea, they cried aloud: Let us sing unto God a song of victory.

Refrain. O all-holy Birth-giver of God, save us.

Verses. Like drops of rain my evil days and few, dried up by summer's heat, already gently vanish: O Lady, save me.

Through thy tenderness of heart and thy many bounties, by nature inclined thereto, O Lady, in this dread hour intercede for me, O Helper Invincible!

Great terror now imprisoneth my soul, trembling unutterable and grievous, when forth from the body it must go: Comfort thou it, O All-undefiled One.

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

O Refuge renowned for the sinful and contrite, make thy mercy known upon me, O Pure One, and deliver me from the hands of demons: For many dogs have compassed me about.

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

Lo, now is the hour for succour, lo, now the hour for thine intercession; lo, now, the time because of which, day and night I have bowed down before thee, and prayed fervently unto thee, O Lady.

Canticle 3

(Irmos): There is none holy like unto thee, O Lord, my God, who hast exalted the horn of thy faithful, O Good One, and hast established us upon the rock of thy confession.

Verses: Inasmuch as I foresaw this day from afar, O Lady, meditating ever upon it as though it were come, with hot tears I have prayed unto thee that thou wouldst not forget me.

The assembly of the crafty, gaping, have compassed me round about, and seek to bear me away and bitterly torment me. Crush thou their teeth and jaws and save me, O Pure One.

For as an organ of speech I am altogether extinguished, and my tongue is bound, and mine eye closeth. In contrition of heart I entreat thee: O my Deliverer, save me.

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

Incline thine ear unto me, O Mother of Christ my God, from the height of thy great glory, O Good One; and hear my last groan, and give me thy hand.

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

Turn not from me thy many bounties; shut not the bowels of thy love toward mankind, O Pure One: but intercede for me now, and in the hour of judgment remember thou me.

Canticle 4

(Irmos): Christ is my strength, my God and my Lord, the august Church doth sing in God-befitting wise, crying aloud and out of a pure mind keeping festival unto the Lord.

Verses: Appoint thou now a washing for sin, a stream of tears, O Good One, receiving the contrition of my heart. In thee have I set my hope, O Good One, when thou deliverest me from frightful fiery torment; forasmuch as thou art the Fountain of Grace, O Birth-giver of God.

O Refuge which maketh not ashamed, and infallible unto all who are in need, Lady all-undefiled, be thou my defender in the hour of trial.

Stretch forth, O All-pure One, thine all-honourable hands, like unto the wings of a holy dove, under whose protection and shelter cover thou me, O Lady.

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

O Conqueror and Tormentor of the fierce Prince of the air, O Guardian of the dread path, and Searcher of these vain words, help thou me to pass over unhindered, as I depart from earth.

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

Lo, terror is come to meet me, O Lady, and I fear it; lo, a great ordeal hath seized hold upon me, wherein be thou my helper, O thou Hope of my salvation.

Canticle 5

(Irmos): With thy light divine, O Good One, illumine thou, I pray thee, the souls of those who wake early unto thee with love: that they may know thee, O Word of God, of the true God, who callest forth from the gloom of sin.

Verses: Forget me not, O Good One, neither turn thou away thy face from me, thy child; but hear me, for I am in trouble; and receive thou my soul, and deliver it.

Ye who are my kinsfolk in the flesh, and ye who are my brethren in the spirit, my friends and wonted acquaintance, weep ye, sigh, wail: For lo, now am I departing from you.

No one now delivereth, and, of a truth, there is none to aid. Succour thou me, O Lady; else as a helpless man shall I be captive in the hands of mine enemies.

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

Having entered, O ye my holy Angels, as ye stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, bending in thought your supersensual knees, cry ye with weeping unto him: Have mercy, O Maker of all men, upon the work of thy hands, O Good One; and cast it not away.

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

Bowing down before the Sovereign Lady and all-pure Mother of my God, pray ye that she will bend her knees together with you; and she shall bend Him to mercy: For the true Mother and Nourisher will be heard.

Canticle 6

(Irmos): Forasmuch as I behold the sea of life surging high with the tempest of temptations, I have fled to thy tranquil haven and cry aloud unto thee: Lead thou my life forth from corruption, O Most Merciful One.

Verses: My mouth is silent, and my tongue speaketh not, but my heart maketh utterance: For that fire of contrition which inwardly devoureth is kindled, and in tones inexpressible invoceth thee, O Virgin.

Look down upon me from on high, O Mother of God, and mercifully hearken now to my supplication; that having beheld thee I may go forth from the body rejoicing.

The destruction of ties, and the overthrow of nature's laws of union, and of the whole corporeal structure, cause me anguish and distress intolerable.

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

To the holy and honourable arms of the holy Angels transfer me, O Lady; that covered with their wings I behold not the ignominious and revolting and gloomy forms of devils.

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

O All-honourable Abode of God, grant unto me the heavenly, the supersensual abode, after that thou hast kindled my expiring and un radiant light by the holy oil of thy mercy.

Kontakion, in Tone 6.

Arise, O my soul, O my soul why sleepest thou? The end draweth near, and thou must speak. Arise, therefore, from thy sleep, and Christ our God, who is in all places and filleth all things, shall spare thee.

Ikos

The Devil, when he beheld the healing of Christ thrown open, and the health which flowed therefrom unto Adam, being sore smitten as it were with a calamity, wailed and cried unto his friends: What shall I do unto the Son of Mary? The Bethlehemite, who is in all places and filleth all things, doth slay me.

Canticle 7

(Irmos): An Angel made the fiery furnace to drop dew for the Holy Children, but the command of God, consuming the Chaldeans with fire, prevailed upon the tormentor to cry aloud: Blessed art thou, O God of our fathers!

Verses: The night of death, gloomy and moonless, hath overtaken me, still unready, sending me forth on that long and dreadful journey unprepared. But let thy mercy accompany me, O Lady.

Lo, all my days are vanished, of a truth, in vanity, as it is written, and my years also in vain; and now the snares of death, which of a truth are bitter, have entangled my soul, and have compassed me round about.

Let not the multitude of my sins conquer thy great tenderness of heart, O Lady. But let thy mercy compass me round about, and let it cover all my transgressions.

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

They who shall lead me hence are come, and hem me in on every side; but my soul holdeth back and is dismayed, being filled with much rebellion; the which allay thou, O Pure One, by thy manifestation.

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

Not one have I found who grieveth over my affliction, or who comforteth me, O Lady: For all my friends and acquaintance have now abandoned me. But do thou, O my Hope, in no wise forsake me.

Canticle 8

(Irmos): Out of the flames thou didst shed forth dew upon the Godly Ones, and with water didst kindle the sacrifice of the Righteous One. For thou doest all things which thou willest, O Christ. Thee will we exalt unto all the ages.

Verses: As the Mother loving mankind of the God who loveth mankind, look thou with calm and merciful eye when my soul from its body shall part; and I will glorify thee forever, O holy Theotokos.

Vouchsafe that I may escape the hordes of bodiless barbarians, and rise through the abysses of the air, and enter into heaven; and I will glorify thee forever, O holy Theotokos.

O thou who didst bear the Lord Almighty, banish thou far from me when I come to die, the chieftain of bitter torments who ruleth the universe; and I will glorify thee forever, O holy Theotokos.

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

When the last great trump shall sound unto the frightful and dread Resurrection of the judgment Day, and all shall rise from the dead; then remember thou me, O holy Theotokos.

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

O lofty Palace of Christ our Master, who hast sent down thy grace from on high, aid thou me now, in the day of wrath; and I will glorify thee forever, O holy Theotokos.

Canticle 9

(Irmos): It is not possible that men should see God, upon whom the Orders of the Angels dare not gaze: but through thee, O All-pure One, was the Word Incarnate manifested unto men; Whom magnifying, together with the Heavenly Hosts, we call thee blessed.

Verses: Oh, how shall I look upon the invisible? How shall I endure its vision dread? How shall I dare mine eyes to open? How shall I dare to gaze upon my Master, whom I have not ceased, from my youth up, ever to grieve?

O Holy Maiden, Theotokos, look with mercy upon my meekness. Receive this my propitiatory and final prayer, and from the fire that tortureth to all eternity make thou haste to deliver me.

I, who have defiled the holy temples, on quitting this vile temple of the body, do beseech thee, O all-honourable Temple of God, Maiden, Virgin Mother, that my soul may escape outer darkness, and the burning of fierce Gehenna.

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

Forasmuch as I now behold the end of my life draw near, and am a worker of unseemly thoughts and deeds, O All-pure One, I am cruelly smitten with the stings of conscience, O Maker of my soul. But do thou mercifully incline unto me; and be thou my Intercessor.

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

The Son will give himself unto us for mercy, the Son of God and King of the Angels, the Man Eternal, coming forth from thy pure blood; Whom do thou propitiate, O Maiden, on behalf of my passion-tossed soul, which is cruelly wrested from my body accursed.

Meet is it, in truth, to bless thee, the Theotokos, ever-blessed and all-undefiled, and the Mother of our God. More honourable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, thou who without defilement barest God the Word, true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

The Prayers said by the Priest at the Departure of a Soul.

O Lord God Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who willest that all men should be saved, and should come unto the knowledge of the truth; who desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn again and live: We pray thee and implore thee, absolve thou the soul of thy servant, N., from every bond, and deliver him (*her*) from every curse. Pardon his (*her*) transgressions, both of knowledge and of ignorance, both of deed and of word, which he (*she*) hath committed from his (*her*) youth up, and hath cleanly confessed or hath concealed, either through forgetfulness or through shame. For thou alone loosest those things which are bound, and guidest aright the contrite, and art the hope of the despairing, and mighty to remit the sins of every man who putteth his trust in thee. Yea, O Lord who lovest mankind, give thou command, and he shall be released from the bonds of the flesh and of sin; and receive thou in peace the soul of this thy servant, N., and give it rest in the everlasting mansions, with thy Saints; through the grace of thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord, and God, and Saviour Jesus Christ: with whom also thou art blessed, together with thine all-holy, and good, and life-giving Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Or: Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

O Master, Lord our God Almighty, who willest that all men should be saved and should come to a knowledge of the truth; who desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he should turn again and be saved: We pray thee and beseech thee, deliver thou the soul of thy servant, N., from every bond, free it from every curse. For thou art he who delivereth them that are bound, and guideth aright them that are cast down, O Hope of the hopeless. Wherefore, O Master, command that the soul of thy servant, N., may depart in peace, and may rest in thine everlasting mansions with all thy Saints; through thine Only-begotten Son, with whom thou art blessed, together with thine all-holy, and good, and life-giving Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Another Prayer for a Person who hath suffered long, and is on the point of death.

O Lord our God, who in thine ineffable wisdom hast created man, fashioning him out of the dust, and adorning him with comeliness and goodness, as an honourable and heavenly acquisition, to the exaltation and magnificence of thy glory and kingdom, that thou mightest bring him into this image and likeness; but forasmuch as he sinned against the command of thy statute, having accepted the image but preserved it not, and because, also, evil shall not be eternal: Thou hast ordained remission unto the same, through thy love toward mankind; and that this destructible

bond, which as the God of our fathers thou hadst sanctified by thy divine will, should be dissolved, and that his body should be dissolved from the elements of which it was fashioned, but that his soul should be translated to that place where it shall take up its abode until the final Resurrection. Therefore we pray unto thee, the Father who is from everlasting, and immortal, and unto thine Only-begotten Son, and unto thine all-holy Spirit, that thou wilt deliver N. from the body onto repose, entreating, also, forgiveness of thine ineffable goodness if he (*she*) in any wise, whether of knowledge or in ignorance, hath offended thy goodness, or is under the ban of a priest, or hath embittered his (*her*) parents, or hath broken a vow, or hath fallen into devilish imaginations and shameful sorceries, through the malice of the crafty demon: Yea, O Master, Lord our God, hearken unto me a sinner and thine unworthy servant in this hour, and deliver thy servant, N., from this intolerable sickness which holdeth him (*her*) in bitter impotency, and give him (*her*) rest where the souls of the righteous dwell. For thou art the repose of our souls and of our bodies, and unto thee do we ascribe glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.