

THURSDAY IN THE FIRST WEEK OF GREAT LENT
THE GREAT CANON OF REPENTANCE, BY ST. ANDREW OF CRETE
CHANTED IN TONE SIX

In the first week of Great Lent, following the Little Doxology we sing tonight's quarter of the "Great Canon of Repentance" by Saint Andrew of Crete. At the words "Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me" we make one prostration.

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.

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.

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.

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.

As the Prodigal, O Savior, I have wasted the substance of my soul in sin, 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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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, the 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

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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?

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.'

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.

Pray to him whom thou hast loved, O holy Mary, whom thou hast desired, for whose sake thou hast worn out thy flesh: pray to Christ for us thy servants, that He may show mercy to us all, and grant a peaceful life to those who worship Him.

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.

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.

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.

We bless the Lord, Father, Son and 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.

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.

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.

Let us glorify the Father, let us exalt the Son, and with faith let us worship the Spirit of God, undivided Trinity and Unity in essence. Let us adore Light and Lights, Life and Lives, giving light and life to the ends of the earth.

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.

IRMOS OF THE NINTH ODE

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.