

Kneeling Prayers on Pentecost Sunday at Vespers

The First Prayer.

 Most-pure, spotless, unoriginate, invisible, incomprehensible, unsearchable, immutable, invincible, immeasurable, forbearing Lord, Who alone hast immortality, Who dwellest in light unapproachable, Who hast made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is therein, Who unto all grantest their petitions before thy ask: We pray Thee and we ask Thee, O Master, Lover of mankind, the Father of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from the heavens and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Ever-virgin Mary, the most glorious Theotokos; Who, having first taught in words, and afterwards instructed by deed, when He had endured the saving Passion, granted unto us, Thy lowly and sinful and unworthy servants a precept that we should offer prayers unto Thee, with bowing of the neck and knees, for our own sins, and for the errors of the people. Do Thou Thyself, O Plenteously Merciful One and Lover of mankind, hearken unto us in the day when we call upon Thee, and especially on this day of Pentecost, whereon after the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into the heavens, and His sitting at the right hand of Thee, God and the Father, He sent down upon His holy disciples and apostles the Holy Spirit, Who rested upon each of them, and all were filled with His inexhaustible grace, and spake in other tongues of Thy greatness and did prophesy. Now, therefore, do Thou hearken unto us who pray unto Thee, and remember us the lowly and condemned, and turn again the captivity of our souls, having Thy loving-kindness interceding for us. Accept us

who fall down before Thee and shout: We have sinned; on Thee were we cast from the womb, from our mother's womb, Thou art our God. But inasmuch as our days were consumed in vanity, we were bereft of Thy help, we deprived ourselves of any defense; but presuming upon Thy compassions, we cry: The sins of our youth and ignorances remember not, and from our secret sins cleanse us, and cast us not away in the time of our old age, when our strength faileth; forsake us not even until we return again into the earth, vouchsafe us to return unto Thee; attend to us through Thy good favour, and grace; measure our transgressions with Thy compassions, set the abyss of Thy compassions against the multitude of our sins. Look down from Thy holy height, O Lord, upon Thy people standing before Thee and looking for abundant mercies from Thee. Visit us with Thy goodness, deliver us from the assaults of the devil; establish our life upon Thy holy and sacred commandments. Commit Thy people unto a faithful guardian angel, gather all into Thy kingdom, grant pardon unto them that hope in Thee; remit their sins and ours. Cleanse us by the working of Thy Holy Spirit; destroy the wiles of the enemy directed against us.

And he addeth also this prayer:

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Master Almighty, Who didst illumined the day with the light of the sun, and makest the night clear with fiery redness, Who hast vouchsafed us to pass through the length of the day, and to approach the beginning of the night: Hearken unto our supplications, and those of all Thy people, forgiving us all our sins, voluntary and involuntary. Accept our evening supplications, and send down a multitude of Thy mercies, and Thy compassions upon Thine inheritance. Defend us with Thy holy angels, arm us

with the weapon of Thy righteousness; compass us about with Thy truth, keep us by Thy might, deliver us from every attack, every plot laid by the adversary. Grant unto us that this evening, with the approaching night, and all the days of our life, may be perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless, without temptations, undisturbed; through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos, and of all the saints who from the ages have been pleasing to Thee.

The Second Prayer.

 Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who hast bestowed upon men Thy peace, and the gift of the Holy Spirit; Who, while still on earth and present with us, didst grant an inalienable inheritance to the faithful, but more visibly hast sent down this grace today upon Thy disciples and apostles, and hast strengthened their lips with fiery tongues, whereby we, together with the whole race of mankind, having received the knowledge of God in their own tongues in the hearing of our own ears, have been enlightened by the light of the Spirit, and have been changed from delusion as from out of darkness, and through the distribution of the material and fiery tongues, and the supernatural activity were taught to believe in Thee, and kindled to bless Thee together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in one Godhead and might and authority: Do Thou, O Effulgence of the Father, immutable and immovable Image of His essence and nature, the Fountain of wisdom and grace, open the lips of even me a sinner, and teach me how I ought to pray and for what needs to pray; for Thou Knowest the great multitude of my sins, but Thy loving-kindness will overcome their immensity. For, behold, in fear I stand before Thee, having cast the despair of my soul into the abyss of Thy mercy: do Thou pilot my

life, O Thou Who by a word dost direct all Creation by the unutterable might of Thy wisdom, O peaceful Haven of the storm-tossed, and cause me to know the way wherein I should walk. Grant unto my thoughts the Spirit of Thy wisdom, bestowing upon my foolishness the Spirit of understanding; overshadow my doings with the spirit of Thy fear, and renew a right spirit within me, and with Thy governing Spirit establish my sliding thoughts, so that being daily guided by Thy good Spirit in things profitable, I may be enabled to keep Thy commandments, and ever to bear in mind Thy glorious Coming, and those things worthy of torment that we have done. And do not suffer me to be captivated by the corruptible beauties of this world, but strengthen me in the desire to attain the treasures of the world to come. For Thou hast said, O Master, that whatsoever one may ask in Thy name, he shall freely receive it from Thine ever-existing God and Father. Wherefore, I also, a sinner, at the descent of Thy Holy Spirit, entreat Thy goodness to grant me whatsoever I have asked which is unto salvation. Yea, O Lord, abundant Giver of every benefit, Bestower of good things, for Thou it is Who dost most abundantly grant that which we request; Thou art compassionate and merciful, having without sin been a participant in our flesh, and in Thy compassionate loving-kindness art inclined toward those that bow the knee before Thee, having been the propitiation for our sins. Grant then, O Lord, Thy compassions unto Thy people; hearken unto us out of Thy holy heaven; sanctify us with the might of Thy saving right hand; shelter us with the shelter of Thy wings, and disdain not the work of Thy hands. Against Thee only have we sinned, but also Thee only do we serve. We know not how to worship an alien god, nor to stretch out our hands, O Master, to another God. Forgive us

our sins, and having accepted our supplications made on bended knees, stretch out unto us all a helping hand; receive the prayer of all as pleasing incense, acceptable before Thy most blessed kingdom.

And he addeth also this prayer:

 Lord, O Lord, Who hast delivered us from every arrow that flieth by day, deliver us also from everything that walketh in darkness. Receive as an evening sacrifice the lifting up of our hands. Vouchsafe us also to pass through the course of the night without blemish, untempted by evil. And deliver us from every anxiety and fear that come to us from the devil. Grant unto our souls compunction, and unto our thoughts solicitude concerning the trial at Thy dread and righteous judgment. Nail our flesh with the fear of Thee, and mortify our earthly members, that in the quietness of sleep we may be enlightened by the vision of Thy judgments. Take from us every unseemly dream and pernicious carnal desire. Raise us up at the hour of prayer fortified in faith and advancing in Thy commandments.

The Third Prayer.

 Ever-flowing, living, and Illumining Fountain, O Might creative, co-ever-existing with the Father, Who hast most excellently fulfilled the whole economy concerning the salvation of mankind, O Christ our God; Who hast shattered the indestructible chains of death and the bolts of hades, and hast trampled down a multitude of evil spirits; Who hast given Thyself for us as a blameless offering, and given Thy most pure Body in sacrifice, inviolable and inaccessible for any sin, and through this terrible and ineffable sacred act granted us life æter-

nal; Who hast descend into hades and broken the æternal bars, and showed the way up, to those that sat in darkness; Who with divinely-wise allurements hast caught the origin of evil and the serpent of the abyss, and having bound him with the chains of darkness in Tartarus and unquenchable fire, and having confined him in outer darkness by Thy boundless might, O preeminent Wisdom of the Father, Thou hast appeared as a great Helper unto the unfortunate, and hast enlightened those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Do Thou, O Lord of ever-lasting glory, beloved Son of the Father Most High, Light ever-existing of Light ever-existing, Sun of righteousness: Hearken unto us that pray unto Thee, and grant rest to the souls of Thy servants, our fathers and brethren departed before us, and the rest of our kindred according to the flesh, and all our fellow-believers, of whom we make commemoration now, for Thou hast dominion over all, and upholdest in Thy hand all the ends of the earth. O Master Almighty, God of the fathers and Lord of Mercy, Creator of both the mortal and immortal race, and of all the nature of man; of that which cometh into being, and again passeth away; of life and death; of sojourn here, and translation beyond this world; Thou dost measure out the years unto the living, and appointest the time for death, Thou bringest into, and leadest out of, hades, Thou dost bind in infirmity and loosest in strength; the present dost Thou arrange according to need, and the future Thou directest profitably; those smitten with the sting of death Thou gladdenest with the hope of resurrection. Do Thou Thyself then, O Master of all, O God our Saviour, Thou hope of all the ends of the earth and of them that be far off at sea, Who hast also on this last and great and salutary day of the feast of Pentecost shown unto us the mystery of

the Holy, consubstantial, co-æternal, indivisible and unmingled Trinity; and in the coming down and descent didst pour out Thy Holy and life-giving Spirit in the form of tongues of fire upon Thy holy apostles, and appointed these as evangelists of our pious Faith, showing them to be confessors and proclaimers of the True Theology, Who also on this all-perfect and saving feast hast deigned to receive propitiatory prayers for those that are kept in hades, giving us great hope that through Thee release and consolation may be sent down to those held there in bondage of vileness. Hearken unto us, Thy lowly servants that pray unto Thee, and give rest to Thy servants departed before us, in a place of light, a place of green pasture, in a place of refreshment, whence all sickness, sorrow, and sighing are fled away; and commit their souls to the tabernacles of the righteous, and vouchsafe unto them peace and release; for not the dead shall praise Thee, O Lord, nor those that be in hades dare to offer confession to Thee, but we the living will bless Thee and will pray and bring propitiatory prayers and sacrifices unto Thee for their souls.

And he addeth also this prayer:

 God great, æternal, and holy, Who lovest mankind and hast vouchsafed us to stand in this very hour before Thine unapproachable glory in song and praise of Thy wonders: Cleanse us, Thine unworthy servants, and grant us the grace with a broken heart and without pride to offer unto Thee the Thrice-holy Doxology, and thanksgiving for Thy great gifts, which Thou hast conferred upon us and always conferrest upon us. Remember, O Lord, our weakness, and destroy us not with our iniquities; but deal with our humility in great mercy, that having escaped the darkness of sin, we may walk in the day

of righteousness, and having put on the armour of light, we may abide unassailed from all snares of the evil one, and with boldness glorify Thee, the only true God and Lover of mankind. For Thine is the truly and really great mystery, O Master and Maker of all, the temporary dissolution of Thy creatures, and thereafter their reintegration and repose unto the ages; we acknowledge Thy grace in everything, for our coming into this world, and our departure, our hope of resurrection and life incorruptible, faithfully pledged unto us through Thy promise, which we shall receive in the future at Thy Second Coming. For Thou art also the Author of our resurrection and the incorruptible and man-loving Judge of those who have lived, and the Master and Lord of rewards, Who also wast joined unto us equally in flesh and blood, because of Thine extreme condescension; and when by Thine own will Thou didst place Thyself under temptation, and in Thy tender compassion didst take our unavoidable passions, and having thereby suffered temptation, Thou art become for us who are tempted the Helper which Thou Thyself hadst promised; wherefore, also Thou hast led us unto Thy passionlessness. Accept, therefore, O Master, our prayers and supplications, and give rest unto all the fathers and mothers and children and the brothers and sisters and relatives of each one of us, and all the souls gone to their rest before us; and commit their spirits unto the hope of resurrection unto life æternal, and inscribe their names in the Book of Life, in the bosom of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the land of the living, in the Kingdom of Heaven, in the Paradise of delight, by Thy radiant angels bringing all into Thy holy habitations, and raising up also our bodies in the day which Thou hast appointed according to Thy holy and sure promise. There is, therefore,

O Lord, no death for Thy servants, when we leave the body and come unto Thee, our God, but a transition from things most saddening unto things most beneficial and most delightful, and unto repose and joy. And though we have sinned against Thee, be Thou merciful unto us and them, for there is no one free from stain in Thy sight, even if his life be but one day, unless it be Thou alone, Who didst manifest Thyself sinless upon the earth, O our Lord Jesus Christ; of Whom we all hope to obtain mercy and remission of sins. Therefore both unto us and them do Thou, as a good and man-loving God, loose, remit, and pardon our transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, whether in knowledge or in ignorance, manifest and forgotten, whether in deed or thought or word, in all our lives and ways. And unto the departed then, grant Thou freedom and release, and bless us that remain here, granting a good and peaceful end unto us and unto all Thy people, and the bowels of mercy and love for mankind do Thou open unto us, at Thy terrible and dread Coming, and make us worthy of Thy kingdom.

And he addeth also this prayer:

 God, great and most high, Who alone hast immortality, and dwellest in light unapproachable; Who hast fashioned all Creation in wisdom; Who hast divided the light from the darkness, and hast set the sun for dominion of the day, the moon and stars for dominion of the night, Who hast vouchsafed unto us sinners at this present hour to come before Thy presence with thanksgiving and to offer unto Thee evening doxology: do Thou Thyself, O Lover of mankind, direct our prayer as incense before Thee and accept it for a sweet-smelling savour; grant unto us that the present evening and the coming night be peaceful. Clothe us with the armour of light. Deliver

us from the terror by night and from everything that walketh in darkness. And grant that the sleep which Thou hast given for the repose of our infirmity may be free from all fantasies of the devil. Yea, O Master, Giver of good things, may we, being moved to compunction upon our beds, remember Thy name in the night, and, enlightened by meditation on Thy commandments, rise up in joyfulness of soul to the glorification of Thy goodness, offering prayers and supplications to Thy loving-kindness for our own sins and for those of all thy people, whom do Thou visit in mercy, through the intercessions of the most holy Theotokos!