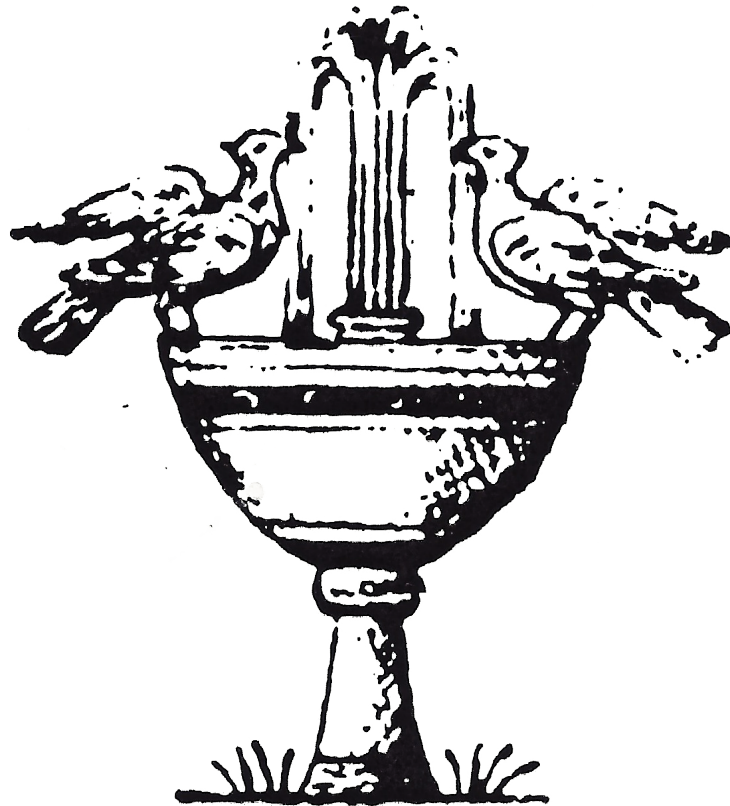


# Prayers of the Hours

*First, Third, Sixth & Ninth Hour Prayers, and the  
Midnight Office*



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*From the Holy and Great Sunday of Pascha until the Saturday of Renewal Week, in place of the usual Hours Prayers the Paschal Hours are read.*

# First Hour

For millennia before the use of clocks, the hours of the day were reckoned from sunrise. We would say now that the First Hour after sunrise corresponds to about seven o'clock in the morning. Our Church prays and asks God to bless the day at this *hour*. She particularly beseeches God to guard us from everything which could harm us in body or soul. At this time, when the senses are awakening through the material light, she calls for spiritual awakening through the Savior Christ, who is "the true light enlightening every man who comes into the world."

*To You I pray, O Lord; in the morning You hear my voice!* – Psalm 5

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Come, let us worship!

## PSALM 5

Give ear to my words, O Lord; give heed to my groaning. Harken to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to You do I pray. O Lord, in the morning You hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You and watch. For You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not sojourn with You. The boastful may not stand before Your eyes; You hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men. But I through the abundance of Your steadfast love will enter Your house, I will worship toward Your holy temple in the fear of You. Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; make Your way straight before me. For there is no truth in their mouth; their heart is destruction, their throat is an open sepulcher, they flatter with their

tongue. Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of their many transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against You. But let all who take refuge in You rejoice, let them ever sing for joy; and defend them, that those who love Your name may exult in You. For You bless the righteous, O Lord; You cover him with favor as with a shield.

## PRAYERS

Order my steps in Your word and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me. Deliver me from the wrongful dealings of men, and so I shall keep Your commandments. Show the light of Your countenance upon Your servant and teach me Your statutes. Let my mouth be filled with Your praise, O Lord, that I may sing of Your glory and honor all the day long. O Christ the true light, enlightening and sanctifying every man who comes into the world: Let the light of Your countenance shine on us, that in it we may behold the ineffable light. Guide our footsteps aright in keeping Your commandments, Through the intercessions of Your all — pure Mother and of all the saints. Amen.

## PETITION FOR THE CHURCH

The universe offers You the God — bearing martyrs as the first — fruits of creation, O Lord and Creator. Through the Theotokos and their prayers, establish Your Church in peace.

O Christ our God, Who at all times and in every hour , in heaven and on earth art worshipped and glorified, Who are long-suffering,

merciful and compassionate, who loves the just and shows mercy on the sinner, and calls all to salvation through the promise of good things to come:

O Lord in this hour receive our prayer and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls, hallow our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds, deliver us from evil and distress.

Encompass us about with Your holy angels, that guided and guarded by them we may attain to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory, for You are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

# Third Hour Prayers

At this hour, which corresponds to about nine o'clock in the morning, the believer along with the Church thanks the Heavenly Father for the very rich gift He gave to the Church when at the third hour the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, came down upon the Apostles (Acts 2:16). From that time onward the Holy Spirit ever remains in the Church, guiding, sanctifying and safeguarding it. As we share with every faithful soul this invaluable gift, we thank our God and Father and ask Him never to deprive us of the fruits and graces of the Spirit.

*Take not Your Holy Spirit from me.* – Psalm 51

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen. Come, let us worship!

## PSALM 24

To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in You I trust, let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. Let none that wait for You be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Make me to know Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day long. Be mindful of Your mercy, O Lord, and of Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, or my transgressions; according to Your steadfast love, remember me for Your goodness sake, O Lord!

Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble

His way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. For Your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him will He instruct in the way that he should choose. He himself shall abide in prosperity and his children shall possess the land. The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him and He makes known to them His covenant.

My eyes are ever toward the Lord, for He will pluck my feet out of the net. Turn to me and be gracious to me; for I am lonely and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart and bring me out of my distresses. Consider my affliction and my trouble and forgive all my sins. Consider how many are my foes and with what violent hatred they hate me. Guard my life and deliver me; let me not be put to shame, for I take refuge in You. May integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles!

## **PRAYER**

O Lord, You sent down Your Most Holy Spirit upon Your apostles at the Third Hour. Take Him not from us, O Good One, but renew Him in us who pray to You.

## **PRAYER OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT**

O Lord our God, You have given Your peace to men and sent down the gift of Your all holy Spirit to Your disciples and apostles, opening their lips with fiery tongues by Your power: Open also my lips and

teach me, sinner that I am, how and for what I ought to pray. Guide my life, O calm Haven of the storm — tossed, and reveal the way in which I should walk. Renew in me a right spirit and make my mind steady with a governing spirit, so that guided and guarded each day by Your good Spirit, I may be enabled to practice Your commandments, always remembering Your glorious presence which looks upon the deeds men do. Do not let me be deceived by the corrupting delights of this world, but rather strengthen in me the desire to attain the treasures of the world to come. For You are blessed and praised in all Your saints, unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Christ our God, Who at all times and in every hour , in heaven and on earth art worshipped and glorified, Who are long-suffering, merciful and compassionate, who loves the just and shows mercy on the sinner, and calls all to salvation through the promise of good things to come:

O Lord in this hour receive our prayer and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls, hallow our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds, deliver us from evil and distress.

Encompass us about with Your holy angels, that guided and guarded by them we may attain to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory, for You are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

# Sixth Hour

Now, even more than at other times, we should join in prayer with the Church, for every soul, delivered by Jesus, ought to have a sense of awe and gratitude, At this hour, corresponding to about twelve noon, the divine drama of our Lord's sacrifice began. At Golgotha, "the place of the skull," Jesus was nailed to the Cross like a criminal (Matthew 27:45 ff.; Mark 15:33 ff.; Luke 23:44 ff.). Do not just shudder, considering the terrible image, but rejoice in the infinite love of God Give Him grateful thanks, for by this, He has wrought our salvation.

*There they crucified Him... It was now about the sixth hour.* – Luke 23:33,44

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen. Come, let us worship!

## PSALM 53

Save me, O God, by Your name and vindicate me by Your might. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For insolent men have risen against me, ruthless men seek my life; they do not set God before them. Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life. He will requite my enemies with evil; in Your faithfulness put an end to them. With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to You; I will give thanks to Your name O Lord, for it is good. For You have delivered me from every trouble and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies!



## PRAYERS

O Christ God, on the sixth day and hour, You nailed to the Cross the sin which rebellious Adam committed in paradise. Tear asunder also the bond of our iniquities, and save us! You have wrought salvation in the midst of the earth, O Christ God. You stretched out Your all — pure hands upon the Cross; You gathered together all the nations that cry aloud to You: Glory to You, O Lord!

### PRAYER OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

O God, Lord of hosts and Maker of all created things, who in Your great compassion and mercy sent down Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the redemption of mankind, and by His precious Cross destroyed the writing of our sins, thereby triumphing over the source and power of darkness: O Lord and Lover of man, accept also the thanksgiving and fervent prayers of us sinners. Deliver us from every dark and harmful transgression and from all the visible and invisible enemies which seek to destroy us. Nail our flesh to the fear of You, and do not incline our hearts to words or thoughts of guile. But wound our souls with Your love, that ever looking to You, and guided by You in the light, and beholding You, the Light ineffable and everlasting, we may offer ceaseless praise and thanksgiving to You: To the Father who has no beginning, together with Your only-begotten Son and Your all holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Christ our God, Who at all times and in every hour , in heaven and on earth art worshipped and glorified, Who are long-suffering,

merciful and compassionate, who loves the just and shows mercy on the sinner, and calls all to salvation through the promise of good things to come:

O Lord in this hour receive our prayer and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls, hallow our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds, deliver us from evil and distress.

Encompass us about with Your holy angels, that guided and guarded by them we may attain to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory, for You are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

# Ninth Hour

At this hour, corresponding to about three o'clock in the afternoon, the drama of our Lord's sacrifice upon the Cross ended as He gave up His spirit to the Heavenly Father. He had promised His Kingdom to the repentant thief (Luke 23:43). Our Church, and with her every faithful soul observing in wonder, gives thanks and prays to the divine Redeemer, singing of these inconceivable and saving events with appropriate hymns. And so the liturgical day is closed with the joy and fulfillment of the Cross of Christ.

*And at the ninth hour, Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.* – Mark 15:34,37

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Come, let us worship!

## PSALM 83

How lovely is Your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at Your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in Your house, ever singing Your praise! Blessed are the men whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. As they go through the valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Behold our shield, O God; look upon the face of Your anointed! For a day in Your courts is better than a

thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; He bestows favor and honor. No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!

## **PRAYERS**

O Christ God, at the ninth hour You tasted death in the flesh for our sake: mortify the rebellion of our flesh and save us!

In the midst of two thieves, Your Cross was revealed as the balance — beam of righteousness;

For while the one was led down to hell by the burden of his blaspheming, the other was lightened of his sins to the knowledge of things divine. O Christ our God, glory to You!

## **PRAYER OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT**

O Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, You have led us to the present hour, in which, as You hung upon the life-giving Tree, You made a way into Paradise for the penitent thief, and by death destroyed death: Cleanse us, Your unworthy servants, for we fall into sin continuously and are not worthy to lift up our eyes and look upon the heights of heaven. Forgive us for departing from the path of righteousness and following the desires of our own hearts. We implore Your unending goodness: Spare us, O Lord, according to the multitude of Your mercies, and save us for Your holy name's sake,

for our days are passing away in vanity. Take us from the hand of the adversary and forgive our sins, and mortify in us all impure thoughts. Help us to lay aside our old ways so that we may be clothed with new resolve and may dedicate our lives to You, our Master and Benefactor, so that by following Your commandments, we may come to the eternal rest which is the abode of all those who rejoice. For You are the true joy and exultation of those who love You, O Christ our God, and to You we ascribe glory, together with the Father who is without beginning and Your All-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Christ our God, Who at all times and in every hour , in heaven and on earth art worshipped and glorified, Who are long-suffering, merciful and compassionate, who loves the just and shows mercy on the sinner, and calls all to salvation through the promise of good things to come:

O Lord in this hour receive our prayer and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls, hallow our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds, deliver us from evil and distress.

Encompass us about with Your holy angels, that guided and guarded by them we may attain to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory, for You are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

# Midnight Office

When it is possible for us to rise in the middle of the night for prayer, or perhaps impossible for us to sleep so that we turn to prayer, we are able to enter into a long tradition. We find this witnessed to in the Old Testament by the great prophet David We also find it in the New Testament, there in the jail of Philippi where the apostles Paul and Silas hymned God at midnight, "the prisoners listening to them" (Acts 6:25). This prayer has a particular grace, for while everything is silent and at rest, the soul which loves God rises from her sleep, and together with the heavenly realms, the angels, she sends up her praises and thanksgivings. The saints throughout the ages have had much to tell us concerning the particular blessing the soul feels when it prays at this hour.

*At midnight I will rise to praise You.* – Psalm 119

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen. Come, let us worship God our King!

## PRAYERS

Now that You have raised me from my bed of sleep, O Lord, enlighten my mind and heart. Open my lips that I may sing to You: Holy, Holy, Holy are You, O God! Through the prayers of the Theotokos, have mercy on us!

Having risen from sleep, I thank You, O Holy Trinity, for in Your great goodness and forbearance You have not become angry with me in my negligence and sinfulness, nor have You destroyed me in my transgressions, but in Your compassion You have raised me up as I lay in despair that I might sing the glories of Your majesty.

Enlighten the eyes of my understanding. Open my heart to receive Your words; teach me Your commandments; help me to do Your will, confessing You from my heart, singing and praising Your All-holy name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### PSALM 134

Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord! Lift up your hands to the holy place, and bless the Lord! May the Lord bless you from Zion, He who made heaven and earth!

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.