

Orthodox Prayer Book

PREPARATORY PRAYERS FOR HOLY COMMUNION

First Prayer of St. Basil the Great

O Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ our God, source of life and immortality, Who art the Author of all creation, visible and invisible, the equally everlasting and co-eternal Son of the eternal Father, Who through the excess of Thy goodness didst in the last days assume our flesh and wast crucified for us, ungrateful and ignorant as we were, and didst cause through Thy own Blood the restoration of our nature which had been marred by sin: O immortal King, accept the repentance even of me a sinner, and incline Thine ear to me and hear my words. For I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and I am not worthy to gaze on the height of Thy glory; for I have provoked Thy goodness by transgressing Thy commandments and not obeying Thy orders. But Thou, O Lord, in Thy forbearance, patience, and great mercy, hast not given me up to be destroyed with my sins, but Thou awaitest my complete conversion. For Thou, O Lover of men, hast said through Thy Prophet that Thou desirest not the death of the sinner, but that he should return to Thee and live. For Thou dost not will, O Lord, that the work of Thy hands should be destroyed, neither dost Thou delight in the destruction of men, but Thou desirest that all should be saved and come to a knowledge of the Truth. Therefore, though I am unworthy both of heaven and earth, and even of this transient life, since I have completely succumbed to sin and am a slave to pleasure and have defaced Thy image, yet being Thy work and creation, wretch that I am, even I do not despair of my salvation and dare to draw near to Thy boundless compassion. So receive even me, O Christ Lover of men, as the harlot, as the thief, as the publican, and as the prodigal; and take from me the heavy burden of my sins, Thou Who takest away the sin of the world, Who healest men's sicknesses, Who callest the weary and heavy laden to Thyself and givest them rest; for Thou camest not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. And purify me from all defilement of flesh and spirit. Teach me to achieve perfect holiness in

the fear of Thee, that with the clear witness of my conscience I may receive the portion of Thy holy Things and be united with Thy holy Body and Blood, and have Thee dwelling and remaining in me with the Father and Thy Holy Spirit. And, O Lord Jesus Christ, my God, let not the communion of Thy immaculate and life-giving Mysteries be to me for condemnation nor let it make me sick in body or soul through my partaking of them unworthily; but grant me till my last breath to receive without condemnation the portion of Thy holy Things, for communion with the Holy Spirit, as a provision for eternal life, and as an acceptable defense at Thy dread tribunal, so that I too with all Thy elect may become a partaker of Thy pure joys which Thou hast prepared for those who love Thee, O Lord, in whom Thou art glorified throughout the ages. Amen.

First Prayer of St. John Chrysostom

O Lord my God, I know that I am not worthy or sufficient that Thou shouldst come under the roof of the house of my soul, for all is desolate and fallen, and Thou hast not with me a place fit to lay Thy head. But as from the highest heaven Thou didst humble Thyself for our sake, so now conform Thyself to my humility. And as Thou didst consent to lie in a cave and in a manger of dumb beasts, so also consent to lie in the manger of my unspiritual soul and to enter my defiled body. And as Thou didst not disdain to enter and dine with sinners in the house of Simon the Leper, so consent also to enter the house of my humble soul which is leprous and sinful. And as Thou didst not reject the woman, who was a harlot and a sinner like me, when she approached and touched Thee, so also be compassionate with me, a sinner, as I approach and touch Thee, and let the live coal of Thy most holy Body and precious Blood be for the sanctification and enlightenment and strengthening of my humble soul and body, for a relief from the burden of my many sins, for a protection from all diabolical practices, for a restraint and a check on my evil and wicked way of life, for the mortification of passions, for the keeping of Thy commandments, for an increase of Thy divine grace, and for the advancement of Thy Kingdom. For it is not insolently that I draw near to

Thee, O Christ my God, but as taking courage from Thy unspeakable goodness, and that I may not by long abstaining from Thy communion become a prey to the spiritual wolf. Therefore, I pray Thee, O Lord, Who alone art holy, sanctify my soul and body, my mind and heart, my emotions and affections, and wholly renew me. Root the fear of Thee in my members, and make Thy sanctification indelible in me. Be also my helper and defender, guide my life in peace, and make me worthy to stand on Thy right hand with Thy Saints: through the prayers and intercessions of Thy immaculate Mother, of Thy ministering Angels, of the immaculate Powers and of all the Saints who have ever been pleasing to Thee. Amen.

Prayer of St. Symeon the Translator

O only pure and sinless Lord, Who through the ineffable compassion of Thy love for men didst assume our whole nature through the pure and virgin blood of her who supernaturally conceived Thee by the coming of the Divine Spirit and by the will of the Eternal Father; O Christ Jesus, Wisdom and Peace and Power of God, Who in Thy assumption of our nature didst suffer Thy life-giving and saving Passion - the Cross, the Nails, the Spear, and Death - mortify all the deadly passions of my body. Thou Who in Thy burial didst spoil the dominions of hell, bury with good thoughts my evil schemes and scatter the spirits of wickedness. Thou Who by Thy life-giving Resurrection on the third day didst raise up our fallen first Parent, raise me up who am sunk in sin and suggest to me ways of repentance. Thou Who by Thy glorious Ascension didst deify our nature which Thou hadst assumed and didst honor it by Thy session at the right hand of the Father, make me worthy by partaking of Thy holy Mysteries of a place at Thy right hand among those who are saved. Thou Who by the descent of the Spirit, the Paraclete, didst make Thy holy Disciples worthy vessels, make me also a recipient of His coming. Thou Who art to come again to judge the World with justice, grant me also to meet Thee on the clouds, my Maker and Creator, with all Thy Saints, that I may unendingly glorify and praise Thee with Thy Eternal Father and Thy all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

First Prayer of St. John Damascene

O Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who alone hast authority to forgive men their sins, overlook in Thy goodness and love for men all my offences whether committed with knowledge or in ignorance, and make me worthy to receive without condemnation Thy divine, glorious, spotless, and life-giving Mysteries, not for punishment, nor for an increase of sins, but for purification and sanctification and as a pledge of the life and kingdom to come, as a protection and help, and for the destruction of enemies, and for the blotting out of my many transgressions. For Thou art a God of mercy and compassion and love for men, and to Thee we send up the glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Second Prayer of St. Basil the Great

I know, O Lord, that I partake of Thy immaculate Body and precious Blood unworthily, and that I am guilty, and eat and drink judgment to myself by not discerning the Body and Blood of Thee my Christ and God. But taking courage from Thy compassion I approach Thee, for Thou hast said: "He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood abides in Me and I in him." Therefore have compassion, O Lord, and do not make an example of me, a sinner, but deal with me according to Thy mercy; and let these Holy Things be for my healing and purification and enlightenment and protection and salvation and sanctification of body and soul, for the turning away of every phantasy and all evil practice and diabolical activity working subconsciously in my members, for confidence and love towards Thee, for reformation of life and security, for an increase of virtue and perfection, for fulfillment of the commandments, for communion with the Holy Spirit, as a provision for eternal life, and as an acceptable defense at Thy dread Tribunal, not for judgment or for condemnation.

Prayer of St. Symeon the New Theologian

From sullied lips,
From an abominable heart,
From an unclean tongue,

Out of a polluted soul,
Receive my prayer, O my Christ.
Reject me not,
Nor my words, nor my ways,
Nor even my shamelessness,
But give me courage to say
What I desire, my Christ.
And even more, teach me
What to do and say.
I have sinned more than the harlot
Who, on learning where Thou wast lodging,
Bought myrrh,
And dared to come and anoint
Thy feet, my Christ,
My Lord and my God.
As Thou didst not repulse her
When she drew near from her heart,
Neither, O Word, abominate me,
But grant me Thy feet
To clasp and kiss,
And with a flood of tears
As with most precious myrrh
Dare to anoint them.
Wash me with my tears
And purify me with them, O Word.
Forgive my sins
And grant me pardon.
Thou knowest the multitude of my evil-doings,
Thou knowest also my wounds,
And Thou seest my bruises.
But also Thou knowest my faith,
And Thou beholdest my willingness,
And Thou hearest my sighs.
Nothing escapes Thee, my God,
My Maker, my Redeemer,
Not even a tear-drop,
Nor part of a drop.
Thine eyes know
What I have not achieved,
And in Thy book
Things not yet done
Are written by Thee.
See my depression,
See how great is my trouble,
And all my sins
Take from me, O God of all,

That with a clean heart,
Trembling mind
And contrite spirit
I may partake of Thy pure
And all-holy Mysteries
By which all who eat and drink Thee
With sincerity of heart
Are quickened and deified.
For Thou, my Lord, hast said:
"Whoever eats My Flesh
And drinks My Blood
Abides in Me
And I in Him."
Wholly true is the word
Of my Lord and God.
For whoever partakes of Thy divine
And deifying Gifts
Certainly is not alone,
But is with Thee, my Christ,
Light of the Triune Sun
Which illumines the world.
And that I may not remain alone
Without Thee, the Giver of Life,
My Breath, my Life,
My Joy,
The Salvation of the world,
Therefore I have drawn near to Thee
As Thou seest, with tears
And with a contrite spirit.
Ransom of my offences,
I beseech Thee to receive me,
And that I may partake without condemnation
Of Thy life-giving and perfect Mysteries,
That Thou mayest remain as Thou hast said
With me, thrice-wretched as I am,
Lest the tempter may find me
Without Thy grace
And craftily seize me,
And having deceived me, may seduce me,
From Thy deifying words.
Therefore I fall at Thy feet
And fervently cry to Thee:
As Thou receivedst the Prodigal
And the Harlot who drew near to Thee,
So have compassion and receive me,
The profligate and the prodigal,

As with contrite spirit
I now draw near to Thee.
I know, O Saviour, that no other
Has sinned against Thee as I,
Nor has done the deeds
That I have committed.
But this again I know
That not the greatness of my offences
Nor the multitude of my sins
Surpasses the great patience
Of my God,
And His extreme love for men.
But with the oil of compassion
Those who fervently repent
Thou dost purify and enlighten
And makest them children of the light,
Sharers of Thy Divine Nature.
And Thou dost act most generously,
For what is strange to Angels
And to the minds of men
Often Thou tellest to them
As to Thy true friends.
These things make me bold, my Christ,
These things give me wings,
And I take courage from the wealth
Of Thy goodness to us.
And rejoicing and trembling at once,
I who am straw partake of fire,
And, strange wonder!
I am ineffably bedewed,
Like the bush of old
Which burnt without being consumed.
Therefore with thankful mind,
And with thankful heart,
And with thankfulness in all the members
Of my soul and body,
I worship and magnify
And glorify Thee, my God,
For Thou art blessed,
Now and throughout the ages.

Second Prayer of St. John Chrysostom

I am not worthy, O Lord and Master, that Thou shouldest enter under the roof of my soul; but since Thou in Thy love for men dost will to dwell in me, I take courage and approach. Thou commandest: I will open wide

the doors which Thou alone didst create, that Thou mayest enter with love as is Thy nature, enter and enlighten my darkened thought. I believe that Thou wilt do this, for Thou didst not banish the Harlot who approached Thee with tears, nor didst Thou reject the Publican who repented, nor didst Thou drive away the Thief who acknowledged Thy Kingdom, nor didst Thou leave the repentant persecutor (Paul) to himself; but all who had been brought to Thee by repentance Thou didst set in the company of Thy friends, O Thou Who alone art blessed always, now and to endless ages. Amen.

Third Prayer of St. John Chrysostom

Lord Jesus Christ my God, remit, forgive, absolve and pardon the sins, offences and transgressions which I, Thy sinful, useless and unworthy servant have committed from my youth, up to the present day and hour, whether with knowledge or in ignorance, whether by words or deeds or intentions or thoughts, and whether by habit or through any of my senses. And through the intercession of her who conceived Thee without seed, the immaculate and ever-virgin Mary Thy Mother, my only sure hope and protection and salvation, make me worthy without condemnation to receive Thy pure, immortal, life-giving and dread Mysteries, for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life, for sanctification and enlightenment and strength and healing and health of soul and body, and for the blotting out and complete destruction of my evil reasonings and intentions and prejudices and nocturnal fantasies of dark evil spirits. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory and the honour and the worship, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Second Prayer of St. John Damascene

I stand before the doors of Thy sanctuary, yet I do not put away my terrible thoughts. But O Christ our God, Who didst justify the Publican, and have mercy on the Canaanite woman, and didst open the gates of Paradise to the Thief, open to me the depths of Thy love for men, and as I approach and touch Thee, receive me like the Harlot and the woman with an issue of blood. For the one received healing easily by

touching the hem of Thy garment, and the other by clasping Thy sacred feet obtained release from her sins. And I, in my pitiableness, dare to receive Thy whole Body. Let me not be burnt, but receive me even as these; enlighten the senses of my soul, and burn the stains of my sins: through the intercessions of her who bore Thee without seed, and of the Heavenly Powers, for Thou art blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

Fourth Prayer of St. John Chrysostom

I believe, O Lord, and I confess that Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief. And I believe that this is Thy pure Body and Thy own precious Blood. Therefore, I pray Thee, have mercy on me and forgive my transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in word and deed, known and unknown. And grant that I may partake of Thy Holy Mysteries without condemnation, for the remission of sins and for life eternal. Amen.

Lines of St. Symeon the Translator

Behold I approach for Divine Communion.
O Creator, let me not be burnt by communicating,
For Thou art Fire which burns the unworthy.
But purify me from every stain.

Then this Prayer:

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, accept me today as a communicant; for I will not speak of the Mystery to Thy enemies; I will not give Thee a kiss like Judas; but like the Thief do I confess Thee. Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom.

And again these lines:

Tremble, O man, when you see the deifying Blood,
For it is a coal that burns the unworthy.
The Body of God both deifies and nourishes;
It deifies the spirit and wondrously nourishes the mind.

And these Troparia:

Thou hast ravished me with longing, O Christ, and with Thy divine love Thou hast changed me. But burn up with spiritual fire my sins and make me worthy to be filled with delight in Thee, that I may leap for joy, O gracious Lord, and magnify Thy two comings.

Into the splendor of Thy Saints how shall I who am unworthy enter? For if I dare to enter the bridechamber, my vesture betrays me, for it is not a wedding garment, and as a prisoner I shall be cast out by the Angels. Cleanse my soul from pollution and save me, O Lord, in Thy love for men.

And this Prayer:

Sovereign Lover of men, Lord Jesus my God, let not these Holy Things be to me for judgment through my being unworthy, but for the purification and sanctification of my soul and body, and as a pledge of the life and kingdom to come. For it is good for me to cling to God and to place in the Lord my hope of salvation.