

THREE PENITENTIAL CANONS

Ode 1

Canon of Compunction

Irmos: Take up the song of Moses and cry aloud, My soul:

He is my helper and protector,
and is become my salvation;
this is my God and I will glorify Him.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
Before our departure let us weep for
ourselves, O brethren, that by comely tears
we may then flee tears of torment that have
in them nothing profitable.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
O Christ, I have made a thousand promises
to repent, and as I have an unfeeling soul, I
fall into offences. Take pity on my
weakness, O Savior.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
O martyrs of Christ, who, covered by
divine dew, have suffered the fire of
tortures, deliver from the fire of Gehenna
me, who lie surrounded by grievous
passions.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
Most worthy martyrs of Christ, by a divine
strength ye have been shown powerful
against the enemy, and have laid low their
powerless might.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!
O Mother of God, Thou Tongs bearing fire
that Isaiah once saw, burn the material
passions of my heart, and quench them
before the end.

Canon to the Theotokos

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!
God having chosen Thee as beautiful, as
very fair, as wholly without spot among
women, He dwelt in Thine undefiled
womb, Do Thou entreat Him, O all-
blameless One, for all who sing Thy praises

to be delivered from the reproach of those
who blame them

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!
As in the Psalms, Thou hast stood as a
Queen at the right hand of Him Who hath
shone forth from Thy womb. Pray Him for
me to receive a place at His Right Hand on
the day of retribution, O all-blameless One.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!
By bearing the heavenly Rain, Thou hast
entirely renewed the nature of mortal man,
made dry and barren by misdeeds. But I
entreat Thee, O Bride of God, show fruitful
the dry and barren furrows of my soul.

Canon to the Forerunner

*O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord,
pray to God for us.*
O Baptist and Forerunner of Christ, pilot
my mind, plunged without ceasing in the
lusts of the body, and appease the waves of
passion, that in a divine calm I may sing of
thee.

*O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord,
pray to God for us.*
Shining by an enlightenment past
understanding as an exceeding bright star
of the spiritual East, thou hast run before
Him: O Baptist, pray that He may enlighten
my heart, darkened by attacks of demons.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit.*
O all-wise one, thou hast once plunged the
Abyss into the river, and washed away
every transgression by grace; but I entreat
thee, O blessed one, dry up by thy divine
mediation the flowing streams of my
offences.

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
O all-blessed Forerunner, thou wast a
kinsman of the Holy Virgin, from whom

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God was made flesh. We honor her and thee also, and we entreat thee to make us who now dwell in thy holy temple, dwellings of the Spirit.

Ode 3

Canon of Compunction

Irmos: O God, the husbandman of all good trees and fruit, make fruitful my barren mind in Thy compassion.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
O Christ, rouse my soul, heavy with the short sleep of heedlessness, to the vigilance of repentance, for it to execute Thine ordinances.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
O Jesus, on the dread day show me not blameworthy, but, turning me back before the end, deliver me from grievous chastisement.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
O martyrs of Christ, who in divine ways have well imitated the Passion of Christ, heal the grievous passions of my soul.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
That ye might be counted worthy of eternal good things, O martyrs, ye have firmly endured on earth every terrible trial.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!
O pure lady, as a mother hast thou fed on milk Him who giveth to all, and thou hast carried in thy bosom Him who at all times beareth the whole world in his hand.

Canon to the Theotokos

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!
O Thou who art all-undefiled, the Maker by proceeding from Thy womb hath worn the man that I am, giving me, stripped by many misdeeds, a garment of incorruption.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!
Thou who art undefiled didst conceive God the Word beyond price. Earnestly pray Him to take pity on my humble soul that the disgraceful things of lust have made dark and dull.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!
Heal the hurts of my soul, O Thou most pure One. By Thine effectual medicine, keep safe my humble heart, poisoned by the venom of the serpent.

Canon to the Forerunner

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.
O Forerunner of the Lord, heal the wounds of my soul and by thy divine mediation enlighten my mind, which is darkened by slothfulness, and deliver me, I entreat thee, from every adverse circumstance.

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.
O wise prophet, born by divine forethought, thou hast loosed from barrenness her that bare thee. O Forerunner of the Lord, make my barren heart now fruitful, that it bear the shoots of virtue.

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

I entreat thee, who by love hath had the strength to make a divine dwelling for thyself, entreat that those who serve in thy temple obtain a portion of the inheritance on high, and make them temples of the divine Spirit by thine intercessions, O Baptist and Forerunner.

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
The Forerunner greatly rejoiced in the womb of his mother and worshipped the Lord who was in thy womb, most blessed one of God; whom do thou pray for me to be delivered from all affliction.

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Ode 4

Canon of Compunction

Irmos: Foreseeing Thy birth from a Virgin, the prophet cried aloud:

I have heard the report of Thee and was afraid; for from Teman and the holy overshadowed mountain hast thou come, O Christ.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

O Word, that crafty-minded one, the adversary, as he looketh at me, at all times stripped and made poor by my slothfulness, is of good cheer. O Lord of glory, who makest rich the needy, pluck me from his evil-doing.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

O Lord, I have made my hands and eyes filthy by mine acts, and have done what is unseemly, moving Thy mercy to wrath and wasting Thy longsuffering. Look upon me, then, and take pity, O good Lord.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us. How wonderful is God in His saints, who obeyed Him and laid low the images of perdition and inherited the wide spaces of Paradise, from which Adam was thrust forth in days gone by.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us. O ye blessed, by streams of blood have ye made to cease the blood offered to demons as ransom of destruction for the perdition of men. Therefore we ever bless you.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

O Theotokos, the glorious company of the prophets, having learnt through the Spirit thy mystery, revealed its pattern beforehand in divers ways by holy symbols, whose object we see clearly.

Canon to the Theotokos

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

Rain down on me, O Lady, a drop of compunction, carrying away all the fever of my heart and suppressing the stumbling reflection of my understanding.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

O thou who art undefiled, do not despise me, lying wounded and pierced by lust; but heal me by the lance and the blood of Thy crucified Son and our God.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

Do Thou whom all men sing and who art rich as Queen of all creation, take pity on me, grievously poor in divine grace, that I may magnify Thee my only Advocate.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

O Virgin, refresh me through repentance and moisten my heart, withered by the fever of passion, pouring upon me the oil and healing of Thy mercy.

Canon to the Forerunner

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

With thy right hand, all-blessed Forerunner, Thou hast bowed the head of Him who bowed the heavens and conversed with mortal men. Therefore do thou guard me and keep my soul in humility.

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

O blessed Forerunner the impassable wilderness had thee as citizen. Therefore do I cry aloud to thee: Keep safe my soul that has become a wilderness void of every divine action.

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

Thou, who hast maintained divine law, hast been lawlessly murdered. Therefore I pray thee, amend me, who at all times

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transgress the law and am allured by the enticements of demons.

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

O Forerunner, who hast built thyself into a house of the Lord and King, thou hast now departed to the divine habitations. Do thou pray, then, for him, who hast raised for thee a holy house, to obtain them.

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
Look upon me that am sick, O all-blameless one, and loose my grievous passions, hard to cure, that I may magnify Thee, who art magnified by all mankind.

Ode 5

Canon of Compunction

Irmos: O Savior, disperse the mists of my soul / and enlighten me with the light of Thy commandments, / as Thou alone art the King of peace.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
To sin do I senselessly join sin, and there is no upward inclination in my death. Woe is me! How shall I appear to Christ?

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
Suffering shipwreck like a boat, I have lost my load that Thou hast given me, O merciful One, and now I cry in need; Abhor me not, O Christ.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
As ye despised the glory here below, that is to be trampled underfoot, ye have been counted worthy of the heavenly glory, and ye live with Christ, O martyrs.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
O Martyrs, by faith ye have parted the mind from the love of the flesh, and ye have lovingly made tortures your own, having become Christ's own.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!
Daniel saw Thee as a mighty mountain, from which a stone was cut that made extinct the graven images of demons.

Canon to the Theotokos

O most holy Theotokos, save us!
O undefiled Mother of God who didst bear the Way of Life, guide me to the straight path, who have lived an unreasonable fallen life which leads me to pathless places and pitfalls of dire calamities.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!
O Virgin Mother of God, having senselessly estranged my mind, I have lived as the Prodigal Son, straying to a far country. But by Thy supplications, turn me back and save me.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!
O undefiled Virgin Mother, grant that I, Thy servant, who am on fire with the flames of sin and threatened by demons, may drink of Thy waters that pour forth life.

Canon to the Forerunner

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.
O Forerunner, who in the outpourings of the Jordan, in the streams of immortality, hast baptized Christ, entreat Him to dry up the flow of my passions and to make me an inheritor of the glowing river of pleasure, and the fair rejoicing of the Just.

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.
I already lament and am cast down with fear, and am held at all times by perplexity, as I perceive the things that I have done, and the future dread trial. O compassionate Lord, spare me by the intercessions of Thy Baptist.

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O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

Giving to the peoples the law unto salvation that shall be for the repentance of sins, O Forerunner, thou dost stand between the Law and Grace. Therefore we entreat thee, illumine us with the ways of repentance.

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

O Benefactor, give me, come carelessly after wasting all, a season of repentance, as I have praying for me, O Word, John the great Forerunner, who is preacher of repentance to the whole world.

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

O all-blameless Lady, I am dead by the assaults and ambushes of the deceiver. O Theotokos who hast borne the life of all in Person, make me live, that I may piously sing thy praises, O pure one.

Ode 6

Canon of Compunction

Irmos: I am held fast, Savior, in the depth of sin / and overwhelmed by the sea of life: / but as Thou hast brought out Jonah from the belly of the whale, / bring me out from the passions and save me.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
I cry unto Thee, O Savior, as in olden days the woman of Canaan cried: O Son of God, having mercy on me, take pity. For I have a soul that suffers grievously, and of its own will does not choose to come to its senses.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
A wave of immeasurable passions troubles me. As Thou didst once rebuke the sea and save the holy disciples, lead me up also, O Jesus, and preserve me, O Christ.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.

The bodiless choirs of angels were amazed at your endurance in the body, O honourable athletes in suffering, and they praised Him who granted you strength and the reward of your labours.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
O martyrs, sprinkled by the streams of your own blood, your eyes pierced, and yourselves frozen by grievous cold, ye passed away to the heat of life singing the praises of Christ.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

As a table Thou bearest the Mystic Bread, and we who eat thereof no longer hunger, knowing Thee, O all-hymned one, to be the Bearer of Christ the God of all, and truly she who fed Him.

Canon to the Theotokos

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

O Lady, at the Judgement to come, do not show me to be a laughing stock of devils, but entreat the Judge, Thy Son, to look upon me with favour.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

O Lord, I anger Thee by my thoughts and my evil and unlawful ways. I offer Thee Thy Mother in propitiation: take pity and save me.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

O Lady, deliver me from condemnation, who am self-condemned by my faults, for Thou hast conceived the Lord, the Judge and God of all.

Canon to the Forerunner

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

O Voice that hath preached the Word, and received the voices of all, beg for forgiveness of sins to be given to those who faithfully sing of thee.

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O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

Heal my broken soul, loose the burden of my sin, and by hope save me by thy prayers, O blessed Forerunner.

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

O Forerunner, who hast baptised Jesus with thine hand, do thou, who art all-glorious, pray that I be delivered from the hand of sin, towards which I ever lift my hands.

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

I am held by the slumber of slothfulness, and the sleep of sin burdens my soul. Rouse and save me by Thy vigilant mediation, O most pure one.

Ode 7

Canon of Compunction

Irmos: As the cherubim in heaven, the children sang together in the furnace: Blessed art Thou, O God, for in truth and judgment hast Thou brought all these things upon us because of our sins; and Thou art praised above all and glorified for ever.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. I have denied Thy laws and been obedient to unreasonable desires and done things that amount to nothing, O Christ. For I have acted more foolishly in my senselessness than any other man on earth. O Savior, through love for mankind, let me not perish.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me. As David cried, O Lord: I have been conceived in sin; and as the harlot I weep; and as the provoking servant have I provoked Thee, who art the only good God. O Savior, through love for mankind, let me not perish.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us. O company of sufferers, ye contended as martyrs, and as martyrs have ye been crowned by the life-bearing Right Hand of God. For in truth, ye have loved Him who made all things by a word, and now, rejoicing in heaven, ye enjoy the divine inheritance.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us. The glorious martyrs' eyes were pierced and their hands and feet were cut off. They were sent on a journey straight to heaven, causing the only enemy to stumble on his journeying. By their prayers, O Word, save all those who glorify Thee.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

The cherubim glorify, the seraphim, the thrones, the dominions and the principalities praise Thy childbearing past understanding, O all-hymned Mary, who alone hast borne God in the flesh. Beg Him, O pure One, that all we who honor Thee may be saved.

Canon to the Theotokos

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

O Lady, Thou art my strength, my song, my salvation, my firm defense and my unshakeable wall. Ever fight the devils fighting me and seeking to put me to death. *(twice)*

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

O Virgin, from Thy virgin blood Thou hast given a body to God who hath made mankind godlike. Therefore, by Thine intercessions, deliver me, torn to pieces by the passions and brought to naught by the wily practices of the enemy.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

O Thou whom all men sing, the furnace prefigured Thy childbirth. For as the unbearable fire burnt not the children, so

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Thy womb was not burnt. Therefore, we entreat Thee: deliver Thy servants from the eternal fire.

Canon to the Forerunner

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

Having uprooted the passions of my heart by thine axe of repentance, implant in me, O Forerunner, divine impassiveness and the purest fear of God, making me a stranger to all that is evil.

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

O glorious Forerunner, as thou hast baptised in the streams of the Jordan Him who has covered the firmament with waters, pray Him ever to give the water of divine compunction to mine eyes.

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

O Forerunner, thou hast proclaimed the Lamb who taketh away the sin of the world. Beg Him to make me stand apart from the goats and to count me with the sheep at His right hand.

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
A barren womb bore Thee, O Virgin who hast borne in thy womb the Word made Flesh, whom the great Forerunner, the holy fruit of barrenness, rejoicing, recognised with divine leaping.

Ode 8

Canon of Compunction

Irmos: Let us praise Him, who, in the bush of old, / prefigured the miracle of the Virgin to Moses on Mount Sinai: / let us bless and exalt Him above all forever.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

That Thou mightiest make us godlike, in Thy mercy Thou hast taken flesh. And I understood this not at all, as I was servant to lusts. In Thy kindness, O Christ, turn me back, Thou salvation of all.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
Thou art the Good Shepherd, turn back my wretched soul astray upon the mountain of transgression, and save me, lest the deceiving enemy entirely tear me apart.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
“Let us stand bravely together”, cried the comely sufferers to each other as they were direly wounded, “Behold, Christ stretches out the crowns of victory in all ages.”

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
With the powerful sinews of your dire sufferings ye have crushed the serpent maliciously wishing to entice you, and have appeared as inheritors of the delight of Paradise.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!
That he might make us godlike, God made Himself flesh from Thy pure blood and became mortal man, O Virgin Theotokos. Ever entreat Him for those who honor thee.

Canon to the Theotokos

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

O my soul, fervently desire what is good and beautiful, putting evil things far from thee through the gracefulness of divine practices, having the Mother of God interceding on thy behalf, advocate in all things who is never confounded, as she is full of compassion and loveth goodness.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!
O Mother who didst conceive God, Thou didst set mankind free from the bond of the ancient condemnation. Therefore, I pray Thee who art undefiled, loosen every bond

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of badness that bindeth my heart, binding me with divine love of the Creator.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

O Theotokos, who didst bear the Brightness of the Glory of the Father, make my heart shine that looks dark and sad from the ill repute of its faults. Show me forth a sharer of the eternal glory, O Thou who art blessed and quite without fault.

Canon to the Forerunner

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

O Forerunner who hast stretched out Thy right hand and washed the Undefined in the waters, give me, who lie upon the ground, thy right hand. Deliver me from stain of body, cleansing me entirely by repentance, and save me.

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

O soul, who hast a season for repenting, shake off the deep sleep of slothfulness and hasten to watch and cry to thy Master: O Compassionate One, at the invocation of the Baptist, take pity on me.

Let us bless the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Lord.

O blessed Forerunner, the flowing rivers of passion and the waters of evil have crept up to my soul. Hasten swiftly to pluck me out, O thou who hast washed the most calm of Seas in the waters of the river of impassiveness.

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

Woe is me! who have done much evil. Woe is me! who alone have angered the all-good God. Help me, O Baptist of Christ, and by thine intercessions give me remission of sins and put an end to my debts.

Ode 9

Canon of Compunction

Irmos: Who among those born on earth / hath ever seen or heard of such a thing? / That a Virgin should conceive and without pain of travail bear a Child. / Beholding this Thy wonder, O Mary, / pure Mother of God, we magnify thee.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
O how fearful is Thy judgement seat, before which I expect to be judged! Yet spending the whole time in slothfulness, I in no way feel the dread thereof. Turn me back, O only Artificer, who hast turned back Manasseh who transgressed.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.
I cry aloud to Thee, O Christ: Check the streams of my ills and give me floods of tears to wash away the filth that comes from my foolishness. And do Thou, who in Thy mercy hast saved the harlot who repented with her whole soul, save me.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
The bright memorial of the divine martyrs hath dawned for all of us like the sun, and it enlightens the ends of the earth and drives out by the Divine Spirit the darkness of frenzied idol worship and the soul destroying obscurity of passions.

O ye holy martyrs of the Lord, pray to God for us.
Honorable battle-array, army that bears the tokens of victory, chosen company, gathering of holy martyrs, blessed choir united to the choirs of the bodiless angels! By their intercessions, O Christ, make us participators of Thy kingdom.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!
By the bright enlightening of Him who has dawned from Thy womb and has utterly destroyed the night of godlessness, enlighten, O Mary, Virgin and Mother, all

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those who honor Thee in faith, and deliver them in the hour of judgment from the darkness without light.

Canon to the Theotokos

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

Tasting of the forbidden food, Adam ate bitter fruit from the Tree; while Thy Son, nailed to the Wood, brought the sweetness of immortality. For this we honor Thee who art undefiled.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

Thou didst appear as a Queen, since Thou didst bear beyond understanding the Lord and King who destroyed the Kingdom of hell, O Maiden. Earnestly entreat Him to make all who sing Thy praises worthy of the Kingdom on high.

O most holy Theotokos, save us!

O Lady, by Thy supplications, cause my lowly heart, befouled by lusts, to be good, since Thou didst bear Goodness Himself and art Thyself entirely good, and lead me towards the good gates of repentance.

Canon to the Forerunner

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

O Lord, Thou who alone art sinless and plenteous in mercy, deliver me from the dirt of sin by the prayers of the Baptist, who has proclaimed Thee to all the world as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of men.

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

I have thee, O prophet of God, as a rose that breathes out sweetness, as a fragrant cypress, as a lily that fades not, as a precious balm, and by thy prayers I, who

take refuge under thy protection, am delivered from the sour smell of my works.

O great and holy John, Forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us.

O all-blessed, make me barren of fruitless works, and cause me to be a child of the Lord, ever offering the good fruits of virtue, and a participator of the divine kingdom, living together with the assembly of the saints.

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

O Forerunner of the Lord, to those who love thee and honour thee with love, and who walk about thy divine temple, give from heaven release from trouble, amendment of life, and deliverance from sin.

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

O Prophet thou hast worshipped Him who beareth all things and who was born of His behest in the womb of the Mother of God. With her do thou entreat, O Prophet, that my humble soul, falling every day through many faults, may be saved.