

## THE OPTINA 500: CELL-RULE OF SAINTS

*Each day read one chapter from the Gospels in order, beginning with Matthew and ending with John, and two chapters from the Epistles, beginning with the Acts of the Apostles and ending with the Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian, with the last seven chapters of the Apocalypse read on the same day. Thus you will read through the whole New Testament every 89 days.*

*Read one kathisma from the Psalter each day, beginning with the first and ending with the last. (There are 20 in the Psalter.)*

*The 500 itself consists of the following:*

O God, have mercy on me a sinner! *Prostration*

O God, cleanse Thou me a sinner and have mercy on me! *Prostration*

Thou hast created me, O Lord, have mercy on me; countless times have I sinned, O Lord, forgive me.

*Prostration*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the prayers of Thy most pure Mother and all the saints, have mercy on us. Amen.

Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things; Treasury of Good Things, and Giver of Life: come and abide in us, cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

*In the Paschal Season, ‘Christ is risen...’ is said thrice in place of ‘O Heavenly King’.*

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us. (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, look upon and heal our infirmities, for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (12)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Come! Let us worship God, our King!

Come! Let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God!

Come! Let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God!

PSALM 50 (*Archbishop Dmitri trans.*)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of thy

compassions, blot out my transgressions. Wash me yet more from my transgressions, and from my sin purify thou me: for I know my transgression, and my sin is continually before me. Against thee alone have I sinned, and have done evil before thee; that thou mightest be justified in thy words, and conquer when thou art judged. Behold, in transgressions was I conceived, and in sin did my mother bear me. Behold, thou hast loved truth, the hidden and secret things of thy wisdom hast thou revealed unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me hear joy and gladness; the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice. Turn away thy face from my sins, and blot out my transgressions. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy face, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Give me again the joy of thy salvation, and establish me with a princely spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and the impious shall return unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips and my mouth shall declare thy praise. For if thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would have given it; with burnt-offerings thou wilt not be pleased. A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; a broken and humbled heart God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in thy goodwill unto Zion; and let the walls of Jerusalem

be built. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, oblations, and burnt-offerings; then shall they lay bullocks upon thine altar.

THE SYMBOL OF FAITH (CREED)

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of light; true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He arose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the prophets. In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. Amen.

*First Three Hundred thus:*

“Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have mercy on me the sinner,” (100), *with a full prostration with each of the*

*first 10 repetitions, full bows for the next 20, and a full prostration with the last one. (The prayers are counted by a prayer rope.) After 100 repetitions:*

PRAYER TO THE THEOTOKOS

O most holy Theotokos, my lady, through thy holy and all-powerful prayers, turn away from me, thy humble and unworthy servant, despair, forgetfulness, unreasonableness, indifference, and all unclean, evil, and blasphemous thoughts from my wretched heart and darkened mind. Extinguish the flame of my passions, for I am poor and wretched. Deliver me from my numerous memories and fantasies. Free me from all evil acts, for thou art blessed by all generations, and thy most honorable name is glorified unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Prostration*

*Then two more identical sets of 100 Jesus Prayers followed by the same prayer to the Theotokos.*

*The fourth 100 follows the same pattern but with this prayer to the Theotokos:*

“My most holy Lady Theotokos, save me a sinner.”

*After the last, again the prayer to the Theotokos “O Most Holy Theotokos, my lady...” Prostration*

*The fifth 100 consists of 50 prayers to one’s Guardian Angel:*

“O holy Angel of God, my guardian, pray to God for me a sinner,”

*with full prostrations with the first five, bows with the next 10, 34 without bows, and the last with a prostration.*

“O Most Holy Theotokos, my lady...” *Prostration*

*The final 50 prayers follows the same pattern of bows and prostrations, as the previous 50, but with the prayer:*

“All ye Saints, pray to God for me a sinner.” *then*

“O Most Holy Theotokos, my lady...” *Prostration*

Meet it is in truth to bless thee, O Theotokos, who art ever-blessed and all-blameless, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious without compare than the Seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word: verily Theotokos, we magnify thee! *Prostration.*

Glory to Thee, O Christ God our hope, glory to Thee.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

*On weekdays the rule is kept as above. On Saturdays, Great Feasts, the period from Pascha through Pentecost, on Forefeasts, for the duration of Feasts, or any day when a Vigil is served, the prostrations are replaced with bows to the waist. The rule is completely set aside on Sundays and during Bright Week and from December 24 – January 7.*