



THE PARISH VINE



ПРИХОДСКАЯ ЛОЗА

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. John 15

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From: Alexander Petrovsky

I want to announce that there will be an excursion from St. Sergius Cathedral to Holy Cross Hermitage in West Virginia for the Pilgrimage Weekend on September 29-30. This is the same weekend as the Celebrations of St. John Chyrostom in St. Louis, but many of us cannot travel there. Anyone interested in joining our group, please contact me at acpetrovsky@yahoo.com

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The Law of God.

By Seraphim Slobodskoy.

Short Prayers (continued)

The Angelic Hymn to the Most-holy Trinity, or, the "Trisagion."

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, Have Mercy On Us.

Mighty — powerful; **Immortal** — never dying, eternal.

This prayer is to be repeated three times in honor of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

It is called the **Angelic Hymn**, because the holy angels sing it as they surround the Throne of God in Heaven. People who believe in Christ began to use this prayer some four hundred years after the Birth of Christ. In Constantinople there was a tremendous earthquake that destroyed homes and other buildings. The frightened King, Theodosius II, and the people turned to God with prayer. During this general prayer, a certain pious youth in sight of all was lifted up to Heaven by an invisible force, and then by the same invisible force let down again to earth. He told the people around him what he heard in Heaven, how the angels were singing: **Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal**. The people, moved to compunction, repeated this prayer and added: **have mercy on us**, and the earthquake stopped.

In this prayer, we call the first Person of the Holy Trinity **God**, that is God the Father; **mighty** is God the Son, because He is also almighty, as is God the Father, even though as a man He suffered and died; **immortal** is the Holy Spirit, because He not only is eternal as is the Father and the Son, but He grants life to all creatures and eternal life to people.

Since in this prayer the word **holy** is repeated three times, it is also called the **Thrice Holy** or **Trisagion Hymn**.

Questions: Whom do we address in this prayer? How many times should we repeat it? What is it called? Why is it called the angelic prayer? What do we know about the origin of this prayer? Why is it also called the "Thrice-holy?"

Doxology of the Holy Trinity.

Glory To The Father, And To The Son, And To The Holy Spirit, Both Now And Ever, And Unto The Ages Of Ages. Amen.

In this prayer we do not ask anything of God, but only glorify Him Who appears to men in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to Whom there belongs, both now and eternally, the same honor of glorification.

Question: Whom do we glorify or praise in this prayer?

Prayer to the Most-holy Trinity.

O Most-Holy Trinity, Have Mercy On Us. O Lord, Blot Out Our Sins. O Master, Pardon Our Iniquities. O Holy One, Visit And Heal Our Infirmities For Thy Name's Sake.

Most holy — holy in the highest degree; **Trinity** — the three Persons of God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; **sins and iniquities** — our deeds that are against the will of God; **heal** — make well; **infirmities** — weaknesses, sins; **for Thy name's sake** — for the glorification of Thy name.

This prayer is a prayer of petition. In it we turn first to all the three Persons together, and then to each Person of the Trinity separately: to God the Father, that He might cleanse our sins; to God the Son, that He might forgive our iniquities; to God the Holy Spirit that He might visit and heal our infirmities.

The words: **for Thy name's sake** again apply to all three Persons of the Holy Trinity together, and just as God is One, so also His name is one, and therefore we say "for Thy name's sake" and not "for Thy names' sakes."

Questions: What kind of prayer is this? Whom do we address in it? What do the words mean: "blot out our sins, pardon our iniquities, visit and heal our infirmities?" To Whom do we turn when we say: "for Thy name's sake?" What do these words mean?

The Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, Who Art In The Heavens,

1. Hallowed Be Thy Name.

2. Thy Kingdom Come.

3. Thy Will Be Done, On Earth, As It Is In Heaven.

4. Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread.

5. And Forgive Us Our Debts, As We Forgive Our Debtors.

6. And Lead Us Not Into Temptation.

7. But Deliver Us From The Evil One.

For Thine Is The Kingdom And The Power And The Glory Of The Father, And Of The Son, And Of The Holy Spirit, Now And Ever, And Unto The Ages Of Ages. Amen.

This prayer is called the **Lord's prayer**, because the Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave it to His disciples when they asked Him to teach them how to pray. Therefore, this prayer is most important for everyone.

In this prayer we address God the Father, the first Person of the Holy Trinity.

It is divided into **an address, seven petitions**, or seven requests, and a **doxology**.

The address: OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN THE HEAVENS. By these words we call on God, and calling Him the Heavenly Father, we call on Him to hear our requests or petitions.

When we say that He is in the Heavens, then we must understand the spiritual, invisible Heavens, and not the visible, blue vault that is stretched out above us and which we call "heaven."

1st petition: HALLOWED BE THY NAME, that is, help us live in righteousness and holiness and by our holy deeds to glorify Thy name.

2nd: THY KINGDOM COME, that is, make us worthy even here on the earth of Thy Heavenly Kingdom, which is **righteousness, love and peace**. Reign over us and rule us.

3rd: THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN, that is, may everything be not as we want but as is pleasing to Thee, and help us to submit to this, Thy will, and to fulfill it on the earth just as obediently, without complaining, as the holy angels fulfill it in Heaven, with love and joy. Thou alone knowest what is useful and needful for us, and desirest good for us, more than we ourselves.

4th: GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD, that is grant us on this day, for today, our daily bread. By the word "bread" here we mean all that is necessary for our earthly life: food, clothing, a dwelling, but most important of all, the all pure Body and precious Blood in the Mystery of Holy Communion, without which there is not any salvation or eternal life.

The Lord commanded us to ask not for wealth nor luxury, but only for the essential things, and to hope in God for all things, remembering that He, as a Father, is attentive and cares for us.

5th: AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS, that is, forgive us our sins just as we forgive those who wrong or hurt us.

In this petition, our sins are called "our debts," because the Lord gave us the strength and ability in order to do good deeds, but we often use them for sin and evil and become "debtors" before God. We are constantly in debt to God. And so, if we ourselves will not sincerely forgive our "debtors," that is, people who have committed sins against us, then God will not forgive us. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself told us about this.

6th: AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION. Temptation is the state when someone or something tries to get us to commit a sin, attempts to get us to do something wrong or foolish. Here we ask: do not let us fall into temptations which we cannot overcome; help us to overcome temptations that come to us.

7th: BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE, that is, deliver us from every evil in this world and from the father of evil, from the Devil, who is always ready to destroy us. Deliver us from this conniving, evil power and its deceptions, which are nothing before Thee.

Doxology: FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, NOW AND EVER, AND UNTO THE AGES OF AGES. AMEN.

For unto Thee, our God, the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, belong the kingdom and the power and eternal glory. All this is right, truly so.

Questions: Why is this called the Lord's prayer? Whom do we address in this prayer? How is it divided? What does it mean: "Who art in the Heavens"? Explain the petitions: 1st, "Hallowed be Thy Name;" 2nd, "Thy Kingdom come;" 3rd, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven;" 4th, "give us this day our daily bread;" 5th, "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors;" 6th, "And lead us not into temptation;" 7th, "But deliver us from the evil one." What does the word "amen" mean?

The Angelic Salutation to the Mother of God.

O Theotokos And Virgin, Rejoice, Mary, Full Of Grace, The Lord Is With Thee; Blessed Art Thou Among Women, And Blessed Is The Fruit Of Thy Womb, For Thou Hast Borne The Saviour Of Our Souls.

Theotokos — the Birthgiver of God (Who gave birth to God); **full of grace** — filled with the Grace of the Holy Spirit; **blessed** — glorified or worthy of glorification; **the fruit of Thy womb** — He who was born of Thee, Jesus Christ.

This is a prayer to the Most-holy Theotokos, Whom we call full of Grace, that is, filled with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and blessed above all women, because from Her our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was so pleased to be born.

This prayer is also called the angelic greeting, because in it are the words of the angel (Archangel Gabriel): **Rejoice, Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee: blessed art Thou among women**, which he said to the Virgin Mary when he appeared to Her in the city of Nazareth, announcing to Her the great joy, that of Her the Saviour of the world would be born. Also **blessed art Thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb** was spoken to the Virgin Mary by the righteous Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, when she met with Her.

The Virgin Mary is called **Theotokos** or "Birthgiver of God," because Jesus Christ, Who was born from Her, is true God.

She is called **virgin**, because She was a Virgin before the birth of Christ, at the birth and after the birth, for She had given a vow to God not to be married, and She remained forever Virgin, giving birth to Her Son by the Holy Spirit in a miraculous way.

Questions: To Whom do we pray when we say this prayer: "O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice?" What do we call the Virgin Mary in this prayer? What do these words mean: "full of Grace," and "blessed art thou among women?" How do we explain the words: "for thou hast born the Saviour of our souls?" Why is this prayer called the angelic greeting? What do these words mean: "Theotokos," "Virgin?"

Hymn of Praise to the Theotokos.

It Is Truly Meet To Bless Thee, The Theotokos, Ever-Blessed And Most-Blameless, And Mother Of Our God. More Honorable Than The Cherubim, And Beyond Compare More Glorious Than The Seraphim, Who Without Corruption Gavest Birth To God The Word, The Very Theotokos, Thee Do We Magnify.

It is truly meet — it is worthy, correct, proper; in truth, in all righteousness; **to bless thee** — to beatify, to glorify Thee; **ever blessed** — always having the highest joy, worthy of constant praise; **most-blameless** — completely innocent, pure, holy; **Cherubim and Seraphim** — the very highest angels who are closest to God; **God the Word** — Jesus Christ, the Son of God (as He is called in the Holy Gospel); **very** — real, true.

In this prayer, we praise the Theotokos as the Mother of our God, ever blessed and completely pure, and we magnify her, saying that She in Her honor and glory excels even the highest of the angels, the Cherubim and Seraphim; that is, the Mother of God in Her perfection stands higher than all, not only people, but even the holy angels. In a miraculous way, and without pain She gave birth to Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. Christ, Who became man through Her, is at the same time the Son of God come down from Heaven, and therefore She is the true Birth-giver of God, the Theotokos.

Questions: Whom do we glorify in this prayer? How do we glorify Her? What do these words mean: "ever-blessed, most-blameless, Mother of our God?" What do these words mean: "More honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim," "...without corruption gavest birth to God the Word," "...very Theotokos,...?"

A Short Prayer to the Mother of God.

Most Holy Theotokos, Save Us!

In this prayer we ask the Mother of God to save us sinners by Her holy prayers before Her Son and our God.

Prayer to the Life-giving Cross.

Save, O Lord, Thy People, And Bless Thine Inheritance, Grant Thou Victory To Orthodox Christians Over Enemies, And By The Power Of Thy Cross, Do Thou Preserve Thy Commonwealth.

Bless — make happy, send mercy; **Thine inheritance** — what belongs to Thee; **Thy commonwealth** — Thy home, that is, the society of the truly faithful, among whom God invisibly dwells; **by the power of Thy Cross, do Thou preserve** — protect by the power of Thy Cross.

In this prayer we ask God to save us, His people, and to bless us with great mercies; that He give victories to Orthodox Christians over their enemies and in general that He protect us by the power of His Cross.

Questions: What is the prayer to the Cross? What do the words mean: "Save, O Lord, Thy people?" "And bless Thine inheritance?" "Grant Thou victory to Orthodox Christians over enemies?" "And by the power of Thy Cross do Thou preserve Thy commonwealth?"

Prayer to the Guardian Angel.

O Angel Of God, My Holy Guardian, Given By God From Heaven To Preserve Me, I Fervently Pray Thee: Do Thou Enlighten Me Today, And Preserve Me From Every Evil, Direct Me In Doing Good, And Guide Me On The Path Of Salvation. Amen.

God grants to every Christian at his Baptism a Guardian Angel who invisibly guards a person from every evil. Therefore, we must pray every day to the Guardian Angel to preserve and have mercy on us.

Prayer to our Saint.

Pray Unto God For Me, St. (Name), For I Fervently Flee Unto Thee, The Speedy Helper And Intercessor For My Soul.

Apart from prayer to the Guardian Angel, we must also pray to the saint whose name we bear because he prays to God for us.

Every Christian, as soon as he is born into God's light at Holy Baptism, receives a **saint** as his patron and protector in the Church. The patron saint cares for the newly-born Christian like a most loving mother and preserves him from all misfortune and woe which meet a person on earth.

We should know when the yearly **feast day** of our patron saint (our "name's day") is and know the story of the life of this saint. On our name day we should dedicate the day to prayer in church and receive Holy Communion. If we cannot be in church on that day for some reason, we should pray very fervently at home.

Prayer for the Living.

We must think not only of ourselves but of others, love them and pray to God for them, because we are all children of the same Heavenly Father. Such prayers are beneficial not only to those whom we pray for, but also for ourselves, because we show **love** for them in this way. The Lord told us that without love, no one can be a child of God.

We must pray for our homeland, for the land in which we live, for our spiritual father, parents, benefactors, Orthodox Christians, and for all people, both **for the living** and also **for the reposed**, *because all men are alive before God* (Luke 20:38).

Save, O Lord, And Have Mercy On My Spiritual Father (Name), My Parents (Names), My Relatives, Teachers, Benefactors And All Orthodox Christians.

Spiritual father — the priest to whom we go for confession; **benefactors** — those who do good to us, who help us.

Prayer for the Reposed.

Give Rest, O Lord, To The Souls Of Thy Servants Who Have Fallen Asleep (Names) And All My Relatives And Benefactors Who Have Fallen Asleep, And Forgive Them All Their Sins, Both Voluntary And Involuntary, And Grant Them The Heavenly Kingdom.

Give rest — in a quiet place, that is, together with the saints in the eternal, blessed dwelling; **reposed** — fallen asleep. We refer to the dead in this way, because people are not destroyed after death, but their souls are separated from the body and pass from this life into another heavenly life. There they abide in the spiritual world until the time of the general resurrection, which will occur at the second coming of the Son of God, when, according to His word, the souls of the dead will again unite with the bodies; people will come to life, will arise. Then each will receive according to what he deserves: the righteous — the Kingdom of Heaven, blessed, eternal life; but the sinners — eternal punishment.

voluntary sins — sins that were committed through one's own will; **involuntary** — committed unintentionally; **heavenly kingdom** — eternal, blessed life with God.

Prayer Before Lessons.

O Most Good Lord! Send Down Upon Us The Grace Of Thy Holy Spirit, Granting Us Understanding And The Strengthening Of Our Mental Powers, That Attending To The Teaching Given Us, We May Grow To The Glory Of Thee, Our Creator, To The Comfort Of Our Parents, And To The Benefit Of The Church And Our Homeland.

Most good — most compassionate, gracious; **Grace of the Holy Spirit** — the invisible power of the Holy Spirit; our mental powers — **our mental abilities** (mind, heart, will); **the church** — the society of all Orthodox Christians; **homeland** — the nation, the land where we live.

This prayer is directed to God the Father, Whom we call the Creator. In it we call upon Him to send down the Holy Spirit, so that by His Grace He might strengthen the powers of our soul (mind, heart, will) and so that we, listening with attention to the teaching that is being put before us, might grow up to be devoted sons and daughters of the Church and faithful servants of our homeland and a consolation for our parents.

Instead of this prayer we can also use the prayer to the Holy Spirit, "O Heavenly King," before lessons.

Questions: What kind of prayer is this? To Whom is it directed? What do we ask for in this prayer? What is the Church and our homeland?

Prayer After Lessons.

We Thank Thee, O Creator, That Thou Hast Vouchsafed Us Thy Grace To Attend Instruction. Bless Those In Authority Over Us, Our Parents And Instructors, Who Are Leading Us To An Awareness Of Good, And Grant Us Power And Strength To Continue This Study.

That thou has vouchsafed us — that Thou hast found us worthy; **of thy Grace** — of Thy invisible help; **to attend** — to listen and understand with attention; **bless** — send mercy; **strength** — health, eagerness, energy.

This prayer is to God the Father. In it we first give thanks to God that He sent His help so that we might understand the teaching set before us. Then we ask Him for His mercy towards those in authority over us, our parents and teachers, who give us the possibility of learning everything good and useful and, in conclusion, we ask that He grant us health and inclination so that we might continue our studies successfully.

Instead of this prayer we can also say the prayer to the Mother of God, "It is truly meet," after lessons.

Questions: To Whom is this prayer directed? What do we thank God for at the beginning? What do we ask for in this prayer?

Prayer Before Eating.

The Eyes Of All Look To Thee With Hope And Thou Gavest Them Their Food In Due Season Thou Openest Thy Hand And Fillest Every Living Thing With Thy Favour (Ps. 144:16-17).

In this prayer we express trust that God will send us food at the proper time, as He grants not only to people but to all living creatures all that is necessary for life.

Instead of this prayer we can use the prayer of our Lord "Our Father" before eating.

Questions: To whom do we pray before eating? What do we express in this prayer? How does God relate to living creatures?

Prayer After Eating.

We Thank Thee, O Christ Our God, That Thou Hast Satisfied Us With Thine Earthly Gifts; Deprive Us Not Of Thy Heavenly Kingdom, But As Thou Camest Among Thy Disciples, O Saviour, And Gavest Them Peace, Come To Us And Save Us.

Satisfied — filled, nourished; **earthly gifts** — earthly good things, that is, what we ate and drank at the table; **Thy Heavenly Kingdom** — eternal blessedness, which the righteous are granted after death.

In this prayer we give thanks to God that He has nourished us with food. We ask Him not to deprive us after our death of eternal blessedness; we should always remember this when we receive good things from the earth.

Questions: What prayer is used after eating? What do we thank God for in this prayer? What do we mean by good things of the earth? What is called the Kingdom of Heaven?

Morning Prayer.

Having Risen From Sleep, I Hasten To Thee, O Master, Lover Of Mankind, And By Thy Loving-Kindness, I Strive To Do Thy Work, And I Pray To Thee: Help Me At All Times, In Everything, And Deliver Me From Every Worldly, Evil Thing, And Every Impulse Of The Devil, And Save Me, And Lead Me Into Thine Eternal Kingdom. For Thou Art My Creator, And The Giver And Provider Of Everything Good, And In Thee Is All My Hope, And Unto Thee Do I Send Up Glory, Now And Ever, And Unto The Ages Of Ages. Amen.

Lover of mankind — lover of people; **strive to do** — hurry, try to do; **in everything** — in every deed; **worldly, evil thing** — evil of the world (deeds that are not good); **impulse of the Devil** — the temptation of the devil (evil spirit), temptation to do wrong; **provider** — the one who looks ahead, who provides, takes care.

Evening Prayer.

O Lord Our God, As Thou Art Good And The Lover Of Mankind, Forgive Me Wherein I Have Sinned Today In Word, Deed, Or Thought. Grant Me Peaceful And Undisturbed Sleep; Send Thy Guardian Angel To Protect And Keep Me From All Evil. For Thou Art The Guardian Of Our Souls And Bodies, And Unto Thee Do We Send Up Glory: To The Father, And To The Son, And To The Holy Spirit, Now And Ever, And Unto The Ages Of Ages. Amen.

Thought — imagination; **good** — merciful; **undisturbed** — restful; **protect and keep** — cover and keep safe.

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*"If God be for us, who can be against us?"  
St. John Chrysostom*

#### **"The Parish Vine"**

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