

Devotions for Lent

At the end of the Hours of the Divine Office of Lauds and Vespers the following Lenten Prayer are to be added each day. On Wednesday & Friday if the Penitential Psalms are to follow Vespers, Psalm 50 and the Prayer of St. Ephraim are not appended to Vespers as well.

Psalm 50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness. O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with whole-burnt offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Afterwards, each day the following Lenten Prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian is prayed.

The Great Lenten Prayer of St Ephraim

(Prostration is made by making the Sign of the Cross and then making a deep bow touching your forehead to the floor, then immediately rising.)

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despondency, lust for power and idle talk.

Prostration

But grant unto me, Thy servant, a spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love.

Prostration

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see mine own faults and not to judge my brothers and sisters. For blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

Prostration

O God, cleanse Thou me a sinner *Twelve times, bowing deeply from the waist each time.*

End by saying:

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despondency, lust for power and idle talk. But grant unto me, Thy servant, a spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see mine own faults and not to judge my brothers and sisters. For blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Seven Penitential Psalms

Beginning Ash Wednesday, the Seven Penitential Psalms are recited on Wednesdays and Fridays after Pre-sanctified Mass or after Vespers.

Psalm 6

O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, nor chasten me in Thy wrath. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak. Heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled, and my soul is troubled greatly; but Thou, O Lord, how long? Turn to me again, O Lord, deliver my soul; save me for Thy mercy's sake. For in death there is none that is mindful of Thee, and in hades who will confess Thee? I toiled in my groaning; every night I will wash my bed, with tears will I water my couch. Through wrath is mine eye become troubled, I have grown old among all mine enemies. Depart from me all ye that work vanity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord hath received my prayer. Let all mine enemies be greatly put to shame and be troubled, let them be turned back, and speedily be greatly put to shame. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Psalm 31

Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not sin, and in whose mouth there is no guile. Because I kept silence, my bones are waxed old through my crying all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me, I was reduced to misery whilst the thorn stuck fast in me. Mine iniquity have I acknowledged, and my sin have I not hid. I said: I will confess mine iniquities before the Lord against myself. And Thou forgavest the ungodliness of my heart. For this shall every one that is holy pray unto Thee in a seasonable time; moreover, in a flood of many waters shall they not come nigh unto him. Thou art my refuge from the affliction which surroundeth me; O my Rejoicing, deliver me from them which have encircled me. (*Diapsalm*) I will instruct thee and teach thee in this way which thou shalt go; I will fix Mine eyes upon thee. Be ye not as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding; whose jaws thou must hold with bit and bridle, lest

they come nigh unto thee. Many are the scourges of the sinner, but mercy shall encircle him that hopeth in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and glory, all ye that are upright of heart. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Psalm 37

O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, nor chasten me in Thy wrath. For Thine arrows are fastened in me, and Thou hast laid Thy hand heavily upon me. There is no healing in my flesh in the face of Thy wrath; and there is no peace in my bones in the face of my sins. For mine iniquities are risen higher than my head; as a heavy burden have they pressed heavily upon me. My bruises are become noisome and corrupt in the face of my folly. I have been wretched and utterly bowed down until the end; all the daylong I went with downcast face. For my loins are filled with ightie, and there is no healing in my flesh. I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly, I have roared from the groaning of my heart. O Lord, before Thee is all my desire, and my groaning is not hid from Thee. My heart is troubled, my strength hath failed me; and the light of mine eyes, even this is not with me. My friends and my neighbours drew nigh over against me and stood, and my nearest of kin stood afar off. And they that sought after my soul used violence; and they that sought evils for me spake vain things, and craftiness all the day long did they meditate. But as for me, like a deaf man I heard them not, and was as a speechless man that openeth not his mouth. And I became as a man that heareth not, and that hath in his mouth no reproofs. For in Thee have I hoped, O Lord; Thou wilt hearken unto me, O Lord my God. For I said: Let never mine enemies rejoice over me; yea, when my feet were shaken, those men spake boastful words against me. For I am ready for scourges, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity, and I will take heed concerning my sin. But mine enemies live and are made stronger than I, and they that hated me unjustly are multiplied. They that render me evil for good slandered me, because I pursued goodness. Forsake me not, O Lord my God, depart not from me. Be attentive unto my help, O Lord of my salvation. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Psalm 50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou ightiest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and

gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness. O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with whole-burnt offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Psalm 101

O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee. Turn not Thy face away from me; in the day when I am afflicted, incline Thine ear unto me. In the day when I call upon Thee, quickly hearken unto me. For my days are vanished like smoke, and my bones consumed like wood for the burning. I am smitten like grass, and withered is my heart, for I forgot to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bone hath cleaved unto my flesh. I am become like a pelican of the wilderness, I am like an owl in a ruined house. I have watched, and am like a sparrow that sitteth alone upon the house-top. The whole day long mine enemies reproached me, and they that praised me made an oath against me. For before the face of Thy wrath and Thine anger I ate ashes like bread, and my drink I mingled with weeping; for after uplifting me, Thou hast dashed me down. My days like a shadow have declined, and I like grass am withered. But Thou, O Lord, for ever abidest, and Thy remembrance is unto generation and generation. Thou shalt rise up and have pity upon Sion, for it is time to have compassion on her, yea, the time is come. For Thy servants have taken pleasure in her stones, and they shall feel pity for her dust. And the nations shall fear Thy name, O Lord, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory. For the Lord shall build up Sion, and He shall be seen in His glory. He hath regarded the prayer of the humble, and hath not despised their supplication. Let this be written for another generation, and the people that is being created shall praise the Lord. For He hath looked out from His holy height, the Lord from heaven hath looked upon the earth, To hear the groaning of them that be in fetters, to loose the sons of the slain, To declare in Sion the name of the Lord, and His praise in Jerusalem, When the peoples are gathered together, and the kings to serve the Lord. He answered Him in the way of his strength: The fewness of my days declare unto me. Take me not away at the half of my days; in generations and generations are Thy years. In the beginning, O Lord, Thou didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou abidest; and all like a garment shall grow old, And as a vesture shalt Thou

fold them, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail. The sons of Thy servants shall have their dwelling, and their seed for ever shall be guided aright. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Psalm 129

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice. Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication. If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness. For Thy name's sake have I patiently waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited patiently for Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord. From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord. For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Psalm 142.

O Lord, hear my prayer, give ear unto my supplication in Thy truth; hearken unto me in Thy righteousness. And enter not into judgement with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath humbled my life down to the earth. He hath sat me in darkness as those that have been long dead, and my spirit within me is become despondent; within me my heart is troubled. I remembered days of old, I meditated on all Thy works, I pondered on the creations of Thy hands. I stretched forth my hands unto Thee; my soul thirsteth after Thee like a waterless land. Quickly hear me, O Lord; my spirit hath fainted away. Turn not Thy face away from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Thy mercy in the morning; for in Thee have I put my hope. Cause me to know, O Lord, the way wherein I should walk; for unto Thee have I lifted up my soul. Rescue me from mine enemies, O Lord; unto Thee have I fled for refuge. Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. Thy good Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness; for Thy name's sake, O Lord, shalt Thou quicken me. In Thy righteousness shalt Thou bring my soul out of affliction, and in Thy mercy shalt Thou utterly destroy mine enemies. And Thou shalt cut off all them that afflict my soul, for I am Thy servant. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

These may be ended with the Lenten Prayer of Saint Ephraim as above.