

February 24, 2012

Friday of the First Week of the Great Fast

Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

**The First and Second Finding of the Precious Head of the Holy, Glorious Prophet,
Forerunner and Baptist John**

AT PSALM 140

In Tone 5

10.

Come, O faithful, let us fulfill the works of God in the light;
and let us walk with dignity as in the light of day;
let us tear up every unjust contract,
and let us cast aside every object of scandal for our neighbour.
Let us turn away from the pleasures of the flesh,
so that we may grow in our spiritual gifts.
Let us give food to the poor;
let us draw near to Christ, and in repentance, let us say:
O our God, have mercy on us.

9.

Come, O faithful, let us fulfill the works of God in the light;
and let us walk with dignity as in the light of day;
let us tear up every unjust contract,
and let us cast aside every object of scandal for our neighbour.
Let us turn away from the pleasures of the flesh,
so that we may grow in our spiritual gifts.
Let us give food to the poor;
let us draw near to Christ, and in repentance, let us say:
O our God, have mercy on us.

In Tone 5

8.

Rejoice, holy and light-bearing head, venerated by the angels!
Of old, you were cut off by the sword,
for you had cut through the shame of impurity with incisive reproofs!
Like a fountain refreshing the faithful with wonders,
you declared the saving coming of the Saviour,
and perceived the coming of the Spirit, which took up his abode in you,
as you stood between the grace of the Old and New Covenants.
Entreat Christ God to grant our souls great mercy!

7.

Rejoice, holy and light-bearing head, venerated by the angels!
Of old, you were cut off by the sword,
for you had cut through the shame of impurity with incisive reproofs!
Like a fountain refreshing the faithful with wonders,
you declared the saving coming of the Saviour,
and perceived the coming of the Spirit, which took up his abode in you,
as you stood between the grace of the Old and New Covenants.
Entreat Christ God to grant our souls great mercy!

6.

The head of the Forerunner is made manifest.
Once it was concealed in an earthen vessel;
now it is openly given up from the depths of the earth,
pouring forth streams of healing.
For he washed in the waters the Head of the One
who even now covers the chambers of the firmament with waters
and rains down divine forgiveness for all peoples!
Then let us bless this truly praiseworthy head
and joyfully celebrate its finding,
entreating Christ to grant our souls great mercy!

5.

The head which proclaimed the Lamb of God who appeared in the flesh
declared to all the ways of saving repentance with divine precepts,
before it had denounced the transgression of Herod
and therefore was severed from its body.
It was concealed for a time and has risen to us as a shining sun,
crying out: repent and with compunction of soul submit to the Lord
who grants the world great mercy!

In Tone 2

4.

Come, all you friends of the martyrs,
let us celebrate this feast in the joy of the Spirit;
for, on this day, the holy martyr Theodore prepares a spiritual banquet for us,
the lovers of the feast;
he brings joy to our hearts,
and we cry out to him:
Rejoice, invincible warrior, who has vanquished powerful tyrants;
and for the love of Christ our God,
you gave given over your body of flesh to torments.
Rejoice, for in the midst of dangers,
you showed yourself to be a valiant soldier of the heavenly army.
Therefore, we pray to you, O glory of martyrs,
intercede for the salvation of our souls.

3.

O holy martyr Theodore,
you generously grant the God-given grace of your miracles
to all the faithful who hasten to you.

We rejoice in this, and we sing:

You are the liberator of captives and healer of the sick,
the wealth of the poor and salvation of those who sail the seas,
the defender of those who cherish your holy memory;
now, for all of us who praise you,
beseech Christ for His great mercy.

2.

O holy martyr Theodore,
you are truly the "gift of God,"
for, being alive even after your death,
you are attentive to the requests of those who come to you.
A son was once seized from his mother
and made a prisoner in the pagan army;
the widow bathed your sanctuary with her tears;
and you were moved with compassion.
You mounted a white horse and mysteriously returned her child;
and even now, you do not cease to work miracles.
Beseech Christ our God to save our souls.

1.

O Theodore, thrice-blessed,
with your name, I praise the gift of God;
you are a shining torch of the divine brightness.
By your deeds you have illuminated the universe.
You have shown yourself to be stronger than fire,
and you crushed the head of the treacherous dragon.
Therefore, Christ has placed on your head the crown of victory.
And now that you enjoy the divine favour,
O holy and great martyr,
beseech God for the salvation of our souls.

In Tone 6, Glory...

The enemy used the apostate emperor as his servant
against the Christian people who were purified by the Fast;
he tried to defile them with food polluted by the blood of sacrifices.
But, you more wisely foiled his plan,
by appearing in a dream to the bishop of that time
and warning him of the danger.
We also offer you our sacrifices of thanksgiving,
and we honour you with the title of protector
as we celebrate the annual memory of this event.
We beseech you to preserve us from the evil designs of the enemy

by interceding with God for us,
O holy martyr Theodore.

In Tone 3, Now...

Rejoice, holy and light-bearing head, venerated by the angels!
Of old, you were cut off by the sword,
for you had cut through the shame of impurity with incisive reproofs!
Like a fountain refreshing the faithful with wonders,
you declared the saving coming of the Saviour,
and perceived the coming of the Spirit, which took up his abode in you,
as you stood between the grace of the Old and New Covenants.
Entreat Christ God to grant our souls great mercy!

PROKEIMENON I, TONE 5

May the Lord answer in time of trial;* may the name of Jacob's God protect you!
verse: May He send you help from His shrine and give you support from Sion!

READING I (Genesis 2:20-3:20)

Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." To the

woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

PROKEIMENON II, TONE 6

O Lord, arise in Your strength;* we shall sing and praise Your power.

verse: O Lord, Your strength gives joy to the king; how Your saving help makes him glad!

READING II (Proverbs 3:19-34)

The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;

By understanding He established the heavens;

By His knowledge the depths were broken up,

And clouds drop down the dew.

My son, let them not depart from your eyes—

Keep sound wisdom and discretion;

So they will be life to your soul

And grace to your neck.

Then you will walk safely in your way,

And your foot will not stumble.

When you lie down, you will not be afraid;

Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.

Do not be afraid of sudden terror,

Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;

For the LORD will be your confidence,

And will keep your foot from being caught.

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,

When it is in the power of your hand to do so.

Do not say to your neighbour,

"Go, and come back,

And tomorrow I will give it,"

When you have it with you.

Do not devise evil against your neighbour,

For he dwells by you for safety's sake.

Do not strive with a man without cause,

If he has done you no harm.

Do not envy the oppressor,

And choose none of his ways;

For the perverse person is an abomination to the LORD,

But His secret counsel is with the upright.

The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked,

But He blesses the home of the just.

Surely He scorns the scornful,
But gives grace to the humble.

READING III (Isaiah 40:1-11)

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

READING IV (Malachi 3)

Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? "For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the LORD. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years. "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts. "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How are we robbing thee?' In your tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me; the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts. "Your words have been stout against me, says the LORD. Yet you say, 'How have we spoken against thee?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the good of our keeping his charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? Henceforth we deem the arrogant blessed; evildoers not only prosper but when they put God to the test they escape.'" Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another; the LORD heeded and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and thought on his name. "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

READING V (Wisdom 4:7-15)

The righteous man, though he die early, will be at rest.

For old age is not honoured for length of time,

nor measured by number of years;

but understanding is gray hair for men,

and a blameless life is ripe old age.

There was one who pleased God and was loved by him,

and while living among sinners he was taken up.

He was caught up lest evil change his understanding

or guile deceive his soul.

For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good,

and roving desire perverts the innocent mind.

Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled long years;

for his soul was pleasing to the Lord,

therefore he took him quickly from the midst of wickedness.

Yet the peoples saw and did not understand,

nor take such a thing to heart,

that God's grace and mercy are with his elect,

and he watches over his holy ones.