

# WEDNESDAY OF THE SIXTH WEEK

*April 8, 2020*



## AT MORNING PRAYER

*from the Lenten Triodion, at Orthros*

**O** word of God, by Thy lifegiving word raise up my soul that is slain by sin and imprisoned in the tomb of transgression; and count me worthy to offer palms of virtue to Thee, the Conqueror of Death.

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

**T**oday, dead Lazarus is buried and his sisters sing in lamentation: but Thou, in Thy divine foreknowledge, hast predicted what should come to pass. ‘Lazarus weeps,’ Thou hast prophesied to Thy disciples, ‘but I go to raise up him who I created.’ Therefore, we all cry to Thee: Glory to Thy mighty power.

*Both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**O** pure Virgin, who wast not burnt by the fire of the Godhead, burn up the material impulses of my passions, that I may forever glorify thee with faith.

## MORNING READING

*Isaiah 58:1-11*

**T**HUS SAYS THE LORD: “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet; declare to My people their transgression, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of Me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. ‘Why have we fasted, and Thou seest it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and Thou takest no knowledge of it?’ Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it to bow down his head like a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.”



# WEDNESDAY OF THE SIXTH WEEK

*April 8, 2020*



## AT EVENING PRAYER

*from the Lenten Triodion, at Vespers*

**I** am rich in passions and clothed in the deceitful robe of hypocrisy, and I rejoice in the sins of self-indulgence. There is no limit to my lack of love. I neglect my spiritual understanding, that lies at the gate of repentance, starved of all good things, sick through want of care. O Lord make me like Lazarus poor in sin, that I be not tormented in the flame that never shall be quenched and pray in vain for a finger to be dipped in water and laid upon my tongue. But in Thy love for mankind, make me dwell with the Patriarch Abraham.

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

**Y**our souls, O holy Martyrs, were filled with an insatiable love; not denying Christ, ye endured great sufferings and torment, and ye cast down the tyrants' pride. Ye kept the faith unaltered and unharmed, and now ye have gone to dwell in heaven. Since ye have boldness before Christ, pray that peace be given to the world, and to our souls great mercy.

*from the Menaion, at Vespers*

*Both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**O** all-pure Theotokos, who didst bear the Word, Who hath wrought our salvation, rescue thy servants from all the temptations made by the warring enemy; shed thy light upon the senses of us all; guide our steps aright to walk the saving paths, that all of us, O Maiden, ever may glorify thee with faith and fervent love.

## EVENING READINGS

*Genesis 43:26-31 & 45:1-16*

**W**HEN JOSEPH CAME HOME, they brought into the house to him the present which they had with them, and bowed down to him to the ground. And he inquired about their welfare, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" They said, "Your servant our father is well, he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!" Then Joseph made haste, for his heart yearned for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out; and controlling himself he said, "Let food be served." Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him; and he cried, "Make everyone go out from me." So, no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. So, Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Make haste and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry; you shall dwell

in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have; and there I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come; lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty.' And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Make haste and bring my father down here." Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him. When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have come," it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well.

*Proverbs 21:23-22:4*

**H**E WHO KEEPS HIS MOUTH and his tongue keeps himself out of trouble. 'Scoffer' is the name of the proud, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride. The desire of the sluggard kills him for his hands refuse to labor. All day long the wicked covets, but the righteous gives and does not hold back. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with evil intent. A false witness will perish, but the word of a man who hears will endure. A wicked man puts on a bold face, but an upright man considers his ways. No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel, can avail against the LORD. The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD. A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold. The rich and the poor meet together; the LORD is the maker of them all. A prudent man sees danger and hides himself; but the simple go on, and suffer for it. The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life.



## WISDOM OF THE HOLY FATHERS

HILARY OF POTTIERS

*Bishop*

†c. 367

~ from his treatise on the psalms ~

**B**LESSED ARE ALL THEY *that fear the Lord, that walk in His ways.* (*Psalm 127:1*) Notice that when Scripture speaks of the fear of the Lord, it does not leave the phrase in isolation, as if it were a complete summary of faith. No, many things are added to it, or are presupposed by it. From these we may learn its meaning and excellence. In the book of Proverbs, Solomon tells us: *If you cry out for wisdom and raise your voice for understanding, if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord.* (*Proverbs 2:3*) We see here the difficult journey we must undertake before we can arrive at the fear of the Lord.

We must begin by crying out for wisdom. We must hand over to our intellect the duty of making every decision. We must look for wisdom and search for it. Then we must understand the fear of the Lord.

*Fear* is not to be taken in the sense that common usage gives it. Fear in this ordinary sense is the trepidation our weak humanity feels when it is afraid of suffering something it does not want to happen. We are afraid, or are made afraid, because of a guilty conscience, the rights of someone more powerful, an attack from one who is stronger, sickness, encountering a wild beast, suffering evil in any form. This kind of fear is not taught; it happens because we are weak. We do not have to learn what we should fear; objects of fear bring their own terror with them.

But of the fear of the Lord this is what is written: *Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* (*Psalm 33:11*) The fear of the Lord has, then, to be learned, because it can be taught. It does not lie in terror, but in something that can be taught. It does not arise from the fearfulness of our nature; it has to be acquired by obedience to the commandments, by holiness of life and by knowledge of the truth.

For us the fear of God consists wholly in love, and perfect love of God brings our fear of Him to its perfection. Our love for God is entrusted with its own responsibility: to observe His counsels, to obey His laws, to trust His promises. Let us hear what Scripture says: *And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to*

*walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and His ordinances, that it may be well with thee? (Deuteronomy 10:12)*

The ways of the Lord are many, though He is Himself the Way. When He speaks of Himself, He calls Himself the Way and shows us the reason why He called himself the Way: *No one can come to the Father except through Me. (John 14:6)*

We must ask for these many ways, to find the one that is good. That is, we shall find the one way of eternal life through the guidance of many teachers. These ways are found in the law, in the prophets, in the gospels, in the writings of the apostles, in the different good works by which we fulfill the commandments. Blessed are those who walk these ways in the fear of the Lord. *Amen.*



## IRENÆUS OF LYON

*Bishop*

†c. 202

~ from 'Against Heresies' ~

**F**ROM THE BEGINNING, God created man out of His own generosity. He chose the patriarchs to give them salvation. He took His people in hand, teaching them, unteachable as they were, to follow Him.

He gave them prophets, accustoming man to bear His Spirit and to have communion with God on earth. He Who stands in need of no one gave communion with Himself to those who need Him. Like an architect, He outlined the plan of salvation to those who sought to please Him. By His own hand He gave food in Egypt to those who did not see Him. To those who were restless in the desert, He gave a law perfectly suited to them. To those who entered the land of prosperity, He gave a worthy inheritance. He killed the fatted calf for those who turned to Him as Father, and clothed them with the finest garment. In so many ways He was training the human race to take part in the harmonious song of salvation.

For this reason, John, in the book of Revelation, says: *His voice was as the voice of many waters. (Revelation 1:15)* The Spirit of God is indeed a multitude of waters, for the Father is rich and great. As the Word passed among all these people, He provided help in generous measure for those who were obedient to Him, by drawing up a law that was suitable and fitting for every circumstance.

He established a law for the people governing the construction of the tabernacle and the building of the temple, the choice of Levites, the sacrifices, the offerings, the rites of purification and the rest of what belonged to worship.

He Himself needs none of these things. He is always filled with all that is good. Even before Moses existed, He had within Himself every fragrance of all that is pleasing. Yet He sought to teach His people, always ready though they were to return to their idols. Through many acts of indulgence, He tried to prepare them for perseverance in His service.

He kept calling them to what was primary by means of what was secondary, that is, through foreshadowings to the reality, through things of time to the things of eternity, through things of the flesh to the things of the spirit, through earthly things to the heavenly things. As He said to Moses: *You will fashion all things according to the pattern that you saw on the mountain. (Exodus 25:40)*

For forty days Moses was engaged in remembering the words of God, the heavenly patterns, the spiritual images, the foreshadowings of what was to come. Saint Paul says: *They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:4)* After speaking of the things that are in the law, he continues: *All these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)*

Through foreshadowings of the future they were learning reverence for God and perseverance in His service. The law was therefore a school of instruction for them, and a prophecy of what was to come. *Amen.*

