

# The First Hour

*Priest: Blessed is our God, now and ever and unto ages of ages.*

Reader Amen. Glory to Thee, O God, glory to Thee. O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, who art everywhere and fills all things, treasury of blessings and giver of life, come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O good one.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

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

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

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

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*Priest                    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 ages of ages.*

The reader then continues with the following:

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 5

Give ear to my words, O Lord; give heed to my groaning. Hearken to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to thee do I pray. O Lord, in the morning thou dost hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for thee, and watch. For thou art not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not sojourn with thee. The boastful may not stand before thy eyes; thou hatest all evildoers. Thou destroyest those who speak lies; the Lord abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men. But I through the abundance of thy steadfast love will enter thy house, I will worship toward thy holy temple in the fear of thee. Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of my enemies; make thy way straight before me. For there is no truth in their mouth; their heart is destruction, their throat is an open sepulcher, they flatter with their tongue. Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of their many transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against thee. But let all who take refuge in thee rejoice, let them ever sing for joy; and do thou defend them, that those who love thy name may exult in thee. For thou dost bless the righteous, O Lord; thou dost cover him with favor as with a shield.

### PSALM 2

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the

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earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed saying, Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us. He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury, saying "I have set my king on Zion, on my holy hill." I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and with trembling kiss his feet lest he be angry and you perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

### PSALM 21

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but thou dost not answer; and by night, but find no rest. Yet thou art holy, enthroned on the praise of Israel, In thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. To thee they cried, and were saved; in thee they trusted, and were not disappointed. But I am a worm, and no man; scorned by men, and despised by the people. All who see me mock at me, they make mouths at me, they wag their heads. "He committed his cause to the Lord; let him deliver him let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" Yet thou art he who took me from the womb; thou didst keep me safe upon my mother's breasts. Upon thee was I cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me thou hast been my God. Be not far from me, for trouble is near and there is none to help. Many bulls encompass me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me; They open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; thou dost lay me in the dust of death. Yea, dogs are round about me; a company of evildoers encircle me; they have pierced

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my hands and feet – I can count all my bones – they stare and gloat over me; They divide my garments among them and for my raiment they cast lots. But thou, O Lord, be not far off! O thou my help, hasten to my aid! Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog! Save me from the mouth of the lion, my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen! I will tell of thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee: You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you sons of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you sons of Israel! For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; and he has not hid his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. From thee comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. For dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nation. Yea, to him shall all the proud of the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and he who cannot keep himself alive. Posterity shall serve him; men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, that he has wrought it.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God

Alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God

Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

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

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**THE TROPARION** *may be read or sung (see appendix for music)*

Troparion, Tone 1: The tyrant has been destroyed by Thy crucifixion, O Christ. / The might of the enemy has been trampled down. / For neither an angel nor a man / but Thou Thyself hast saved us. // O Lord, glory to Thee!

Reader      Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

What shall we call you, O full of grace? Heaven, for from you shone forth the Son of Righteousness; Paradise, for you have budded forth the flower of immortality; Virgin, for you have remained undefiled; Pure Mother, for you have held in your arms the Son, who is God of all. Beseech Him to save our souls.

*The following **STICHERA** may be read or sung (see appendix for music)*

Reader      Today the curtain of the temple is torn in two to convict the transgressors. And even the sun hides his rays, seeing the Master crucified.

Vs. Why do the nations rage and the peoples utter folly? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and His anointed

Thou wast led as a sheep to the slaughter, O Christ our King. and as an innocent lamb, Thou wast nailed to the cross by transgressors, Because of our sins, O Lover of Mankind!

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

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While permitting transgressors to arrest Thee, Thou didst cry out to them, O Lord: Though you smite the shepherd and scatter the twelve sheep - my disciples I am able to surround myself with more than thirty legions of angels, but I forbear, so that the secret and hidden things might be fulfilled, which were revealed to you by my prophets. O Lord, glory to Thee!

### The Readings

*Priest*      *Wisdom. Let us attend*

*Reader*      The Prokeimenon is in the 4th Tone:

His heart gathered iniquity to itself / He went out and spoke to the multitude.

Vs: Blessed is he who considers the poor and needy; the Lord delivers him in the day of trouble.

*Priest*      Wisdom

*Reader*      The reading is from the Prophecy of Zachariah (11:10-13)

Thus says the Lord: And I took my staff, and I broke it, annulling the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. So it was annulled on that day and the traffickers in sheep, who were watching me, knew that it was the word of the Lord. Then I said to them "If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them." and they weighed out as my wages thirty shekels of silver. Then the Lord said to me, "Cast it into the treasury – the lordly price at which I was paid off by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and cast them into the treasury in the house of the Lord.

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Priest      Wisdom

Reader      The reading is from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians (6:14-18)

Brethren, but far be it for me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

*Priest      Wisdom. Let us attend. Let us listen to the Holy Gospel. Peace be unto all.*

Choir      And to Thy spirit

*Priest      The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew (27:1-56)*

Choir      Glory to Thy passion, O Lord.

*Priest      When the morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death; and they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor. When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver said,*

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*“It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.” So they took counsel and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on Him who was valued by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me.” Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said to him, “You have said do.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor wondered greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?” For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream.” Now the chief priest and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said “Barabbas”. Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said “Let him be crucified, “And he said “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified.” So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and*



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washed his hands before the crowd, saying "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released for them Barabbas and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him saying "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spat upon him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him. As they were marching out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. and over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross" So also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him saying "He saved others; he cannot save himself. If He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desire him; for he said 'I am the Son of God.'" And the robbers who were crucified with him also

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*reviled him in the same way. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice "Eli, Eli, lama Sabathani?", that is "My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "This man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and gave up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split; and the tombs also were opened and many of the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said "Truly this was the Son of God!". There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.*

Choir      *Glory to Thy long-suffering, O Lord.*

Reader     *Direct my steps according to Thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me. Deliver me from the slander of men, and I shall keep Thy commandments.*

*Let Thy face shine on Thy servant, and teach me Thy statutes.*

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Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, O Lord, that I may hymn Thy glory and honor all day long.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

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

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

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

*Priest      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 ages of ages.*

Reader    Amen

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**THE KONTAKION** can either be read or sung (see appendix for music)

Kontakion, Tone 8: Come, let us all sing the praises of Him Who was crucified for us, / for Mary said when she beheld Him upon the tree, // Thou Thou dost endure the Cross, Thou art my Son and my God.

Reader Lord have mercy (12x)

Thou who at every season and in every hour, in heaven and on earth art worshipped and glorified, O Christ our God, who art long-suffering, merciful and compassionate: who lovest the just and showest mercy upon the sinner; who callest all to salvation through the promise of blessings to come: O Lord, in this hour receive our supplications and direct our lives according to Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, hallow our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds; deliver us from all tribulations, evil and distress. Surround us with Thy holy angels, that guided and guarded by them we may attain the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy

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

More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without defilement You gave birth to God the Word: true Theotokos we magnify You.

In the name of the Lord, bless Father.

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*Priest*      *God be bountiful unto us and bless us and show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful unto us.*

**Reader**      Amen. O Christ, the True light who enlightens and sanctifies every man who comes into the world, let the light of Thy countenance shine upon us, that in it we may behold the unapproachable light; and guide our footsteps aright to the keeping of Thy commandments; through the prayers of thy most pure mother, and of all Thy Saints. Amen.