



*Yours Is The Power*



THE PASCHAL HYMN  
**HIS HOLINESS POPE SHENOUDA III**

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His Holiness Pope Shenouda III

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# *The Hymn of the Holy Pascha*



*Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing  
and the majesty forever. Amen.  
O Immanuel our God and King*

## Introduction

With this hymn, we sing to our Lord throughout the whole of Holy Week, following Him in every movement and every situation. We sing it instead of the Canonical Prayers- the five daytime hours and the five evening hours- repeating it twelve times in the stead of each of the twelve psalms of each Canonical hourly prayer.

Christ the Lord departs Jerusalem and journeys to Bethany. We follow Him there, singing to Him, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever*. The priests are vexed at Him for His cleansing of the Temple and plot to kill Him, but we protest their plotting, saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever*. As our Lord stoops down in humility to wash the disciples' feet, we exalt Him, singing to Him, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever*. As He prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, struggling such that His sweat pours down as drops of Blood, we cry out, saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever*. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.

In this way and with this hymn, we walk beside Him. As He is being arrested, as He is being judged before His enemies, as the crown of thorns is being placed upon His head, as He is being scourged, as He falls beneath the Cross, as He is being nailed to the Cross, as He commits His Spirit into the hand of the Father, and as He takes the Penitent Thief with Him to Paradise, we walk beside Him, saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever*. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.





*Yours is the Power  
O Immanuel our God and King*

# *Yours is the Power*

That for which we first praise the Lord during this week is that power is His. Yes, Lord, power is one of Your attributes. You are He of Whom the Apostle Saint Paul said, *"Christ the power of God"* (1Cor.1:24). They thought You, being on the cross, were weak. But we know Who You are. The first thing we know of Your power that is that Yours is the power as the Creator, as the Holy Bible says, *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made"* (Jn.1:3).

And Yours is the power for You are the Judge Who is coming upon the clouds of heaven to judge the living and the dead.

Indeed, if they had pondered deeply on the days in which this Crucified Who appeared weak in their eyes, had spent in their midst, they would have seen Him as All-Powerful.

## **Powerful in His Miracles and His Holiness**

You, Lord, are the Only Powerful who was able to triumph over sin, the world and Satan. All mankind weakened before sin which *"has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men"* (Prov.7:26). That is why Scripture says, *"They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one"* (Ps.14:3). As for You, Lord, You are the Only One who challenged the world, saying, *"Which of you convicts Me of sin?"* (Jn.8:1). You alone are the Only Powerful One who was able to overcome Satan and say, *"the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me"* (Jn.14:30). And it is for



this reason that they sang to You in the Book of Revelation, saying, *"For You alone are holy"* (Rev.15:4). You alone are powerful in holiness, You who are *"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"*, who are *"higher than the heavens"* (Heb.7:26).

You have proved, Lord, Your wondrous power through Your miracles, such that You worked miracles *"which no one else did"* (Jn.15:24). You manifested Your power over nature: You rebuked the winds, the sea and the waves, and walked upon the waves of the sea. You are He of whom David sang, saying, *"You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them"* (Ps.89:9). *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever.*

You manifested Your power over illness and death. You healed every illness and weakness, in particular those that were incurable, for You gave sight to the blind, cleansed the leprous, healed the woman who had suffered bleeding for eighteen years, the man who had been paralysed for thirty-eight years, the paralytic who was lifted down through the roof and the man with a withered hand. You are the One who raised the dead, even he who had been lain in the tomb for four days and there was a stench (Jn.11:39).

You revealed Your power of creation in the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand men from the five loaves and two fishes, in Your creating eyes for the man born blind, and when You changed the water into wine, in which You created a new element that was not among the two elements that form water.

You manifested Your power over evil spirits who were cast out whilst crying and saying, *"You are the Christ, the Son of God!"* You would rebuke the evil spirit and it would depart the body

unable to return. We cannot number Your miracles and it suffices us to repeat the words of John the Beloved when He said, *"And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen"* (Jn.21:25).

Besides these many manifestations of the Lord's power in His miracles, there was another wondrous power which He manifested during His sufferings and crucifixion; namely, the new concept of power.

## **The New Concept of Power**

The world's understanding of power differs from that presented to us by Christ the Lord. The world beholds external power- the power of violence, the power of the man who can strike and protect himself from being stricken, the power of the man who can subject others. The Lord, however, gave us by His example the model of the power that loves and that can expend, endure and give, even if it sacrifices the self.

When we contemplate power, we think of it only on the spiritual plane and not the physical, and with this perspective we meditate Christ in His passion.

In its poverty, the materialistic world considers that Christ was weak when He was stricken, slapped, mocked and hung on the Cross. Indeed, this could be said if Christ had endured all this humiliation due to inability. But on the contrary, He was stronger than those who struck Him, than those who humiliated Him, than those who crucified Him. It was within His power to destroy them all, and yet He did not do so because He loved

them and His love was stronger than death. He could have had them all put to death, but He did not do so because He had come to deliver them from death and to grant them life through His death.

It is for this reason that we glorify Christ in His endurance, acknowledging that the one who endures is the stronger. For thus says the Apostle, *"We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves"* (Rom.15:1).

Weak persons do not have the ability to endure; a single word can disturb them, and a slight insult can provoke them so quickly that they may lose their temper. In their retaliation or response to insult with another insult, we sense their weakness and their inability to bear or endure.

Christ the Lord, however, was strong in His forbearance, and His forbearance was indicative of His strong love, because he who has love for others is able to forebear them. Our lack of forbearance is but an indication of our lack of love.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to carry our sins, for *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"* (Is.53:6). The Lord carried all these iniquities on our behalf to pay their wages Himself. For the sake of each and every one of us, the Lord endured the insults, taunts, strikes, slaps and spitting with joy, in the depth of His love, chanting in our ears, saying, *"for your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face"* (Ps.69:7). When we hear this, we reply brokenheartedly, *"For my sake, You bore the injustice of the wicked, for my sake You gave Your back to the scourges and Your cheeks to the slaps; and turned not Your face away from the shame and spitting"* (Divine Liturgy).

The power of Christ in His passion and crucifixion is apparent in the fact that He was able to destroy all the transgressors but did not do so out of the vast depths of His love for us. He bore our penalty and gave us His peace; He bore our shame and gave us His glory.

In order to comprehend fully the power of Christ, we must ask: What would have happened if Christ had rejected the insults and the crucifixion? What would have happened if He had commanded the earth to open its mouth and engulf them all, or that a fire descend from heaven and consume them? He could have done so, but the result would have been our destruction because the Saviour would have rejected to die for us. That is why the Lord said, 'I will die, and not you. I will suffer insult, and you be glorified. I have come in the flesh especially for you to sacrifice Myself for you, and endure insults in My love for you and for those who insult Me'. That is why He not only endured the injustice of the wicked, but He loved them, forgave them, prayed for them, defended them and interceded for them, saying, "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*" (Lk.23:34). This is true power, true strength; the strength of the Heart who is full of love, who can forbear those who mistreat Him, who can love them, pray for them and lay down His life a ransom for theirs.

Who among men can do this? However much physical strength or elevated rank a person may have, will he be able to do so? Which director can endure a slap on the face from his page-boy, love him, forgive him, excuse him and promote him, not forgetting the vast difference between this example and what happened to our Lord, which was between the Creator and His creatures?

Saint Peter did not understand the true Christian spiritual meaning of power when he drew his sword and cut off the ear of the servant in defence of His Master at His arrest. For this reason the Lord commanded him to put his sword in its place. It is good to have sacred zeal, but violence is not our way; our way is love. Thus the Lord touched the ear of the servant and healed it, and handed Himself over to sinners whom He had also come to redeem. In like manner to Saint Peter were Saints James and John. They did not understand the meaning of power when, in defending the Lord for being rejected, said, "*Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?*" (Lk.9:54). But the Lord answered them, saying, "*You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them*" (Lk.9:54-56). This is not My way; I have come to save that which was lost. In like manner did the Lord approached the Cross, giving His life a ransom for many.

Therefore, my brethren, when we stand by the Cross, we stand not to weep for Christ, as did Mary Magdalene and the daughters of Jerusalem. We stand by the Cross not to lament and eulogise Christ, but we stand by the Cross that we may glorify the Cross and the Crucified by singing to Him this beautiful hymn, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

For this reason, we boast in the Cross, saying with Saint Paul, "*But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world*" and "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*" (Gal.6:14);(1Cor.1:18).



If the Cross were a sign of weakness, it would not be our boast nor our glory, nor would we have taken it as our emblem. If the Cross were a sign of weakness, we would not have raised it atop our churches and minarets, nor worn it nor adorned our wrists with it, neither would we have drawn it in our books. The Cross for us is a sign of power, expressing the power of love, the power of sacrifice and of self-denial, and the power of endurance. This is the true meaning of power.

Many said to the Lord Jesus Christ, "*If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross*" (Mt.27:40). If Christ had yielded to their provocations and come down from the Cross, we would have perished, and humanity and Salvation would have been forfeited. Yet Christ the Lord was stronger than their provocations and He remained on the Cross.

Christ was not overcome by this provocation of vainglory when they said to Him: 'If You come down from the Cross, You will indeed be the Son of God. Prove Your power and amaze people by this miracle!' He was not overcome by vain flattery nor by the misconception of power. He could have descended from the Cross, but He did not, that we might be saved.

Christ thought not of Himself, but we were His concern. He was not concerned about saving Himself from death, but about saving us, to redeem us by His death. He yielded to the Cross not out of weakness but out of love.

He was not concerned with Himself, for love "*does not seek its own*" (1Cor.13:5). If He had been concerned with Himself and how He could be glorified in a worldly manner, He would not have emptied Himself and taken the form of Man. He did not think of Himself, because He had come to give Himself up for us. Then mankind would know that His power was in His love

and in His sacrifice, for *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends”* (Jn.15:13). Thus on the Cross, Christ gave us the model of the power which overcomes the self. That is why we witness an amazing thing in that the Lord’s response to all their transgressions was with a wondrous surrender: *“He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth”* (Is.53:7).

He knew all the steps that would be taken against Him, yet He did not resist the evil, but quietly said to Judas Iscariot, *“What you do, do quickly”* (Jn.13:27). We can find no reason for this other than the Lord’s desire to die for us. It was within His power to destroy the Cross and the crucifiers, but He accepted the crucifixion with a greater power; the power of love and of sacrifice.

## **Powerful in Accepting Death**

Christ was strong in His approach to death. People did not attack Him in secret and take Him by force, but He knew that they were coming to arrest Him; He knew the time of their coming, and that is why He said to His disciples, *“You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified”* (Mat.26:2). Rather, we would not be mistaken if we said that He knew the precise hour and minute; He knew the place to which they would come to arrest Him, and yet He went Himself to that place at that precise time. That was why when that time arrived, He awakened His disciples who were sleeping in the Garden of Gethsemane, saying to them, *“Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners”* (Mat.26:45,46). And when His enemies

approached, He did not distance Himself but arose with His disciples and approached to meet His enemies.

He did all this because He wanted to hand Himself over for us. Thus He said, *"I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again"* (Jn.10:17,18).

Christ the Lord says that His enemies are approaching and He goes forward courageously and powerfully to meet them. And we walk beside Him, singing to Him and saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

The Lord could have kept death away from Himself, but He accepted it willingly and approached it with power and courage, for it was the reason for His coming; He came *"to give His life a ransom for many"* (Mk.10:45).

## **Powerful at His Arrest**

At His arrest, our Lord was powerful. The soldiers who had come against Him with swords and clubs feared Him. Our teacher John the Beloved, who followed our Lord all the way to the Cross, explains this, saying, *"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus said to them, 'I am He'. And Judas, who betrayed*



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*Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground" (Jn.18:4-6).*

They fell to the ground because of His awe and because of their inability to face Him. His unarmed power was stronger than their armed attack. If He willed to leave, He could have, but He remained where He was courageously and calmly, and waited for them to rise up from their fall and asked them again, *"Whom are you seeking?," and they replied, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'* The Lord answered them, *'I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way' "* (Jn.18:7-9). In this way was Christ powerful at His arrest. At being arrested, some shudder and fear. But Christ's arrest was the contrary; those who had come to arrest Him feared Him and *"fell to the ground"* before Him. They were unable to approach His solemnity till He permitted them to, by His saying, *"I am He"*.

Our Lord's power at His arrest is also evident in His healing of the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant. In his zealousness, Peter drew his sword and cut off the servant's right ear (Jn.18:10), but violence was not the way of our gentle Lord. That is why He commanded Peter to put his sword into the sheath, refusing to defend Himself or to be defended by another, and in reproach said to Peter, *"Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"* (Mat.26:53). Yes, He could, but He refused to do so, because He approached courageously death to save us.

As for the servant whose ear had been cut off, the Holy Bible says that the mighty Christ whom they had come to arrest, *"touched his ear and healed him"* (Lk.22:51), working a merciful deed for His enemies, even at a critical moment. As the arrested



Christ heals the servant's ear, we stand beside Him, saying in His holy ears, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

This deed put to shame the officers, Judas and the chief priests, and was a testimony to them or a call for them all to believe later on. Christ walked amidst them under arrest in the way that a King walks amidst His subjects or the Creator amidst His creatures... He could utterly destroy them if He wished, but He did not, for our salvation.

He could have done as Elijah did with the captain of fifty who had come saying to him, "*Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!'*" Elijah answered the captain, "*If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men*" (2Kin.1:10). And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men. And he also commanded a second time that fire should come down from heaven and consume the second fifty with their captain.

As for the Messiah who had come to die for mankind, He did not do so. It would have been easy for Him to do as Elijah did, but He did not. The power by which He withheld Himself from utterly destroying them was the power by which He saved us. Thus the Lord handed Himself over for us in all courage, not fearing death.

## Powerful at His Trial

The chief priests feared our Lord so they tried Him at night. They were muddled at His trial, seeking false testimony against Him to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses had come forward, they found no reason to condemn Him (Mt.26:59,60). They were astounded at His calmness and silence. The high priest arose and said to Him, *"Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You? But Jesus kept silent"* (Mt.26:62,63).

Christ our Lord was not the One to be provoked by false charges or false witnesses. His silence was more powerful than speech. So they realised the hollowness of their charges and false witness, and sought another charge, adjuring Him by the living God if He was the Christ, the Son of God? He could have maintained His silence and perplexed them but powerfully He answered their question, adding, *"Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven"* (Mat.26:64).

In the same way that He was powerful before Caiaphas was He also powerful before Pilate. His awesomeness overwhelmed that ruler, making him confess more than once, *"I find no fault in this Man"* (Lk.23:4,14,21). Our Lord did not convince Pilate by His words, but by His silence, by the power emanating from His Person, to the extent that Pilate tried using more than one ploy to release Him as far as his cowardice would permit. And finally, the ruler washed his hands, justifying himself of the Blood of Christ.



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By Christ's side in His trial, we stand and sing to Him,  
*Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever.*  
*Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

## **Powerful in His Crucifixion and Death**

When Christ was hanging upon the Cross, the sun hid its rays, *"Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised"* (Mt.27:51,52). This earthquake had its impact on the centurion and his soldiers who were guarding the Cross, in that *"they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'"* (Mt.27:54). The centurion, named Longinus, was to become a great martyr for whom the Church celebrates two feast days in his memory.

The darkness that befell the land between the sixth and the ninth hours had an effect in Athens, Greece, and because of which Dionysius the Areopagite, astronomer and member of the Areopagus, was later to believe when Saint Paul would explain to him the reason for the sun's darkening. Dionysius became the first Bishop of Athens.

On the Cross, Christ the Lord was powerful when He forgave His crucifiers and when He promised the Penitent Thief entry into Paradise with Him that same day.

## Powerful in His Death

At the moment of His death, the Lord *"cried out with a loud voice"*, saying, *"Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit"* (Lk.23:46). Saint John Chrysostom contemplates Christ's power at His death revealed in the phrase, *"cried out with a loud voice"*, saying how could the Lord have this loud voice at His death despite His indescribable physical frailty?

In the Garden of Gethsemane, He had earnestly striven such that *"His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Luke 22:44). Arrested, He had then to walk a long distance as He was tried five times: before Ananias, Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod and then Pilate once again. In addition to this was the bitter exhaustion from being scourged thirty-nine times with full brutality. People would die or approach a near-death state from scourging alone. He bled from the crown of thorns. He also suffered from the many slaps and endured more sufferings from carrying the Cross, till He was so exhausted that He fell beneath the Cross, leading them to lay hold of Simon of Cyrene to bear the Cross after Him. After all this, He endured further suffering when He was being nailed to the Cross; and the pain of crucifixion is unbearable. He was drained of every physical strength due to bleeding, such that His skin clung to His bones and the verse *"I can count all My bones"* (Ps.22:17) applied to Him. When He reached the moment of death, His strength had dried up so that He could not even whisper. How, then, could He cry out with a loud voice?

In this holy moment, we stand beside Him in wonder, saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*





*Yours is the Power*  
*@ Immanuel our God and King*

Christ was powerful in His death because His death annihilated Death, and because by His death He crushed the Serpent's head and the promise given to mankind from the time of Eve (Gen.3:15) was fulfilled. Thus at His death, He was made known as the Saviour of the world.

Christ's most powerful moment was the moment of His death, for that was when He received His kingdom and reigned over all humanity, regaining the kingdom from the ruler of this world. That is why the Psalm says, *"The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength"* (Ps.93:1). For this reason we find that the Ninth Hour Prayer, in which we remember the Lord's death, are full of psalms of praise, glorification and phrases of worship, and in which the phrase *"the Lord reigns"* is repeated many times. And in the Lord's presence, in the presence of Him who was powerful in His death, we stand, singing to Him, saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

## **Powerful After His Death**

The first thing the Lord did after commending His spirit was that He took Satan and bound him for a thousand years, then descended into Hades (Eph.4:9) and there preached those who had died in hope, leading them all and entering with them, together with the Penitent Thief, into Paradise. After His death, the Lord could reopen Paradise which had remained shut for thousands of years since the Fall of Adam and Eve.

He whom they thought dead in the tomb, whose tomb they sealed, was able to open the gates of Paradise and to bring in all those who had died in hope, leading them in His triumph.

One of the beautiful stories recounted of the Lord after His death is that when Nicodemus was wrapping His body, He felt humbled as to how could he be wrapping the body of the Lord the Creator? At this, the Lord looked at him and smiled. In response, Nicodemus said, 'Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal!' and from these words have the Trisagion Hymn been taken. And by the Lord's tomb we stand and say to our Lord in His death, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing, and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

## **Powerful in His Resurrection**

The Lord was powerful when He left the tomb whilst it was sealed, triumphant over death.



## Concealing His Power from Satan

Indeed, one of the main reasons why some believe that Christ the Lord was weak was because the Lord was constantly concealing His power. He was concealing it out of His humility, and also from Satan, so much so that Satan stood bewildered before our Lord's true identity: Was He the Christ or was He not?

It was not beneficial that Satan know who our Lord was, for then he would do his utmost to hamper the way to Redemption, because he was against the Salvation of the world and desired it not to happen. Here, I will try to tell you some of the examples of these doubts into which Satan fell, resulting from the Lord's power being concealed from him.

Satan knew that Christ would be born of a Virgin, for Isaiah the Prophet's prophecy was clear, *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel"* (Is.7:14), describing the attributes of this Son, saying, *"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"* (Is.9:6). Satan was convinced of the fulfillment of this prophecy from the angel's apparition to Saint Joseph (Mt.1:22,23), and also from the annunciation of the angel to the Virgin Saint Mary, that the *"Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God"* (Lk.1:35).

Indeed, the Virgin Saint Mary conceived and moreover, Satan saw that when this Virgin visited Elizabeth, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and the babe leaped in her womb for joy and she said to Saint Mary, *"But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"* (Lk.1:41-44). Satan said within himself, *"This must be the Son of God"*, but he was

perplexed when he saw God Incarnate born in a manger. How could this be? It is impossible that the Son of God is This poor Babe, homeless and surrounded by animals. Surely, it is not Him! For how was it possible that God could come to the world without a glorious reception, festivities, angels surrounding Him and celestial lightings, and without heaven and earth shuddering at His coming?

Satan speculated thus because he was not able to comprehend the meaning of humility and self-abandonment. If he were able to, he would have not become Satan.

Then Satan heard the angel's annunciation to the shepherds, saying, *"I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger"* (Lk.2:10-12). So Satan said in his heart, "This must be Him. It is confirmed by the angels' song, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men'. Now everything is clear, because peace will never return to earth unless this is the Saviour, Christ the Lord". The Magi's testimony, the birth in Bethlehem agreeing with the prophecy, the disturbance of King Herod at the birth and the worship of the Magi, all reconfirmed this (Mat.2:1-11).

Nevertheless, Satan began to doubt when he saw this Saviour to whom the angels sang, whom the Magi worshipped and from whom Herod was troubled, fleeing to Egypt as a fearful One. How could this be? How could it be possible that God flees from man? Where is His power, His kingdom and His awe? For sure, it is not Him.

Satan watched as the Child entered Egypt and found that many of the Egyptian idols tottered, fell and were destroyed

and realised that this was in fulfillment of the Prophet Isaiah's prophecy, "*Behold, the Lord rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst*" (Is.19:1), and Satan said in his heart, "Undoubtedly, this is He, the Saviour, the Son of God".

Yet when he found that the Child did not return till the death of those who sought His life, his doubts were renewed once more. He saw that Joseph feared for the Child from Archelaus the governor of Judea, and remained in Nazareth (Mat.2:20-22)- Nazareth, that city which people wondered if anything good could come from it (Jn.1:46). So Satan said, "No, it is not He", and continued in his doubts till he saw the twelve year old Child Jesus sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And he heard Him answering His mother the Virgin Saint Mary, saying to her and to Saint Joseph, "*Why is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?*" (Lk.2:45-49). So Satan said within himself, "It must be Him, for from where did He get this wisdom? And what is the meaning of '*I must be about My Father's business*'?" Yet when Satan found the Child who stunned the teachers and who said, "*I must be about My Father's business*" living in obedience to the Virgin Saint Mary and Saint Joseph (Lk.2:51), he doubted. How could He live submitting to them when He is the One to whom heaven and earth submit? No, it definitely is not Him.

These doubts of Satan increased when he found our Lord living for the ensuing eighteen years (until He was thirty years





old) unknown, working as a simple carpenter. How can He endure as God to live all this golden time like that? For sure, it is not Him.

Then Satan heard John the Baptist testify to Christ, saying, *"there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose"*, and pointing to Christ, saying, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* (Jn.1:26-29); *"I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit"* (Mk.1:8). So Satan said, *"It must be Him"*.



Satan was then immensely astounded when He looked and saw the Great Person whom John the Baptist was not worthy to stoop down and undo His straps, the Saviour who takes away the sin of the world, who was to baptise men with the Holy Spirit, coming to be baptized by John the Baptist along with the rest of the people. Satan waited to see John the Baptist being baptised by Him and handing the ministry over to Him, as honour dictates. But to the contrary, he heard the Lord saying to John, *"Permit it to be so now"* (Matthew 3:15), and John permitted and baptised Christ. Satan was stunned because he did not comprehend the meaning of humility, saying in his heart, *"No, it is not Him"*.

Yet there was a wondrous occurrence at the Lord's baptism, proving that He was the Christ. The heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, resting upon Him and a voice from heaven said, *"You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Mk.1:10,11), so Satan said, *"Without a doubt, it is He- the Father's testimony is clear"*.

However, when Satan witnessed the Person to whom the Father and the Holy Spirit testifying to at baptism on the mountain suffering hunger after having fasted, he doubted. How could He suffer hunger when He is the One who is able to change the stones into bread so that He could eat? When He was able to take Christ and set Him on the pinnacle of the Temple and take Him up on an exceedingly high mountain (Mat.4:5,8), he was sure that it was not Him. He was so sure that it was not Him at all, that he boldly said to Him, *"All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me"* (Mat.4:9).

Nonetheless, Satan feared and sensed the power of He who fasted and suffered hunger, when He rebuked him, saying,

*"Away with you, Satan!"* He left Him and angels came and ministered to Him (Mt.4:11).

When Satan saw Christ performing miracles which no one had worked before, he became more fearful and said, 'It is He'. Yet he found Him concealing these miracles behind a prayer or what looked like a prayer, and that some of the extraordinary miracles He performed on the Sabbath, causing the scribes and the Pharisees to condemn Him for breaking the Sabbath. Then he saw Him living without title or profession or habitation, surrounded by a group of weaklings, so he said in himself, "No, it is not Him".

When he heard the Lord saying to Nicodemus, *"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven"* (John 3:13), he said, "Perhaps it is Him. How can He be in heaven whilst He is on earth with Nicodemus? Is He everywhere? Then He is God. Does not the phrase *'ascended to heaven'* prove it?" Then Satan heard Him saying, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved"* (Jn.3:17), so he said, "It must be Him, the Only Begotten Son who is in heaven, who came down from heaven, for whoever believes in Him will have everlasting life". Yet he returned to his doubts again because of the term *'Son of Man'* which Christ used frequently. Why does He say at the same time, *"...even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life"* (Jn.3:14-15)?

However, before the many miracles proving the Lord Christ's Divinity, and before His amazing power of casting out demons, the demons could but confess Him, crying out and saying, *"You are the Christ, the Son of God!"* (Lk.4:14), and the Lord rebuked them.

When Satan saw the Lord weary from walking, sitting by the well and saying to the woman, "Give Me a drink", he doubted again. As Christ rebuked the sea and the waves, Satan said, "It is Him", yet when he found Him sleeping in the boat, he doubted, saying within himself, "How can He sleep when it is said of Him in the psalm, that He *'shall neither slumber nor sleep'*" (Ps.121:4)?

In the same way that Satan was confused as to who Jesus of Nazareth was, the people were likewise perplexed. Some said that He was John the Baptist, others that He was Jeremiah, and others that He was one of the prophets (Mt.16:14). When Christ asked His disciples, "*Who do you say that I am?*", Simon Peter answered, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God*", and the Lord accepted this testimony, praising Simon and saying to him, "*...flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven*" (Mt.16:17).

Satan saw this as an explicit and unmistakable confession and said to himself, "Surely it is Him; there is no doubt about it". However, immediately afterwards, hearing the Lord telling His disciples that He ought to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and the scribes, be killed and be raised the third day, he was astounded, saying: "How can He be the Son of God and yet suffer and be killed? Probably this is the only way to save mankind? Therefore I must prevent Him from doing so". Hence Satan puts on Peter's lips the words which he said to the Lord, "*Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!*" Knowing this to be Satan, the Lord turned and said to Peter, "*Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men*" (Mat.16:21-23).

The Lord entered Jerusalem received as a great King, as the awaited-for Messiah, and praised by children in fulfillment of the psalm, "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained praise" (Ps.8:2). When with great awe and authority the Lord cleansed the Temple, Satan said, "It could be Him", yet doubted again when he saw Him withdrawing to Bethany.

The Lord began to forcefully destroy Satan's kingdom by revealing to the people in total frankness the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees, saying, "*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*" (Mt.23:25), and destroying the dignity of the Levitical priesthood with the parable of the wicked vinedressers (Lk.20:9-19). He then put to shame the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians who were unable to answer Him (Mk.12). At these, Satan prepared to hand Christ over, and Wednesday was the day of the conspiracy.

On Thursday, Satan saw Christ washing His disciples' feet, so he was encouraged, saying in his heart, "It is not He; how can He be Lord and wash the feet of men?" And after Judas took the morsel of bread, Satan entered his heart and he went to carry out the plot.

Satan listened to the Lord's final speech with His disciples and heard how He would send them the Holy Spirit, and said, "Could this be Him? Who can send the Spirit of God but God alone?" Then hearing the Lord's lengthy prayer to the Father (Jn.17) in which He said of the disciples, "*that they may be one as We are*", and "*...as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You*", and, "*keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are*", Satan trembled and said, "It must be Him", remembering the previous words of Christ, that, "*I and My Father are one*" (Jn.10:30), and also His words to Philip, "*He*

*who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?" (Jn.14:8-10). Once more, Satan trembled and said, "It must be Him".*



Then Satan looked and saw the Person who had said, *"I and My Father are one"*, and, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father"*, striving in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying that the cup be taken from Him, such that *"His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Luke 22:44), he was reassured, saying, *"No, it is not Him"*.

Satan looked and beheld the troops coming to arrest Christ with swords and clubs falling to the ground before the greatness

of His awe, despite His being weaponless, so he was left bewildered. When he saw Him healing the servant's ear which Peter had severed, he said, "It is definitely Him. Who else could have this courage, awesomeness and love for His enemies, and this mighty miraculous power?" But when he saw Him walking with them "as a sheep led to the slaughter", he felt reassured, saying, "No, it cannot be Him".

As the Lord stood tried before the chief priests, Satan stood listening attentively to see what would the outcome be? Satan's same question which he asked on the Mount of Temptation, was now being repeated by the chief priest, "Are You the Christ, the Son of God?" The Lord answered him, saying, *"It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven"* (Mat.26:64). Satan heard this clear confession from Christ the Lord and said in himself, "Could this be Him? He had said many times before that He would come on the clouds of heaven?" Yet his doubts were renewed when he watched Him being despised and humiliated by men who reviled Him, slapping Him and mocking Him whilst He opened not His mouth. He gave His back to those who struck Him, and His cheeks to those who plucked out the beard, and did not hide His face from shame and spitting.

Satan also saw Christ the Lord fall beneath the Cross from exhaustion, such that Simon of Cyrene carried it for Him, so then he said, "No, it is impossible that it is Him". Satan's understanding of dignity and power were different, and hence said to himself, "It is impossible that it is He", and cried out through the mouth of the mob, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

As for our Lord, His words, *"I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I*

*have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again"* (Jn.10:17), continued to echo.

Christ our Lord was lifted up on the Cross and Satan remained tormented by his doubts. As the Lord concealed His power from him, he continued asking his old question, *"If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross"* (Mt.27:40). The first phrase the Lord says upon the Cross starts with His saying, 'Father': *"Father, forgive them..."*, and this word 'Father' makes Satan shudder, hence saying within himself, *"Could He be the Christ?"*, and asking through the lips of the thief on the Lord's left, *"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us"* (Lk.23:39).

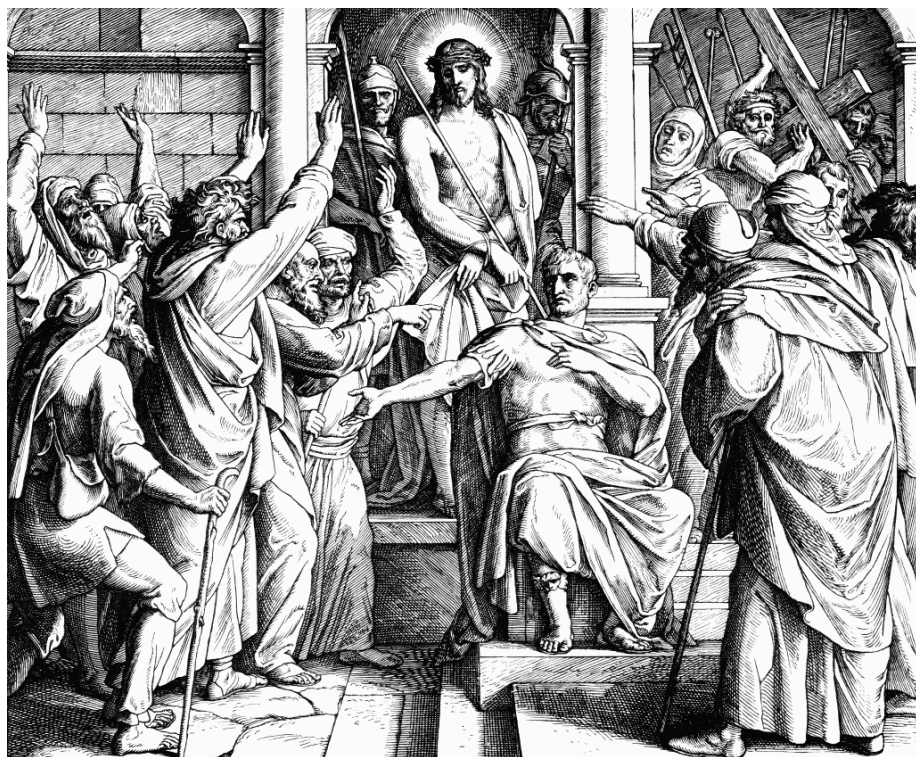
The words of the Lord and Master to the Penitent Thief, *"today you will be with Me in Paradise"* (Luke 23:43), shuddered and terrified Satan. *"What is He saying? Does He not know that Paradise has been shut for the past five thousand years, and at its doors angels of the rank of cherubim with a flaming sword turning every way, to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen.3:24)? So how can Paradise be opened? And how can this Crucified and this thief enter it? Is He the Christ who by His crucifixion shall save the whole world? If so, it will be a catastrophe to the kingdom of demons and all their works since the time of Adam..."*.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over the earth and Satan saw the curtain of the Temple torn in two, the rocks split, the earth quake and the graves opened, and he trembled exceedingly and said, *"Surely this is Him; He is Christ the Saviour"*.

And yet in spite of the earthquake and the darkness, Satan heard the voice of Christ, saying, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* and then, *"I thirst!"* Reassured, he said, *"It is not Him"*.

Satan was waiting for Christ to die so that he could bind His spirit as he had been doing with the rest of mankind and take His spirit down to Hades. Taken by surprise at Christ's cry with a loud voice, "*Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit*" - he wondered, "Is this Crucified still saying, 'Father'? Could He indeed be the Son of God? And what is the meaning of this loud voice? From where is He getting this strength? And how can He commit His spirit into the hands of the Father? He will actually commit it into my hands". As he came forward, trembling with doubts, to take the spirit of Christ, the Lord Christ held him by the power of His Divinity and bound him for one thousand years.





*Yours is the Glory*  
*© Immanuel our God and King*

# *Yours is the Glory*

During Passion Week, we behold Christ as He was described by the prophet, "...despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him" (Is.53:3). And we, when we see Him despised for our sake, we follow Him with this immortal hymn, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

## **Despised and Rejected by Men**

In fact, it was not only during Passion Week, that the Lord emptied Himself of His glory, but throughout His lifetime, He gave up His honour for us, such that He was without honour in His own country and was reviled, "*Is this not the carpenter's Son?*" (Mt.13:55). For our sakes, He endured shame, insults and assailment. Because of His humility, when He sat with tax collectors and sinners, they said of Him that He was a glutton and a winebibber. Because of His love in healing the sick, they said of Him that He did not keep the Sabbath. For the sake of teaching us to not focus on the letter but to be mindful of the depths, they said of Him that He was a breaker of the Law. And we, when we see Him despised for our sakes, we follow Him with the same hymn, saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

We know, Lord, why they humiliated You; it was because You were different from them, for Your humility exposed them. You did not do as they did. They made *"their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi'"* (Mt.23:5-7).

But You, Lord, lived humble and gentle, sitting with the lowly, poor and despised, eating with sinners and tax-collectors, conversing with a Samaritan woman. Children approached You. In poverty You lived with neither rank nor money, nor place to lay Your head. They refused to glorify You because You did not esteem their glory and said, *"I do not receive honour from men"* (Jn.5:41). Thus You rejected possessions and splendour. As for us, we know the truth of Your greatness, and we address You saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

All their despising of You can never lessen Your glory. They sold You for the price of a slave, thirty pieces of silver, and in mockery arrayed You with a scarlet robe, placing a crown of thorns upon Your head. As for us, we follow You in every one of these events, saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

## **You are our Glorious God**

They despised You because You took the form of a Servant, but we glorify You because we know who You are. You are equal with the Father in essence, and all the Father's are Yours (Jn.17:10). You are *"in the bosom of the Father"* (Jn.1:17) from eternity, and *"the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person"* (Heb.1:3). Indeed, we glorify You because of the glory You had with the Father before the world was

(Jn.17:5), You to whom all authority has been given, in heaven and on earth (Mat.28:18). You are He who has been glorified before we existed, and before we came into being. You are the One at whose Name every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth (Phil.1:10). Before we glorified You, You were and remain glorified by angels and archangels, with “thousands upon thousands standing in Your presence and myriads upon myriads serving You and obeying Your word, O our Master” (Divine Liturgy).

And before the angels and before all the other creation, You were glorified when You were Alone. You are not in need of any creature to glorify You; You are glorified in Yourself, glorified through Your attributes and glorified in Your Divinity; You are not in need of glorification by anyone; You are “*the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last*” (Rev.22:13).

When we glorify You we do not add anything new to You. Even when You emptied Yourself, many examples of Your glorification were manifest: at Your birth the angels glorified You at their announcement of the good news to the shepherds, the Magi glorified You when they worshipped You offering gifts befitting Your Person. You were glorified when the idols of Egypt tottered at Your presence when You entered Egypt as a Child (Is.19:1). You were glorified by John the Baptist when he witnessed to You, saying, “*There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose*” (Mk.1:7).

Your glory was manifest at Your baptism when the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove and the Father’s voice from heaven said, “*You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased*” (Lk.3:22). Your glory was also manifest on the Mount of

Transfiguration when Your face shone like the sun and Your clothes became as white as light, and when the Father from heaven said, *"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"* (Mt.17:2-5).

Your glory was apparent in many miracles. Even the evil spirits themselves could only but confess You. Or rather Your glory appeared on the Mount of Temptation itself, when You rebuked Satan who then left You and angels came and ministered to You (Mk.1:13). Your glory was visible to John the Visionary when he saw You amidst the seven lampstands, Your face shining like the sun in its strength, Your eyes like a flame of fire and Your voice as the sound of many waters, such that John could not endure the awesomeness of that great scene and fell at Your feet as dead (Rev.1:3-17).

You will come in Your glory too at Your Second Coming upon the clouds of heaven, as the Holy Bible says that You will come in Your glory, and all the holy angels with You (Mat.25:31); clouds and darkness will surround You; righteousness and justice the foundation of Your throne, Your lightnings will light the world, and the earth shall see and tremble and the mountains shall melt like wax at Your presence (Ps.97).

## **We also Glorify You**

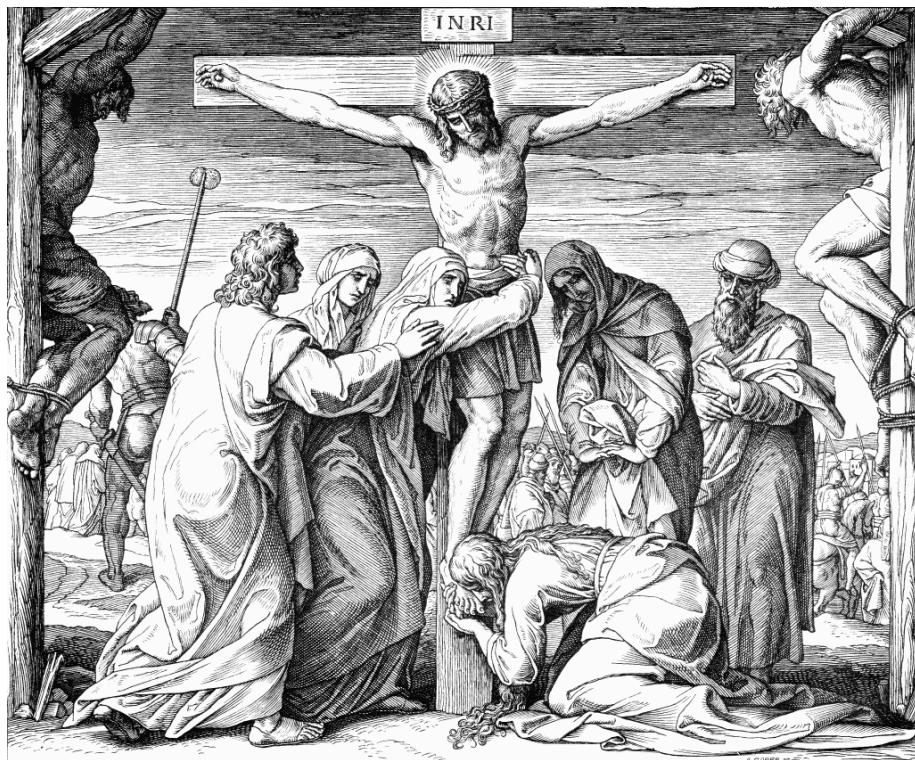
When we glorify You, our mouths become sanctified whilst to You, nothing is added. In fact, when we glorify You, we are not giving You glory but merely professing Your glory. You, Lord, are like the sun which shines whether people admit to its light or not. Their admission does not add to its light, for its light is intrinsic.

We not only glorify You for the majesty of Your glory at Your Second Coming when Your glory will be clearly evident, but we glorify You now when You are in the depths of Your agony. We walk behind You in Your sufferings step by step, crying out and saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

We glorify You too with this unique, incomparable and unequal masterpiece, *"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom"* (Ps.45:6,7). When we glorify You we protest against what those crucifiers and conspirators did. We protest against what ungrateful humanity did to You, beholding Your true glory at Your crucifixion which You endured for us. When we glorify You, we are in effect accepting with honour the glory of the Cross in our lives and ministry. Rather, we sing with Saint Paul the Apostle, saying, *"I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me"* (Gal.2:20).

With this beautiful melody we glorify the Lord at the end of the prayers on Good Friday when He had paid His Blood the price of the Salvation of the world, and begun to reign on the wood of the Cross. For this reason, we sing to Him saying, *"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom"* (Ps.45:6,7).

With this melody we glorify the Lord on Tuesday also, when He declared the time of His crucifixion, saying to His disciples, *"You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified"* (Mat.26:2). We glorify You, Lord, whilst You are on Your Cross and not only in Your miracles. *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God.*



*Yours is the Blessing  
O Immanuel our God and King*



## *Yours is the Blessing*

We follow Christ our Master in His crucifixion and say to Him, *Yours is the blessing* because the Holy Bible says, “*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*” (Gal.3:13). That was why it was necessary to bury the dead body of the one who was deserving death the same day, for they could not remain overnight on the cross that the land might not be defiled, for “*he who is hanged is accursed of God*” (Deut.21:22,23). Thus the Lord “*has redeemed us from the curse of the Law*” and became “*a curse for us*” (Gal.3:13).

We, however, know that He is sinless and holy, and that the curse which He carried was ours. That curse was that which our sins deserved according to the Law (Deut.28). He is without sin but is a bearer of sin, of the sin of others, of the sin of the whole world. Hence we follow Him sorrowing for what we have caused Him to carry, saying to Him from the depths of our hearts, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel, our God and King.*

It was because of this curse that He was crucified outside the camp, so as not to defile it. And we too, during His Week of Passion, go out to Him, as our teacher Paul the Apostle says, “*Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach*” (Heb.13:13). Yes indeed, bearing His reproach, “*esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches*” (Heb.11:26). Therefore, during Holy Week, the Church sits outside the camp, far from the altar, far from the sanctuary, far from the pews, the rows of the saints, remembering our sins which caused us to go outside the camp, in like manner of Adam’s exile from Paradise.

In following the Lord outside the camp, we say to Him, “You are righteous and we are evil. We are deserving of the curse and



the exile, but *Yours is the blessing forever. Amen. O Jesus Christ, our Good Saviour*".

At the time that the Jews viewed the Cross of Christ as a symbol of humiliation and of shame, we say to Him, "Blessing belongs to You and to Your Cross. It is through Your Cross that we receive blessing in all things", for it is through the Cross and by making the sign of the Cross that the priest blesses the congregation, and administers consecrations and ordinations.

We make the sign of the Cross in the Sacrament of Baptism, thus receiving the blessing of the new birth. And in the Sacrament of Chrismation we make the sign of the Cross on every member of our bodies, thus every member of ours becomes blessed and sanctified. By the sign of the Cross, the holy signings in the Sacrament of the Eucharist take place, as well as in the Sacrament of the Priesthood and all the other sacraments of the church. Hence by it we receive the grace, the blessing and the gifts, and cry out from our depths, *Yours is the blessing!*

To You, Lord, belongs the blessing. Ever since Adam's Fall, we have lost the blessing and it has been our dream to this day to wait to receive it from You, O You who bless all the nations of the earth.

When God created man, He blessed him. But when man fell, through Adam's Fall, the curse entered the earth, according to the Lord's words, "*cursed is the ground for your sake*" (Gen.3:17). The curse then began to enter men themselves; the Lord cursed Cain (Gen.4:11), then Canaan and his descendants (Gen.9:25). The curse extended till it reached every sinner, for the Law says to man, "*if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes...*

*all these curses will come upon you and overtake you... The Lord will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly"* (Deut.28:15-20).

Amidst the curses of the Law, mankind dreamt of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraam when He had said to him, *"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed"* (Gen.22:18). Mankind continued to look forward to this Seed through whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Generations passed by and humanity remained defiled in its sins, *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God", "They have together become corrupt; there is none who does good"* (Ps.53:3), and mankind continued to await Your coming, till You came, O beloved and compassionate Lord, You who lift from us all the curse of the Law. In You all the nations of the earth are blessed.

We stand by Your cross, trusting in Your promise to our father Abraam, beholding You immersing Your hyssop in Your precious Blood to sprinkle it upon us that we may be cleansed, that we may sing to You with all exaltation and glorification, saying, *Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

## **Yours is the Blessing**

Yours is the blessing which You bestowed on the world, without which the whole world would have perished in its sin. Yours is the blessing which is mentioned in the Divine Liturgy, *"You blessed my nature in You"*. Yours is the infinite blessing by which You blessed the whole world.

*Yours is the blessing* by which You blessed us, the uncircumcised Gentiles, who were without Messiah, who were alien and strangers to the covenants of the promise, without hope. Through Your blessing, we became close and foreign and strangers no longer, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Eph.2:11-19).

Yours is the blessing because You are holy. That is why we sing to You the Trisagion Hymn on the day of Your crucifixion, "Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us!" When we sing this hymn about Your holiness, we are but declaring how You are above all their accusations. And when we sing this hymn 'Agios' in the sad tune, we are not grieving over You, but our hearts mourn that mankind delivered You to the Cross as a sinner with inappropriate charges. But You, O Holy One, who was born of the Holy Spirit and who alone is holy (Rev.15:4), *Yours is the blessing forever. Amen.*

The Penitent Thief was the first to receive from You this blessing when You permitted him entry with You into Paradise. And with this blessing have You blessed the ignorant of the world through whom You put to shame the prudent, and blessed the weak vessels that bore Your holy Name. Who would have imagined that those weak fishermen would become in Your hand as the five loaves of bread, that by them You would satisfy the whole world, so that their preaching "*has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world*" (Ps.19:4)? Who would have believed that this scared group hiding in the Upper Room would be able to go out and stand before emperors, philosophies and religions and fill the whole earth? It is Your blessing which was said to our mother Rebecca, "*may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may*

*your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them"* (Gen.24:60). Yes, Lord, Yours is the blessing.

Sin had concealed blessing. Thus when sin was lifted up from us, blessing was restored to us, restoring man to his former place as You had said to him in lovingkindness, *"I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing"* (Gen.12:2). We entreat You to continue Your blessing upon us with all its entailing graces and abundances. And may that blessing which we heard on the sixth day when You said to us, *"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it"* (Gen.1:28), may this blessing return to us once more, along with Your blessing to Noah (Gen.8).



*Yours is the Majesty  
O Immanuel our God and King*

## *Yours is the Majesty*

Yours is the majesty because You are “*Lord of lords and King of kings*” (Rev.17:14). Although You rejected the worldly kingdom, You reign over hearts and Your kingdom is within us. Even those who did not permit You to reign over their hearts, feared You.

Yours is the majesty because You are awesome, revered and feared. You may empty Yourself in humility according to Your will, but this in no way lessens Your majesty and Your reverence.

Many times, Your emptying of Yourself permitted Your enemies to take up stones to stone You but they could not do anything to You, and You passed through them, went Your way and no one was able to lay hand on You... (Lk.4:30).

They were not able to arrest You unless the hour had come, the hour which You had appointed to hand Yourself over with Your own will. In Your presence, all feared You. Even their interrogation broke down. You spoke little with them. As a young Child, they had listened to You, and were astounded and full of wonder.

Even Satan felt deep inside him that You were powerful and invincible. Your humility permitted him to approach You, but Your dread overwhelmed him when You rebuked him, so that he fled from Your presence, unable to continue his words with You, and his tempting of You ended thus.

You were majestic all the days of Your life, inspiring awe and fear, and all the events of the crucifixion were but a reaction

of Your enemies' fear. They felt that You were stronger than they were in everything, closer to hearts than they were, more convincing to people than they were, and so they were anxious for their authority.

And we, Lord, stand at the foot of Your Cross and say to You despite all these insults and sufferings: *Yours is the majesty forever. Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*

# *Hymn of Barabbas*

*"And they all cried out at once, saying,  
'Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas' "*  
(Luke 23:18)

It was not You who listened to the Serpent  
    But my mother, who sinned and to its call listened  
It was not You who plucked from the garden  
    But my mother, who of its fruit plucked illicit  
You are holy and pure, whereas I am  
    The one who in evil strayed and was lost  
You are high in heaven, whereas I am  
    The son of the earth, whose origin is its dust  
You are Lord and God, whereas I am  
    Your sinful, disobedient slave  
So why is it You Who are crucified here  
    While I, the sinner, am free and boastful?  
A wisdom, O Lord, I cannot comprehend  
    And a tenderness limitless and sublime

How strange, O Lord, what happened-  
    Why did they hate You, why?  
You lived, my Master, for a time with them  
    Casting out hatred and discord from them  
You were, O Holy One, a compassionate heart  
    Filling the world with love and peace  
You were feet for the lame and hands



For the maimed, and a Father for the orphan  
You raised the dead, the blind could see  
And the paralytic took strength and stood up  
So why did the world rise up against  
Your tender-hearted Person and their hurts multiply?  
So why is it You Who are crucified here  
While I, the sinner, am free and boastful?  
A wisdom, O Lord, I cannot comprehend  
And a tenderness limitless and sublime

It is I, not You, who ought to have been crucified  
I, who am full of shame, who has my soul defiled  
I am the one, woe is me, who has in sin wasted his today  
As I have wasted my yesterday  
I am the one who after death runs, and in  
Carousing and drunkenness, my own grave digs  
I am the thirsty one who hastened  
Begging the Serpent to my cup fill  
O Crucified, You Whose holiness was seen  
By all in the ungrateful world  
Whenever the eye tries to look upon You  
My ashamed soul covers it with tears  
So why is it You Who are crucified here  
While I, the sinner, am free and boastful?  
A wisdom, O Lord, I cannot comprehend  
And a tenderness limitless and sublime

## *A Message of Love*

To Him whose love surpassed the comprehension of love  
To Him who loved without seeking the price for His love  
To Him who came to teach us about love  
To Him who descended from heaven to give us His love  
To Him who sacrificed Himself for this love

O Lord who for me was incarnate, I love You,  
    Forgive me, my Beloved!  
    Judas sold You for thirty pieces of silver  
I join him not; never shall I sell You.

With You I am, O Lord;  
    I am not with those who conspired against You,  
    nor among those who forsook You;  
    I know Who You are;  
You are He to Whom belongs  
the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty.

O Fountain of Love, I love You  
Oh my Beloved, it was for my sake  
    that You gave Your cheeks to slaps,  
    it was for my sake  
    that You hid not Your face from  
shame and spitting.

My Beloved, I shall keep Your sufferings in my heart  
to remember all that You have done for me.

*Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing and the majesty forever.  
Amen. O Immanuel our God and King.*