

The Prayer* of Thanksgiving: "Glory to God for All Things"

*This prayer was found in the personal effects of Fr Gregory Petrov after his death in a prison camp in 1942.
The title is from the words of St John Chrysostom as he was dying in exile. It is a song of praise from amidst terrible sufferings.*

Stanza 1

Everlasting King, Your will for our salvation is full of power. Your right arm controls the whole course of human life. We give You thanks for all Your mercies, seen and unseen. For eternal life, for the heavenly joys of the Kingdom which is to be. Grant mercy to us who sing Your praise, both now and in the time to come. Glory to You, O God, from age to age.

Response 1

I was born a weak, defenseless child, but Your angel spread his wings over my cradle to defend me. From birth until now Your love has illumined my path, and has wondrously guided me towards the light of eternity; from birth until now the generous gifts of Your providence have been marvelously showered upon me. I give You thanks, with all who have come to know You, who call upon Your name.

Glory to You for calling me into being
Glory to You, showing me the beauty of the universe
Glory to You, spreading out before me heaven and earth
Like the pages in a book of eternal wisdom
Glory to You for Your eternity in this fleeting world
Glory to You for Your mercies, seen and unseen
Glory to You through every sigh of my sorrow
Glory to You for every step of my life's journey
For every moment of glory
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 2

O Lord, how lovely it is to be Your guest. Breeze full of scents; mountains reaching to the skies; waters like boundless mirrors, reflecting the sun's golden rays and the scudding clouds. All nature murmurs mysteriously, breathing the depth of tenderness. Birds and beasts of the forest bear the imprint of Your love. Blessed are You, mother earth, in Your fleeting loveliness, which wakens our yearning for happiness that will last for ever, in the land where, amid beauty that grows not old, the cry rings out: Alleluia!

Response 2

You have brought me into life as into an enchanted paradise. We have seen the sky like a chalice of deepest blue, where in the azure heights the birds are singing. We have listened to the soothing murmur of the forest and the melodious music of the streams. We have tasted fruit of fine flavor and the sweet-scented honey. We can live very well on Your earth. It is a pleasure to be Your guest.

Glory to You for the Feast Day of life
Glory to You for the perfume of lilies and roses
Glory to You for each different taste of berry and fruit
Glory to You for the sparkling silver of early morning dew
Glory to You for the joy of dawn's awakening
Glory to You for the new life each day brings
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 3

It is the Holy Spirit who makes us find joy in each flower, the exquisite scent, the delicate color, the beauty of the Most High in the tiniest of things. Glory and honour to the Spirit, the Giver of Life, who covers the fields with their carpet of flowers, crowns the harvest with gold, and gives to us the joy of gazing at it with our eyes. O be joyful and sing to Him: Alleluia!

Response 3

How glorious are You in the springtime, when every creature awakes to new life and joyfully sings Your praises with a thousand tongues. You are the Source of Life, the Destroyer of Death. By the light of the moon, nightingales sing, and the valleys and hills lie like wedding garments, white as snow. All the earth is Your promised bride awaiting her spotless husband. If the grass of the field is like this, how gloriously shall we be transfigured in the Second Coming after the Resurrection! How splendid our bodies, how spotless our souls!

Glory to You, bringing from the depth of the earth an endless variety of colors, tastes and scents
Glory to You for the warmth and tenderness of the world of nature
Glory to You for the numberless creatures around us
Glory to You for the depths of Your wisdom, the whole world a living sign of it
Glory to You; on my knees, I kiss the traces of Your unseen hand
Glory to You, enlightening us with the clearness of eternal life
Glory to You for the hope of the unutterable, imperishable beauty of immortality
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 4

How filled with sweetness are those whose thoughts dwell on You; how life-giving Your holy Word. To speak with You is more soothing than anointing with oil; sweeter than the honeycomb. To pray to You lifts the spirit, refreshes the soul. Where You are not, there is only emptiness; hearts are smitten with sadness; nature, and life itself, become sorrowful; where You art, the soul is filled with abundance, and its song resounds like a torrent of life: Alleluia!

Response 4

When the sun is setting, when quietness falls like the peace of eternal sleep, and the silence of the spent day reigns, then in the splendour of its declining rays, filtering through the clouds, I see Your dwelling-place: fiery and purple, gold and blue, they speak prophet-like of the ineffable beauty of Your presence, and call to us in their majesty. We turn to the Father.

Glory to You at the hushed hour of nightfall
Glory to You, covering the earth with peace
Glory to You for the last ray of the sun as it sets
Glory to You for sleep's repose that restores us
Glory to You for Your goodness even in the time of darkness
When all the world is hidden from our eyes
Glory to You for the prayers offered by a trembling soul
Glory to You for the pledge of our reawakening
On that glorious last day, that day which has no evening
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 5

The dark storm clouds of life bring no terror to those in whose hearts Your fire is burning brightly. Outside is the darkness of the whirlwind, the terror and howling of the storm, but in the heart, in the presence of Christ, there is light and peace, silence: Alleluia!

Response 5

I see Your heavens resplendent with stars. How glorious are You radiant with light! Eternity watches me by the rays of the distant stars. I am small, insignificant, but the Lord is at my side. Your right arm guides me wherever I go.

Glory to You, ceaselessly watching over me
Glory to You for the encounters You arrange for me
Glory to You for the love of parents, for the faithfulness of friends
Glory to You for the humbleness of the animals which serve me
Glory to You for the unforgettable moments of life
Glory to You for the heart's innocent joy
Glory to You for the joy of living
Moving and being able to return Your love
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 6

How great and how close are You in the powerful track of the storm! How mighty Your right arm in the blinding flash of the lightning! How awesome Your majesty! The voice of the Lord fills the fields, it speaks in the rustling of the trees. The voice of the Lord is in the thunder and the downpour. The voice of the Lord is heard above the waters. Praise be to You in the roar of mountains ablaze. You shake the earth like a garment; You pile up to the sky the waves of the sea. Praise be to You, bringing low the pride of man. You bring from his heart a cry of Penitence: Alleluia!

Response 6

When the lightning flash has lit up the camp dining hall, how feeble seems the light from the lamp. Thus You, like the lightning, unexpectedly light up my heart with flashes of intense joy. After Your blinding light, how drab, how colorless, how illusory all else seems. My souls clings to You.

Glory to You, the highest peak of men's dreaming
Glory to You for our unquenchable thirst for communion with God
Glory to You, making us dissatisfied with earthly things
Glory to You, turning on us Your healing rays
Glory to You, subduing the power of the spirits of darkness
And dooming to death every evil
Glory to You for the signs of Your presence
For the joy of hearing Your voice and living in Your love
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 7

In the wondrous blending of sounds it is Your call we hear; in the harmony of many voices, in the sublime beauty of music, in the glory of the works of great composers: You lead us to the threshold of paradise to come, and to the choirs of angels. All true beauty has the power to draw the soul towards You, and to make it sing in ecstasy: Alleluia!

Response 7

The breath of Your Holy Spirit inspires artists, poets and scientists. The power of Your supreme knowledge makes them prophets and interpreters of Your laws, who reveal the depths of Your creative wisdom. Their works speak unwittingly of You. How great You are in Your creation! How great are You in man!

Glory to You, showing Your unsurpassable power in the laws of the universe
Glory to You, for all nature is filled with Your laws
Glory to You for what You have revealed to us in Your mercy
Glory to You for what You have hidden from us in Your wisdom
Glory to You for the inventiveness of the human mind
Glory to You for the dignity of man's labour
Glory to You for the tongues of fire that bring inspiration
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 8

How near You are in the day of sickness. You Yourself visit the sick; You Yourself bend over the sufferer's bed. His heart speaks to You. In the throes of sorrow and suffering You bring peace and unexpected consolation. You are the comforter. You are the love which watches over and heals us. To You we sing the song: Alleluia!

Response 8

When in childhood I called upon You consciously for the first time, You didst hear my prayer, and You didst fill my heart with the blessing of peace. At that moment I knew Your goodness and knew how blessed are those who turn to You. I started to call upon You night and day; and now even now I call upon Your name.

Glory to You, satisfying my desires with good things
Glory to You, watching over me day and night
Glory to You, curing affliction and emptiness with the healing flow of time
Glory to You, no loss is irreparable in You, Giver of eternal life to all
Glory to You, making immortal all that is lofty and good
Glory to You, promising us the longed-for meeting with our loved ones who have died
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 9

Why is it that on a Feast Day the whole of nature mysteriously smiles? Why is it that then a heavenly gladness fills our hearts; a gladness far beyond that of earth and the very air in church and in the altar becomes luminous? It is the breath of Your gracious love. It is the reflection of the glory of Mount Tabor. Then do heaven and earth sing Your praise: Alleluia!

Response 9

When You didst call me to serve my brothers and filled my soul with humility, one of Your deep, piercing rays shone into my heart; it became luminous, full of light like iron glowing in the furnace. I have seen Your face, face of mystery and of unapproachable glory.

Glory to You, transfiguring our lives with deeds of love
Glory to You, making wonderfully Sweet the keeping of Your commandments
Glory to You, making Yourself known where man shows mercy on his neighbour
Glory to You, sending us failure and misfortune that we may understand the sorrows of others
Glory to You, rewarding us so well for the good we do
Glory to You, welcoming the impulse of our heart's love
Glory to You, raising to the heights of heaven every act of love in earth and sky
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 10

No one can put together what has crumbled into dust, but You canst restore a conscience turned to ashes. You canst restore to its former beauty a soul lost and without hope. With You, there is nothing that cannot be redeemed. You are love; You are Creator and Redeemer. We praise You, singing: Alleluia!

Response 10

Remember, my God, the fall of Lucifer full of pride, keep me safe with the power of Your Grace; save me from falling away from You. Save me from doubt. Incline my heart to hear Your mysterious voice every moment of my life. Incline my heart to call upon You, present in everything.

Glory to You for every happening
Every condition Your providence has put me in
Glory to You for what You speak to me in my heart
Glory to You for what You reveal to me, asleep or awake
Glory to You for scattering our vain imaginations
Glory to You for raising us from the slough of our passions through suffering
Glory to You for curing our pride of heart by humiliation
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 11

Across the cold chains of the centuries, I feel the warmth of Your breath, I feel Your blood pulsing in my veins. Part of time has already gone, but now You are the present. I stand by Your Cross; I was the cause of it. I cast myself down in the dust before it. Here is the triumph of love, the victory of salvation. Here the centuries themselves cannot remain silent, singing Your praises: Alleluia!

Response 11

Blessed are they that will share in the King's Banquet: but already on earth You give me a foretaste of this blessedness. How many times with Your own hand have You held out to me Your Body and Your Blood, and I, though a miserable sinner, have received this Mystery, and have tasted Your love, so ineffable, so heavenly.

Glory to You for the unquenchable fire of Your Grace
Glory to You, building Your Church, a haven of peace in a tortured world
Glory to You for the life-giving water of Baptism in which we find new birth
Glory to You, restoring to the penitent purity white as the lily
Glory to You for the cup of salvation and the bread of eternal joy
Glory to You for exalting us to the highest heaven
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 12

How often have I seen the reflection of Your glory in the faces of the dead. How resplendent they were, with beauty and heavenly joy. How ethereal, how translucent their faces. How triumphant over suffering and death, their felicity and peace. Even in the silence they were calling upon You. In the hour of my death, enlighten my soul, too, that it may cry out to You: Alleluia!

Response 12

What sort of praise can I give You? I have never heard the song of the Cherubim, a joy reserved for the spirits above. But I know the praises that nature sings to You. In winter, I have beheld how silently in the moonlight the whole earth offers You prayer, clad in its white mantle of snow, sparkling like diamonds. I have seen how the rising sun rejoices in You, how the song of the birds is a chorus of praise to You. I have heard the mysterious mutterings of the forests about You, and the winds singing Your praise as they stir the waters. I have understood how the choirs of stars proclaim Your glory as they move forever in the depths of infinite space. What is my poor worship! All nature obeys You, I do not. Yet while I live, I see Your love, I long to thank You, and call upon Your name.

Glory to You, giving us light
Glory to You, loving us with love so deep, divine and infinite
Glory to You, blessing us with light, and with the host of angels and saints
Glory to You, Father all-holy, promising us a share in Your Kingdom
Glory to You, Holy Spirit, life-giving Sun of the world to come
Glory to You for all things, Holy and most merciful Trinity
Glory to You, O God, from age to age

Stanza 13

Life-giving and merciful Trinity, receive my thanksgiving for all Your goodness. Make us worthy of Your blessings, so that, when we have brought to fruit the talents You have entrusted to us, we may enter into the joy of our Lord, forever exulting in the shout of victory: Alleluia!

[When sung, the first Stanza and Response are repeated.]

This text can be found online at www.faithful.name/thanks

* - The proper name of this prayer is "The Akathist of Thanksgiving," each stanza is called a "Kontakion", and each response is called an "Ikos". The approximate English equivalents are used so that the unfamiliar terms will not be an obstacle to entering into the beauty of the prayer. It has been commonly stated that Father Petroff wrote this while imprisoned in Siberia during World War II, shortly before his martyrdom. However, there is some indication that it was composed by an earlier author.