

DAILY MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS: THE COMPLETE ORTHODOX RULE

Morning and evening prayers (prayer rules) are the essential daily spiritual duty of every Orthodox Christian. Morning prayer prepares the soul for a peaceful day, while evening prayer brings repentance and quiet peace before sleep.

1. Daily Morning Prayers (Beginning Rule and Prayer of the Optina Elders)

Before beginning to pray, stand in silence until all your senses are quieted and your thoughts have left all earthly things. Then recite slowly and with attention of heart:

"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner." (Bow)

"O Heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of life: come and dwell in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One."

"Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us." (Thrice with the sign of the cross and waist bow)

"Our Father, Who art in heaven..."

The Prayer of the Optina Elders at the Beginning of the Day:

"O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day with peace of mind. Help me rely on Your holy will in all things. In every hour of this day, instruct and support me. Whatever news I may receive during the day, teach me to accept it with a quiet soul and firm conviction that Your holy will is in all things. Guide my thoughts and feelings in all my words and deeds. In all unforeseen circumstances, let me not forget that everything is sent by You. Teach me to act sincerely and wisely with every member of my family and all people, troubling or embarrassing no one. O Lord, grant me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day and all its events. Guide my will and teach me to pray, to believe, to hope, to suffer, to forgive, and to love. Amen."

2. The Short Seraphimic Rule (for Special Circumstances)

Venerable Seraphim of Sarov blessed busy or ill laypeople to pray using this short rule:

- The Lord's Prayer "Our Father" — thrice.
- Song to the Most Holy Theotokos "O Virgin Theotokos, Rejoice" — thrice.
- The Symbol of Faith "I believe in One God..." — once.

3. Daily Evening Prayers Before Sleep (Thanksgiving and Confession of Sins)

"O Sovereign Master, Who lovest mankind, will this bed be my grave, or wilt Thou enlighten my wretched soul with another day? Before Thee I stand, O Lord, and confess all my sins committed this day by word, deed, or thought. Forgive me, O Merciful One, all my voluntary and involuntary transgressions, and grant me peaceful and quiet sleep. Send me Your Guardian Angel to guard me on my bed from all evil. Into Your hands, O Lord, I commend my soul and body: bless me, have mercy on me, and grant me eternal life. Amen."