

15 DECEMBER
± Hieromartyr Elefthérios of Illyria C2

VESPERS

Lord I have cried

Tone 2

O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;

O Lord, listen to me.

O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;

Note the voice of my plea when I cry to you.

O Lord, listen to me.

² Let my prayer be directed before you like incense,
the raising of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

O Lord, listen to me.

S6: O Lord, if you mark offences, who will stand?

But there is forgiveness with you.

S5: O Lord, I have waited for you for your name's sake;

my soul has waited for your word,

my soul has hoped in the Lord.

O venerable Elefthérios, witness for the Lord, when you had purified your soul of its passions, you became an instrument of the Holy Spirit. You received the divine and sacred anointing which made you a bishop, a guide for the people of God, and an invincible martyr for the *Lord* who suffered for us; he set us free from passion by his passion. *X2*

S4: Let Israel hope in the Lord

from morning watch until night,

from morning watch.

S3: For there is mercy with the Lord

and abundant redemption with *him*.

He will redeem Israel from all his offences.

O Elefthérios, joy of martyrs, splendour of holy hierarchs, you did not worry about your body when it was covered with wounds and burnt with fire. You grounded your spirit on the supreme beauty of divine love whose sweetness had enthused you. Pray for our souls. *X2*

S2: Every nation, praise the Lord;
every people, acclaim him!

S1: For his mercy is strengthened over us
and the truth of the Lord remains for ever.

O holy martyr, when she saw you as you fought the good fight, your mother who had graciously brought you into this world was filled with the desire to follow the same road. She embraced you in the middle of the arena and was led to the slaughter like a lamb. Together with her, O blessed Elefthérios, we implore you to pray for us to God our Saviour. X2

Glory: Tone 6

O blessed Elefthérios, you were a commendable bishop to the very end. As you celebrated the divine and ineffable mysteries, you poured out your blood for Christ our God. You offered yourself as an acceptable victim to the Lord. You have influence with him, so continually plead with him to rescue the faithful who devoutly celebrate your honourable memory from trial, misfortune, and every danger.

Both now:

O Theotokos, you are the true vine which is loaded with the Fruit of Life. Therefore, O Lady, we implore you to pray, together with the apostles and all the saints, that we may obtain mercy for our souls.

Entrance

Phos Ilarón

P/D: Wisdom! Stand upright!

O Jesus Christ, joyful light of the holy glory
of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father,
when we come to the setting of the sun
and see the light of evening,
we praise God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

For it is right at all times to worship you
with voices of praise,
O Son of God *and* Giver of life.
Therefore the world glorifies you.

Prokeímenenon

*Of the Day***Ektení****Prayer**

O Lord, allow us this night to be guarded from sin. Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers! Praised and glorified be your name for ever. Amen. O Lord, let your mercy be on us, for we have hoped in you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes. Blessed are you, O Master; make me understand your statutes. Blessed are you, O Holy *One*; enlighten me with your statutes. O Lord, your mercy lasts for ever; do not overlook the work of your hands. To you belongs worship, to you belongs praise, to you belongs glory, to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.

Plirotiká**Prayer**

P: Peace be with you all. R: And with your spirit

D: Bow down your heads to the Lord. R: To you, O Lord.

P: For blessed and glorified is the power of your Kingdom, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages.
Amen.

Apósticha

Tone 6

O holy father, as the son of the wise Evanthía you became a head in the Church and were initiated into the mysteries of the divine apostles. You converted to God the people who had foolishly worshipped the demons.

S1: I will clothe her priests with salvation

and her holy ones will rejoice with gladness. Ps 131

You care for women in birth-giving and grant a safe delivery to those who pray in your holy temple. You grant save travel to those who zealously ask. You grant health to the sick through your marvellous miracles.

S2: The just will flourish like a palm tree

and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Ps 91

O holy martyr, you steadfastly endured the trials of your confession and testimony. You were not afraid of the emperor Hadrian's punishments, for you delighted in the love of your Creator. O wise Elefthérios, you were accompanied in your martyrdom by the woman who gave birth to you. You hurried to depart in joy.

Glory: Both now: Tone 8

O holy father, you dyed the robes of your priesthood with the stream of your blood. When she saw your dignified end in the arena, the woman who gave birth to you and nourished you, threw herself down to embrace the body of her dear son. She was struck with a sword and travelled with him to the heavenly homes. Blessed is the mother! Blessed are the breasts which nourished you! You learnt from her to know the world's Creator. Together with her, O blessed Elefthérios, plead with Christ to grant our souls great mercy.

Both now:

O Lady, accept the prayers of your servants. Rescue us from every danger and distress.

Song of Simeon

B/P: O Master, now let your servant depart in peace
 according to your word,
² for my eyes have seen your salvation,
 which you have prepared before all peoples,
³ a light of revelation for *the* nations
 and *the* glory of your people Israel.

Triságion Prayers

Apolytikia

Tone 4

O saint inspired by God, you became a partner of the apostles in their way of life and a successor to their thrones; you found the means for approaching divine vision. Therefore you have truly taught the word of truth and fought for the faith even to death. O hieromartyr Elefthérios, plead with Christ God to save our souls.

Hail, O gate of the Lord which no one can force! Hail, rampart and shelter of those who come to you! Hail, undisturbed haven that never knew a man! Since you gave birth in the flesh to your Creator and God, continually intercede for those who sing a hymn of praise to your Son and worship him.

Dismissal

ORTHROS

God is the Lord Ps 117

R: God is the Lord and has appeared to us.

Blessed is the one who comes in the Lord's name. *Ps 117*

S1: Thank the Lord, for he is good,
for his mercy lasts for ever.

S2: All the nations surrounded me,
but I opposed them in the Lord's name.

S3: This *is* the Lord's doing
and it is wonderful in our eyes.

Apolytikia

Tone 4

O saint inspired by God, you became a partner of the apostles in their way of life and a successor to their thrones; you found the means for approaching divine vision. Therefore you have truly taught the word of truth and fought for the faith even to death. O hieromartyr Elefthérios, plead with Christ God to save our souls.

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Small Litany

P: For yours is the might, and yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

Kathísma 1

Tone 3

O sea of faith's confession, you have ended the false faith of spells, shamed the ungodly behaviour of idol worship and become a divine burnt-offering. You enlightened the ends of the earth with your miracles. O holy father Elefthérios, implore Christ our God to grant us great mercy.

Glory: Both now:

Most pure Virgin and Mother, you were a divine tabernacle for the Word. O pure *Lady*, you have exceeded the angels in your purity. Although I am dust and defiled above all by the sins of the flesh, cleanse me with the divine water of your prayers which grant great mercy.

Kathísma 2

O voice of God, O light-bearing and holy Elefthérios, O glory of the martyrs, you shone like a ray of the sun and glisten brightly for the whole world in your teaching.

Glory: Both now:

O Virgin and Mother, you extend your most pure arms, shelter those who trust in you and address your Son, "O Christ, grant us all your mercies."

Small Litany

P: For blessed is your name, and glorified is your kingdom, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

Psalm 50

O God, have mercy on me in your abundant mercy
and wipe out my offence through your great compassion.

⁴ Wash me thoroughly from my lawless act
and cleanse me from my sin.

⁵ For I know my lawlessness
and my sin is always before me.

⁶ I have sinned against you alone
and done this evil before you

^{6b} so that you might be justified in your words
and overcome when you are judged.

⁷ For see, I was conceived in lawlessness

- and my mother gave birth to me in sin.
- ⁸ For see, you have loved truth
and revealed to me the hidden and secret *things* of your wisdom.
- ⁹ You will sprinkle me with hyssop and I will be clean;
you will wash me and I will become whiter than snow.
- ¹⁰ You will make me hear about joy and gladness;
the humbled bones will rejoice.
- ¹¹ Turn your face from my sins
and wipe out all my lawlessness.
- ¹² O God, create a pure heart within me
and renew an upright spirit within me.
- ¹³ Do not banish me from your presence
or remove your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹⁴ Restore the joy of your salvation to me
and make me firm with your directing Spirit.
- ¹⁵ I will teach the lawless your ways
and the ungodly will return to you.
- ¹⁶ O God, set me free from the guilt of blood;
O God of my salvation,
my tongue will rejoice in your justice.
- ¹⁷ O Lord, you will open my lips
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
- ¹⁸ For if you had wanted sacrifice, I would have given it;
you will not be pleased with burnt offerings.
- ¹⁹ Sacrifice for God is a broken spirit;
God will not despise a broken and humbled heart.
- ²⁰ O Lord, be good to Zion in your pleasure
and let the walls of Jerusalem be built.
- ²¹ Then you will be pleased with a sacrifice of justice,
with an offering and burnt sacrifices;
then they will offer calves on your altar.

Kontákion

Tone 2

O holy *saint*, you are the splendour of the hierarchs and example of victory; we all sing a hymn of praise to you. O hieromartyr Elefthérios, we implore you to rescue from danger those who warmly celebrate your memory. Pray continually for us all.

Íkos

O Source of life within my tender heart, unique Lover of the human race, regard the blind foolishness of my soul. O Word of God, save me from the depth of the passions with your all-powerful arm. Then I can chant the praises of your sacred hierarch Elefthérios. You truly knew him from his mother's womb. First he was sanctified, then he was offered by his devout mother to you and he continually pleads for us all.

Synaxáron

Today we remember the suffering of the holy hieromartyr Elefthérios of Illyria and his mother Evanthía who lived in the Second Century. He guided an entire flock of believers to Christ. On the Fifteenth he departed from this earth through the sword.

Together with them we remember:

Ascetic Paul of Látros C10

Martyr Elefthérios of Constantinople C4

Confessor Stephen of Sourozh C8

O God, have mercy on us through their holy prayers. Amen.

Katavasías

1: Christ is born, glorify him! Christ is from heaven, receive him! Christ is on earth, be raised! All the earth, sing to the Lord! All you people, praise him with joy, for he has been glorified!

3: Let us cry out to Christ our God, to the Son begotten of the Father before all ages and incarnate from the Virgin without seed in these latter days, "O Lord, you have raised our horn and are holy."

4: O Rod of the stem of Jesse and Flower which bloomed from a virgin, O all-praised Christ, you have come from the mountain covered with darkness. You have been made flesh from her who did not know marriage. O God not formed from matter, O Lord, glory to your might!

5: God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us the Angel of Great Council who grants us peace. So we are guided to the light of the knowledge of God. O Lover of the human race, we wake early from the night and praise you.

6: The sea-monster threw out Jonah unharmed as it had received him, like a baby from the womb. When the Word came to live in the Virgin and was made flesh, he came out, yet preserved her incorrupt, for he himself was not subject to decay and he kept his mother free from harm.

7: The children brought up together in godliness, despised the unjust command, and were not afraid of the threat of fire, but as they stood in the midst of the flames, they sang, “Blessed are you, O God of our fathers!”

8: Let us praise, bless and worship the Lord.

The furnace which was moist with dew was the image of a wonder beyond nature, for it did not burn the children whom it had received, just as the fire of divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb when it entered. So let us raise the song, “Let tthe one whole creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever!”

Ode 9

My soul glorifies the Lord

and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. R:

R: *You are* more honourable than the Cherubim

and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim.

You gave birth to God the Word without defilement;

O true Theotokos, we glorify you.

² For he has regarded his servant's humility;

see, from now all generations will call me blessed. R:

³ For the Almighty has accomplished great *things* for me

and his name is holy.

His mercy is from generation to generation

on those who fear him. R:

⁴ He has accomplished strength with his arm

and scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. R:

⁵ He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones

and exalted the humble.

He has satisfied the hungry with good *things*

and dismissed the rich with nothing. R:

⁶ He has helped his servant Israel

in remembering his mercy,

as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and his seed for ever. R:

9: I see a strange and most glorious mystery. Heaven is the cave and the cherubic throne is the Virgin. The manger is the place where Christ lay. *He* is the God who cannot be contained and whom we glorify in song.

Small Litany

P: For all the powers of heaven praise you, and to you we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

Exaposteilária

Tone 3

O holy father, you guided a whole flock of believers to Christ like a shepherd. The mother who gave birth to you clung to you like a ewe to her lamb and was sacrificed at your side. O holy Elefthérios, together with her, I now sing to you.

All-pure Virgin, I address you as an advocate with your Son. Let me be rescued from every punishment and every pain which are merited by my offences.

Praises

Tone 8

Let everything with breath
praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights.
To you, O God, is due a song.

Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his powers.
To you, O God, is due a song.

S4: Praise him with cymbal and dance;
praise him with strings and flute.

O holy bishop, you received the grace of the divine apostles from Christ our God and wholeheartedly followed their course to the last. Therefore, O holy Elefthérios, we correctly celebrate your great deeds.

S3: Praise him with tuneful cymbals;
praise him with joyful cymbals.
Let everything with breath praise the Lord.

O holy bishop, you received the grace of the divine apostles from Christ our God and wholeheartedly followed their course to the last. Therefore, O holy Elefthérios, we correctly celebrate your great deeds.

S1: O Lord, your priests will be clothed with justice
and your holy ones will rejoice. Ps 131

You refuted lies through your teaching, then confronted the father of lies in the arena. You put him to death and so threw down before your feet the one who had arrogantly exalted himself.

S2: The just will flourish like a palm tree
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Ps 91

O holy hierarch, while the faithful honour you, lovingly celebrate your venerable memory and glorify the Saviour, sprinkle us mystically with the streams of your blood.

Glory: Tone 2

O saint, you were named for divine freedom and earned a double robe of holiness. You bravely taught the faith, granted us the example of your lifetime deeds, then gave the final testimony of martyrdom. You were amazing in both these ways and so received a double crown from Christ our God in heaven. O holy hieromartyr Elefthérios, continually plead with him to save our souls.

Both now:

O Theotokos, I place all my hope in you. Preserve me beneath your protection.

Great Doxology

Glory to you who have shown us the light!
glory to God in the highest!
Peace on earth and goodwill to men!

- ² We praise you, we bless you, we worship you,
we glorify you, we thank you for your great glory,
- ³ O Lord King, heavenly God, almighty Father,
O Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,
and you, O Holy Spirit!
- ⁴ O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us,
for you take away the sin of the world.
- ⁵ Receive our prayer,
for you sit on the right of the Father,
and have mercy on us.
- ⁶ For only you are holy, only you are Lord,
O Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.
- ⁷ I will bless you every day
and always praise your name for ever and ever. Ps 144
- ⁸ O Lord, allow us this day
to be guarded from sin.
- ⁹ Blessed are you, O Lord God of our fathers!
Praised and glorified be your name for ever. Amen. Daniel 3
- ¹⁰ O Lord, let your mercy *be* on us,
for we have hoped in you. Ps 32.
- ¹⁶ Blessed are you, O Lord!
Teach me your statutes. X3 Ps 118
- ¹² O Lord, you have been our refuge
from generation to generation. Ps 89
- I said, "O Lord, have mercy on me;
heal my soul, for I have sinned against you." Ps 40
- ¹⁴ O Lord, I have fled to you;
teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Ps 142
- ¹⁵ For with you is the source of life
and in your light we will see light. Ps 35
- ¹⁶ Stretch out your mercy
to those who know you. Ps 35

Triságion

Apolytíkion

Tone 4

O saint inspired by God, you became a partner of the apostles in their way of life and a successor to their thrones; you found the means for approaching divine vision. Therefore you have truly taught the word of truth and fought for the faith even to death. O hieromartyr Elefthérios, plead with Christ God to save our souls.

LITURGY

Antiphon 1 Ps 91 Tone 5

S1: It is good to thank the Lord
and make melody to your name, O Most High.

R: At the prayers of the Theotokos, Saviour, save us!

S2: To announce your mercy in the morning
and your truth by night,

S3: For the Lord our God is upright
and there is no injustice in him.

S4: Glory: Both now:

Antiphon 2 Ps 92 Tone 2

S1: The Lord reigns *and* is clothed with majesty;
the Lord has put on power and clothed himself.

R: Save us, O Son of God. You are wonderful in your saints.
We sing to you, "Alleluia!"

S2: For he founded the world which will not be moved.

S3: O Lord, holiness is right for your house
to length of days.

S4: Glory: Both now:

Monogenes

Antiphon 3 Ps 94 Tone 4

S1: Come, let us rejoice in the Lord,
and shout with joy to God our Saviour.

R: O saint inspired by God, you became a partner of the apostles in their way of life and a successor to their thrones; you found the means for

approaching divine vision. Therefore you have truly taught the word of truth and fought for the faith even to death. O hieromartyr Elefthérios, plead with Christ God to save our souls.

S2: Let us enter his presence with thanksgiving
and gladly cry to him with psalms,
S3: For the Lord is a great God
and a high king over all the earth.

Entrance Ps 94

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.
Save us, O Son of God.
You are wonderful in your saints.
We sing to you, “Alleluia!”

Apolytíka

Tone 4

O saint inspired by God, you became a partner of the apostles in their way of life and a successor to their thrones; you found the means for approaching divine vision. Therefore you have truly taught the word of truth and fought for the faith even to death. O hieromartyr Elefthérios, plead with Christ God to save our souls.

Of the Church

Kontákion

Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave where she will ineffably give birth to the pre-eternal Word. O inhabited earth, rejoice when you hear the news! Glorify with the angels and shepherds the one who chose to be revealed as a new born Child, *yet was* God before the ages.

Triságion

Prokeimenon Ps 115 Tone 4

R: The death of his saints is precious in the sight of the Lord.
S: What shall we give back to the Lord
for everything which he has given us?

Apostolos

From the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy (1:8-18)

My son Timothy, do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God,⁹ who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago,¹⁰ and now has manifested through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.¹¹ For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher,¹² and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.¹³ Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus;¹⁴ guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.¹⁵ You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelus and Hermógenes.¹⁶ May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesíphorus, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains,¹⁷ but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me --¹⁸ may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day -- and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

Alleluia Ps 131 Tone 2

S1: O Lord, your priests will be clothed with justice
and your holy ones will rejoice.

S2: For the Lord has chosen Zion.

Gospel

From the Holy Gospel according to Mark (2:23-3:2)

At that time Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields on a Sabbath; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain.²⁴

And the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"²⁵ And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him:²⁶ how he entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?"²⁷

And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath;

²⁸ so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath.” ¹ Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. ² And they watched him, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. ³ And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come here." ⁴ And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. ⁵ And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

Communion Ps 111

The just will be in everlasting remembrance. Alleluia!