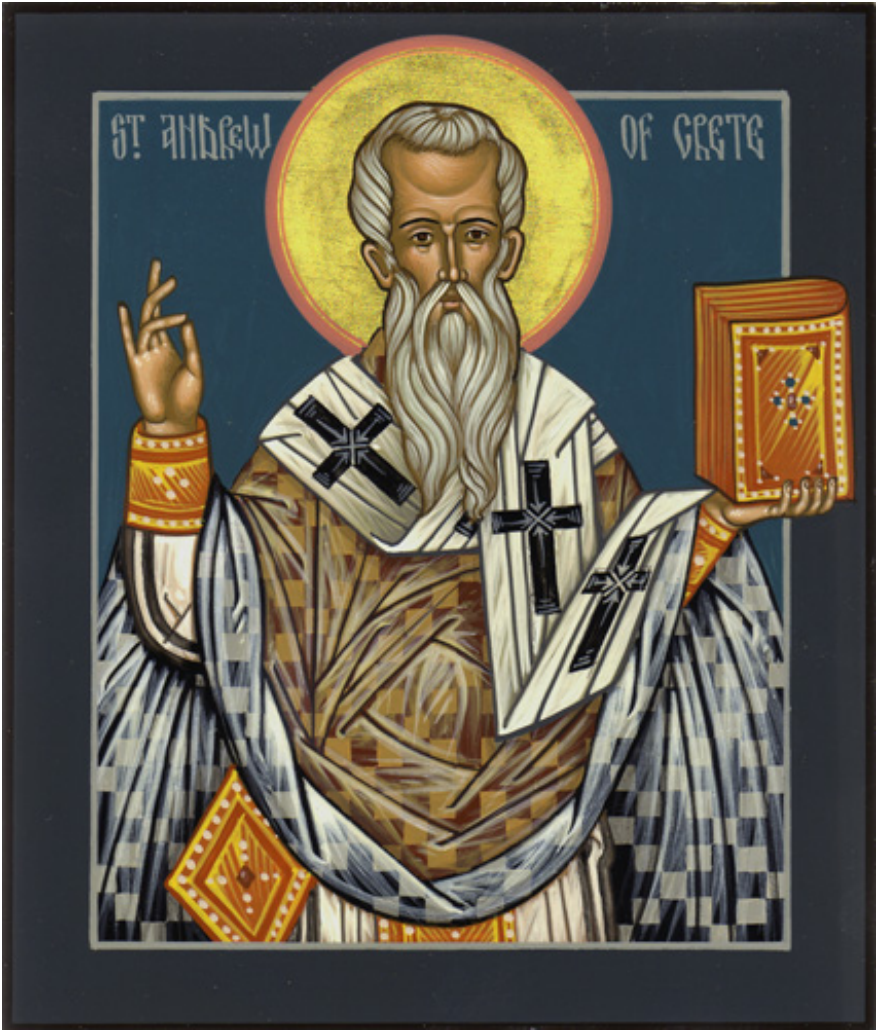


*Insert for the First Wednesday  
of Great Lent*



**CANON OF ST. ANDREW OF CRETE**  
*and Gospel Reading*



## INTRODUCTION

The Great Canon of St Andrew, Bishop of Crete, is the longest (and perhaps the richest) canon in Church services. It is appointed to be chanted in church only during Great Lent. The first reciting of the canon is during the first four nights of Great Lent, where it is divided into four parts, one part inserted during the Great Compline services after the Small Doxology. This Insert is the third part. It is also recited in its entirety during Matins for Thursday of the fifth week of Great Lent, along with the entire life of St Mary of Egypt.

There is perhaps no other sacred hymn which compares with this monumental work, which St Andrew wrote for his personal meditations. The Odes are distinguished by a spirit of mournful humility, hope in God, and complex and beautiful Trinitarian Doxologies and hymns to the Theotokos.

The canon is a dialog between St. Andrew and his soul. The ongoing theme is an urgent exhortation to change one's life. St Andrew always mentions his own sinfulness placed in juxtaposition to God's mercy, and uses literally hundreds of references to good and bad examples from the OT and NT to "convince himself" to repent.

In any case, all Odes have the same basic format. An "Irmos" begins each Ode, and each Irmos has a reference to one of the nine biblical canticles, which are selections from the Old and New Testament. A variable number of "troparia" follow, which are short hymns about the subject of the canon. At the end of each Ode, another hymn, called the "Katavasia", either the Irmos previously sung, or one like it is sung.

The troparia of the Great Canon in all its Odes are usually chanted by the Priest in the center of the church, with the Choir singing the Irmos and Katavasia. After each troparion a "refrain" is chanted by the People; *"Have mercy on me O Lord, have mercy on me."* There are varying traditions about bows and prostrations. The usual Greek custom is to make a low bow and the sign of the cross after the Irmos, and after each troparion while chanting the refrain.



# LENTEN PRAYER OF ST EPHRAIM



O LORD AND MASTER OF MY LIFE, TAKE  
FROM ME THE SPIRIT OF SLOTH, DESPAIR,  
LUST OF POWER AND IDLE TALK;

BUT GRANT RATHER THE SPIRIT OF CHASTITY,  
HUMILITY, PATIENCE  
AND LOVE TO THY SERVANT.

YEA, O LORD AND KING, GRANT ME  
TO SEE MY OWN TRANSGRESSIONS  
AND NOT TO JUDGE MY BROTHER,

FOR BLESSED ART THOU, UNTO THE AGES OF  
AGES. AMEN.

ST EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

WEDNESDAY OF THE FIRST WEEK—Part 3

*The Eirmos hymns are sung twice, at the beginning and end of each Song. Before each Troparion we bow and make the sign of the Cross.*

**Song 1. Tone 6**

*Eirmos*

**H**e is my Helper and Protector, and has become my salvation. This is my God and I will glorify Him. My father's God and I will exalt Him. For gloriously has He been glorified. (Exodus 15:2, 1; Psalm 117:14)

*Refrain:* Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

*Troparia*

**F**rom my youth, O Christ, I have rejected Your commandments. I have passed my whole life without caring or thinking as a slave of my passions. Therefore, O Savior, I cry to You: At least in the end save me.

**I**n old age even, O Savior, do not cast me out empty to hell as I lie prostrate before Your gates. But before my end in Your love for men grant me release from my falls.

**I** have squandered in profligacy my substance, O Savior, and I am barren of virtues and piety; but famished I cry: O Father of mercies, forestall and have compassion on me. (Luke 15:13, 17)

**I** am the one by my thoughts who fell among robbers, and now I am all wounded by them, full of sores. But stand by me, O Christ my Savior, and heal me. (Luke 10:30)

**T**he priest saw me first and passed by on the other side. Then the Levite took a look at my sufferings and disdained my nakedness. But stand by me, O Jesus Who didst dawned out of Mary, and have compassion on me. (Luke 10:31-33)

*Refrain:* Holy mother Mary, pray for us.

*Great Compline—Insert for Wednesday of the First Week*

*To St. Mary of Egypt*

**G**rant me that illuminating grace from on high given you by Divine Providence that I may escape the darkening of the passions and fervently sing of the thrilling achievements of your life, O Mary.

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

*To The Trinity*

**S**upersubstantial Trinity, adored in Unity, take from me the heavy yoke of sin, and in Your compassion grant me tears of compunction.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

**M**other of God, hope and intercessor of those who sing of you, take from me the heavy yoke of sin, and as you are our pure Lady, accept me who repent.

*Eirmos*

**A**ttend, O heaven, and I will speak, and will sing of Christ who came to dwell among us in flesh which He took from the Virgin.

*Refrain:* Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

*Troparia:*

**I** have slipped and fallen like David through lack of discipline, and I am covered with filth; but wash me too, O Savior, with my tears. (II Kings 11:1-4)

**N**o tears, no repentance have I, no compunction. But as God, O Savior, grant me these.

**I** have lost my first-created beauty and comeliness; and now I lie naked, and I am ashamed.

**C**lose not Your door to me then, Lord, Lord; but open it to me who repent to You. (Matthew 25:11)

*Great Compline—Insert for Wednesday of the First Week*

**G**ive ear to the sighs and groans of my soul, and accept the drops of my eyes, O Savior, and save me.

**O** Lover of men, Who wishes all to be saved, in Your goodness recall me and receive me who repent. (1 Tim. 2:4)

*Refrain:* Most holy Mother of God, save us.

*Theotokion*

**S**potless Mother of God, only all-hymned Virgin, pray intensely that we may be saved.

*Another Eirmos*

**S**ee, see that I am God, Who rained manna and made water spout from the rock of old for my people in the wilderness, by My right hand, and by My strength alone.

*Troparia*

**S**ee, see that I am God: give ear, my soul, to the Lord Who is appealing to you, and tear yourself from your former sin, and fear Him as the Avenger, and as your Judge and God. (Deuteronomy 32:35; Hebrews 10:30)

**W**hom do you resemble, O most sinful soul? Surely the first Cain and that wicked Lamech. For you have stoned your body with evil deeds, and you have murdered your mind with irrational appetites. (Genesis 4; 4:23)

**R**unning through all who lived before the Law, my soul, you have not been like Seth, nor imitated Enos, nor Enoch by translation, nor Noah. But you are seen to be bereft of the life of the righteous. (Genesis 5)

**Y**ou alone have opened the cataracts of the wrath of God, my soul, and have flooded as the earth all your flesh and actions and life, and have remained outside the Ark of Salvation. (Genesis 6-8)

*Refrain:* Holy mother Mary, pray for us.



*Great Compline—Insert for Wednesday of the First Week*

*To St. Mary of Egypt*

**W**ith all eagerness and love you ran to Christ, abandoning your former way of sin. And being nourished in the untrodden wilderness, you chastely fulfilled His divine commandments.

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

*To The Trinity*

**U**noriginate, uncreated Trinity, indivisible Unity, accept me who repent, save me who have sinned. I am Your creation, despise me not, but spare me and deliver me from the fire of condemnation.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

**S**potless Lady, Mother of God, hope of those who run to you, and haven of those in distress, obtain grace for me from the merciful One, Your Son and Creator, by your prayers.

*Eirmos*

**E**stablish, O Lord, my unstable heart on the rock of Your commandments, for You only are Holy and Lord.

*Refrain:* Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

*Troparia*

**Y**ou have not inherited Shem's blessing, wretched soul, nor have you received that vast possession like Japheth in the land of forgiveness. (Genesis 9:26-27)

**C**ome out, my soul, from sin, from the land of Haran! Come into the land of eternal life flowing with incorruption which Abraham inherited. (Genesis 12:4)

**Y**ou have heard, my soul, how Abraham of old left the land of his fathers and became a nomad. Imitate his resolution. (Genesis 12:1)

*Great Compline—Insert for Wednesday of the First Week*

**A**t the Oak of Mamre the Patriarch entertained Angels, and inherited in his old age the spoil of the promise. (Genesis 18:1)

**K**nowing, my wretched soul, how Isaac was mystically offered to the Lord as a new sacrifice and holocaust, imitate his resolution. (Genesis 22:2)

**Y**ou have heard of Ishmael (be watchful, my soul!) who was driven out as the son of a slave-girl. Beware lest you suffer something similar by your lusting. (Genesis 21:10)

*Refrain:* Holy mother Mary, pray for us.

*To St. Mary of Egypt*

**I** am hard pressed by the waves and billows of my sins, mother. But now bring me safely through, and lead me to the haven of divine repentance.

*Refrain:* Holy mother Mary, pray for us.

*To St. Mary of Egypt*

**I**n offering a fervent prayer at this time to the compassionate Mother of God, O Saint, by your intercession open to me the divine right of entry.

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

*To The Trinity*

**S**imple, uncreated Unity, unoriginate Nature praised in a Trinity of Persons, save us who with faith worship Your power.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

**O** Mother of God, unwedded you gave birth in time to the timeless Son of the Father. And - O strange wonder! - you remain a Virgin while suckling Him.

*Eirmos*

**T**he Prophet heard of Your coming, O Lord, and was afraid that You were to be born of a Virgin and appear to men, and he said, "I have heard the report of You and am afraid." Glory to Your power, O Lord. (Habbakuk 3:2)

*Refrain:* Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

*Troparia*

**M**y body is defiled, my spirit is sullied, and I am all covered with sores. But as the Physician, O Christ, heal, wash, and cleanse both body and spirit with repentance, and make me, my Savior, purer than snow.

**Y**ou laid down Your body and blood for all, O crucified Word: Your body in order to renew me, Your blood in order to wash me, and You surrendered Your spirit, O Christ, in order to bring me to the Father.

**Y**ou have wrought salvation in the midst of the earth, O merciful Creator, that we may be saved. You were voluntarily crucified on the Tree: Eden that was closed is open; things on high and below, creation and all peoples are saved and worship You. (Psalm 73:12)

**M**ay the blood and water that wells from Your side be a font for me and a draught of forgiveness, that I may be cleansed, anointed and refreshed by both as with drink and unction by Your living words, O Word. (John 19:34; Acts 7:38)

**T**he Church has acquired Your life-giving side as a chalice, from which gushes forth for us a twofold torrent of I am bereft of the bridal chamber, I am bereft of the marriage and supper. My lamp has gone out for want of oil, the door has been locked while I was asleep; the supper is eaten; and I, bound hand and foot, am cast outside. (Matthew 25; Luke 14:7-35; Matthew 22:114)

*Great Compline—Insert for Wednesday of the First Week*

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

*To The Trinity*

**I** confess You to be undivided in essence, unconfused in persons, One Triune Divinity, co-enthroned and co-reigning. I sing You the great song thrice sung on high.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

**Y**ou give birth and live a virgin life, and in both remain a virgin by nature. He Who is born of you renews the laws of nature, and a womb gives birth without travail. Where God wills, the order of nature is overruled; for He does whatever He wishes.

*Eirmos*

**O**ut of the night watching early for You, enlighten me, I pray, O Lover of men, and guide even me in Your commandments, and teach me, O Savior, to do Your will.

*Refrain:* Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

*Troparia*

**H**ow heavy in character I have become, in soul and body, like Jannes and Jambres in Pharaoh's bitter service, and my mind has sunk low. But help me, O Lord. (Exodus 7: 11; 2 Tim. 3:8)

**I**, wretch that I am, have rolled my mind in mud. But wash me, O Lord, in the bath of my tears, I pray You, and make the robe of my flesh as white as snow.

**W**hen I examine my actions, O Savior, I see that I have gone beyond all men in sins; for I have sinned with knowledge consciously, and not in ignorance.

**S**pare, spare, O Lord, Your works. I have sinned; forgive me, for You alone are pure by nature, and apart from You there is none without defilement. (1 Peter 3:21)

*Great Compline—Insert for Wednesday of the First Week*

**B**eing God, for my sake You took my form, and worked miracles, healing lepers and bracing paralytics; and You didst stop the flow of blood of the woman with hemorrhage, O Savior, through the touch of Your hem. (Phil. 2:6; Matthew 4:24; Luke 8:43-48)

*Refrain:* Holy mother Mary, pray for us.

*To St. Mary of Egypt*

**H**aving crossed Jordan's stream, you found rest by giving a wide berth to the deadening pleasure of the flesh, from which deliver us also by your prayers, O saint.

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

*To The Trinity*

**Y**ou, O Trinity, we glorify, the one God: Holy, Holy, Holy are You, Father, Son and Spirit, simple Being, Unity ever adored.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

**F**rom you, O pure maiden Mother and Virgin, God Who created the worlds and ages was clad in my clay and united to Himself human nature.

*Eirmos*

**I** cried with my whole heart to the merciful God, and He heard me from the lowest hell and raised my life out of corruption.

*Refrain:* Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

*Troparia:*

**R**ise and make war against the passions of the flesh, as Joshua did against Amalek, and ever conquer the Gibeonites - illusive thoughts. (Exodus 17:8; Josh. 8:21)

*Great Compline—Insert for Wednesday of the First Week*

**P**ass through the flowing nature of time, like the Ark of old, and take possession of the Land of Promise, my soul: It is God's command. (Josh. 3:17; Deuteronomy 1:8)

**As** You saved Peter when he cried, "Save me!", forestall and deliver me from the beast, O Savior; stretch out Your hand and raise me from the depths of sin. (Matthew 14:25-31)

**I** know You as a calm haven, O Lord, Lord Christ; but forestall and deliver me from the innermost depths of sin and despair.

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

*To The Trinity*

**T**he Father, the Son, and the Divine Spirit say, I am the Trinity, simple and undivided, divided Personally, and I am the Unity, united in nature.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

**Y**our womb bore God for us Who took our form. Implore Him as the Creator of all, O Mother of God, that through your intercessions we may be justified.

**Kontakion, tone 6:**

**M**y soul, my soul, arise! Why are you sleeping? The end is drawing near, and you will be confounded. Awake, then, and be watchful, that Christ our God may spare you, Who is everywhere present and fills all things.

*Eirmos*

**W**e have sinned, transgressed, done wrong before You, we have not watched or done as You have commanded us. But do not give us up utterly, O God of our Fathers.

*Refrain:* Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

*Troparia:*

**Y**ou have piled up sins like Manasseh by deliberate choice, my soul, setting up your passions as idols and multiplying abominations. But now fervently emulate his repentance and acquire compunction. (IV Kings 21; II Chronicles 33)

**Y**ou have rivaled Ahab in defilements, my soul. Alas, you have been a lodging-place of fleshly pollutions and a shameful vessel of passions. But groan from your depths and tell God your sins. (III Kings 16:30)

**H**eaven is closed to you, my soul, and the famine of God has reached you, for you have been disobedient as was Ahab of old to the words of Elijah the Tishbite. But be like the woman of Sarepta, and feed the Prophet's soul. (III Kings 17)

**E**lijah once burned a hundred of Jezebel's flunkies when he had destroyed her shameful prophets as a proof and rebuke for Ahab. But avoid imitating these two, my soul, and master yourself. (IV Kings 1:10-15; III Kings 18:40)

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

*To The Trinity*

**O** Trinity simple and undivided, of one essence and one nature, Lights and Light, three Holies and one Holy, God the Trinity is hymned. But sing, my soul, and glorify the Life and Lives, the God of all.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

**W**e sing of you, we bless you, we worship you, O Mother of God, for you gave birth to one of the inseparable Trinity, the one Son and God, and to us on earth you have opened the heavenly realms.

*Eirmos*

**H**im Whom the heavenly hosts glorify and before Whom Cherubim and Seraphim tremble, let every breath and all creation praise, bless and exalt throughout all ages.

*Refrain:* Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

*Troparia*

**J**ust Judge and Savior, have mercy on me and deliver me from the fire and the threat which I shall justly incur at the judgment. Forgive me before my end by virtue and repentance.

**L**ike the robber I cry, "Remember me!" Like Peter I weep bitterly, "Release me, O Savior!" I croak like the publican; I weep like the harlot. Accept my lamentation as You once did the Canaanite woman. (Luke 23:42; Matt 26:75; Luke 18:13; Luke 7:37-38; Matt 15:22-28)

**H**eal, O Savior, the corruption of my debased soul, O only Physician. Apply the compress to me, and the oil and wine works of repentance, compunction and tears. (Luke 10:34)

**I**mitating the woman of Canaan, I also cry, "Have mercy on me, O Son of David!" I touch Your hem like the woman with hemorrhage. I weep like Martha and Mary over Lazarus.

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

*To The Trinity*

**E**ternal Father, co-eternal Son, gracious Comforter, Spirit of Truth; Father of the Divine Word, Word of the Eternal father, living and creative Spirit, Trinity Unity, have mercy on us.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.



*Theotokion*

**A**s from scarlet silk, O spotless Virgin, within your womb the spiritual purple was woven, the flesh of Emmanuel. Therefore we honor you as in truth Mother of God.

*Eirmos*

**I**neffable is the childbearing of a seedless conception, unsullied the pregnancy of a Virgin Mother, for the birth of God renews natures. So in all generations we magnify you in orthodox fashion as the Mother and Bride of God.

*Refrain:* Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

*Troparia*

**C**hrist the Word healed diseases, preached the Gospel to the poor, cured cripples, ate with publicans, conversed with sinners, and He brought back the departed soul of Jairus' daughter by the touch of His hand. (Matthew 9:11; Mark 5:41-42)

**T**he publican was saved, the harlot was made chaste, but the pharisee through boasting was condemned. For the first said, "Be merciful," the second, "Have mercy on me," but the last boasted and cried, "O God, I thank You," and then some foolish words. (Luke 7:36-50; 18:9-14)

**Z**acchaeus was a publican, but yet was healed, and Simon the Pharisee was disappointed; but the harlot received the release of full forgiveness from Him Who has power to forgive sins. Obtain His forgiveness yourself, my soul. (Luke 19:110; 7:36-50)

**Y**ou, my wretched soul, have not emulated the harlot who took the alabaster jar of perfumed oil and anointed with tears and wiped with her hair the feet of the Savior, Who tore up for her the handwriting of her old accusation. (Luke 7:37-38; Colossians 2:14)

**Y**ou know how the towns to which Christ offered the Gospel were cursed. Fear this example, my soul, do not be like them; for the Lord compared them to the Sodomites and condemned them to hell. (Luke 10:13-15)

**Δ**o not let despair make you worse than the Canaanite woman, my soul, for you have heard of her faith through which her daughter was healed by the Word of God. Call to Christ like her from the depth of your heart, "Son of David, save me." (Matthew 15:22)

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

*To The Trinity*

**L**et us glorify the Father, exalt the Son, and faithfully worship the Divine Spirit, inseparable Trinity, Unity in essence, as the Light and Lights, the Life and Lives, giving life and light to the ends of the earth.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Theotokion*

**P**rotect your city, spotless Mother of God, for in you it faithfully reigns, and in you is made strong, and through you it conquers and routs every trial and temptation, and spoils its foes and rules its subjects.

*Refrain:* Holy father Andrew, pray for us.

**T**o St. Andrew of Crete: Venerable Andrew, thrice-blessed father, shepherd of Crete, cease not to pray to God for those who sing of you, that He may deliver from anger, oppression, corruption and our countless sins, all of us who faithfully honor your memory .

*And again the Eirmos*

**I**neffable is the childbearing of a seedless conception, unsullied the pregnancy of a Virgin Mother, for the birth of God renew natures. So in all generations we magnify you in orthodox fashion as Mother and Bride of God.

*Great Compline—Insert for Wednesday of the First Week*

*Then return to page 28 for the rest of Great Compline.*

***NOTE:** When you reach page 35, the Gospel Reading for this evening is on the following page: If the Priest has already read or will read the assigned Gospel Reading in the Wednesday Presanctified Divine Liturgy, he does not repeat it here.*

**GOSPEL READING FOR WEDNESDAY NIGHT:**  
**MARK 11:22-26; MATTHEW 7:7-8**



**T**he Lord said: “Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one; so that your Father Who is in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses. Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”

***We return now to page 35 in the Great Compline booklet for the Dismissal.***

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THANK YOU

*Version 5. 3/20/2025*

*Rev. Fr. Joseph Chaffee*

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