

A Prayer Before the Reading of Scripture by St. Gregory the Theologian

*All-seeing Father of Christ
Hear now our prayers
and grace your minister
with a song of sweetness so divine;
for he walks the straight and godly path
and has known the self-originate God
among the living creatures (Hab. 3.2 LXX; Origen De Princ. 1.3)
and has known the Lord Christ
who heals all ills of mortal man.
He it was who had compassion on the wretchedness
of the suffering race of men
and in accordance with the Father's will
he willingly exchanged his form and state. (Phil. 2.6-11)
The incorruptible God
became mortal
and by his blood dissolved the dreadful chains of hell.
Now, draw near,
and from this pure and sacred book
and in these God-inspired words
find sustenance for your soul.
Here you shall behold the ministers of truth
proclaim the word of life
in a voice that pierces through to very heaven itself.*

*St. Gregory of Nazianzus.
Hymn 1.1.35. PG 37. 517-518
Tr. J.A. McGuckin.*

A Hymn of Glory to the Trinity

*Glory to God the Father
And to the Son who reigns over all.
Glory to the Spirit, All-Holy,
To whom praise is fitting.
This is the Single God, the Trinity,
Who created all things that are;
Who filled the heavens with spiritual beings,
The land with earthly creatures,
The oceans, rivers, springs,
With all aquatic living things.
Out of his own Spirit he gives life
to all that lives (Ps. 104.30; Jn. 6.63)
So that all created life can sing out praise
To the wisdom of the Maker;
That single cause of their existence,
Their continuing subsistence.
But more than all other things,
And in all things,
Rational nature must sing out
That he is the Great King, Good Father.
And so, my Father, grant to me
In spirit and in soul, in heart and voice,
In purity of heart (Mt. 5.8)
To give you the glory. Amin.*

*St. Gregory of Nazianzus.
Hymn 1.1.31. PG 37. 510-511
Tr. J.A. McGuckin.*

Two Prayers at the Setting of the Sun

I

*Now it is time to bless you
My Christ, the Word of God,
Light of Light that has no beginning,
Steward of the Spirit
And of that threefold light
That gathers in one glory.
You it is who set loose darkness,
And you who brought forth light,
That you might make all things in light.
You set fast unstable matter,
Forming it into a world
And into the good order we now have.
You enlightened the mind of Man
 with reason and with wisdom
And thereby placed an Ikon here below
Of that brightness which is above,
That Man may see the light by light
And so become entirely light.
You it was who lit up the heavens
 with lights of many hues.
You it was decreed that night and day
Should gently yield to one another
Honouring that law of brotherly and sisterly love.
In Night you give us respite
From the cares of our much burdened flesh.
In Day you raise us up to work
And to deeds that are pleasing in your sight;
So that fleeing from all darkness
We might hurry into the day,
The day you liberate from all the gloom of night.
But for now, send a light and restful sleep upon my eyes
So that the voice of praise may not be silenced long;
For as the angels take up that song,
Your work is never stilled.
Now let this reverent time of repose
Be also a scrutiny of soul before you,
So that the night may not reproach us
With defilements of the day,
And that the follies of the dark
Should not affright our dreams.*

*But let the mind, freed of the body,
Still speak with you, O God;
The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
To whom be glory, honour and might
To the ages of ages. Amin.*

*St. Gregory of Nazianzus.
Hymn 1.1.32. PG 37. 511-514
Tr. J.A. McGuckin.*

II

*Word of God, and Truth itself,
I consecrated this day to you;
But I have played you false.
Night now falls upon me
And finds my own lamp barely bright.
This I prayed over, and foresaw,
But even so my feet still stumbled,
And so darkness fell around me,
That hater of salvation.
Oh, my Christ !
Rekindle my little lamp,
And shine on me once more.*

*St. Gregory of Nazianzus.
Hymn 2.1.25. PG 37. 1285
Tr. J.A. McGuckin.*

A Hymn to the Divinity

*You stand above all things that are.
What other way could we rightly begin to sing of you?
How can words chant your praise
When no word can ever speak of you?
How can the mind consider you
When no thought can ever grasp you?
You alone are unutterable
From the time you created all things that can be spoken of.
You alone are unknowable
From the time you created all things that can be known.
All things cry out about you
 those which speak, and those which cannot think;
For there is one longing, one yearning,
That all things have for you (Rom. 8. 22-23).
All things pray to you, that comprehend your plan,
And offer you a silent hymn.
In you, the One, all things abide
And to you all things endlessly converge
Who are the end and goal of all.
You are One, and All, and None of these.
You who bear all names,
How shall I ever name you?
You who can never be named?
What heavenly mind can ever penetrate
 those veils above the clouds?
Be merciful, You who stand above all things.
What other way can we rightly sing of you?*

*St. Gregory of Nazianzus.
Hymn 1.1.29. PG 37. 507-508
Tr. J.A. McGuckin.*

Hymn of the Immortal Monarch

*Grant, Immortal Monarch,
That we may hymn you.
Grant that we may sing of you
Our Ruler and Lord.
Through whom comes the hymn
Through whom the praise
Through whom the chorus of angels
Through whom the endless ages
Through whom the light of Sun
Through whom the course of Moon
Through whom the great beauty of stars
Through whom noble man was made
So that, as creature of reason, he might see the deity.*

*For you have created all things
and given order in each,
Governing all things in your Providence.
You spoke a Word and so it came to pass.
That Word is God the Son,
Same in essence as yourself
Same in honour to his parent.
He it is who keeps all things cohering (Eph. 1.10)
That he might rule over all.
And the Holy Spirit, who is divine,
Embraces all things about
Guarding all within his providence.*

*Living Trinity I name you,
One and only Monarch,
Unchangeable Nature without beginning,
Nature of ineffable being,
Impenetrably wise intelligence,
Unshakeable strength of the heavens,
Devoid of all beginning,
Wholly boundless,
Radiant glory that can never be seen,
Yet which looks upon all things.
No depths exists beyond your gaze,
From the Earth, even into the Abyss.*

*Father be merciful to me.
Grant that I may ever worship
 this awesome mystery.
But cast away my sins
And cleanse my heart of evil thoughts
That I may glorify the Deity,
Lifting up hands that are undefiled;
That I may bless the Christ
And bend a suppliant knee,
That he may receive me as servant
On the day he comes in Kingly power. (Lk. 23.42)
Father be merciful to me.
Indeed, I have found both mercy and peace;
For glory and thanks are yours
To the everlasting ages.*

*St. Gregory of Nazianzus.
Hymn 1.1.30. PG 37. 508-510
Tr. J.A. McGuckin.*