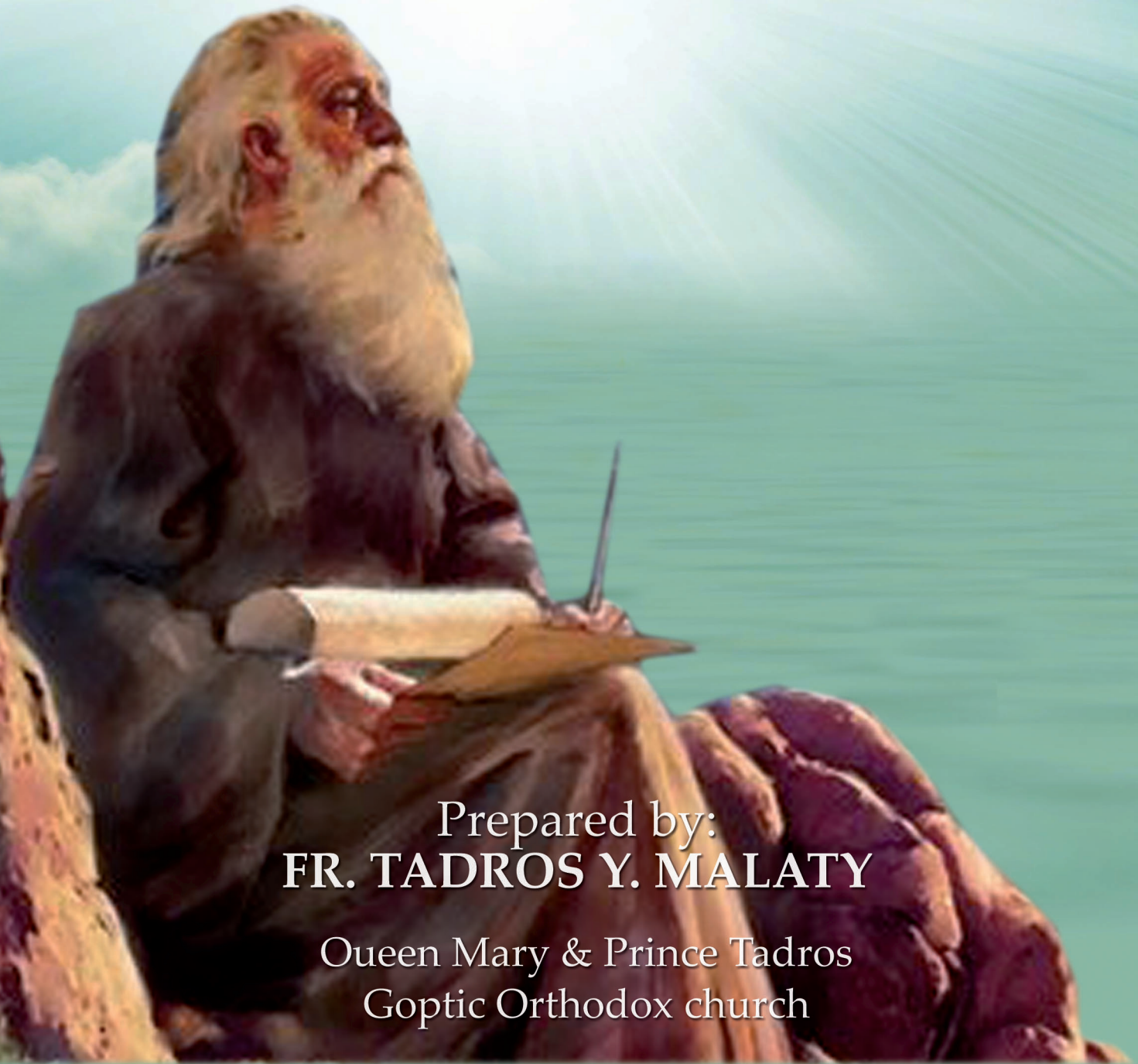




*A Delightful Journey
With Prophet Isaiah*



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Introduction

It is a Book for every young man to accompany Prophet Isaiah and to enjoy the partnership with the Redeemer.

“He (Isaiah) saw His glory and spoke of Him” [John 12:41]

“O Zion, that brings good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that brings good tidings, lift up your voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” [Isaiah 40:9-11].

- 1- An ember of fire in the heart of Prophet Isaiah
- 2- Here am I; send me
- 3- A journey inside the manger
- 4- A journey in the land of the pharaohs
- 5- A journey unto the holy mountains
- 6- A journey unto the mountain of Golgotha
- 7- A joyful journey in the church of the New Testament
- 8- An enjoyable meeting with the Christ of the church

1- An Ember of Fire in the Heart of Prophet Isaiah [1-2]

My soul longs to be in the company of Prophet Isaiah while he was under the leadership of God's Holy Spirit. The prophet has commenced his journey in Jerusalem with a bitter soul, for the king and the men of his palace, and even the archpriest, the priests, the servants of the temple, and all ranks of the people have persistently refuted to obey God's commandments. Yet, when the coming of the Messiah, our LORD Jesus Christ that will open the gates of hope not just before certain people but before every man in the world, was revealed unto him, his soul rejoiced immensely.

The doors of heaven were opened before him; and he experienced the salvation of Master Christ, and thus longed that God would send him to the service.

The soul of Isaiah rejoiced as he saw the barren wilderness become a paradise, the weak becoming strong, and the lame leaping with all his might like a deer. He saw the heavenly King of kings coming to be crucified in order to grant the believers a new life.

It is a Book for every young man to accompany Prophet Isaiah and to enjoy the partnership with the sinner-loving Redeemer.

Isaiah was born in the royal family of Judah more than 700 years before the coming of Master Christ, and was one of the greatest prophets.

Isaiah was a good man that loved God and the people, as well as the temple and Jerusalem, the city of God. He was heartrending over the evilness that everyone was committing. Since his childhood, he lived in a very depressing atmosphere; yet, at the same time, he felt that he was the happiest man on the face of the earth, and maybe even across all mankind. But, where did his happiness and the joy of his heart come from?

Since his adolescence, he used to hear that the entire world has diverted away from the knowledge of God and has worshipped the idols instead. All nations are violently fighting for authority. Nobody worships God except for the Jewish people; and there is no city like Jerusalem, the city of God, that encompasses the holiest place, that is, the temple. Yet, at the same time, when he examined the royal palace, from the king to the least servant, the temple, from the archpriest to the simplest laborer, and the people with all their ranks,

he found that all of them have diverted away from God and have walked the path of evil. There was an ember of fire in his heart that nobody could extinguish. Thus, he used to pray and say:

O God, is there any man that longs for Your embrace and beseeches the partnership with the heavenly beings? Was mankind created to be destroyed?

In a quiet session, a great light shined upon him, making his soul rejoice significantly. Isaiah kneeled before God, who started to speak with him, as a personal friend, about His plan for the people of God as well as for the other nations. He heard God's voice, grievously telling him about the kingdom of Judah: "Woe to the sinful nation... they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger... the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints; from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it... How did Jerusalem become a harlot city?!"

The tears flooded from Isaiah's eyes and his heart trembled inside him, making him wonder: "What could be the solution? Who is able to change the hearts? Who can rip off the corruptness from the holiest city in the world?!"

His soul was agonized, but the brightness of God's glory filled his heart with joy; and God spoke with him and said: "Do not fear, O Isaiah, for I love all mankind. Here I am, revealing unto you all what I am intending to do, not just with Judah, but with all mankind. In the last days, I will descend from heaven and become human; I will be crucified for the sake of the world, offering Myself as a sacrifice, and will carry the sins of all mankind.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD".

Isaiah saw God's plan for salvation, and the cross of Jesus, the God of glory, has appeared before him, attracting many of all nations. Isaiah realized the power of the cross that relinquishes the grief, turning it to joy and happiness, filling the soul with hope so that it might see a heavenly light engulfing the darkness within.

2- Here am I; send me [6]

The conversation with God filled the heart of Isaiah with hope, turning his daydreams to the realization of this divine promise, when the people and the nations would ascend upon the mountain of the LORD, enter into the upper Jerusalem, and enjoy the heavenly temple. Isaiah believed that God, the man-loving, will definitely realize this divine plan, for He is honest and faithful in realizing His promises; and He is able, for He is the God of the impossible.

Every time he enters the palace and meets with one of the men of the state, he would return to his chamber and cry: When will You fulfill Your plan, O LORD? Tell me how it will be realized! If he met with one of the priests, the Levites, or the people, he would return to his chamber and wonder: My LORD, when will I behold all men with You in heaven?

While Isaiah was struggling in his prayers and his heart was crying out unto the LORD, he abruptly found himself inside the temple. He neither saw the archpriest, the Levites, nor any of the servants of the temple; rather he saw a bright light that cannot be gazed at.

Isaiah fell on the ground; and with fear and inner joy he lifted up his head to behold the Holy One sitting on a throne with wondrous glory. It seems that he couldn't concentrate his eyes upon Him for His great brightness. He didn't even know what to call Him; should He call Him God, the Almighty, the Creator, the Judge, or the Holy One? He called Him "Master", because all divine names cannot suffice to truly express God's reality as it should be.

He beheld His train filling the temple, and heard a voice in his heart, saying: "Do not fear, O Isaiah, I fill the temple of heaven; and all the heavenly beings are longing to see all mankind praising Me with them. I want you and all your brethren to be like the greatest fraction in heaven!"

Isaiah looked and saw the fraction of the six-winged Seraphim, and longed that all mankind would be like them. He saw that each one of them was covering his face with two wings before God's great magnificence; and with two others he covered his feet, and with twain he flew. The prophet heard the Seraphim praising without severance or bore, and saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth and heaven are full of His glory". He heard the

voices of their cheer filling the temple, and the cloud lifting up to fill the entire temple.

What an excessively joyful image! He realized that the Holy One alone is able to sanctify the sinners! His heart rejoiced and all his being trembled: how was it allowed for him to behold this vision? Isaiah fell on his knees before the LORD God and cried out: "Woe is me, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips". Then, God asked one of the Seraphim to grab a live coal with the tongs from off the altar and to touch the lips of the prophet with it. The prophet heard the LORD telling him: "Isaiah, lo, your lips are purified, and your sins purged!"

Isaiah rejoiced greatly for enjoying the presence of God and for the purification of his lips, even all his body and soul. He longed that all men could behold this sight and enjoy the purification by eating the body of our LORD Jesus, the true ember that sanctifies the heart. We eat the ember of the body and the blood of Master Christ to enjoy the forgiveness of our sins after His true promise.

Isaiah longed for every man to enjoy what he was granted. Then, he heard the voice of the Master saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"; and he said: "Here am I; send me". He gave himself for the service, and God made him His own prophet.

At that time, the kingdom of Judah was extremely rich. Yet, adhering to the heathen nations, it opened its doors before the idols. Therefore, God asked Isaiah to warn it, calling for repentance. He used to rebuke the rulers and the rich people for worshipping the idols with the heathen people, for practicing evil habits, and for their selfishness.

The kingdom of Judah formed an alliance with Assyria, forgoing their reliance on God. Thus, Prophet Isaiah declared that Judah will fall under captivation; yet the sacred remnants will return from the captivation and will rebuild Jerusalem.

In the midst of these rough circumstances and his firm warnings, the doors of hope were opened before him:

First: the Spirit of God plainly told him about the coming of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world.

Second: He confirmed that the nations will accept the faith through the Messiah.

Third: He prophesied about the outflow of the holy family to Egypt and about the establishment of an altar for the LORD in its midst. Furthermore, he said: "Blessed be Egypt my people".

3- A Journey Inside the Manager [7, 9]

The Spirit of the LORD took Isaiah from the temple with its wondrous glory, where the high divine throne dwells and where the Seraphim are hovering about the throne in great joy, and entered with him into a humble manger in Bethlehem.

He beheld the greatest wonder ever, for the Master has made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant. The unlimited Creator is sharing mankind its life.

Isaiah heard this heavenly voice, saying: "the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, which means God is amongst us... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace... The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this".

Prophet Isaiah was silent when he heard this sign, wondering: How is the zeal of the LORD of hosts related to this sign? Indeed, His inexpressible zeal and love has urged Him to become human and to even share our food with us, while He is the eternal magnificent and almighty Prince of peace!

4- A Journey in the Land of the Pharaohs [2, 19]

Prophet Isaiah saw all the nations rushing towards the heavenly house of God, and thus wondered: Are the children of the Pharaohs among those comers? The heart of the Pharaoh was hardened in the old days, and he humiliated the people of God. Yet, God sent Moses, the great prophet, driven His people out of Egypt, made them cross the Red Sea, and led them in the desert.

Isaiah understood from the tradition of his fathers that the Egyptians are filled with violence, for they are the children of the Pharaohs! Yet, do they have a share in the heavenly house of God along with the rest of the nations?

Isaiah was surprised when God took him about 730 years forward, for he saw God as He came to the world. He became a child and has distinguished Egypt from all the nations by turning to it, riding on a swift illuminated cloud.

What is this beautiful illuminated cloud? It is St. Mary, upon whom the Holy Spirit has dwelled to prepare her for the incarnation of the Word of God inside her! Here she is with the child Jesus and St. Joseph, rushing towards Egypt away from Herod that is striving to kill Jesus. Is the Redeemer of the entire world afraid of Herod? Certainly not, but He is the Holy One that is teaching mankind not to stand in the face of evil, but to run away from it.

What is our LORD Jesus Christ doing in Egypt? Is He avenging from the Callous Children of the Pharaohs?

No; rather “the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt, for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a savior, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the LORD shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the LORD in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; and they shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and perform it”.

How could there be an altar to the LORD in the land of Egypt? Didn't He prevent the establishment of altars outside of Jerusalem? Indeed, but this altar is not an altar of the Old Testament, but of the New One! And what sacrifice? Didn't God prohibit the offering of sacrifices outside of Jerusalem? Indeed, but this sacrifice is the sacrifice of the Eucharist, that is, the body and the blood of the LORD, which He has sacrificed on the cross!

How wondrous is God's love unto mankind, for even in Egypt did He establish an altar to Him? Prophet Isaiah heard the LORD of hosts blessing Egypt and saying: “Blessed be Egypt my people”.

What a joyful journey, for the heart of Isaiah has blissful of the love of God unto all mankind, even Egypt that has previously enslaved His old people!

5- A Journey unto the Holy Mountains [52]

In one of the journeys, in which the Spirit of God has accompanied Prophet Isaiah, he saw Jerusalem as a grieving lady, dressed in defiled and torn-up clothes, heart-broken and bitter, and in apathy as if she was asleep!

As the tears started to sneak into Isaiah's eyes, he heard the LORD calling unto her: "Awake, awake; put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem".

Isaiah was surprised to see an uncountable crowd coming from all over the world, ascending as if on a mountain, not to enter into the earthly city of Jerusalem, but into the heavenly one. And He heard a sweet voice singing and praising: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings, that publishes peace; that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that saith unto Zion: Your God reigns"!

Isaiah realized that this journey will be fulfilled more than 730 years thereafter, when Master Christ would send His disciples and apostles to the entire world to establish His Kingdom inside the hearts of men, so that the King of kings would reign inside us.

6- A Journey unto the Mountain of Golgotha [53]

After Isaiah had enjoyed the previous journey unto the holy mountains and rejoiced that the King of kings will establish His Kingdom inside the hearts of all the nations, he wondered in his heart: "What is this wondrous mystery?"

The Spirit of the LORD carried him to a new journey unto the mountain of Golgotha, so that Isaiah has cried out in amazement: "Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" He beheld the Crucified and, thus, uttered in bitterness: "He has no form or comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not".

What did he see? He saw the King of kings, the Creator of heaven and earth, becoming human, being crucified on the cross, and filled

with wounds. The Jews were deriding Him, a soldier beating Him with a spear, and His disciples running away and hiding. He could not bear to see Him like that! Yet, he soon realized the power and the glory of the cross, and he heard all the believers praising and saying: "Surely he has borne our grief, and carried our sorrows... he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed... He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth".

Isaiah was silent before this praise, as he realized that He is the Savior of the world, and that He had died to raise mankind from the death of the sin.

What happened after the cross? The Spirit carried Isaiah to see the burial of Master Christ, and he was told: "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth".

He saw Master Christ crucified with two thieves, and then being buried by Joseph, a rich man from Arimathaea, and Nicodemus. Isaiah rejoiced when he saw Master Christ completing the salvation, carrying those that had previously died from hell, entering with them into Paradise, and pleasing the Father by that: "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief; making his soul an offering for sin". Our LORD Jesus has offered Himself as a unique sacrifice for all generations. "He bared the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors".

You are blessed, O Isaiah, for you have seen the birth of Master Christ from a virgin, His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection even seven centuries before He came! You believed in Him, while many of the Jews didn't when He finally came!

7- A Joyful Journey in the Church of the New Testament [54, 60]

We saw how the Spirit of God has led Isaiah in a special journey to the cross, which began with the sight of pain and ended with beholding Jesus Christ that mediates with His blood before the Father, entering with the believers into the eternal glory. Now, the

Spirit will take Isaiah in a joyful journey to the church of the New Testament that truly becomes an icon of heaven.

Isaiah saw the nations like a barren woman that has not given birth, for they have neither worshipped the true God, received any prophets, nor have entered into a covenant with God. Now, they are hearing God's voice, saying: "a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee".

It came to have the joyful fruits of the Holy Spirit as if there were many children of the church. Thus, she was told: "Sing, O barren, you that did not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you that did not travail with child, for more are the children of the desolate (that is without a man, a house or children) than the children of the married wife. For your Maker is your husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called".

Isaiah beheld the LORD of glory, Jesus Christ the Light of the world, raising His church to be filled with a heavenly light. The prophet has heard the following song: "Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth... and the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising".

What joy has filled Prophet Isaiah, for he beheld the believers becoming kings, and their hearts being filled with light, marching towards heaven in the light of the church of Christ!

8- An Enjoyable Meeting with the Christ of the Church [40-44]

We may conclude our journey with Isaiah with his meeting with the Christ of the church. He tried to describe what he saw in Him, being the Source of joy for all mankind. He saw Him working in His people, filling them with joyful hope and saying: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, says your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned".

He beheld St. John the Baptist preparing the way before Him, and said: "The voice of him that cries in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God...

the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it". He saw Him as the good Shepherd, and said: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young".

He saw Him coming for the sake of every man and telling him: "Fear not, for I am with you; I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness".

It seems that some have cried out and said: Whoever deserves this wondrous divine care? The answer was: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench".

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you". "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior"!

Come, O Shepherd, into my heart, and take care of it with the richness of Your exceeding love. Carry me on Your arms, and enter with me into Your divine embrace!

Grant me, O Spirit of God, to be prepared for the heavenly temple. Let the brightness shine in my deep insides, so that I would not be occupied with temporal glories. Rather, I would resemble the Seraphim in that my heart would not cease to praise.

Open up my heart so that I would love all mankind, and cry out with Prophet Isaiah: Here I am, send me; craving for the salvation of the entire world!

I would enter with the wise men into the manger and behold the wondrous Child of the virgin dwelling in my deep insides.

Destroy every idol I worship, so that I would hear Your voice inside me: Blessed be Egypt my people!

Ascend with me into the holy mountains and appear inside me; let me not dwell at the bottom of the mountain.

Carry me to the mountain of Golgotha, so that my soul would find rest at the feet of my Savior.

Beautify me with Your fruits, O Spirit of God, so that I would be ornamented as a member in the heavenly church of Christ.