

Hymn of St. Kassiani from the 9th Century

*The woman had fallen into many sins, O Lord,
yet when she perceived Your divinity,
she joined the ranks of the Myrrhbearing Women.
In tears she brought You myrrh before Your burial.*

She cried, "Woe is me!

*For I live in the night of licentiousness,
shrouded in the dark and moonless love of sin.*

*But accept the fountain of my tears,
O You Who gathered the waters of the sea into clouds.*

*Bow down Your ear to the sighing of my heart,
O You Who bowed the heavens in Your ineffable condescension.*

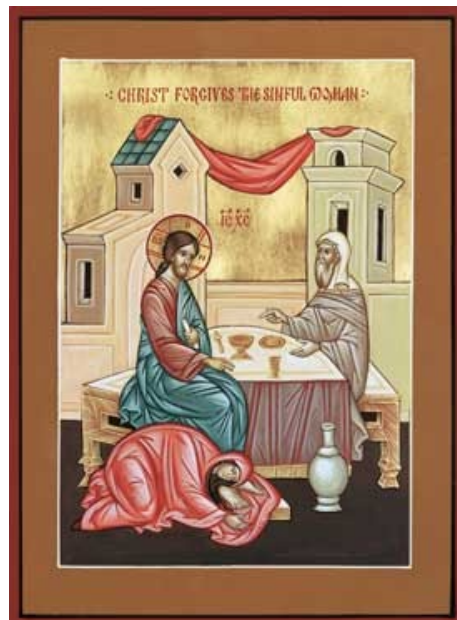
*Once Eve heard Your footstep in Paradise
in the cool of the day,*

and in fear she ran and hid herself.

*But now I will tenderly embrace those pure feet,
and wipe them with the hair of my head.*

*Who can measure the multitude of my sins,
or the depth of Your judgments, O Savior of my soul?*

Do not despise Your servant in Your immeasurable mercy.



History of the Hymn of Kassiani (Cassiane)

from Orthodox Wiki

The Hymn of Kassiani, also known as the *Hymn of the Fallen Woman*, is a Penitential Hymn written in the 9th Century. It is based on the Gospel reading for Holy Wednesday morning (Matthew 26:6-16), which speaks of a sinful woman who anoints Jesus' feet with costly ointment (distinguished from a similar incident with a different woman, St. Mary Magdalene). This hymn is chanted only once a year and considered a musical high-point of the Holy Week, at the Matins and Presanctified Liturgy of Holy Wednesday.

One story, about the origin of the hymn, holds that the Abbess Kassiani spent the afternoon in the garden composing this hymn. As she finished writing that verse which says, "I shall kiss Thine immaculate feet, and wipe them again with the tresses of my head," she was informed that Emperor Theophilos had arrived at the convent. She did not wish to see him, and in her haste to conceal herself, left behind the scroll and pen. Theophilos, having entered the garden, found her half-completed poem, and added the phrase, "those feet at whose sound Eve hid herself for fear when she heard Thee walking in Paradise in the afternoon." After he departed, Kassiani came out from hiding. When she took up her composition, she beheld the phrase written in his handwriting. She retained it and went on to complete the poem.

Saint Kassiani lived during the 9th Century. She is commemorated on September 7.

