



*At the Nymphios Service on Holy Tuesday evening, the Church chants the words of the beautiful and inspiring hymn written by Saint Kassiani.*

Saint Kassiani the Hymnographer and poet was born between 805 A.D. and 810 A.D. in the city of Constantinople into a wealthy family and grew to be exceptionally beautiful and very intelligent. In 843 A.D., she founded a women's monastery in Constantinople, becoming its first *Egoumenissa* (Abbess). She spent the rest of her life in asceticism and composed liturgical poetry. She is commemorated by the Church on September 7th. The best known of her compositions is the "Hymn of Kassiani" sung at the Bridegroom Orthros (Nymphios) for Great and Holy Wednesday (which is chanted by anticipation on the previous evening in parish churches).

*We were created in God's image and likeness... as such the Clergy always cense our parishioners during church services in recognition of our body as a temple of the Holy Spirit within us which we have from God" (1 Cor. 6:19). Like the sinful woman in the following hymn, may we repent of our shortcomings and live as faithful children of God! "Do not despise us, Your servants, since without measure is Your Mercy."*

Lord, when the woman who had fallen into many sins perceived Your divinity, she assumed the role of a myrrh-bearing woman, and lamenting brought fragrant oils to anoint You before Your burial. "Woe is me," she says. "Night for me is a frenzy without restraint, very dark and moonless, a sinful love-affair. Accept the fountains of my tears, You who draw out from the clouds the water of the sea. Take pity on me, and incline to the sighing of my heart, You who bowed the heavens by Your ineffable self-emptying. I shall cover Your unstained feet with kisses, and wipe them dry again with the locks of my hair; those feet, whose sound at twilight in Paradise echoed in Eve's ears, and she hid in fear. Who can reckon the multitude of my sins, or fathom the depths of Your judgments, O my life-saving Savior? Do not despise me, Your servant, since without measure is Your mercy." [SD]

