

The Service of the Akathist Hymn

Served on the fifth Friday in Lent

[If a priest is serving]

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

[If there is no priest]

Deacon or Senior Reader: Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

O Come, let us worship God, our King.

O Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and God.

O Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ himself, our King and God.

Psalm 50.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness. O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with whole-burnt offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

Psalm 69.

O God, be attentive unto helping me; O Lord, make haste to help me. Let them be shamed and confounded that seek after my soul. Let them be turned back and brought to shame that desire evils against me. Let them be turned back straightway in shame that say unto me: Well done! Well done! Let them be glad and rejoice in Thee all that seek after Thee, O God, and let them that love Thy salvation say continually: The Lord be magnified. But as for me, I am poor and needy; O God, come unto mine aid. My helper and my deliverer art Thou, O Lord; make no long tarrying.

Psalm 142.

O Lord, hear my prayer, give ear unto my supplication in Thy truth; hearken unto me in Thy righteousness. And enter not into judgement with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath humbled my life down to the earth. He hath sat me in darkness as those that have been long dead, and my spirit within me is become despondent; within me my heart is troubled. I remembered days of old, I meditated on all Thy works, I pondered on the creations of Thy hands. I stretched forth my hands unto Thee; my soul thirsteth after Thee like a waterless land.

Quickly hear me, O Lord; my spirit hath fainted away. Turn not Thy face away from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Thy mercy in the morning; for in Thee have I put my hope. Cause me to know, O Lord, the way wherein I should walk; for unto Thee have I lifted up my soul. Rescue me from mine enemies, O Lord; unto Thee have I fled for refuge. Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. Thy good Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness; for Thy name's sake, O Lord, shalt Thou quicken me. In Thy righteousness shalt Thou bring my soul out of affliction, and in Thy mercy shalt Thou utterly destroy mine enemies. And Thou shalt cut off all them that afflict my soul, for I am Thy servant.

Laudation of the Theotokos

When the bodiless one learned the secret command, in haste he came and stood before Joseph's dwelling and spake unto the maiden who knew not wedlock: The One Who hath bowed the heavens by His descent is held and contained, unchanged, wholly within thee. Seeing Him receiving the form of a servant in thy womb, I stand in awe and cry to thee: Rejoice, thou Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 1

To thee, the Champion Leader, we thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and thanksgiving as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: but as thou art one with might which is invincible, from all dangers that can be do thou deliver us, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, thou Bride Unwedded!

Ikos 1

An archangel was sent from Heaven to say to the Theotokos: Rejoice! **(x3)**

And beholding Thee, O Lord, taking bodily form, he was amazed and with his bodiless voice he stood crying to her such things as these:

Rejoice, thou through whom joy will shine forth:
Rejoice, thou through whom the curse will cease!
Rejoice, recall of fallen Adam:
Rejoice, redemption of the tears of Eve!
Rejoice, height inaccessible to human thoughts:
Rejoice, depth undiscernible even for the eyes of angels!
Rejoice, for thou art the throne of the King:
Rejoice, for thou bearest Him Who beareth all!
Rejoice, star that causeth the Sun to appear:
Rejoice, womb of the Divine Incarnation!
Rejoice, thou through whom creation is renewed:
Rejoice, thou through whom we worship the Creator!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 2

Seeing herself to be chaste, the holy one said boldly to Gabriel: The marvel of thy speech is difficult for my soul to accept. How canst thou speak of a birth from a seedless conception? And she cried: Alleluia!

Ikos 2

Seeking to know knowledge that cannot be known, the Virgin cried to the ministering one: Tell me, how can a son be born from a chaste womb? Then he spake to her in fear, only crying aloud thus:

Rejoice, initiate of God's ineffable will:
Rejoice, assurance of those who pray in silence!
Rejoice, beginning of Christ's miracles:
Rejoice, crown of His dogmas!
Rejoice, heavenly ladder by which God came down:
Rejoice, bridge that conveyest us from earth to Heaven!
Rejoice, wonder of angels sounded abroad:
Rejoice, wound of demons bewailed afar!
Rejoice, thou who ineffably gavest birth to the Light:
Rejoice, thou who didst reveal thy secret to none!
Rejoice, thou who surpassest the knowledge of the wise:
Rejoice, thou who givest light to the minds of the faithful!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 3

The power of the Most High then overshadowed the Virgin for conception, and showed her fruitful womb as a sweet meadow to all who wish to reap salvation, as they sing: Alleluia!

Ikos 3

Having received God into her womb, the Virgin hastened to Elizabeth whose unborn babe at once recognized her embrace, rejoiced, and with leaps of joy as songs, cried to the Theotokos:

Rejoice, branch of an Unfading Sprout:
Rejoice, acquisition of Immortal Fruit!
Rejoice, laborer that laborest for the Lover of mankind:
Rejoice, thou who givest birth to the Planter of our life!
Rejoice, cornland yielding a rich crop of mercies:
Rejoice, table bearing a wealth of forgiveness!
Rejoice, thou who makest to bloom the garden of delight:
Rejoice, thou who preparest a haven for souls!
Rejoice, acceptable incense of intercession:
Rejoice, propitiation of all the world!
Rejoice, good will of God to mortals:
Rejoice, boldness of mortals before God!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 4

Having within a tempest of doubting thoughts, the chaste Joseph was troubled. For knowing thee to have no husband, he suspected a secret union, O blameless one. But having learned that thy conception was of the Holy Spirit, he said: Alleluia!

Ikos 4

While the angels were chanting, the shepherds heard of Christ's coming in the flesh, and having run to the Shepherd, they beheld Him as a blameless Lamb that had been pastured in Mary's womb, and singing to her, they cried:

Rejoice, Mother of the Lamb and the Shepherd:
Rejoice, fold of rational sheep!
Rejoice, torment of invisible enemies:
Rejoice, opening of the gates of Paradise!
Rejoice, for the things of Heaven rejoice with the earth:
Rejoice, for the things of earth join chorus with the heavens!
Rejoice, never-silent mouth of the Apostles:
Rejoice, invincible courage of the passion-bearers!
Rejoice, firm support of faith:
Rejoice, radiant token of Grace!
Rejoice, thou through whom hades was stripped bare:
Rejoice, thou through whom we are clothed with glory!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 5

Having sighted the divinely-moving star, the Magi followed its radiance; and holding it as a lamp, by it they sought a powerful King; and having reached the Unreachable One, they rejoiced, shouting to Him: Alleluia!

Ikos 5

The sons of the Chaldees saw in the hands of the Virgin Him Who with His hand made man. And knowing Him to be the Master, even though He had taken the form of a servant, they hastened to serve Him with gifts, and to cry to her who is blessed:

Rejoice, Mother of the Unsetting Star:
Rejoice, dawn of the mystic day!
Rejoice, thou who didst extinguish the furnace of error:
Rejoice, thou who didst enlighten the initiates of the Trinity!
Rejoice, thou who didst banish from power the inhuman tyrant:
Rejoice, thou who didst show us Christ the Lord, the Lover of mankind!
Rejoice, thou who redeemest from pagan worship:
Rejoice, thou who dost drag us from the works of mire!
Rejoice, thou who didst quench the worship of fire:
Rejoice, thou who rescuest from the flame of the passions!
Rejoice, guide of the faithful to chastity:
Rejoice, gladness of all generations!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 6

Having become God-bearing heralds, the Magi returned to Babylon, having fulfilled Thy prophecy; and having preached Thee to all as the Christ, they left Herod as a babbler who knew not how to sing:
Alleluia!

Ikos 6

By shining in Egypt the light of truth, Thou didst dispel the darkness of falsehood; for its idols fell, O Saviour, unable to endure Thy strength; and those who were delivered from them cried to the Theotokos:

Rejoice, uplifting of men:
Rejoice, downfall of demons!
Rejoice, thou who didst trample down the dominion of delusion:
Rejoice, thou who didst unmask the fraud of idols!
Rejoice, sea that didst drown the Pharaoh of the mind:
Rejoice, rock that doth refresh those thirsting for life!
Rejoice, pillar of fire that guideth those in darkness:
Rejoice, shelter of the world broader than a cloud!
Rejoice, sustenance replacing manna:
Rejoice, minister of holy delight!
Rejoice, land of promise:
Rejoice, thou from whom floweth milk and honey!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 7

When Symeon was about to depart this age of delusion, Thou wast brought as a Babe to him, but Thou was recognized by him as perfect God also; wherefore, marveling at Thine ineffable wisdom, he cried:
Alleluia!

Ikos 7

The Creator showed us a new creation when He appeared to us who came from Him. For He sprang from a seedless womb, and kept it incorrupt as it was, that seeing the miracle we might sing to her, crying out:

Rejoice, flower of incorruptibility:
Rejoice, crown of continence!
Rejoice, thou from whom shineth the Archetype of the Resurrection:
Rejoice, thou who revealest the life of the angels!
Rejoice, tree of shining fruit, whereby the faithful are nourished:
Rejoice, tree of goodly shade by which many are sheltered!
Rejoice, thou that has carried in thy womb the Redeemer of captives:
Rejoice, thou that gavest birth to the Guide of those astray!
Rejoice, supplication before the Righteous Judge:
Rejoice, forgiveness of many sins!
Rejoice, robe of boldness for the naked:
Rejoice, love that doth vanquish all desire!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 8

Having beheld a strange nativity, let us estrange ourselves from the world and transport our minds to Heaven; for the Most High God appeared on earth as a lowly man, because He wished to draw to the heights them that cry to Him: Alleluia!

Ikos 8

Wholly present was the Inexpressible Word among those here below, yet in no way absent from those on high; for this was a divine condescension and not a change of place, and His birth was from a God-receiving Virgin who heard these things:

Rejoice, container of the Uncontainable God:
Rejoice, door of solemn mystery!
Rejoice, report doubtful to unbelievers:
Rejoice, undoubted boast of the faithful!
Rejoice, all-holy chariot of Him Who sitteth upon the Cherubim:
Rejoice, all-glorious temple of Him Who is above the Seraphim!
Rejoice, thou who hast united opposites:
Rejoice, thou who hast joined virginity and motherhood!
Rejoice, thou through whom transgression hath been absolved:
Rejoice, thou through whom Paradise is opened!
Rejoice, key to the kingdom of Christ:
Rejoice, hope of eternal good things!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 9

All the angels were amazed at the great act of Thine incarnation; for they saw the Unapproachable God as a man approachable to all, abiding with us, and hearing from all: Alleluia!

Ikos 9

We see most eloquent orators mute as fish before thee, O Theotokos; for they are at a loss to tell how thou remainest a Virgin and could bear a child. But we, marveling at this mystery, cry out faithfully:

Rejoice, receptacle of the Wisdom of God:
Rejoice, treasury of His Providence!
Rejoice, thou who showest philosophers to be fools:
Rejoice, thou who exposest the learned as irrational!
Rejoice, for the clever critics have become foolish:
Rejoice, for the writers of myths have faded away!
Rejoice, thou who didst rend the webs of the Athenians:
Rejoice, thou who didst fill the nets of the fishermen!
Rejoice, thou who drawest us from the depths of ignorance:
Rejoice, thou who enlightenest many with knowledge!
Rejoice, ship for those who wish to be saved:
Rejoice, harbor for sailors on the sea of life!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 10

Desiring to save the world, He that is the Creator of all came to it according to His Own promise, and He that, as God, is the Shepherd, for our sake appeared unto us as a man; for like calling unto like, as God He heareth: Alleluia!

Ikos 10

A bulwark art thou to virgins, and to all that flee unto thee, O Virgin Theotokos; for the Maker of Heaven and earth prepared thee, O Most-pure one, dwelt in thy womb, and taught all to call to thee:

Rejoice, pillar of virginity:
Rejoice, gate of salvation!
Rejoice, leader of mental formation:
Rejoice, bestower of divine good!
Rejoice, for thou didst renew those conceived in shame:
Rejoice, for thou gavest wisdom to those robbed of their minds!
Rejoice, thou who didst foil the corrupter of minds:
Rejoice, thou who gavest birth to the Sower of purity!
Rejoice, bridechamber of a seedless marriage:
Rejoice, thou who dost wed the faithful to the Lord!
Rejoice, good nourisher of virgins:
Rejoice, adorer of holy souls as for marriage!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 11

Every hymn is defeated that trieth to encompass the multitude of Thy many compassions; for if we offer to Thee, O Holy King, songs equal in number to the sand, nothing have we done worthy of that which thou hast given us who shout to Thee: Alleluia!

Ikos 11

We behold the holy Virgin, a shining lamp appearing to those in darkness; for, kindling the Immaterial Light, she guideth all to divine knowledge, she illumineth minds with radiance, and is honored by our shouting these things:

Rejoice, ray of the noetic Sun:
Rejoice, radiance of the Unsetting Light!
Rejoice, lightning that enlightenest our souls:
Rejoice, thunder that terrifiest our enemies!
Rejoice, for thou didst cause the refulgent Light to dawn:
Rejoice, for thou didst cause the river of many streams to gush forth!
Rejoice, thou who paintest the image of the font:
Rejoice, thou who blottest out the stain of sin!
Rejoice, laver that washest the conscience clean:
Rejoice, cup that drawest up joy!
Rejoice, aroma of the sweet fragrance of Christ:
Rejoice, life of mystical gladness!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 12

When the Absolver of all mankind desired to blot out ancient debts, of His Own will He came to dwell among those who had fallen from His Grace; and having torn up the handwriting of their sins, He heareth this from all: Alleluia!

Ikos 12

While singing to thine Offspring, we all praise thee as a living temple, O Theotokos; for the Lord Who holdeth all things in His hand dwelt in thy womb, and He sanctified and glorified thee, and taught all to cry to thee:

Rejoice, tabernacle of God the Word:
Rejoice, saint greater than the saints!
Rejoice, ark gilded by the Spirit:
Rejoice, inexhaustible treasury of life!
Rejoice, precious diadem of pious kings:
Rejoice, venerable boast of reverent priests!
Rejoice, unshakable fortress of the Church:
Rejoice, inviolable wall of the kingdom!
Rejoice, thou through whom victories are obtained:
Rejoice, thou through whom foes fall prostrate!
Rejoice, healing of my flesh:
Rejoice, salvation of my soul!
Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded!

Kontakion 13

O all-praised Mother who didst bear the Word, holiest of all the saints, accept now our offering, and deliver us from all misfortune, and rescue from the torment to come those that cry to thee: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! (This Kontakion is sung three times)

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (**x3**)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins; O Master, pardon our iniquities; O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (**x3**)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Kontakion of the Akathist

To thee, the Champion Leader, we thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and thanksgiving as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: but as thou art one with might which is invincible, from all dangers that can be do thou deliver us, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, thou Bride unwedded!

Lord, have mercy. (**x40**)

Thou Who at all times and at every hour, in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, Who art long-suffering, plenteous in mercy, most compassionate, Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on sinners; Who callest all men to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Receive, O Lord, our prayers at this hour, and guide our life toward Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil, and pain. Compass us about with Thy holy angels, that, guarded and guided by their array, we may attain to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory: For blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (**x3**)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word, true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Prayer to the Most Holy Theotokos, by the monk Paul

O spotless, undefiled, incorrupt, immaculate, pure Virgin, Lady Bride of God, who by thy wondrous conceiving hast united God the Word to man, and joined the outcast nature of our race to heavenly things, O only hope of the hopeless, and succour of the embattled, the ready help of them that have recourse to thee, and refuge of all Christians: abhor me not, the sinner, the accursed one, who have altogether made myself unprofitable by shameful thoughts, words, and deeds, and with the heartsease of life's pleasures am become a thrall in mind.

But as the Mother of the man-befriending God, do thou, in man-befriending wise, take pity upon me a sinner and prodigal, and receive my supplication, offered thee on unclean lips. And using thy boldness as a mother, entreat thy Son, our Master and Lord, that He may open even unto me the loving compassions of His goodness, and that, overlooking mine innumerable trespasses, He would turn me to repentance, and make me the approved doer of His commandments.

And be thou ever with me, as thou art merciful, and compassionate, and the lover of good, being in this life a fervent protectress and help, to defend me from the assaults of adversaries, and guide me unto salvation; and in the hour of my departure, to care for my wretched soul, and drive far from it the dark countenances of evil demons; and in the terrible day of judgment, to deliver me from eternal torment, and show me forth as an heir of the unspeakable glory of thy Son and our God.

This be my lot, O my Lady, most holy Theotokos, by thy mediation and help, through the grace and love for man of thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom is due all glory, honour, and worship, with His Father which is without beginning, and His All-holy and good and life creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.