

**AKATHIST TO OUR MOST HOLY LADY
THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY**

The priest, wearing the stole, stands on the Ambo before the closed Royal Doors.

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

Reader:

Amen. Glory to You, our God! Glory to You!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things; Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life: Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us! (3 times)

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

O most holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Priest:

For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Reader:

Amen. Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

Come, let us worship God, our King! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God!

The priest goes to the center of the church, before the icon of the Theotokos.

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the innermost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

All:

I believe in one God, the FATHER almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the SON of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end. And in the HOLY SPIRIT, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Choir: *The Kontakion in tone 8*

O victorious leader of triumphant hosts!
 We, your servants, delivered from evil,
 sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos!
 As you possess invincible might, set us free from every calamity,
 so that we may sing: “Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!”

Priest: *Ikos 1*

The Archangel Gabriel – first among angels – was sent from heaven to greet the Theotokos, saying “Rejoice!” When he beheld that You, O Lord, would become incarnate of her as a result of his announcement, he stood in awe and cried out saying:

Choir:

Rejoice, O Theotokos, for by you joy will be set aflame!
 Rejoice, for by you the curse of sin will be extinguished!
 Rejoice, for you are the restoration of fallen Adam!
 Rejoice, for by you Eve is delivered from weeping!
 Rejoice, for your glory is beyond human understanding!
 Rejoice, for angelic eyes look with amazement at your childbearing!
 Rejoice, for you are the throne of the king of all!
 Rejoice, for in your womb you hold the one who holds all things!
 Rejoice, for you are a star giving rise to the sun of righteousness!
 Rejoice, for your womb gives flesh to God!
 Rejoice, for through your childbearing creation is renewed!
 Rejoice, for through your birth-giving the creator is worshipped!
 Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 2*

In purity the Holy Lady cried to Gabriel the Archangel with boldness, saying: “Your greeting is a mystery to my soul. You foretell a conception although I have not known a man; and you proclaim the majesty of God, singing “Alleluia!”

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: *Ikos 2*

Desiring to understand the unknowable mystery, the Virgin cried to the angelic messenger, saying: “Tell me how a child can be born of me?” With awe he answered her saying:

Choir:

Rejoice, O Theotokos, for you commence the plan of God!/
 Rejoice, for in you things that have never been seen are revealed!/
 Rejoice, for you manifest the first of Christ's miracles!/
 Rejoice, for you are the herald of his mission on earth!/
 Rejoice, for you are the heavenly ladder by which God descended from heaven!/
 Rejoice, for you are a bridge leading the human race to heaven!/
 Rejoice, for by your miraculous conception angels are amazed!/
 Rejoice, for you are greatly glorified!/
 Rejoice, for you are the lamentation and defeat of demons!/
 Rejoice, for you wondrously give birth to the light of all!/
 Rejoice, for you reveal wisdom beyond the understanding of the wise!/
 Rejoice, for you enlighten the minds of believers!//
 Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 3*

The power of the Most High came upon the handmaiden of God and transformed her virginal womb into a fruitful paradise. Therefore, all who seek salvation cry out, saying: "Alleluia!"

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**Priest:** *Ikos 3*

Having conceived the Word of God in her womb, the Virgin ran to Elizabeth, who carried in her womb the one who would prepare the way of the Lord. And the child leapt for joy in Elizabeth's womb as the Theotokos approached, singing songs of praise and saying:

Choir:

Rejoice, O Theotokos, flower of an unwithering plant!/
 Rejoice, for you bring forth an incorruptible fruit!/
 Rejoice, for you are the fountain of living water!/
 Rejoice, for you are the mother of the Son of God the Father!/
 Rejoice, for you are a garden bringing forth a harvest of mercy for us!/
 Rejoice, for you are a banquet feast of purity!/
 Rejoice, for you are a flowering meadow of gladness!/
 Rejoice, for you are the guide and harbor of souls!/
 Rejoice, for you are an acceptable incense of prayer!/
 Rejoice, for you bring purification to the universe!/
 Rejoice, for you reveal the goodness of God toward the dead!

Rejoice, for you are the courage of the dead toward God!//
Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 4*

Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin, was troubled by doubts in his mind. He was perplexed by your virginal childbearing, O Pure One. But having learned that the conception was of the Holy Spirit, he cried out, saying: “Alleluia!”

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: *Ikos 4*

The shepherds heard the angels proclaiming the birth of Christ in the flesh. They ran to the Good Shepherd and found him as a little child in the arms of the Theotokos. They greeted her, saying”

Choir:

Rejoice, O Mother of the Lamb of God!/
Rejoice, O Mother of the Good Shepherd!/
Rejoice, for you are a pasture of spiritual sheep!/
Rejoice, for you are a defender against invisible enemies!/
Rejoice, for you open the gates of heaven for us!/
Rejoice, for in you heaven and earth rejoice together!/
Rejoice, for you are the boast of the apostles!
Rejoice, for you are the invincible courage of martyrs!/
Rejoice, for you are the confirmation of faith!/
Rejoice, for you shine forth the illumination of the knowledge of grace!/
Rejoice, for through you the dominion of hell is shattered!/
Rejoice, for you clothe humanity with glory!//
Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 5*

When the Magi beheld the star leading the way to God, they followed it as if being led by a torch. Seeking to offer gifts and worship to the Almighty King, they followed the star and came upon God born of the Virgin. They rejoiced and cried out, saying: “Alleluia!”

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: *Ikos 5*

The Magi – sons of Chaldea – saw the One whose hands had created all things held in the hands of the Virgin. Although He had been born in the form of a servant, they knew that

Rejoice, for you bestow holy delights upon us!
 Rejoice, for you are the Promised Land!
 Rejoice, for you are the cup of milk and honey!//
 Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 7*

Simeon, the righteous elder, came to the Temple and greeted the Theotokos as she presented the Savior of all – as an infant – according to the Law of Moses. He said, “Lord, I have seen Your salvation; now let me depart this life in peace according to Your promise.” Amazed by Your ineffable wisdom, he cried out, saying: “Alleluia!”

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: *Ikos 7*

The Creator of all appeared to us in the flesh when he was born of the Virgin. He showed the Theotokos to be a new creation when He came forth from her in a manner beyond reason and understanding, for He was born of her without seed. Beholding this miracle, we praise the Mother of God, saying:

Choir:

Rejoice, O flower of incorruption!/
 Rejoice, O crown of purity!/
 Rejoice, O image of our salvation!/
 Rejoice, O revelation of the angelic life!/
 Rejoice, O nourishment of the faithful!/
 Rejoice, O tree providing shade to those who despair!/
 Rejoice, O Birth-giver of the one who guides us!/
 Rejoice, O Mother of the one who delivers us from captivity!/
 Rejoice, O prayer offered to the righteous judge!/
 Rejoice, O forgiveness of sin!/
 Rejoice, O clothing of the naked!/
 Rejoice, O love which surpasses desire!//
 Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 8*

As we behold and glorify the nativity of Christ, let us become strangers to this world and turn our minds toward heaven; for the Most High appeared on earth in order to raise up all who cry out, saying: “Alleluia!”

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: *Ikos 8*

The eternal Word of God did not depart from His divinity when He came to visit our lowliness by being born of the Virgin and taking the form of a servant. Glorifying the merciful condescension of God for our sakes, we cry out, saying:

Choir:

Rejoice, O boundary of the God who cannot be contained!/
 Rejoice, O gate opening the way to the mystery of God's grace!/
 Rejoice, O joy of believers!/
 Rejoice, O gladness of the faithful!/
 Rejoice, O chariot of the one who sits upon the throne of the Cherubim!/
 Rejoice, O most glorious abode of the one praised by the Seraphim!/
 Rejoice, O Birth-giver of the one who united humanity and divinity!/
 Rejoice, O communion of virginity and motherhood!/
 Rejoice, O deliverer from sin!/
 Rejoice, O earthly paradise leading to heaven!/
 Rejoice, O key to Christ's kingdom!/
 Rejoice, O hope of eternal blessings!//
 Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 9*

Angels marveled at Your incarnation, O Christ. They beheld the inaccessible God take human flesh and, by being born of the Virgin, become accessible to us as we cry out, saying: "Alleluia!"

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**Priest:** *Ikos 9*

Those who are wise become ignorant as they attempt to express your glorious birth-giving, O Theotokos. They cannot describe the mystery of how you gave birth yet remained a virgin. But we, the faithful, marvel at this great mystery of our salvation and cry out, saying:

Choir:

Rejoice, O receiver of the wisdom of God!/
 Rejoice, O treasury of God's dispensation!/
 Rejoice, for through you the false philosophers are foiled!/
 Rejoice, for through you those seeking knowledge are taught!/
 Rejoice, as many minds are perplexed by your birth-giving!/
 Rejoice, for through you myths are destroyed!//

Rejoice, for through you the chains of falsehood are broken!/
Rejoice, for through you the apostles' fishing nets are filled with believers!/
Rejoice, for through you we are delivered from ignorance!/
Rejoice, for through you we are enlightened by knowledge!/
Rejoice, O vessel of those seeking salvation!/
Rejoice, O harbor of life's travelers!//
Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 10*

The Maker of All came to His own creation desiring to save the world. Our God and Shepherd appeared among us in the form of a servant – having taken flesh and human nature from the Theotokos through His incarnation. Having saved us and calling us to life, He hears us cry out, saying: “Alleluia!”

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: *Ikos 10*

You are a haven for all who flee to You for protection, O Virgin Theotokos. The Maker of All adorned you by dwelling in you, O Most-pure Lady, and we therefore have been taught to magnify you, saying:

Choir:

Rejoice, O pillar of virginity!/
Rejoice, O gate of salvation!/
Rejoice, O fruit of spiritual effort!/
Rejoice, O gift of divine goodness!/
Rejoice, for through you those born into sin are born again to new life!/
Rejoice, for through you knowledge is given to the ignorant!/
Rejoice, for through you the deceiver of minds was crushed!/
Rejoice, for through you the sower of chastity was begotten!/
Rejoice, O bridal chamber of purity!/
Rejoice, O union of the faithful to the Lord!/
Rejoice, O helper of the people of God!/
Rejoice, O bridesmaid of holy souls!//
Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 11*

O Lord, no song sufficiently proclaims the greatness of Your mercies! If we offered You as many songs of praise as there are sands of the sea we would not offer you glory worthy of all You have given to us. Therefore, we cry out, saying: “Alleluia!”

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: *Ikos 11*

We behold the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary as a light shining upon those in darkness. Her spiritual light illumines the path leading all to the knowledge of God. She is the radiance of faith that enlightens every mind; she is praised by all who cry out, saying:

Choir:

Rejoice, O ray of the spiritual sun!/
 Rejoice, O radiance of the endless light!/
 Rejoice, O splendor of grace illumining our souls!/
 Rejoice, O thunder of God repelling our foes!/
 Rejoice, for from you shines the greatest light!/
 Rejoice, for from you flows the most marvelous stream!/
 Rejoice, O fulfillment of healing!/
 Rejoice, O cleansing of sins!/
 Rejoice, O shower cleansing the conscience!/
 Rejoice, O chalice by which we partake of gladness!/
 Rejoice, O perfume of Christ's divine fragrance!/
 Rejoice, O life of mystical feasting!//
 Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 12*

Desiring to free the human race from the ancient curse of sin, the Savior came to those who were exiles from His grace. Tearing up the handwriting of sin against us, He hears us as we cry out, saying: "Alleluia!"

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: *Ikos 12*

We extol your birth-giving, O Theotokos! We magnify you as the living temple of God, for the One who holds all things in His hand dwelt in your womb. The Lord sanctified you! The Lord glorified you! And the Lord taught us to magnify you, saying:

Choir:

Rejoice, O tabernacle of the word of God!/
 Rejoice, O holy place greater than the sanctuary of the temple!/
 Rejoice, O ark of the covenant sealed by the Holy Spirit!/
 Rejoice, O treasure of everlasting life!//

Rejoice, O precious crown of faithful kings!/
 Rejoice, O precious glory of loyal priests!/
 Rejoice, O fortress of the church!/
 Rejoice, O ladder to the kingdom!/
 Rejoice, for through your prayers we receive forgiveness of sins!/
 Rejoice, for through you intercessions all victories are won!/
 Rejoice, for through you healing has been granted!/
 Rejoice, for through you our souls have received salvation!//
 Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

Priest: *Kontakion 13*

All-praised Mother of God, you gave birth to the Word! You are truly most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious. Accept our prayer and intercede for us before your Son and our God; deliver us from every calamity, and protect us as we cry out to Christ, saying: “Alleluia!”

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Priest: *Ikos 1*

The Archangel Gabriel – first among angels – was sent from heaven to greet the Theotokos, saying “Rejoice!” When he beheld that You, O Lord, would become incarnate of her as a result of his announcement, he stood in awe and cried out saying:

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 Rejoice, for you are the restoration of fallen Adam!/
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 Rejoice, for angelic eyes look with amazement at your childbearing!/
 Rejoice, for you are the throne of the king of all!/
 Rejoice, for in your womb you hold the one who holds all things!/
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 Rejoice, for your womb gives flesh to God!/
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Choir: *The Kontakion in tone 8*

O victorious leader of triumphant hosts!
We, your servants, delivered from evil,
sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos!
As you possess invincible might, set us free from every calamity,
so that we may sing: “Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!”

Priest:

Most gracious Theotokos – my hope, Mother of God, shelter of orphans, and the intercessor for travelers, strangers and pilgrims; joy of those in sorrow, protectress of the wronged – see my distress, see my affliction. Help me, for I have no other helper. Feed me, for I am a stranger and a pilgrim. You know my offences; pray to our Lord and Savior that I may be forgiven and that my sins may be absolved. For I run to your protection, O Mother of God, since you are a gracious in consoling me. Guard and protect me always. Amen.

The priest goes to the Ambo, before the Royal Doors.

Reader:

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us! (3 times)

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

O most holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name’s sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Priest:

For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Reader:

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos. Ever-blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos we magnify you!

In the name of the Lord, Father bless!

Priest:

Christ our God, the Existing One, is blessed always, now and ever and unto ages of ages!

Reader:

Amen. O Heavenly King, establish the Orthodox Christians, confirm the faith, quiet the unbelievers, give peace to the world; place our departed brethren in the tabernacles of the righteous; and accept the prayers of us sinners offered in repentance; for You are good and You love mankind.

THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM

Priest:

Glory to You, O Christ our God and our hope! Glory to You!

Choir:

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

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.//
Father, bless!

Priest:

Through the prayers of the Holy Theotokos and our holy fathers and mothers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

Choir:

Amen. Amen.