

† THE AKATHIST TO THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD “SOFTENER OF EVIL HEARTS”



† THE APOLYTIKION IN †TONE 5

Soften our evil hearts, O Theotokos, * and quench the attacks of those who hate us * and loose all straitness of our soul. * For looking on thy holy icon * we are filled with compunction by thy suffering and loving-kindness for us * and we kiss thy wounds; * we are filled with horror for the darts with which we wound thee. * Let us not, O Mother of Compassion, * according to the cruelty of our hearts, perish from the cruelty of heart of those near us, ** For thou art in truth the Softener of Evil Hearts.

† THE AKATHIST TO THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD “SOFTENER OF EVIL HEARTS”

Kontakion I

We cry out with heartfelt emotion to the chosen Virgin Mary, far nobler than all the daughters of the earth, Mother of the Son of God, Who gave salvation to the world: Look at our life which is filled with every sorrow and remember the sorrow and pain which thou didst suffer as one born on earth with us, and do with us according to thy merciful heart, that we may cry unto thee: Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften the hearts of evil men!

Oikos I

An angel announced the birth of the Saviour of the world to the shepherds in the Bethlehem and with the multitude of the heavenly hosts praised God, singing: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among men!" But thou, O Mother of God, having nowhere to lay thy head, since there was no room in the inn, gave birth to thy first-born Son in a cave and, wrapping Him in swaddling clothes, laid Him in a manger. Knowing the pain in thy heart, we cry out to thee:

Rejoice, for thou wast warmed by the breath of thine own beloved Son!

Rejoice, for thou didst wrap the eternal Child in swaddling clothes!

Rejoice, for thou didst nourish with thy milk the One who sustaineth the universe!

Rejoice, for thou didst turn a cave into a heaven!

Rejoice, for thou didst make thy throne upon the Cherubim!

Rejoice, for thou didst remain a virgin both in giving birth and after birth!

Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion II

Seeing the eternal Child swaddled and lying in a manger, the shepherds of Bethlehem came to worship Him and to relate that which the Angels told them about the Child. But Mary kept all these things in her heart. And after eight days had passed Jesus was circumcised, according to the law of Israel, as a man. Hymning thy humility and patience, O Theotokos, we sing to the Good God Eternal: Alleluia!

Oikos II

Having their understanding based on God and keeping the Law of the Lord, on the fortieth day when the days of purification were complete, His parents took Jesus to Jerusalem so that they could present Him before the Lord and offer sacrifice for Him according to the decree in the Law of the Lord. But we sing out to thee, O Theotokos, thus:

Rejoice, for thou didst take the Creator of the universe to the Temple in
Jerusalem to fulfill the Law!
Rejoice, for thou didst there meet the Elder Simeon with joy!
Rejoice, thou only Pure and blessed one among women!
Rejoice, for with humility Thou didst carry thy cross adorned with sorrows!
Rejoice, for thou didst never disobey the will of God!
Rejoice, for thou didst reveal thyself as a model of patience and humility!
Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften
the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion III

Thou wast strengthened with power from on high, O Mother of God, when thou didst hear the words of the Elder Simeon, when he said to thee: "Behold, this Child is destined to be the rise and fall of many in Israel. This is a sign which will be spoken against, and a sword will pierce thy very soul so that the thoughts of many may be revealed." And great sorrow entered the heart of the Theotokos, and with grief she cried out to God: Alleluia!

Oikos III

Hastening to destroy the Child, Herod ordered the killing of all children in Bethlehem and its environs, from two years of age and under according to the time that he determined from the Magi. And behold, according to the command of God, the Elder Joseph was informed by an angel in a dream to flee with the Holy Family to Egypt and to remain there until the death of Herod. Therefore with compunction, we cry out to thee, O Theotokos:

Rejoice for thou didst bear the entire turmoil of exile!
Rejoice for all the idols fell in the land of Egypt not being able to endure the
power of thy Son!
Rejoice for thou didst remain for seven years among the dishonorable pagans!
Rejoice, for thou didst arrive in Nazareth with the first-born Youth and with
thy betrothed!
Rejoice, for thou didst live with the Elder Joseph the carpenter in poverty!

Rejoice, for thou didst spend all thy time in hard labors!
Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften
our hearts and those of evil men!

Kontakion IV

A storm of sorrows whirled about the most pure Mother when they returned from Jerusalem, not finding the young man Jesus in the caravan. For this reason they returned to look for Him, and after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers listening to them and asking them questions. And His Mother asked Him, "Child, why hast Thou done this to us? Behold, Thy father and I suffered greatly looking for Thee." And Jesus answered them, " Why were ye looking for Me? Do ye not know about those things which My Father has entrusted unto Me?" And Thou, O Most Pure One, kept all these sayings in Thy heart, crying out to God: Alleluia!

Oikos IV

The Mother of God heard that Jesus traveled through all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing all kinds of illness and infirmity among the people. And His reputation spread through all of Syria and they brought Him every kind of illness and the suffering and those tormented by demons and the paralyzed and He healed them. But thou, O Mother of God, knowing the prophecy, sorrowed in thy heart, knowing that very soon the time would come when Thy Son would present Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. For this reason we bless thee, much-sorrowing Mother of God, crying out:

Rejoice, for thou didst give thy Son to the service of the Jewish people!
Rejoice, for thou didst sorrow in thy heart, but didst submit to the will of God!
Rejoice, for thou didst save the world from the deluge of sin!
Rejoice for thou didst crush the head of the ancient serpent!
Rejoice, for thou didst offer thyself as a living sacrifice to God!
Rejoice, O blessed one, the Lord is with Thee!
Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften
the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion V

Preaching the Kingdom of God on earth, Jesus exposed the arrogance of the Pharisees who imagined themselves to be righteous. So when they heard His parables they understood it was about themselves that He was speaking and they sought to arrest Him, but they feared the people who considered Him to

be a prophet. Seeing all of this, the Mother of God sorrowed for her beloved Son and feared that they would kill Him, in affliction crying out: Alleluia!

Oikos V

Some of the Jews, seeing the resurrection of Lazarus, went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. And Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, said, "It will be better for us that one man die for the people, so that the whole nation would not perish." From that day on they took counsel about how they would kill Him. But we cry out to thee, O Most Pure One:

Rejoice, thou who gavest birth to the Saviour of the world!
Rejoice, source of our salvation!
Rejoice, for thou wast chosen from birth to be the Mother of our Saviour!
Rejoice, Mother of God, destined for suffering!
Rejoice, O blessed one, who dost preside as Queen of Heaven!
Rejoice, O blessed one, thou who always prays for us!
Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften
the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion VI

Once a preacher of the Word of God, and now a traitor, Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, went to the high priest to betray his Teacher. They listened to him, were exceedingly pleased and promised to give him thirty pieces of silver. But thou, O Mother of God, didst sorrow for thy beloved Son, and didst cry out in grief to God: Alleluia!

Oikos VI

Taking part in the Last Supper with the disciples at which the Teacher washed their feet, thereby revealing an example of humility, Christ said to them, "One of you will betray Me." But we, suffering with the Mother of God, cry out to Her:

Rejoice, Mother of God, languishing with the torture of thy heart!
Rejoice, Thou who didst suffer all in this most sorrowful vale!
Rejoice, Thou who didst find comfort in prayer!
Rejoice, joy of all who sorrow!
Rejoice, Thou who dost save us from the mire of sin!
Rejoice, vessel filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit!
Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften
the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion VII

Desiring to show His love for the human race, the Lord Jesus Christ at the Mystical Supper, blessed and broke bread, and gave it to His disciples and apostles, saying: "Take, eat, this is My Body." And taking the chalice and giving praise gave it to them saying: "All of you drink of this, this is My Blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Thanking the compassionate God for His ineffable mercy to us, we sing to Him: Alleluia!

Oikos VII

The Lord revealed a new sign of His mercy to His disciples when He promised to send them the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who would descend from the Father and would witness concerning Him. But to thee, O Mother of God, sanctified again on the day of Pentecost by the Holy Spirit, we cry:

Rejoice, mansion of the Holy Spirit!

Rejoice, brilliantly-illuminated bridal chamber!

Rejoice, spacious dwelling place of God the Word!

Rejoice, thou who didst open for us the gates of paradise by Thy giving of birth!

Rejoice, thou who didst reveal the sign of divine mercy Himself to us!

Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion VIII

It is at once very strange and sorrowful for us to hear how Judas Iscariot betrayed his Teacher and Lord with a kiss. Then the crowd and the commander and the servants of the Jews arrested Jesus, and bound Him, and led Him first to the chief priest Ananias, and then to the high priest Caiaphas. But thou, O Mother of God, expecting the death sentence for thy beloved Son, cried out to God: Alleluia!

Oikos VIII

All of the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium to Pilate, saying that He was a criminal. But Pilate, after questioning Him, told them that he could not find any fault at all in Him. But we cry out to thee with compunction, O Mother of God, who saw the slander of Thy Son:

Rejoice, thou whose heart was broken by woe !

Rejoice, for thou didst shed tears for thy Son!

Rejoice, thou who didst see thy beloved Child given over to trial!
Rejoice, for thou didst suffer everything without complaint like a true
 handmaiden of the Lord!
Rejoice, despite thy weeping and lamentation!
Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven and earth, who dost accept the prayers of thy
 servants!
Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften
 the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion IX

All generations bless thee, who art more honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, our Lady and the Mother of our Redeemer, for thy birth-giving has brought joy to the whole world. But thou didst suffer the final great sorrow when thou saw thy beloved Son insulted, whipped, and sentenced to death. For this reason we present our heartfelt hymn to thee, O Most Pure One, singing to God Almighty: Alleluia!

Oikos IX

Loquacious orators are not able to describe all of the suffering which Thou endured, our Saviour, such as when the soldiers placed a crown woven out of thorns on Thy head and dressed Thee in a purple robe, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and slapped Thee across the face. But we, Mother of God, recognizing thy suffering, cry out to thee:

Rejoice, thou who didst behold thy Son slain for our sake!
Rejoice, seeing Him dressed in purple and wearing a crown of thorns!
Rejoice, seeing Him tortured, whom thou didst nourish with thy milk!
Rejoice, thou who didst suffer His Passion together with Him!
Rejoice, thou who didst watch all His disciples forsake Him!
Rejoice, thou who didst see Him condemned by the judgement of the
 unrighteous!
Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften
 the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion X

Wanting to save Jesus, Pilate said to the Jews, "We have a custom to release a prisoner on the feast of Passover. Do you want me to give you the King of the Jews?" All of them shouted, saying, "Not Him, but Barabbas!" We praise the great mercy of the Heavenly Father, Who so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son to death on the Cross in order to redeem us from eternal death, as we cry out to Him: Alleluia!

Oikos X

Be a wall and a fortification unto us, O Lady, who are overburdened by sorrows and suffering. For thou thyself didst suffer hearing the Jews shouting, "Crucify, crucify Him!" Now hear us crying out unto thee:

Rejoice, Mother of mercy, who wipest away every tear from those who suffer cruelly!

Rejoice, thou who grandest us tears of heartfelt compunction!

Rejoice, thou who savest lost sinners!

Rejoice, Protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame!

Rejoice, thou who savest us from our passions!

Rejoice, thou who grandest comfort to broken hearts!

Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion XI

We offer a hymn of heartfelt sorrow to the Saviour of the world for His voluntary Passion and carrying His Cross to Golgotha to be crucified. Standing at Jesus' Cross are His Mother, Mary Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. But Jesus, seeing His Mother and His disciple whom He loved standing there, said to His disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And from that time the disciple took her into his family. But thou, O Mother of God, seeing Thy Son and Lord on the Cross was devastated, and cried out to God on high: Alleluia!

Oikos XI

"O my Son and Pre-eternal God, Fashioner of all creation! O Lord, how canst Thou endure the suffering on the Cross?" the pure Virgin cried, saying: "By Thy awesome birth, O my Son, I have been exalted above all mothers, but woe is me! Now when I see Thee, my womb burns within me." But we shed tears remembering thee, and cry out to thee:

Rejoice, thou who was deprived of joy and merriment!

Rejoice, thou who didst see the voluntary passion of thy Son on the Cross!

Rejoice, thou who didst see thy beloved Son sore wounded!

Rejoice, ewe lamb, seeing thy Son as a lamb being led to slaughter!

Rejoice, thou who didst see the Deliverer of the wounds of soul and body covered with wounds!

Rejoice, thou who didst see thy Son rise from the dead!

Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion XII

O All merciful Saviour, grant us mercy, breathing out Thy Spirit on the Cross and tearing up the handwriting of our sins. "Behold, my good Light, my God, is extinguished on the Cross!" the Virgin in great anguish exclaimed. "O Joseph, hasten to Pilate, approach him and ask him to take thy Teacher down from the Cross." "Seeing Thy wounded Body, naked and without glory, on the Cross, O my Child, a sword has pierced my soul according to the prophecy of the Elder Simeon," said the Mother of God, singing: Alleluia!

Oikos XII

Hymning Thy mercifulness, O Lover of mankind, we bow down to Thy generous mercy, O Master. The Most Pure one said, "Wishing to save Thy creature, thou hast given Thyself over to death." But by Thy resurrection, O Saviour, have mercy on all of us, while we address Thy most pure Mother:

Rejoice, thou who didst see the most good Lord dead and without breath!
Rejoice, thou who didst kiss the body of thy beloved Son!
Rejoice, thou who didst see thy Light as a naked and wounded corpse!
Rejoice, thou who didst place the Light of the world in the tomb!
Rejoice, thou who didst wrap His body in a new shroud!
Rejoice, thou who beheld His Resurrection from the dead!
Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften the hearts of evil men!

Kontakion XIII

(Thrice)

O All-hymned Mother, crushed by thy sorrow at the Cross of thy Son and God, accept our tears and expressions of sorrow and save from every sorrow, affliction, and eternal death, all those who hope in thine ineffable kindheartedness and cry out to God: Alleluia!

(And again Oikos I and Kontakion I)

Oikos I

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Rejoice, for thou didst nourish with thy milk the One who sustaineth the universe!

Rejoice, for thou didst turn a cave into a heaven!

Rejoice, for thou didst make thy throne upon the Cherubim!

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Kontakion I

We cry out with heartfelt emotion to the chosen Virgin Mary, far nobler than all the daughters of the earth, Mother of the Son of God, Who gave salvation to the world: Look at our life which is filled with every sorrow and remember the sorrow and pain which thou didst suffer as one born on earth with us, and do with us according to thy merciful heart, that we may cry unto thee: Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows into joy and soften the hearts of evil men!

Prayer to the Most Holy Mother of God “The Softener of Evil Hearts”

O much sorrowing Mother of God, more highly exalted than all other maidens, according to thy purity and the multitude of thy suffering endured by thee on earth: Hearken to our sighs and soften the hearts of evil men, and protect us under the shelter of thy mercy. For we know no other refuge and ardent intercessor apart from thee, but as thou hast great boldness before the One who was born of thee, help and save us by thy prayers, that without offence we may attain the Heavenly Kingdom where, with all the saints, we will sing the thrice-holy hymn to One God Almighty in the Trinity, always now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.