

**AKATHIST HYMN TO THE ALL-HOLY THEOTOKOS,
SUNG BEFORE HER WONDERWORKING KURSK-ROOT ICON OF THE SIGN
Which the Holy Church Doth Celebrate on the 8th of September**

KONTAKION I

To the champion leader and good directress, who guideth us to the heavenly kingdom, come ye, let us all bow down who here have no continuing city, entreating her all-powerful aid, recalling the miracles that from times past till now have been wrought through her icon; and let us cry out with a loud voice:

Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

IKOS I

The angels marveled, beholding thee going before us in thine icon, as in a pillar of fire, in our great exodus from a land enslaved by the iniquitous, O Mistress. For it is not Moses, but thee thyself whom we have as a guide in our sorrowful journey. Wherefore, we cry out to thee in gratitude:

Rejoice, O blessed directress!

Rejoice, Mother of the true Way!

Rejoice, thou who dost accompany us through the desert of this world!

Rejoice, thou who dost most gloriously vanquish the noetic Amalek!

Rejoice, thou who dost gush forth torrents of grace from thine icon!

Rejoice, thou who engravest the law of thy Son, Christ our God, on the tablets of our hearts!

Rejoice, gracious quenching of the heat of burning passions!

Rejoice, almighty strengthening of the disabled!

Rejoice, most peaceful sweetening of troubled hearts!

Rejoice, divine comfort of wanderers and orphans!

Rejoice, thou who makest ready for us the promised land!

Rejoice, thou who openest the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem unto us!

Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION II

We have seen, we have continually beheld thy signs and wonders, O Mistress. And we confess thy mercy and conceal not thy benefactions, but cry out with a loud voice: Alleluia!

IKOS II

Who can comprehend the mind of God, and who can recount the mystery of His judgments? For He raiseth up and casteth down, He humbleth and exalteth, He afflicteth and healeth. Who is privy to His counsel? Wherefore, He hath humbled us also because of our sins, and cast down our kingdom, scattering our children over all the face of the earth. To whom, then, shall we flee in our sorrow, to whom shall we stretch forth our hands, if not to thee, O all-good one? Therefore, with contrite hearts we cry to thee:

Rejoice, thou who dost appease thy Son for us!

Rejoice, thou who dost allay the righteous wrath of God!

Rejoice, washing away of our transgressions!

Rejoice, intercessor for the forgiveness of the sinful!
Rejoice, thou who for us dost light the unfailing beacon of hope!
Rejoice, thou who in thine icon dost go before us in our exodus and sojourn!
Rejoice, thou who gatherest all the scattered together!
Rejoice, thou who coverest all with thy splendid omophorion!
Rejoice, thou who dost put down schisms and revolts!
Rejoice, thou who dost set at naught the counsels of the ungodly!
Rejoice, thou who dost pilot those who sail the sea of life!
Rejoice, thou who in thy care forsakest none!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION III

Mighty works are shown forth in thee, and grace is poured forth in abundance from thy precious icon, O most blessed Virgin, moving all to cry to thee: Alleluia!

IKOS III

In that thou art possessed of ineffable loving-kindness, O most good one, thou shinest forth thy grace where darkness groweth thick and sorrows are multiplied. Wherefore, thou hast not left us orphans, but in thine icon art come to us paupers who glorify thy condescension and cry thus:

Rejoice, sea of wonders!
Rejoice, abyss of mercy!
Rejoice, ever-flowing fount of grace!
Rejoice, inexhaustible well of healings!
Rejoice, thou who didst transcend the bounds of nature!
Rejoice, thou who didst alter the laws of nature!
Rejoice, thou who dost turn our sorrow into joy!
Rejoice, thou who changest our lamentation and groaning into spiritual gladness!
Rejoice, thou who turnest affliction and misfortune to our benefit!
Rejoice, thou who most gloriously dost lay low our foes!
Rejoice, thou who dost put to shame the expectation of the enemy!
Rejoice, thou who makest glad those who hymn thee!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION IV

When the storm of temptations assaileth us, when sorrows and pain are visited upon us, when patience faileth within us and our soul is troubled, let us run to the image of the all-pure Virgin and, pouring forth tears before her, cry out from our hearts: Stretching forth thy God-bearing hands unto us, lead us up from the depths of evil, that with grateful lips we may cry: Alleluia!

IKOS IV

Of old, the people of Russia heard report of the appearance of thy holy image amid the groves of Kursk and, making haste unto it with zeal, they cried out in compunction: Why is this granted to us, that the Mother of our Lord hath come to us?

And beholding thine icon lying at the root of the tree, O Mistress, they took it up as a great treasure, and cried out to thee, its prototype:

Rejoice, most radiant [garden of] paradise, which gavest rise to the Tree of life!
Rejoice, divine garden that didst produce the tree of the Church!
Rejoice, fragrant blossom who perfumest the whole world!
Rejoice, undefiled lily who adornest the universe!
Rejoice, fruitful vine that dost quench the thirst of all with the wine of compunction!

Rejoice, sanctified branch that dost nourish the human race with sweet fruit!
Rejoice, root of the dispensation of God!
Rejoice, summit and peak of our salvation!
Rejoice, thou who cuttest down our evil passions at the root!
Rejoice, thou who plantest a garden of virtues!
Rejoice, thou who rootest good habits within us!
Rejoice, thou who dost grant us to share in the life of paradise!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION V

Like unto a divinely guided star, thy precious icon traversed the Russian land and its cities, O Lady. Kings reverently bowed down before it, queens adorned it with love, hierarchs greeted it with awe, and multitudes of the faithful, spiritually keeping festival, cried out: Alleluia!

IKOS V

Seeing the wicked plot of the godless to destroy thine icon confounded by thee, O most pure Virgin, and recovering thy holy image unharmed by any destructive force, with fear and love monks and laity cried out to thee such things as these:

Rejoice, impregnable fortress!
Rejoice, insuperable rampart!
Rejoice, thou who didst put to shame the plot of the cruel atheists!
Rejoice, thou who didst render vain the expectation of the enemy!
Rejoice, thou who didst stop the mouths of blasphemers!
Rejoice, thou who didst preserve thy holy icon unharmed!
Rejoice, thou who didst protect it from the hands of evildoers!
Rejoice, thou who dost avert thy gaze from the vile deeds of man!
Rejoice, thou who dost not turn thy most pure face away from us, wretched though we are!
Rejoice, thou who didst escape the sinful hands of the devil!
Rejoice, thou who shinest forth forgiveness upon the penitent!
Rejoice, thou who openest the doors of God's mercy by thy mediation!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION VI

The entire world proclaimeth the mercies that pour forth from thine icon, O Queen of all! For since in it thou didst depart from the land of Russia, there is no city or

village wherein thy might hath not been made manifest. Wherefore, those who have been saved by thee from the midst of all the nations cry out to God in thanks: Alleluia!

IKOS VI

Shine forth on us again the light of hope, O most pure Theotokos, who in thy birthgiving hast proclaimed the splendor of salvation to the world. Leave us not in the hands of the enemy forever, and quickly set at naught the counsels of the ungodly and cruel apostates. May the Russian land be thy home as of old; may piety flourish therein; may the holy monasteries and churches be richly adorned; and may the people, delivered from the cruel atheists, celebrate with gladness, glorifying thine aid and crying out to thee:

Rejoice, thou who enlightenest the whole world with thy love!
Rejoice, thou who didst receive the adoption of the human race from the divine lips of thy Son!
Rejoice, Mother of God and Mother of Christians!
Rejoice, banisher of afflictions and healer of wounds!
Rejoice, never-waning light of the imprisoned!
Rejoice, liberation of those in bondage, enlargement of there cells!
Rejoice, boldness of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake!
Rejoice, endurance of those who suffer for the Faith!
Rejoice, crowning of martyrs!
Rejoice, dread retribution of tormenters!
Rejoice, thou who dost loose the bonds of those who are bound!
Rejoice, thou who freest those who are captive in body and soul!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION VII

Desiring to admonish men who had forgotten Him, God, the righteous Judge, permitted great wars to be raised on the earth. And the nations were in upheaval; kingdoms tottered and fell; death and terror roamed the face of the earth; and weeping and lamentation rent the air. Then all who placed their hope on thee, O Theotokos, fled earnestly to thine image and, awaiting salvation through thee alone, cried out to God Who had given thee to the people as a helper: Alleluia!

IKOS VII

New signs and wonders didst thou show forth through thy precious icon, O Mother of God, when the din of battle was heard. For though cities burned, the earth quaked, palaces were destroyed and locusts filled the air, thou didst preserve unharmed the church wherein thine image was kept, O Queen of all. And, beholding this miracle, all praying therein cried out to thee with one voice:

Rejoice, mighty leader!
Rejoice, thou upon whom all the people set their hope!
Rejoice, pillar and confirmation of the Church!
Rejoice, defense and protection of every holy place!
Rejoice, victory overcoming the world!
Rejoice, thou who savest those bereft of hope!

Rejoice, thou who hearkenest well to fervent prayers!
Rejoice, help of the helpless and hope of the hopeless!
Rejoice, thou who tramplest Satan beneath our feet!
Rejoice, thou who commandest fire and the elements!
Rejoice, thou who through thine icon dost fortify us!
Rejoice, thou who dost overshadow us with thy protection!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION VIII

A strange and fearsome sign didst thou make manifest, O most holy one. For when the house was destroyed, thou didst keep intact the little room which thou hadst earlier sanctified by the presence of thine icon, and didst preserve unharmed the aged woman and her son who found shelter therein. Therefore, beholding and hearing of this, all were filled with fear and cried out in awe: Alleluia!

IKOS VIII

Thou dost embrace the whole world with thy divine love, O Ever-virgin, visiting those near and far and traversing the whole earth in thine icon, which is ever venerated. Wherefore thy journey hath been from the East even unto the West, that all might bow down before it without hindrance, and chant unto thee, its prototype, such things as these:

Rejoice, joy of all joys!
Rejoice, undrained cup of delight!
Rejoice, consolation of the present sorrowful age!
Rejoice, delight of the life to come!
Rejoice, thou who, for our sake, partest from those who rejoice in heaven!
Rejoice, thou who dost look down upon the earth that is filled with much sorrow and misfortune!
Rejoice, thou who with gracious step dost enter unseen into our homes together with thine icon!
Rejoice, thou who therewith dost bring blessing and joy!
Rejoice, thou who dost hallow monastic cells through thine image!
Rejoice, thou who therewith adornest the rooms of the poor beyond the palaces of kings!
Rejoice, thou who dost illumine the temples of God with thy most holy countenance!
Rejoice, thou who dost invisibly dwell in the homes of those who honor thee!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION IX

Men of every age and rank hasten to thee, O Mistress, divine Bride, for thy hands which held God are extended unto all; thou dost enlighten and comfort all, and dost bounteously bestow all [good] things upon everyone, O Queen of all. Wherefore, rejoicing in thee, we cry to God: Alleluia!

IKOS IX

The most eloquent of orators fall silent and skilled rhetors fall mute, desiring to glorify thee fittingly, O Mary Theotokos; for every mind is at a loss how to extol thee as is meet. Yet, if we be silent, the very stones will cry out. Wherefore, though unworthy, with lips of clay we dare to cry out to thee:

Rejoice, fiery sword of the prophets!
Rejoice, proclamation of the apostles, who fallest not silent!
Rejoice, heartfelt song of the saints!
Rejoice, strength and boldness of confessors!
Rejoice, mystic discourse of those who keep silence!
Rejoice, golden mouth of orators and those who preach God!
Rejoice, exalted reward of those who struggle against the passions!
Rejoice, divine ease of the righteous!
Rejoice, glory of mothers and boast of virginity!
Rejoice, rest of the aged and guide of the young!
Rejoice, daughter of mortal Adam and bearer of God!
Rejoice, thou who with ineffable glory shinest near God!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION X

Pray thou fervently that the world be saved, O Theotokos, for it is in need of thine aid, the snares of the evil one being spread over all the face of the earth, the nations raging and storms of temptations rising up against the Church of God. Wherefore, as thou once didst in Cana of Galilee, speak thou a word to thy Son and God, that He transform the water of temptations and sorrows into the wine of compunction and divine gladness, that we may continually chant unto Him: Alleluia!

IKOS X

Be thou an invincible rampart for us, O immaculate one, withstanding the legions of enemies, visible and invisible, and fighting mightily for us who with love sing to thee such things as these:

Rejoice, thou who for us dost ever stretch forth thy God-bearing hands unto God!
Rejoice, thou who dost trample malevolent spirits beneath our feet!
Rejoice, thou who dost put to shame the devious plots of the prince of darkness!
Rejoice, thou who by the Spirit of God dost scatter clouds of evil thoughts!
Rejoice, thou who dost drive despondency from us!
Rejoice, thou who stillest the mighty waves of life!
Rejoice, thou who dost rebuke storms of temptations!
Rejoice, thou who dost graciously pilot the tempest-tossed!
Rejoice, thou who deliverest [us] from the depths of evil!
Rejoice, thou who dost mercifully extend thy hand to the perishing!
Rejoice, thou who settest our feet upon the path of salvation!
Rejoice, thou who strengthenest our arms in battle!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION XI

Accept our hymns as thy Son did the widow's mite, O most holy one, and grant that we may ever offer them to thee, guiding our life in the world and granting remission of sins; that, entering into the heavenly mansions, we may cry out to God: Alleluia!

IKOS XI

Thy splendid omophorion do thou invisibly spread over all the earth, O most good one, dispelling the moonless night of impiety and illumining creation with splendor once more, that we may unceasingly cry out in joy:

Rejoice, thou who art truly arrayed in the sun!
Rejoice, thou who art crowned with a diadem of stars!
Rejoice, thou who art adorned with gold-fringed garments of varied colors!
Rejoice, ineffable beauty!
Rejoice, splendor more radiant than the morning star!
Rejoice, fervor more beloved than the sun!
Rejoice, first ray of the age to come!
Rejoice, unwaning light of angels and men!
Rejoice, thou who drivest away the dark demonic hordes!
Rejoice, thou who dost cast light into the darkness of unbelief!
Rejoice, thou who dost array us in the armor of light!
Rejoice, O holy one, who art fragrant with the blossoms of all the virtues!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION XII

We have received grace upon grace from thine icon, O most pure Theotokos. For none who approacheth it with faith departeth empty away, but each receiveth a gift from God according to his need, and is crowned with joy, crying to God: Alleluia!

IKOS XII

We hymn thee, we magnify thee, we bow down before thee, O all pure Lady, knowing not all the abundance of thy praises; and falling prostrate before thy precious image, in compunction we cry thus to thee:

Rejoice, sweet wellspring of our souls!
Rejoice, radiant morning of our hearts!
Rejoice, incomprehensible height!
Rejoice, glory that fadeth not away!
Rejoice, bliss without end!
Rejoice, infinite goodness!
Rejoice, ineffable gladness!
Rejoice, thou who alone art truly blessed!
Rejoice, thou who hast been exalted above all creation!
Rejoice, thou who dost help us in this life!
Rejoice, thou who dost meet the faithful at the hour of death!
Rejoice, for even at the Dread Judgment thou shalt save those who hope in thee!
Rejoice, O Mistress, who ever revealest signs of thy mercy unto the world!

KONTAKION XIII

O all-hymned mother, Mother of all Christians, imitating thy Son and God in thy love, thou dost mercifully cry to us: "Fear not, little flock! I am with you and no one is against you!" Wherefore, falling down before thee with love and giving thanks with tears, we cry aloud: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

This Kontakion is recited thrice, whereupon Ikos I & Kontakion I are repeated.

PRAYER TO THE ALL-HOLY THEOTOKOS

O Theotokos, our most gracious Queen, our hope, haven for orphans and intercessor for strangers, joy of those who sorrow, protection of the oppressed! Thou seest our misfortune, thou seest our sorrow. Help us, for we are weak; guide us, for we are gone astray; feed us, for we are strangers. Thou knowest our offense: resolve it as thou wilt, for we have none other help than thee, none other intercessor, nor gracious comforter save thee, O Mother of God, to preserve and protect us unto the ages of ages. Amen.

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