

AKATHIST TO SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT OF EGYPT



For the pardon and remission of our sins,
for strength to flee the vanity of this world.

Kontakion 1

With thankful hearts, we offer to you a hymn of praise, O Saint Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria and Theologian of the Incarnation. As a great shepherd of the one, holy Church and a great defender of the divinity of Jesus Christ, you have been entitled: the Great. And to you we joyfully cry:

Rejoice, O Father Athanasius, Holy confessor and champion of Orthodoxy!

Ikos 1

O Saint of God, you were raised by the Lord of Glory to confront the greatest heresy of all time, the diabolical lie that the Son of God is a created being. When the impious Arius spread his poison of falsehood throughout Egypt and beyond, you led the defense of the one true Faith and to you, who defeated the devil and annulled the Arians, we cry:

Rejoice, true theologian of the Incarnation!

Rejoice, pious guardian of the Nicene Creed!

Rejoice, godly son of the Son of God!

Rejoice, bright beacon of the Light of Light!

Rejoice, destroyer of the devil's delusion!

Rejoice, defender of the one true Faith!

Rejoice, O Father Athanasius, Holy confessor and champion of Orthodoxy!

Kontakion 2

Your birth, O star of Egypt, prefigured your life. You were born in the turmoil of persecution and in the turmoil of persecution you would live. Your name, which means “immortal,” foretold that your legacy would be immortal. And to the One Who created you for immortality we cry:
Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 2

As a child, your character was refined like gold during a time of terrible persecution. Though the impious Diocletian tried to destroy Christ’s holy Church, instead she blossomed forth holy confessors and martyrs. And through their examples, O blessed one, you grew in courage and faith. To you, worthy of praise, we cry:

Rejoice, true theologian of the Incarnation!

Rejoice, pious guardian of the Nicene Creed!

Rejoice, godly son of the Son of God!

Rejoice, bright beacon of the Light of Light!

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Rejoice, defender of the one true Faith!

*Rejoice, O Father Athanasius, Holy confessor and champion of
Orthodoxy!*

Kontakion 3

Beginning from your youth, you were mentored by Alexander the Archbishop. Seeing in your pure soul the potential for greatness, he instructed you in the wisdom which is from above. His way of life showed you the model of true pastoral care. And when in due time you were deemed worthy of the holy diaconate and became his archdeacon, you both sang in praise: *Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)*

Ikos 3

O prodigy of wisdom, while yet young in years, you composed the timeless treatise: *On the Incarnation*. Divinely receiving wisdom from the divine, like a new Saint John the Theologian, you expressed in words that which is inexpressible: “God became man that man might become God.” To you, who articulated the Mystery hidden from the ages, we cry:

Rejoice, true theologian of the Incarnation!

Rejoice, pious guardian of the Nicene Creed!

Rejoice, godly son of the Son of God!

Rejoice, bright beacon of the Light of Light!

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Kontakion 4

After the Emperor Constantine conquered the godless Maxentius in battle by fighting under the banner of the Holy Cross, he ended the terrible persecution of Christians and brought peace to the one, holy Church. Loosed from the chains of tyranny, the faithful were filled with joy and sang in praise and thanksgiving: *Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)*

Ikos 4

When the outward attacks against the Church had been brought to an end, a new danger rose from within. The unpriestly Arius, the disciple of the devil, began spreading his ungodly heresy that “there was a time when the Son of God was not.” But with all the Orthodox, you confessed Jesus Christ to be eternally-begotten of God the Father and to you we give praise:

Rejoice, true theologian of the Incarnation!

Rejoice, pious guardian of the Nicene Creed!

Rejoice, godly son of the Son of God!

Rejoice, bright beacon of the Light of Light!

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Kontakion 5

When the Arian plague of heresy spread throughout Egypt and beyond, so that even some bishops became infected, the Emperor Constantine called for the First Ecumenical Council to restore harmony to the one, holy Church. And when from throughout the empire, the three hundred and eighteen bishops gathered at Nicaea, all the faithful sang to God:

Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 5

At the Council of Nicaea, with all the Holy Fathers, you pronounced “anathema” on those who denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. And in the holy Creed you professed Jesus to be the “Son of God, begotten of the Father, Light of Light, very God of very God.” And with all true believers we join in giving praise to you:

Rejoice, true theologian of the Incarnation!

Rejoice, pious guardian of the Nicene Creed!

Rejoice, godly son of the Son of God!

Rejoice, bright beacon of the Light of Light!

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Kontakion 6

When your beloved mentor, the Patriarch Alexander, went to his eternal reward in Heaven, you were chosen to succeed him upon the Episcopal throne.

Though you fled this honor out of humility, you were found nonetheless to be worthy. And when you were enthroned as the new Pope of Egypt, all the faithful shouted as one: *Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)*

Ikos 6

O Patriarch of Alexandria, you began your Episcopal ministry by journeying from the Delta to Syene, visiting the churches and monasteries both near and far. You encouraged the faithful toward godliness and conveyed your love to all. In turn, they revered you as “the good, the pious, a genuine bishop, the source of living water.” And together they gave praise to you:

Rejoice, true theologian of the Incarnation!

Rejoice, pious guardian of the Nicene Creed!

Rejoice, godly son of the Son of God!

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Kontakion 7

Though condemned by the Council of Nicaea, the unholy Arians continued to blaspheme the Only-begotten Son and word of God and through their impious deception and intrigue, by bringing false charges against you, O Saint of God, you were banished far off into exile. Yet remaining steadfast in faith, you sang with unwavering voice to the Triune God: *Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)*

Ikos 7

Following in the footsteps of your beloved Savior, O heavenly citizen, you oftentimes had nowhere to lay your head. The disciples of the devil continually contrived to defame, depose, and destroy you, but throughout your five separate exiles totaling seventeen years, you remained a bulwark of faith and a bastion of Orthodoxy. To you who lived in martyrdom, we cry:

Rejoice, true theologian of the Incarnation!

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Rejoice, godly son of the Son of God!

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Orthodoxy!***

Kontakion 8

Enlightened by the Light of Light, O blessed Athanasius, your pure theology like brilliant celestial lightning, has flashed throughout the ages. Upon hearing the thunder of your words, "As Man He was living a human life, as Word He was sustaining the universe and as Son He was in constant union with the Father," we sing in wonder and praise: ***Alleluia!***
(People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 8

Your virtued volumes of wisdom, O Theologian, were written not on papyrus, but on the scrolls of the everlasting ages. You defended the Nicene Creed, extolled Great Anthony of the desert and praised the holy Psalms. You encouraged unbelievers to believe and admonished the erring to repent. And to you, the inspired sage of wisdom, we cry:

Rejoice, true theologian of the Incarnation!

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Kontakion 9

O shepherd of Egypt, you pastured your spiritual flock throughout the Nile and the Delta. You guided your sheep away from the poisoned wells of heresy and you protected them from the noetic wolves of impiety. And as you guided them to the meadow of Heaven, they sang out in praise to the Chief Shepherd: *Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)*

Ikos 9

O holy Arch pastor, the faithful were encouraged by your example, instructed by your wisdom and united under your Episcopal staff.

Even in times of exile your heart remained steadfast in the mutual love of a true father and his children. And we, your children, give praise to you:

Rejoice, true theologian of the Incarnation!

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Kontakion 10

As a young man, you met the Great Anthony in the desert and from him you learned the ascetical way of life. Throughout the decades of mutual love that followed, you maintained great admiration and respect for him. Your famed biography of this holy ascetic touched the hearts and minds of men, leading many to the angelic life. And when the faithful learned of Anthony's confession: "I no longer fear God, I love Him," they sang in joy: *Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)*

Ikos 10

O holy Patriarch, you were the Abba to all those following the monastic way: to Anthony and solitaries of Pispir, to Amoun and the skete-dwellers of Nitria, to Pachomius and the monastics of Tabennesis and to the nuns of Alexandria you gave special care. And all these icons of angelic purity gave praise to you:

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Kontakion 11

Forty years of warfare rendered the Arian heretics impotent, O holy Father, and your last years were ones of peace. Compassion was your medicine for those returning from error and peace your benediction for those striving for holiness. Of the holy Fathers, you were the first to enumerate the Canonical Books and we the faithful from first to last, pondering the marvelous book of your life, sing unto God: *Alleluia!*
(People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 11

As the days of your end drew near, O Athanasius, and with the Church in peace and good order, you chose Peter of rock-like faith to succeed you on the Episcopal throne. Then from all your beloved faithful and the holy See of Saint Mark the Evangelist, you were exiled one last time: to Paradise. And we on earth give praise to you:

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Kontakion 12

Ascending on high to the Throne of Glory, O holy bishop, you offered to the Bishop of Souls your life of martyric sacrifice. Received by Him and His pure Mother into the Episcopate of eternity and with all the righteous, you ever sing in thundering praise to God: ***Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)***

Ikos 12

Though you have left space and time, you are never truly exiled from us and with you, distance like death is no more. Though you now dwell in the heights of Heaven, we on earth can still receive your patriarchal blessing. The light of your legacy enlightens our path and your teachings of truth instruct our way and true Christians from every age give you praise:

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Kontakion 13

(To be read three times)

You comprehended the depths of Incarnation, professing Jesus Christ to be “Very God of Very God.” O blessed Theologian, accept our offering of praise and thanksgiving and intercede on our behalf: that we may be granted all that is God-pleasing for our health and salvation and that being led by you to the meadow of Heaven, we may ever chant: *Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!* (People sing *Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*)

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Prayer to Saint Athanasius the Great of Egypt

O holy Saint Athanasius, as a youth you persevered in persecution and you grew into a spirit-filled man. As a deacon, you fled the vanity of this world and labored for the glory which is everlasting. As a bishop, you banished the wolves of heresy and in Godly manner you shepherded the pious sheep of Christ's holy flock. Because you lived in martyrdom, you were granted the grace to become a mystical fountain of living water for all those who thirst for Truth. Now that you stand in the presence of the One God in Three Persons, Whom you so valiantly proclaimed, the Unoriginate Father, the Only-begotten Son and the All-Holy Spirit, we beseech you to intercede on our behalf: that we may be granted the grace to patiently endure our own trials and hardships; that we may increase in faith, wisdom, and godliness; that we may flee the vanity of the world and embrace the ascetical labor of love; that we may be granted the forgiveness and remission of our sins; that we may grow in the love of

God and man; and that being exiled from every evil, we may be united with you and all the saints in the Heavenly Jerusalem and ever sing with one voice: “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord Almighty,” unto the ages of ages. **Amen.**

Glorifying God Through His Light
50 Hour Prayer Vigil

Orthodox Mission Church
Serving Coolidge and Florence, AZ
Prepared, edited, and provided by the 50 Hour Prayer Vigil Committee
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