

AKATHIST TO THE VENERABLE FATHERS AND ELDERS WHO SHONE FORTH IN THE OPTINA HERMITAGE



For teaching us to pray, to believe, to hope,
to be patient, to forgive and to love

Kontakion 1

O venerable fathers of Optina, we offer earnest entreaty now to you who were chosen by God out of the vain world, and who reverently took up your cross and with faith followed Christ; and as our bold intercessors before the Lord, we cry out to you with love:

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Ikos 1

Having searched for the angelic monastic life with all your hearts, you cast away all the passionate attachments of the world, O divinely wise ones; and having hastened with love to your Father's embrace at the Monastery of Optina, to the end of your lives, you trod the narrow and sorrowful path. Wherefore, we chant to you:

Rejoice, you hastened with joy at the call of the Lord!

Rejoice, you followed Christ with all your desire!

Rejoice, you took your cross upon your shoulders!

Rejoice, you loved nothing more than the Lord!

Rejoice, you utterly denied yourselves for the sake of Christ!

Rejoice, blessed heirs to the kingdom of God!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 2

Seeing the snares of the devil like a spider's web spread out in the world and feeling in the depths of your hearts that men could be saved only through humility, you cast yourselves down before the Lord in fervent prayer, crying out with compunction:

Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 2

Understanding with hearts and minds that no man living can be justified before God by his own works and ever keeping before your eyes your own sins, you did not cease to pour forth streams of tears, seen by the Lord alone, offering Him repentance of soul, the image whereof you have shown to us who cry out:

Rejoice, you clearly perceived your own sins as unconcealed!
Rejoice, you received the gift of compunction and tears from the Lord!
Rejoice, you recognized that it is blessed to weep over one's sins!
Rejoice, you acquired perpetual sorrow for them!
Rejoice, preachers of repentance on earth!
Rejoice, you are now comforted by the Lord in heaven!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 3

Considering yourselves to be the worst of men and in no way deserving of mercy, O saints, you saw the power of the redemptive suffering of Christ as the only sure hope of salvation; and therefore, with great humility and thankfulness, you ever cried out to God: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 3

Possessing within your hearts the divine gift of humble-mindedness, O true disciples of Christ Who humbled Himself even to death on the Cross, you considered all your ascetic feats and labors as nothing, for as your struggles increased, so did your humility grow. And marveling at this, we say:

Rejoice, you whom the Savior taught obedience and humility!
Rejoice, with your humility, you have been exalted by the Lord of glory!
Rejoice, you through humility, attained the state of meekness and lack of anger!
Rejoice, you found rest for your souls through humility and self-reproach!
Rejoice, you elect, who enriched yourselves by poverty of spirit!
Rejoice, for yours is the kingdom of heaven, which has been prepared for the poor in spirit!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 4

Stilling the tempest of the passions which is stirred up by the flesh and the devil, through asceticism, you made your minds the master over the pernicious passions; for manfully wreaking violence upon nature, you strove with the grace of God to make

what is baser subject to that which is higher, and to enslave the flesh to the spirits, never ceasing to chant to Christ the Judge of the contest: **Alleluia!**

(People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 4

Hearing the words of the Lord, that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and only the violent take it by storm, through fasting, vigils and prayer you unceasingly struggled, and for Christ you crucified your flesh with its passions and lusts, faithfully observing the rules of monasticism. Wherefore, we bless you:

Rejoice, you loved labor and took the light yoke of Christ upon your shoulders!
Rejoice, you with watchful hearts, did not extinguish the Spirit!
Rejoice, you by your mouths, set forth a mighty preservation!
Rejoice, you pitilessly afflicted your bodies!
Rejoice, you joined mental activity to bodily struggles!
Rejoice, you in your patience, possessed your souls!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 5

Unceasingly and faithfully bearing the radiant name of Jesus in your hearts as an invincible weapon against the demonic armies, you discovered the ever-flowing well-spring of grace; and ascending from glory to glory and adding fire to fire with purified minds, you chanted to God: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 5

Ever perceiving your own weaknesses and the saving and grace-filled power of the Jesus Prayer, you never ceased to pray it, thereby beating back the assaults of the passions and burning up all the snares of the enemy. And having mystically found prayerful conversation with the Lord in stillness of heart, you teach us to cry out to you:

Rejoice, you immersed your whole mind in prayer!
Rejoice, you kept your hearts wholly on high!
Rejoice, you in prayer, pondered no vain thing!
Rejoice, you tirelessly invoked the name of Jesus!
Rejoice, excellent ascetics of the prayer of the heart!

Rejoice, men of prayer, who received all things whatsoever you asked in the name of the Lord!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 6

Interceding with your hearts in prayer before the Cross of the Lord Who suffered for the sins of men, you groaned in lamentation, O venerable ones, consumed with sorrow for your own sins and burning with ineffable love for our Redeemer; therefore, until the end of your lives, you cried out to Him with trembling: **Alleluia!**

(People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 6

The light of divine love having shone forth in your hearts, you hated and abominated earthly glory and praise; and with open hearts joyfully accepting dishonor and all tribulations from men, you earnestly acquired the reproaches which Christ endured. Wherefore, a model of the endurance of evils and of patience have you provided for us who cry out:

Rejoice, you bore the wounds of the Lord Jesus Christ upon your bodies!

Rejoice, you zealously swallowed reproaches like a purifying remedy!

Rejoice, you with all your hearts, turned away from earthly honors!

Rejoice, you prayed with love for those who hated you!

Rejoice, you loved as benefactors, those who oppressed you!

Rejoice, you never ceased to thank the tender-hearted Lord!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 7

Seeing your good volition and tireless labor in the fulfilling of His commandments, the Lord Who desires that all men be saved and come to knowledge of the Truth, opened your minds to understand His ways and taught you by His righteousness. Wherefore, with hearts continually enlightened, you chanted: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 7

Wondrous are Your works O Lord! For more than a scribe, You enlighten Your servants who seek You with all their heart, and You open their eyes that they may understand Your wonders through Your law. Wherefore, we bless Your venerable ones, the fathers of Optina, who ever studied Your commandments which they loved exceedingly and we chant to them:

Rejoice, you concealed the word of God in your hearts like great riches!
Rejoice, you loved the ways of the commandments of God with all your hearts!
Rejoice, you abominated every path of unrighteousness!
Rejoice, you in no way strayed from the path of the Lord!
Rejoice, you trained for the good fight and were not confounded!
Rejoice, you embodied the word of God, having found great peace in Christ!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 8

Considering yourselves to be wanderers and sojourners on the earth, you in no way desired to acquire for yourselves the corruptible things of this world, lest your hearts be dragged down to the earth; instead you cleaved to the one God, in purity offering Him the song: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 8

Every passionate attachment of the flesh which separates one from the love of the Lord you rejected with all your souls, seeking the one thing needful. Wherefore, you sat at the feet of Jesus with love which brooked no parting, keeping your hearts from the good things of life and setting all your hope on the Lord. For this cause, O holy ones, we praise you singing:

Rejoice, you finished your lives without any passionate attachment to the world!
Rejoice, having freed yourselves from earthly cares, came to know the sweetness of pure prayer!
Rejoice, you with steadfast faith, set aside the concerns of life!

Rejoice, you mortified the pernicious passions by obedience and lack of acquisition!

Rejoice, you in a holy manner, kept the monastic vow of poverty!

Rejoice, you were obedient to Christ and cut off your own wills!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 9

All your prayers and all your strength you applied, O venerable ones, to the acquisition of purity of soul and body, without which, in the words of Christ, no one can see God; wherefore, through your pure hearts, you have been vouchsafed in the paradise of the Lord to chant worthily the wondrous hymn of the righteous, crying out: **Alleluia!**
(People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 9

Taming by fasting and prayer the carnal desires which embattle the soul, you did not permit sinful thoughts to gain dominion over you; and from the Lord God, Who alone has the power to overthrow the order of nature; you received the gift of purity and chastity. Wherefore, accept from us such laudations as these:

Rejoice, you by humility, drew down the grace of God in your war with the flesh!

Rejoice, loving labors and privations, you spurned bodily repose!

Rejoice, you mortified carnal lust by fasting and by prayers which lasted all night!

Rejoice, you by the power of Christ, overturned the laws of nature!

Rejoice, you offered to the Lord, your pure bodies and souls!

Rejoice, you in everlasting blessedness, gaze upon God with pure hearts!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 10

Desiring to save your souls for everlasting life, you repelled all thoughts of what is earthly and transitory, and in deed and truth followed after our Savior, Who gave His disciples the great commandment of love. Wherefore, you loved your neighbor with an ardent love, crying out to the heavenly Father of all men: **Alleluia!**
(People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 10

Loving your neighbor with all your souls, you discovered the kingdom of God within you; wherefore, the consuming fire of the love of God descended into your hearts and filled it incomprehensibly by an act of love and you offered yourselves wholly as a sacrifice. Now you hear from us this reverent hymnody:

Rejoice, you loved all men with a holy love!

Rejoice, you became all things for all men, that you might save some!

Rejoice, you sighed tearfully over the misfortunes of the people!

Rejoice, you made room in your hearts for all who had recourse to you!

Rejoice, you sent no one empty away!

Rejoice, you laid down your lives for your neighbor!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 11

Hymnody of supplication we offer to you, O our venerable fathers of Optina, for following your path, we have truly learned to walk aright. Blessed are you who labored for Christ and put the power of the enemy to shame, for you have shown the true rule of virtue to all who cry out to the Lord: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 11

Praising your splendid struggles, O our venerable fathers of Optina, we bless you as glorious instructors of monks and wondrous companions of the angels, standing now in heaven before the throne of God and praying for us who chant to you with love:

Rejoice, earnest zealots of ceaseless vigilance!

Rejoice, tireless keepers of the flame of the heart!

Rejoice, unshakable towers of obedience who endured all things!

Rejoice, through many tribulations, you entered into the kingdom of God!

Rejoice, angelic ascetics of the monastic life!

Rejoice, good and faithful servants of God!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 12

Ask that the Lord bestow the gift of grace upon us who with faith praise you, O blessed ones. Harken to our sighs and spurn not our tears. Beseech the Lord to ease our grievous sufferings and to grant us tears of compunction for our sins, that with a pure soul and undefiled lips, we may be vouchsafed to chant with you in paradise: **Alleluia!**
(People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 12

Though we hymn you now with voices of praise, O venerable ones, we know that you seek not hymnody from men's lips, but rather the imitating of your struggles, humility of hearts and correction of life. Wherefore, asking your help to achieve repentance and moved by love we say:

Rejoice, you protect those who lead good lives!
Rejoice, you strengthen the weak and orphaned!
Rejoice, you extend a helping hand to the fallen!
Rejoice, you send tears of compunction down upon the penitent!
Rejoice, speedy helpers of all who call upon you!
Rejoice, fervent mediators before God for our salvation!

Rejoice, O venerable fathers of Optina, beacons of the grace of eldership!

Kontakion 13

(To be read three times)

O all glorious favorites of Christ, venerable fathers and elders—Moses, Anthony, Isaacius, Hilarion, Anatolius, Joseph, Isaacius the Younger, Leo, Macarius, Ambrose, Barsonuphius, Anatolius the Younger, Nectarius and Nikon—who shone forth like seven pillars and seven lamps in the Monastery of Optina! Harken now to this, our present supplication, and entreat the Lord that He grant us humility and the remembrance of death, that he may deliver us from all evil and vouchsafe a Christian end to all who cry out to Him: **Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**
(People sing Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!)

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Prayer to the Holy Fathers of Optina

O divine company of holy fathers, God-bearing elders of Optina, who shone forth on earth in the angelic life and are now glorified in the heavenly city! We know that in the days of your earthly ministry, no one departed from you empty and disappointed, for you were all things to all men—healers for the infirmed, reassurance for the perplexed and comforters for the sorrowful—for the grace of abundant healings, clairvoyance, the curing of sick souls, were shown to abide within you. Now you are mediators for all of us as well and tireless intercessors for the suffering Russian land, for you pray for us continually before the throne of God. Wherefore, look down from the glory of heaven

and watch over our flock which you pastured on the grass of the teachings of Christ, for it is troubled, and brought low, and has fallen prey to the rapacity of the soul-destroying wolves. In your pity visit us who are weak and helpless, seek out those who have gone astray, gather the dispersed, convert those who have been deceived and unite them to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, instruct the young, support the elderly, maintain the married ones in peace and concord and defend monastics from all the wiles of the enemy. Hearken to us, O Godly physicians of men's souls and guide us to the path of repentance, that following your words, we may place ourselves and all our lives in the compassionate hands of God, that His will may direct our minds and senses in all our doings and words. Extend to us a helping hand, O most blessed fathers, and teach us to pray, to believe, to hope, to be patient, to forgive, and to love. And walking in the commandments of the Lord, we may through your intercessions, be vouchsafed everlasting joy in the kingdom of heaven, where with you, we may glorify God, Who is wondrous in his saints—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—for endless ages. **Amen.**

Glorifying God Through His Light
50 Hour Prayer Vigil

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Prayer from Holy Trinity Monastery
Prepared, edited, and provided by
50 Hour Prayer Committee
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