

Akathist to the 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 Your holy icon we are filled with compunction by Your suffering and loving-kindness for us and we kiss Your wounds; we are filled with horror for the darts with which we wound You. 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 You are in truth the 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 You suffered as one born on earth with us, and we according to Your merciful heart, cry unto You:

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

Ikos I

An angel announced the birth of the Savior of the world to the shepherds in 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 You, O Mother of God, having nowhere to lay Your head, since there was no room in the inn, gave birth to Your first-born Son in a cave and, wrapping Him in swaddling clothes, laid Him in a manger. Knowing the pain in Your heart, we cry out to You:

Rejoice, For You were warmed by the breath of Your own beloved Son!

Rejoice, For You wrapped the eternal Child in swaddling clothes!

Rejoice, For You nourished with Your milk the One who sustains the universe!

Rejoice, For You turned a cave into a heaven!

Rejoice, For You made Your throne upon the Cherubim!

Rejoice, For You remained 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 Your humility and patience, O Theotokos, we sing to the Good God Eternal: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 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 a sacrifice for Him according to the decree in the Law of the Lord. But we sing out to You, O Theotokos:

Rejoice, For You took the Creator of the universe to the Temple in Jerusalem to fulfill the Law!

Rejoice, For You met the Elder Simeon with joy!

Rejoice, You are the only Pure and blessed one among women!

Rejoice, For with humility You carried Your cross adorned with sorrows!

Rejoice, For You never disobeyed the will of God!

Rejoice, For You revealed Yourself 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

You were strengthened with power from on high, O Mother of God, when You heard the words of the Elder Simeon, when he said to You: "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 Your 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! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 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 You, O Theotokos:

Rejoice, For You bore the entire turmoil of exile!

Rejoice, For all the idols fell in the land of Egypt not being able to endure the power of Your Son!

Rejoice, For You remained seven years among the dishonorable pagans!

Rejoice, For You arrived in Nazareth with the first-born Youth and with Your betrothed!

Rejoice, For You lived with the Elder Joseph the carpenter in poverty!

Rejoice, For You spent all Your 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 have You done this to us? Behold, Your father and I suffered greatly looking for You." And Jesus answered them, "Why were you looking for Me? Do you not know about those things which My Father has entrusted to Me?" And You, O Most Pure One, kept all these sayings in Your heart, crying out to God: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 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 You, O Mother of God, knowing the prophecy, sorrowed in Your heart, knowing that very soon the time would come when Your Son would present Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. For this reason we bless You, much-sorrowing Mother of God, crying out:

Rejoice, For You gave Your Son to the service of the Jewish people!
Rejoice, For You sorrowed in Your heart, but submitted to the will of God!

Rejoice, For You saved the world from the deluge of sin!

Rejoice, For You crushed the head of the ancient serpent!

Rejoice, For You offered Yourself as a living sacrifice to God!

Rejoice, O Blessed One, the Lord is with You!

**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 them 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! (People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 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 You, O Most Pure One:

Rejoice, You who gave birth to the Savior of the world!

Rejoice, source of our salvation!

Rejoice, For You were chosen from birth to be the Mother of our Savior!

Rejoice, Mother of God, destined for suffering!

Rejoice, O Blessed One, who presides as Queen of Heaven!

Rejoice, O Blessed One, For You always pray 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 You, O Mother of God, sorrowed for Your beloved Son, and cried out in grief to God: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos VI

Taking part in the Last Supper with the disciples when 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 Your heart!

Rejoice, For You suffered in this most sorrowful vale!

Rejoice, You found comfort in prayer!

Rejoice, Joy of all who sorrow!

Rejoice, For You 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! (People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 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 You, O Mother of God, sanctified again on the day of Pentecost by the Holy Spirit, we cry to You:

Rejoice, Mansion of the Holy Spirit!

Rejoice, Brilliantly-illuminated bridal chamber!

Rejoice, Spacious dwelling place of God the Word!

Rejoice, For You opened for us the gates of paradise by Your giving birth!

Rejoice, For You revealed, 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 You, O Mother of God, expecting the death sentence for Your beloved Son, cried out to God: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 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. We cry out to You with compunction, O Mother of God, who saw the slander of Your Son:

Rejoice, You whose heart was broken by woe!

Rejoice, For You shed tears for Your Son!

Rejoice, For You saw Your beloved Child given over to trial!

Rejoice, For You suffered everything without complaint like a true handmaiden of the Lord!

Rejoice, Despite Your weeping and lamentation!

Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven and earth, who accepts the prayers of Your servants!

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

Kontakion IX

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

Ikos IX

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

Rejoice, For You beheld Your Son, slain for our sake!

Rejoice, Seeing Him dressed in purple and wearing a crown of thorns!

Rejoice, Seeing Him tortured, who You nourished with Your milk!

Rejoice, For You suffered His Passion together with Him!

Rejoice, For You watched all His disciples forsake Him!

Rejoice, For You saw Him condemned by the judgment 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! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos X

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

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

Rejoice, For You give us tears of heartfelt compunction!

Rejoice, For You save lost sinners!

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

Rejoice, You save us from our passions!

Rejoice, For You give 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 Savior 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 Your mother!" And from that time the disciple took her into his family. But You, O Mother of God, seeing Your Son and Lord on the Cross was devastated, and cried out to God on high: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos XI

"O my Son and Pre-eternal God, Fashioner of all creation! O Lord, how can You endure the suffering on the Cross?" the pure Virgin cried, saying: "By Your awesome birth, O my Son, I have been exalted above all mothers, but woe is me! Now when I see You, my

womb burns within me." But we shed tears remembering You, and cry out to You:

Rejoice, For You were deprived of joy and merriment!

Rejoice, For You saw the voluntary passion of Your Son on the Cross!

Rejoice, For You saw Your beloved Son sorely wounded!

Rejoice, Ewe lamb, seeing Your Son as a lamb being led to slaughter!

Rejoice, For You saw the Deliverer of the wounds of soul and body covered with wounds!

Rejoice, For You saw Your 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 Savior, grant us mercy, breathing out Your 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 Your Teacher down from the Cross." "Seeing Your 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! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos XII

Hymning Your mercifulness, O Lover of mankind, we bow down to Your generous mercy, O Master. The Most Pure One said, "Wishing to save Your creature, You have given Yourself over to death." But by Your resurrection, O Savior, have mercy on all of us, while we address Your most pure Mother:

Rejoice, For You saw the all good Lord dead and without breath!
Rejoice, For You kissed the body of Your beloved Son!
Rejoice, For You saw Your Light as a naked and wounded corpse!
Rejoice, For You placed the Light of the World in the tomb!
Rejoice, For You wrapped His body in a new shroud!
Rejoice, For You beheld His Resurrection from the dead!

**Rejoice, much-sorrowing Mother of God, turn our sorrows
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Kontakion XIII
(To be read three times)

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

Ikos I

An angel announced the birth of the Savior of the world to the shepherds in 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 You, O Mother of God, having nowhere to lay Your head, since there was no room in the inn, gave birth to Your first-born Son in a cave and, wrapping Him in swaddling clothes, laid Him in a manger. Knowing the pain in Your heart, we cry out to You:

Rejoice, For You were warmed by the breath of Your own beloved Son!

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Rejoice, For You make Your throne upon the Cherubim!
Rejoice, For You remained a virgin both in giving birth and after birth!

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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 You suffered, as one born on earth with us, we according to Your merciful heart, cry unto You:

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 Your purity and the multitude of Your suffering endured by You on earth: Hearken to our sighs and soften the hearts of evil men, and protect us under the shelter of Your mercy. For we know no other refuge and ardent intercessor apart from You, but as You have great boldness before the One who was born of You, help and save us by Your 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.**

PRAYERS FOR UNITY

O Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, You promised to abide with us always. You call all Christians to draw near and partake of Your Body and Blood. But our sin has divided us and we have no power to partake of Your Holy Eucharist together. We confess this our sin and we pray to You, forgive us and help us to serve the ways of reconciliation, according to Your Will. Kindle our hearts with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Give us the spirit of Wisdom and faith, of daring and of patience, of humility and firmness, of love and of repentance, through the prayers of the most blessed Mother of God and of all the saints. **Amen. – Fr Sergius Bulgakov**

O Merciful Lord Jesus, Our Savior, hear the prayers and petitions of Your unworthy sinful servants who humbly call upon You and make us all to be one in Your one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Flood our souls with Your unquenchable light. Put an end to religious disagreements, and grant that we Your disciples and Your beloved children may all worship You with a single heart and voice. Fulfill quickly, O grace-giving Lord, your promise that there shall be one flock and one Divine Shepherd of Your Church; and may we without offence 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.**

Glorifying God Through His Light
50 Hour Prayer Vigil

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