

The Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

containing only the odd numbered kontakia & ikoi

Metropolitan Cantor Institute
of the
Archeparchy of Pittsburgh
Byzantine Catholic Seminary
2nd edition,
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edited by Rev. John R.P. Russell
to include Paschal & Reader Service variations,
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Foreword

One of the greatest marvels of Greek religious poetry, with a richness of imagery that is the despair of any translator, the Akathistos Hymn has twenty-four main stanzas, alternatively long and short: each long stanza bears the title 'ikos,' ending with the refrain “Rejoice, O Bride and maiden ever pure!”, while each short stanza is termed 'kontakion' and ends with the refrain “Alleluia!” The title 'Akathistos' means literally 'not sitting,' the Hymn being so-called because all remain standing while it is sung. The greater part of the Hymn is made up of praises addressed to the Holy Virgin, each beginning with the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel--'hail' or 'rejoice.' (Luke 1:28) The Hymn passes in review the main events connected with Christ's Incarnation, starting with the Annunciation (first ikos) and ending with the Flight into Egypt (sixth ikos) and the Presentation in the Temple (seventh kontakion).

The Hymn is deeply connected with the feast of the Annunciation on March 25. For example, most of the texts at Friday Vespers before the Vigil of the Akathistos are taken directly from the office for March 25. The Annunciation almost always falls within the period of the Great Fast, and that is why this special office of praise to the Theotokos has found a place in the Lenten Triodion.

*Adapted from “The Inner Unity of the Triodion,”
from **The Lenten Triodion** of Kallistos Ware and Mother Mary.*

This edition of the Akathist is a revision of the text published by the Rev. Msgr. William Levkolic, bringing the text into conformity with *The Divine Liturgies of Our Holy Fathers John Chrysostom and Basil the Great* published by the Byzantine Catholic Church *sui juris* of the U.S.A. It is published by the Metropolitan Cantor Institute of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh.

Second edition (2018): the text, and the numbering of the kontakia, were edited to bring them into line with the official Church Slavonic text in the Ruthenian *Chasoslov* (1950), and a harmonization of the Pochaiv melody was added at the end.

The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos

Deacon: Reverend Father, give the blessing.

Priest: + Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

If a priest is not present:

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us.

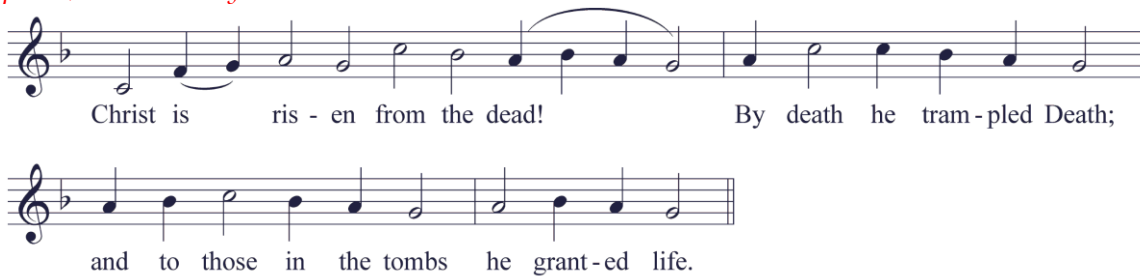
Response: Amen.

Glory to you, our God,
glory to you!

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth,
everywhere present and filling all things.
Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life,
come and dwell within us,
cleanse us of all stain,
and save our souls, O gracious One.

From Pascha until Pentecost, "Glory to you..." and "Heavenly King..." are not said.

From Pascha until Ascension, the following Paschal Troparion is sung three times, first by the priest, then twice by all:



Trisagion Prayers

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy on us. (*three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us;
Lord, cleanse us of our sins;
Master, forgive our transgressions;
Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities
for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil

If a priest is not present:

Priest: For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the
glory, Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit, now and
ever and forever.

Leader: Through the prayers of our
holy fathers, O Lord Jesus
Christ, our God, have mercy
on us.

Response: Amen.

Response: Amen.

Ordinarily, the faithful *STAND* throughout the entire service. The priest (or leader) chants those portions for which only text is given, and the congregation sings the hymns and refrains.

If the Akathist is sung as a part of another service, it begins here:

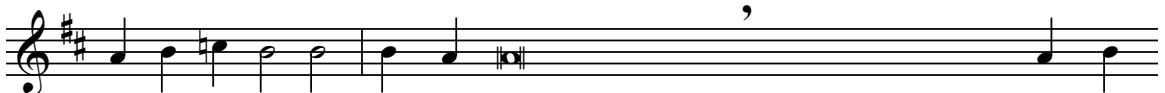
Kontakion 1 - *Kontakion melody, Tone 8*



O The-o - to-kos, val-i-ant de - fend - er, your serv-ants offer you hymns of victo-ry



in thanks-giv-ing, for you have de-liv-ered us. But since you have invincible power, free



us from all per-il, that we may exclaim to you: Rejoice, O Bride and Mai - den

Refrain



ev - er pure! Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid - en ev - er - pure! Re-joyce, O



Bride and Maid - en ev - er - pure!

Ikos 1: An Archangel was sent from heaven to greet the Theotokos, and as he saw you assuming a body at the sound of his bodiless voice, O Lord, he stood rapt in amazement and cried to her in these words:

Re - joyce, O you through whom joy will shine forth; Re - joyce, O you through whom the curse will dis-ap-pear! Re-joyce, O Restoration of the fall-en A - dam; Re - joyce, O Redemption of the tears of Eve! Re - joyce, O Peak above the reach of hu - man thought; Re-joyce, O Depth even beyond the sight of an - gels! Re-joyce, O you who have be-come a king-ly Throne; Re - joyce, O you who carry him who car - ries all! Re-joyce, O Star who man - i - fest the Sun; Re-joyce, O womb of the divine In-car-na - tion! Re-joyce, O you through whom cre - a - tion is re-newed; Re - joyce, O you through whom the Crea-tor be - comes a Babe!

Refrain



Re-joice, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure! Re-joice, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure!

Kontakion 3



When the pow'r of the Most High o - ver - shad - owed the one who had never



known the nup - tial bed, her fruit - ful womb con-ceived, and she be - came



for all a de - li - cious field for those who wished to reap sal - va - tion by sing - ing:

Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Ikos 3: Pregnant with God, the Virgin hastened to Elizabeth, and her unborn child rejoiced, immediately knowing her embrace. Bouncing and singing, he cried out to the Theotokos:

Re-joyce, O Ten-dril whose Bud shall not wilt; Re-joyce, O Soil whose Fruit shall not

per - ish! Re - joyce, O Tender of humanity's lov - ing Ten - der;

Re-joyce, O Gardener of the Gar-den-er of life! Re - joyce, O Earth who yielded

a-bun-dant mer - cies; Re - joyce, O Table full-laden with ap - pease - ment!

Re - joyce, for you have greened a-new the pas-tures of de-light; Re - joyce, for you

have prepared a ha-ven for the souls! Re-joyce, accept-a-ble In-cense of pray'r;

Re - joyce, Expiation of the whole u - ni - verse! Re - joyce, O Favor of God to

mor - tals; Re - joyce, O Trust of mor-tals be - fore God!

Refrain

Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure! Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure!

Kontakion 5



When they saw the star moved by God, the Ma-gi fol-lowed its glit-t'ring light.



Us-ing it as a bea-con, they found through it the Might-y King; and reach-ing



the One be-yond all reach, they re-joiced and cried out to him: Al-le-lu-ia!

Refrain

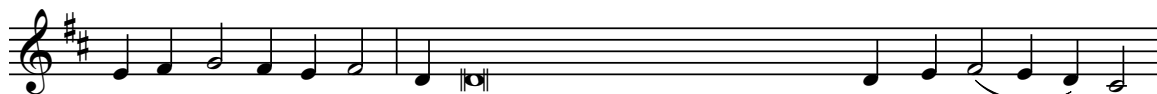


Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!

Ikos 5: The sons of Chaldea saw in the Virgin's hands the One whose hands had fashioned men; and acknowledging him as the Master, although he had taken the form of a servant, they hastened to honor him with their gifts, and cried out to the Blessed One:



Re-joyce, O Mother of the Star With-out Set-ting; Re-joyce, O Radiance





of the mys-tic-al day! Re-joyce, O you who quenched the flame of er-ror;





Re-joyce, O Light of those who search the Trin-i-ty! Re-joyce, O you who



un-throned the en - e-my of men; Re - joice, O you who showed forth Christ the Lord,


the Lov-er of us all! Re - joice, O you who cleansed us from the stain of pa - gan



wor - ship; Re - joice, O you who saved us from the mire of e - vil deeds!


Re-joyce, O you who made cease the cult of fire; Re-joyce, O you who dispelled the

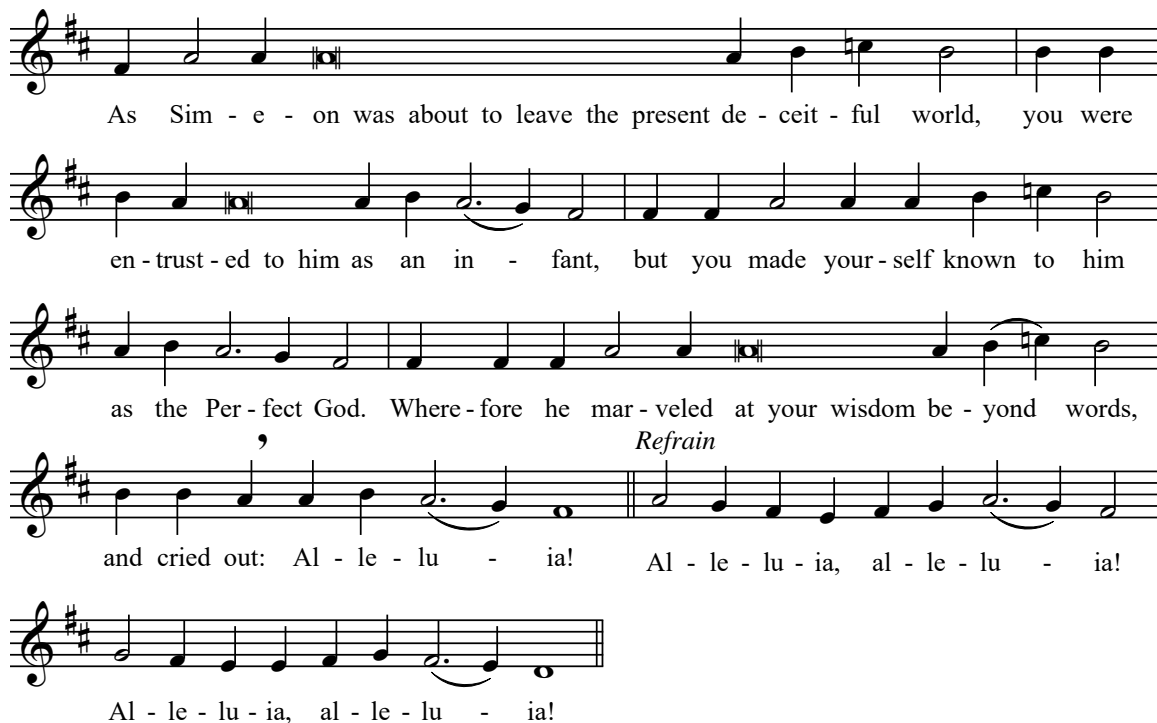

flames of pas - sion! Re-joyce, O you who guide the faith-ful toward wis - dom;


Re - joice, O Delight of all the na - tions!

Refrain


Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev - er-pure! Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev - er-pure!

Kontakion 7



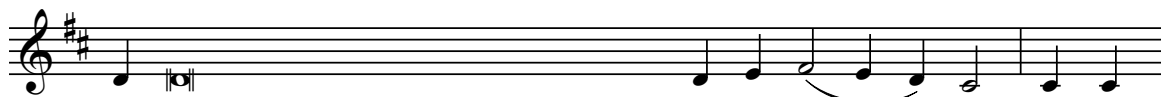
As Sim - e - on was about to leave the present de - ceit - ful world, you were
en - trust - ed to him as an in - fant, but you made your - self known to him
as the Per - fect God. Where - fore he mar - veled at your wisdom be - yond words,
and cried out: Al - le - lu - ia! *Refrain* Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp). The first four staves contain the main text, and the fifth staff contains the refrain. The melody is simple and melismatic, with long horizontal lines indicating sustained notes. The text is in a stylized, slightly archaic font.

Ikos 7: The Creator displayed a new creation to us who had come from him: he came forth from a womb that had received no seed, and he left it intact as it had been, so that at the sight of this marvel, we would sing to her and cry out:



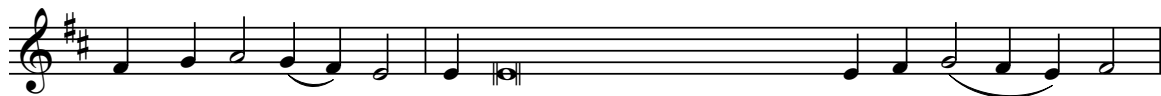
Re-joyce, O Blossom of in-cor-rup - tion; Re-joyce, O Crown of self-mas-ter - y!



Re - joyce, O you who shone forth as a Sign of res - ur - rec - tion; Re-joyce,



O you who dis-played the life of an - gels! Re - joyce, fruitful Tree from



whom be-liev - ers feed; Re - joyce, shady Glen where man-y are shel - tered!



Re-joyce, O you who have borne the Guide of the lost; Re-joyce, for you have borne a



De-liv-er-er for the cap-tives! Re-joyce, O our Advocate be-fore the just judge;



Re - joyce, Indulgence of many who have fall - en! Re - joyce, O Stole for those



who lack free-dom to speak; Re - joyce, O Tenderness who ex-ceeds all de-sire!

Refrain



Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure! Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure!

Kontakion 9



The whole or-der of an-gels mar-veled at the great work of your be-com-ing a man.



For they saw the One inacces-si-ble as God be-come a Man ac-ces-si-ble to all,



liv-ing with us and hear-ing all cry out: Al-le-lu-ia!

Refrain



Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia!

Ikos 9: O Theotokos, we see the best of speakers become as mute as fish in your regard, for they could not explain how you could give birth while remaining a virgin. As for us, while marveling at the mystery, we cry out to you with faith:

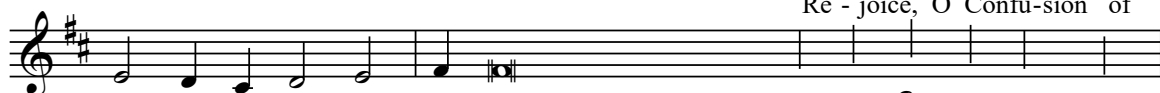


Re-joyce, O Container of God's wis - dom;

Re-joyce, O Treasury of his prov-i - dence!

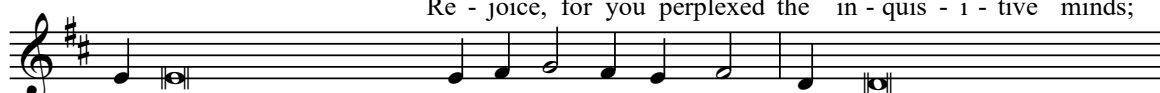


Re - joyce, O Reproof of fool-ish phil-os - o - phers;



speech-less wise men!

Re - joyce, O Confu-sion of



Re - joyce, for you perplexed the in - quis - i - tive minds;

Re - joyce, for you dried up the in-ven-tors of myths! Re - joyce, for you ripped the



A - the - ni - ans' mesh - es; Re - joyce, for you filled the fish - er - men's nets!



Re - joyce, O Retriever from the a-byss of ig - nor-ance;

Re - joyce, O Lamplight of



knowl-edge to man - y! Re - joyce, O Ship for those who seek sal - va - tion;



Re - joyce, O Harbor for the sail - ors of life!

Refrain



Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure! Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure!

Kontakion 11



Ev-'ry hymn falls short when it at-tempts to sing the multitude of your mer - cies.



We could sing to you as man-y songs as there are grains of sand, O Ho - ly King,



with-out ev - er do - ing an - y - thing wor - thy of what you have given to those

Refrain



who cry out to you: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

Ikos 11: We see the Holy Virgin as a brilliant luminary enlightening those who live in darkness; for having kindled the Immaterial Light, she leads us to the knowledge of God and fills our minds with radiance, so that she is worthily praised in these words:

Re-joyce, O Beam of the mys-tic-al Sun; Re-joyce, O Radiance of the Light with-out
set - ting! Re - joyce, Lightning-flash that bright - ens the souls; Re-joyce,
Thun-der-clap that strikes down the foes! Re - joyce, for you have raised the
man-y-light-ed Star; Re - joyce, for you have opened the man-y-cours-ed Stream!
Re - joyce, O you who traced the liv - ing Mod - el of the pool; Re-joyce,
O you who e-rased the stain of sin! Re - joyce, flowing Water that cleans-es
the con - science; Re-joyce, holy Vessel o-ver-flow-ing with joy! Re-joyce, O Fragrance
of the sweet-ness of Christ; Re - joyce, O Life of the mys-ti-cal ban - quet!

Refrain

Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure! Re-joyce, O Bride and Maid-en ev-er-pure!

Kontakion 13

O Moth - er wor - thy of all praise, you who have giv - en birth to the Word,
the Ho - li - est of the Ho - ly, ac - cept this pres - ent of - fer - ing,
de - liv - er all of us from ev - 'ry af - flic - tion, and save from the fu - ture pun - ish - ment
Refrain
those who cry out to you: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

If the Akathist is being sung as a part of another service, that service now continues and we do not proceed with the following dismissal.

Dismissal

If a priest is not present:

Priest: Glory to you, O
Christ God, our
hope; glory to
you!

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O
Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us.

Response: Amen.


If a priest is not present, the Akathist ends here

Response: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever, and forever. Amen.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Give the blessing.

*Throughout **Pascha**, the following is sung in place of "Glory to the Father... Give the blessing."*

Christ is risen from the dead! By death he trampled Death;
and to those in the tombs he granted life.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Give the blessing.

Priest: May Christ our true God, [risen from the dead,] have mercy on us and save us
through the prayers of his most pure Mother and of the holy, glorious,
and illustrious apostles, [through the prayers of (Name,) whom we
commemorate today,] and of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

Response: 
A - - - - - men.

The following hymn may be sung as the faithful come forward to venerate an icon of the Annunciation.

Sticheron

Tone 6 samohlasen

Ga - bri - el was rapt in a - maze - ment as he beheld your vir - gin - i - ty

and the splen - dor of your pu - ri - ty, O The - o - to - kos,

and he cried out to you: By what name shall I call you?

I am be - wil - dered, I am lost! I shall greet you as I was com - mand - ed to do:

Re - joice, O Wom - - - an Full of Grace!