

Resource Sheet 50

Akathists

Explanation: The akathist hymn itself is divided into thirteen parts, each of which has a kontakion and an oikos. The kontakion usually ends with the exclamation: "Alleluia!" Within the latter part of the oikos comes a refrain, as "Rejoice!" The thirteenth kontakion is usually followed by the repetition of the first oikos and kontakion. After the thirteen kontakia and ikoi, additional prayers are added, such as a troparion and another kontakion.

Activity:

The Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God

Having secretly received the command, the Archangel hastened into Joseph's abode and spoke to the Holy Virgin. He Who bowed the Heavens with His descending, is wholly contained, yet unchanged in You. And seeing Him taking the likeness of a servant in your womb, I stand in amazement and cry unto you:

Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride [3 times].

Kontakion 1

Unto you, O Theotokos, invincible Champion, your City [or "we your people"], in thanksgiving ascribes the victory for the deliverance from sufferings. And having your might unassailable, free us from all dangers, so that we may cry unto you:

Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride.

Eikos 1

The Archangel was sent from Heaven to cry 'Rejoice!' to the Theotokos. And beholding You, O Lord, taking bodily form, he stood in awe, and with his bodiless voice he cried aloud to her such things as these:

Rejoice, you through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, you through whom the curse will vanish.

Rejoice, the Restoration of fallen Adam. Rejoice, the Redemption of the tears of Eve.

Rejoice, O Height beyond human logic. Rejoice, O depth invisible even to the eyes of Angels.

Rejoice, for you are the King's throne. Rejoice, you bear Him, Who bears the universe.

Rejoice, O Star revealing the Sun. Rejoice, O Womb of divine Incarnation.

Rejoice, you through whom creation is renewed. Rejoice, you through whom the Creator is born a Babe.

Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride.

Kontakion 2

Beholding herself in purity, the holy one courageously said to Gabriel: Your strange voice seems almost unbelievable to my soul; for how do you speak of birth-giving without seed? And she cried aloud:

Alleluia.

Eikos 2

Seeking to know the incomprehensible knowledge, the Virgin cried to him who ministered to her: How may a Son be born from a virginal womb? Tell me! To her he answered in fear, yet crying thus:

Rejoice, O seer of the ineffable Will. Rejoice, O surety of those praying in silence.

Rejoice, you the Preface of Christ's miracles. Rejoice, you the Pinnacle of His commandments.

Rejoice, O heavenly Ladder, by which God descended. Rejoice, O Bridge leading those from earth to Heaven.

Rejoice, O Miracle, much marveled of Angels. Rejoice, O trauma, much dirged of demons.

Rejoice, you who ineffably gave birth to the Light. Rejoice, you who revealed the mystery to none.
Rejoice, O knowledge superseding the wise. Rejoice, You who enlighten the minds of the faithful.

Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride

Kontakion 3

The power of the Most High then overshadowed the Virgin, that she might conceive; and her fruitful womb
He made a fertile meadow for all those desiring to reap salvation, as they chant:

Alleluia.

Eikos 3

Carrying God in her womb, the Virgin hastened to Elizabeth, whose unborn babe forthwith recognizing
Mary's salutation rejoiced, and with leaps as it were with songs, he cried out to the Theotokos:

Rejoice, O branch of the unwithering Vine. Rejoice, O Land yielding the untainted Fruit.

Rejoice, O Husbandry of the merciful Husbandman. Rejoice, O birthgiver to the Planter of our life.

Rejoice, O Field bearing abundant compassion. Rejoice, O Table laden with an abundance of mercies.

Rejoice, for you make the meadow produce contentment. Rejoice, for you prepare a haven for souls.

Rejoice, acceptable Incense of intercession. Rejoice, Oblation for all the world.

Rejoice, Favour of God to mortals. Rejoice, Access of mortals to God.

Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride.

Kontakion 4

Having doubtful thoughts, the righteous Joseph was troubled; for he suspected a secret union as he beheld
you unwed, O blameless one; but when he learned of your conception through the Holy Spirit, he cried:

Alleluia.

Eikos 4

On hearing the Angels praising the incarnate presence of Christ, the shepherds hastened as to a Shepherd,
and beholding Him as a spotless Lamb pastured in Mary's womb, her they hymned and said:

Rejoice, Mother of the Lamb and Shepherd. Rejoice, Fold of the rational sheep.

Rejoice, O Defense against invisible foes. Rejoice, Opener of the gates of Paradise.

Rejoice, for the things of Heaven rejoice with the earth. Rejoice, the things of earth join chorus with the
Heavens.

Rejoice, never-silent Voice of the Apostles. Rejoice, never-conquered Courage of the Martyrs.

Rejoice, firm Support of the Faith. Rejoice, shining Token of grace.

Rejoice, you through whom Hades was laid bare. Rejoice, you through whom we are clothed with glory.

Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride.

Kontakion 5

Beholding the Godward-pointing Star, the Magi followed its radiance; and holding it as a lantern, they
sought through it the mighty King. And having approached the Unreachable, they rejoiced and cried to Him:

Alleluia.

Eikos 5

The sons of the Chaldees saw in the hands of the Virgin Him Who by His hand fashioned man; and sensing
Him as Lord, even though He had taken the form of a servant, they hastened with gifts to do homage, and
they cried out to her who is blessed:

Rejoice, Mother of the never-setting Star. Rejoice, Dawn of the mystic Day.

Rejoice, you who have quenched the fiery furnace of error. Rejoice, you who enlighten the initiates of the Trinity.

Rejoice, you who have removed the inhuman tyrant from power. Rejoice, you who have shown Christ, the man-befriending Lord.

Rejoice, you who have redeemed us from the pagan religion. Rejoice, you who have rescued us from the works of mire.

Rejoice, you who ceased the worship of fire. Rejoice, you who saves us from the flames of passions.

Rejoice, Guide of the faithful to chastity. Rejoice, O Delight of all generations.

Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride.

Kontakion 6

Having become God-bearing heralds, the Magi returned to Babylon. Fulfilling Your prophecy, and having preached You as the Christ to all, they left Herod as a trifler, who knew not how to chant:

Alleluia.

Eikos 6

Having shed the light of truth in Egypt, You expelled the darkness of falsehood; and unable to bear Your strength, O Saviour, her idols fell; and they that were set free from them cried to the Theotokos:

Rejoice, Uplifting of men. Rejoice, Downfall of demons.

Rejoice, you who trampled upon the delusion of error. Rejoice, you who censured the deceit of the idols.

Rejoice, Sea which drowned the symbolic Pharaoh. Rejoice, Rock which refreshed those thirsting for life.

Rejoice, Pillar of fire, guiding those in darkness. Rejoice, Protection of the world, more spacious than a cloud.

Rejoice, Nourishment, successor to manna. Rejoice, Minister of holy joy.

Rejoice, Land of promise. Rejoice, you from whom flows milk and honey.

Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride.¹

Activity:

Fill up the omitted words and expressions, using the Glossary:

The Akathist Hymn is a profound, devotional, which sings the praises of the Holy Mother and It is one of the most beloved services in the Orthodox Church. It was composed in the imperial city of, "the city of the Virgin," by St. Romanos the Melodist, who reposed in the year 556. The Akathist Hymn has proven so popular in the of the Church that many other hymns have been written following its format. These include Akathists to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Cross, and to many Saints.

The word means "not sitting," i.e., standing; normally all participants stand while it is being prayed. The hymn is comprised of 24 stanzas, arranged in an acrostic following the Greek alphabet.

Glossary: poem, Constantinople, Ever-Virgin Mary, "akathistos", liturgical life,

¹ Source: <http://www.orthodoxa.org/GB/orthodoxy/spirituality/AkathistMotherGodGB.htm>

Key:

The Akathist Hymn is a profound, devotional poem, which sings the praises of the Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary. It is one of the most beloved services in the Orthodox Church. It was composed in the imperial city of Constantinople, "the city of the Virgin," by St. Romanos the Melodist, who reposed in the year 556. The Akathist Hymn has proven so popular in the liturgical life of the Church that many other hymns have been written following its format. These include Akathists to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Cross, and to many Saints.

The word "akathistos" means "not sitting," i.e., standing; normally all participants stand while it is being prayed. The hymn is comprised of 24 stanzas, arranged in an acrostic following the Greek alphabet.²

Activity:

The leader writes on a board in 5 columns: Vespers, Matins, Hours, Compline, Akathist. Then students, working as a team and helped with the questions by the leader should remember the most important part of these services and some specific characteristics.

At what time they are served?

What forms they have (for example – Matins: Sunday matins, daily and feast-day matins).

What express this service? (example: Vespers – the beginning of the new day in the Church, symbolize the creation of the man and the world and Old testament times)

Vespers	Matins	Hours	Compline	Akathist

² Source: http://lent.goarch.org/akathist_hymn/learn/