

The Akathist Hymn to Our Lady,  
the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary



**The Akathist Hymn to Our Lady,  
the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary,  
or Office of Praise Of the Mother of God  
Akathist Hymn**

This office, probably composed in the year 532, is to the Byzantine Church what the rosary and the litanies of the Blessed Mother are to the Latin rite. There is in the Oriental Church no better prayer expressing love and veneration for Mary: all the figures under which she has been represented in the Scriptures are repeated here, in the second part, not in a form of a dry enumeration, but as applied to her by the living people of the Gospel, who thus participate in the universal concert of praise and personally glorify the Virgin Mother. The episodes of Holy Scripture come back to life before our very eyes; they set our heart aflame, and lead us to join the chorus of the Saints who, at the time of Mary, witnessed the great mystery of the Incarnation. The excellence of the Akathist Hymn is seen in this, that it always brings us back to the theological truth: to the fact that Mary is great because she is the Mother of God, the bridge between heaven and earth, for her intercession is all-powerful with God, her Son; her holiness and beauty are such that even the angels in their glory fall in admiration before her.

This hymn also exalts the mystery of the Incarnation in its plenitude: the miraculous maternity and perpetual virginity of Mary cannot be admired without concurrent adoration of the condescension, wisdom and omnipotence of God who enclosed his infinite Word in the Virgin's womb.



**Deacon:** Father, give the blessing.

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

**People:** Amen.

**Cantor:** Glory to you, our God, Glory to you.

**People:** O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, You are 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 Lord!

**Cantor:** Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

**People:** Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

**Cantor:** Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

**People:** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, \* now and ever and forever. Amen.

**Cantor:** O most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us! O Lord, cleanse us of our sins! O Master, forgive our transgressions! \*O Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for your name's sake!

**People:** Lord, have mercy. (3 times)

**Cantor:** Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever, Amen.

**People:** Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, Thy Kingdom, 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.

**Priest:** For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

**People:** Amen.

**Cantor:** Lord have mercy. (6 times)

**People:** Lord have mercy. (6 times)

**Cantor:** Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever, Amen.

**People:** O come, let us adore the King, our God.

**Cantor:** O come, let us adore Christ, the King and our God.

**People:** O come let us adore and fall down before the only Lord Jesus Christ, the King and our God.

*Recite the Prayers of Introduction.*

## PREAMBLE

As soon as the angel had received his command, he hastened to Joseph's house and said to the ever-Virgin: "Behold, heaven was brought down to earth when the Word Himself was fully contained in you! Now that I see Him in your womb, taking a servant's form, I cry out to you in wonder: Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!"

## FIRST CHANT

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

Hail, O you, through **whom** Joy will shine forth!  
Hail, O you, through whom **the** curse will disappear!  
Hail, O Restoration of **the** Fallen Adam!  
Hail, O Redemption of **the** Tears of Eve!

Hail, O Peak above **the** reach of human thought!  
Hail, O Depth even beyond the sight of angels!  
Hail, O you who have become a Kingly Throne!  
Hail, O you who carry Him Who Carries All!

Hail, O Star **who** manifest the Sun!  
Hail, O Womb of the Divine Incarnation!  
Hail, O you through whom creation is renewed!  
Hail, O you through whom the Creator becomes a Babe!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

## KONTAKION

Knowing that she was a Virgin, the Blessed One courageously answered the Angel: "Your surprising words seem hard for my mind to accept: how can you speak of a birth that is to come from a conception without seed? And why do you cry, Alleluia?"

## SECOND CHANT

Trying to grasp the meaning of this mystery, the Virgin asked the holy messenger: "How is it possible tha a Son be born from a virginal womb? Tell me." And he answered her with awe, crying out in these words:

Hail, O hidden Sense of the Ineffable Plan!  
Hail, O Belief in Silence That Must Be!  
Hail, O Forecast of the Marvels of Christ!  
Hail, O Fountainhead of truths concerning Him!

Hail, Celestial Ladder, by whom God came down!  
Hail, O Bridge leading earthly ones to heaven!  
Hail, O Wonder, ever-thrilling to the angels!  
Hail, O Wound, ever-hurting to the demons!

Hail, O you who gave birth to Light ineffably!  
Hail, O you who told no one how it was done!  
Hail, O you who surpass the wisdom of the wise!  
Hail, O you who enlighten faithful minds!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

## KONTAKION

When the power of the Most High overshadowed the one who had never known the nuptial bed, her fruitful womb conceived, and she became for all a delicious field: for those who wished to reap salvation by singing

"ALLELUIA!"

## THIRD CHANT

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

Hail, O Tendril **whose** Bud shall not wilt!  
Hail, O Soil **whose** Fruit shall not perish!  
Hail, O Tender **of** mankind's loving Tender!  
Hail, O Gardener of **the** Gardener of Life!

Hail, O Earth who yielded abundant mercies!  
Hail, O Table full-laden **with** appeasement!  
Hail, for you have greened anew **the** pastures of delight!  
Hail, for you have prepared a haven for the souls!

Hail, acceptable Incense of Prayer!  
Hail, Expiation of **the** whole universe!  
Hail, O Favor **of** God to mortal men!  
Hail, O Trust **of** mortals before God!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!



## KONTAKION

Filled with a storm of contradictory thoughts, the wise Joseph was greatly disturbed: until then, he had seen you a virgin, and now he suspected you of secret guilt, All-Blameless One! Learning that your conception was of the Holy Spirit, he cried out: "Alleluia!"

## FOURTH CHANT

The Shepherds heard the angels singing hymns of praise to the coming of Christ in the Flesh. And running to Him as to a shepherd, they saw Him as a spotless Lamb, grazing at Mary's breast. They sang a hymn to her and said:

Hail, O Mother of Lamb and Shepherd!

Hail, O Fold of rational sheep!

Hail, O Protection against unseen foes!

Hail, O Key to the Doors of Paradise!

Hail, for the heavenly rejoice with the earthly!

Hail, for the earthly meet the heavenly in song!

Hail, the Unsilenced Voice of the Apostles!

Hail, the Undaunted Might of Martyrs!

Hail, O Steadfast Foundation of Faith!

Hail, O Shining Emblem of Grace!

Hail, O you through whom Hades was despoiled!

Hail, O you through whom we were clothed with glory!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

## KONTAKION

When they saw the Star moved by God, the Magi followed its glittering light. Using it as a beacon, they found through it the Mighty King, and reaching the One Beyond All Reach, they rejoiced and cried out to Him: "Alleluia!"

## FIFTH CHANT

The Sons of Chaldaea 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:

Hail, O Mother of **the Star** Without Setting!

Hail, O Radiance of **the Mystical Day**!

Hail, O you who quenched **the flame** of error!

Hail, O Light of those **who search the** Trinity!

Hail, O you who unthroned **the enemy** of Men!

Hail, O you who showed forth Christ the Lord, **the Lover** of Mankind!

Hail, O you who cleansed us from **the stain of** pagan worship!

Hail, O you who saved us from **the mire of** evil deeds!

Hail, O you who made cease **the cult** of fire!

Hail, O you who dispelled **the flames** of passion!

Hail, O you who guide **the faithful** toward wisdom!

Hail, O Delight of **all the** Nations!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!



## KONTAKION

The Magi, become God-bearing heralds, returned to Babylon, conforming to your command, announcing You, the Christ, to all, and leaving Herod as a fool who did not know how to sing: "Alleluia!"

## SIXTH CHANT

Illuminating Egypt with the Light of Truth, you cast away the darkness of error. For the idols, unable to stand your might, fell down, and those who had been delivered from them cried out to the Mother of God:

Hail, O Resurrection of mankind!

Hail, O Downfall of the Demons!

Hail, O you who crushed **the** error of deceit!

Hail, O you who exposed **the** fraud of idols!

Hail, O Sea who drowned the symbolic Pharaoh!

Hail, O Rock who **quenched** those who thirst for Life!

Hail, O Pillar of Fire **who** guided those in darkness!

Hail, O Shelter of the **World**, wider than the clouds!

Hail, O Food who took **the** place of Manna!

Hail, O Servant **of** holy delight!

Hail, O Land of **the** Promised Good!

Hail, O you who flow **with** milk and honey!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

## KONTAKION

As Simeon was about to leave the present deceitful world, You were entrusted to him as an infant, but You made Yourself known to him as the perfect God. Wherefore, he marveled at your wisdom beyond words, and cried out: "Alleluia!"

## SEVENTH CHANT

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:

Hail, O Blossom of Incorruption!

Hail, O Crown of Self-mastery!

Hail, O you who shone forth as a Sign of Resurrection!

Hail, O you who displayed the life of Angels!

Hail, Fruitful Tree from whom believers feed!

Hail, Shady Glen where many are sheltered!

Hail, O you who have born the Guide of the Lost!

Hail, Source of Life to the captives' Release!

Hail, O you who unsettled even the Just Judge!

Hail, Indulgence of many who have fallen!

Hail, O Stole for those who lack freedom to speak!

Hail, O Tenderness who exceed all desire!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

## KONTAKION

Now that we have seen this strange birth, let us estrange ourselves from the world and turn our minds to heaven: indeed, it is for this that the God Most High appeared on earth as a lowly man, desiring to draw up to heaven those who cry out to Him: "Alleluia!"

## EIGHTH CHANT

While fully present amid those below, the Uncircumscribed Word was in no way absent from those above: for what happened was a divine condescension, and not a moving from one place to another: and it was a birth from a Virgin inspired by God, who heard these words:

Hail, O Space of the Spaceless God!

Hail, O Gate of the Sublime Mystery!

Hail, O Message unsure to men without faith!

Hail, O Glory most certain to those who believe!

Hail, O Sacred Chariot of the One above the Cherubim!

Hail, Perfect Dwelling of the One above the Seraphim!

Hail, O you who reconciled opposites!

Hail, O you who combined maidenhood and motherhood!

Hail, O you through whom transgression was erased!

Hail, O you through whom Paradise was opened!

Hail, O Key to the Kingdom of Christ!

Hail, O Hope for the Ages of Bliss!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!



## KONTAKION

The whole order of the Angels marveled at the great work of your becoming a man: for they saw the One Inaccessible as God become a Man accessible to all, living with us and hearing us cry out: "Alleluia!"

## NINTH CHANT

O Mother of God, 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:

Hail, O Container of God's Wisdom!  
Hail, O Treasury of His Providence!  
Hail, O Reproof of foolish philosophers!  
Hail, O Confusion of speechless wise men!

Hail, for you perplexed the inquisitive minds!  
Hail, for you dried up the inventors of myths!  
Hail, for you ripped the Athenians' meshes!  
Hail, for you filled the Fishermen's nets!

Hail, O Retriever from the Abyss of Ignorance!  
Hail, O Lamplight of Knowledge to many!  
Hail, O Ship for those who seek Salvation!  
Hail, O Harbor for the Sailors of Life!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

## KONTAKION

Desiring to save the world, the Creator of All came down to it of His own will. Being at the same time our Shepherd and our God, He appeared among us. And so the like called upon the like, and as God He heard: "Alleluia!"

## TENTH CHANT

O Virgin God-Bearer, you are the Strength of Virgins and of all those who have recourse to you. For the Maker of Heaven and Earth covered you with His shadow, O Pure One, and came to dwell in your womb, and taught us all to cry out to you:

Hail, O Pillar of Virginity!  
Hail, O Gateway of Salvation!  
Hail, O Principle of the New Creation!  
Hail, O Dispenser of God's bounties!

Hail, for you restored those born in shame!  
Hail, for you gave sense to those who had lost it!  
Hail, O you who stopped the corruptor of minds!  
Hail, O you who bore the Sower of Chastity!

Hail, Holy Chamber of virginal wedlock!  
Hail, O you who join the faithful with God!  
Hail, O gracious Foster-Mother of virgins!  
Hail, O Bridesmaid of holy souls!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

## KONTAKION

Every hymn falls short when it attempts to sing the multitude of Your mercies. We could sing to You as many songs as there are grains of sand, O Holy King, without ever doing anything worthy of what You have given to those who cry out to You: "Alleluia!"

## ELEVENTH CHANT

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

Hail, O Beam of **the** Mystical Sun!  
Hail, O Radiance of **the** Light Without Setting!  
Hail, Lightning-Flash **that** brightens the souls!  
Hail, Thunder-Clap **that** strikes down the foes!

Hail, for you have raised **the** many-lighted Star!  
Hail, for you have opened **the** many-coursed Stream!  
Hail, O you who traced the Living Model of the Pool!  
Hail, O you who erased **the** stain of sin!

Hail, Flowing Water **that** cleanses the conscience!  
Hail, Holy Vessel overflowing with joy!  
Hail, O Fragrance of **the** Sweetness of Christ!  
Hail, O Life of **the** Mystical Banquet!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!



## KONTAKION

Because He wished to grant release from all the ancient debts, the One Who pays men's dues came down Himself to those who had spurned His grace; He tore up their obligations, and heard from all of them this cry: "Alleluia!"

## TWELFTH CHANT

By singing praise to your maternity, we all exalt you as a Spiritual Temple, O Theothokos! For the One Who Dwelt Within Your Womb, the Lord Who Holds All Things in His Hands, sanctified you, glorified you, and taught all men to sing to you:

Hail, O Tabernacle of God the Word!  
Hail, O Holy One, **more** holy than the saints!  
Hail, O Ark that **the** Spirit has gilded!  
Hail, Inexhaustible Treasure of Life!

Hail, Precious Crown of rightful authorities!  
Hail, Sacred Glory of reverent priests!  
Hail, Unshakable Tower of the Church!  
Hail, Unbreachable Wall of the Kingdom!

Hail, O you through whom **the** trophies are raised!  
Hail, O you through whome **the** enemies are routed!  
Hail, O Healing of my body!  
Hail, O Salvation of my soul!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

## KONTAKION

O Mother worthy of all praise, you who have given birth to the Word, the Holiest of the Holy, accept this present offering, deliver all men from every affliction, and save from the future punishment those who cry out to you:  
"Alleluia!"

## HIRMOS

Gabriel was rapt in amazement as he beheld your virginity and the splendor of your purity, O Mother of God, and he cried out to you: "By what name shall I call you? I am bewildered; I am lost! I shall greet you as I was commanded to do: 'Hail, O Woman full of Grace!'"

## HYMN TO OUR LADY Ἀγνή Παρθένη / AGNÍ PARTHÉNE (NECTARIOS OF AEGINA)

Ἀγνή Παρθένη Δέσποινα, ἄχραντε Θεοτόκε,

Χαῖρε νόμφη ἀνύμφευτε.

Παρθένη μήτηρ ἄνασσα, πανένδρoσέ τε πόκε. R

Ὑψηλότερα οὐρανῶν ἀκτίνων λαμπρότερα, R

Χαρά παρθενικῶν χορῶν ἀγγέλων ὑπερτέρα. R

Ἐκλαμπρότερα οὐρανῶν, φωτὸς καθαρωτέρα, R

Τῶν οὐρανίων στρατιῶν, πασῶν ἀγιωτέρα. R

Μαρία ἀειπάρθενη κόσμου παντὸς Κυρία, R

Ἄχραντε νόμφη πάναγνε, Δέσποινα Παναγία. R

Μαρία νόμφη ἄνασσα, χαρὰς ἡμῶν αἰτία, R

Κόρη σεμνή, Βασιλίσσα, Μήτηρ ὑπεραγία. R

Τιμιωτέρα Χερουβὶμ, ὑπερενδοξότερα, R

Τῶν ἀσωμάτων Σεραφίμ, τῶν θρόνων ὑπερτέρα. R

Agní Parthéne Déspina, Áhrante Theotóke,

Hére Nímfi Anímfepte.

Parthéne Mítir Ánassa, Panéndrose te póke. R

Ipsilotéra Uranón, aktínon lamprotéra, R

Hará parthenikón horón, angélon ipertéra, R

Eklamprotéra uranón fotós katharotéra, R

Ton Uraníon stratión pasón agiotéra. R

María Aipárthene kósmu pantós Kiría, R

Áhrante Nímfi Pánagne, Déspina Panagía, R

María Nímfi Ánassa, harás imón etía, R

Korí semní Vasilissa, Mítir iperagía, R

Timiotéra Herubím, iperendoxotéra R

Ton asomáton Serafim, ton Thrónon ipertéra. R

## DISMISSAL

**Deacon:** Wisdom!

**(Priest:** O Most Holy Mother of God, save us!)

**People:** More honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly the Mother of God, we magnify.

**Priest:** Glory be to you, O Christ, our God, our hope: Glory be to you!

**People:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever Amen. Lord, have mercy! (3 times). Give the blessing!

**Priest:** May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us, through the prayers of his most pure Mother, through the might of the precious and life-giving Cross, through the protection of the honorable, heavenly and incorporeal powers, through the prayers of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John, of the holy, glorious, and illustrious Apostles, of saint(s) N. and N. whose memory we celebrate today, of the holy and just ancestors of God, Joachim and Anne, and of all the saints, for He is gracious and loves mankind!

**People:** Amen.

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*(From Pascha until the Wednesday before Ascension, we sing:)*

**People:** Shine in splendor, O new Jerusalem; for the glory of the Lord is risen on you, O Zion. Sing with joy and rejoice. And you, O pure Mother of God, rejoice in the Resurrection of your Son.

**Priest:** Glory be to you, O Christ, our God, our hope: Glory be to you!

**People:** Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and upon those in the tombs bestowing life (3 times). Lord have mercy (3 times). Give the blessing!

**Priest:** May Christ our true God, risen from the dead and upon those in the tombs bestowing life, have mercy on us and save us... etc.

**People:** Amen.