

AKATHIST HYMN
CHANTED BEFORE THE MIRACULOUS IVERON ICON
OF THE ALL-HOLY THEOTOKOS,
KNOWN AS "THE KEEPER OF THE PORTAL"

Kontakion I

To the champion leader, our Mistress, the Theotokos, do we, thy servants, offer hymns of praise, as ones who have acquired a mighty shield, an insuperable rampart and an ever-vigilant guardian through the arrival of thy precious image. As thou art possessed of invincible might, protect and defend us, O Mistress, from all enemies, visible and invisible, and deliver us from all harm of body and soul, that we may cry out to thee: Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise unto the faithful!

Ikos I

An angel, and a chief among them, was sent to say to the Theotokos, when she drew the land of Iberia as her lot for apostolic ministry: "Depart not from Jerusalem! The land which hath fallen to thee by lot will be enlightened in later days. Thou must labor in the land which God willeth for thee!" Wherefore,

Rejoice, thou by whom the Gospel is proclaimed;
Rejoice, thou by whom the deception of idolatry is set at naught!
Rejoice, thou by whom the authority of the prince of darkness is abolished;
Rejoice, thou by whom the kingdom of Christ is made steadfast!
Rejoice, summons of them that have fallen into the darkness of idolatry to the light of the Gospel;
Rejoice, leader of the children of God out of slavery to the devil into the freedom of glory!
Rejoice, ready servant of thy Son and God;
Rejoice, thou who by thine obedience healest the disobedience of Eve!
Rejoice, summit of the virtues;
Rejoice, abyss of humble-mindedness!
Rejoice, thou through whom the infidels come to know the Creator;
Rejoice, thou through whom the faithful are adopted by the Father!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to the faithful!

Kontakion II

Perceiving God's new and wondrous providence concerning her, as a handmaid of the Lord, ever ready to do His will, the Virgin cried out: Alleluia!

Ikos II

Making the incomprehensible meaning of the angel's words comprehensible to thee, O all-pure one, the Lord directed thy passage to Mount Athos, where the Gospel was preached by thee; and thus it was shown to be thy lot. And we joyfully cry out:

Rejoice, thou who didst sanctify Athos by thine arrival;
Rejoice, thou who didst cast down the idols in that place!
Rejoice, thou who didst plant there the true Faith;
Rejoice, thou who didst expel unbelief!
Rejoice, thou who didst choose that mountain as thine own portion;
Rejoice, thou who didst promise grace for that place!
Rejoice, bestower of the good things of the earth upon the faithful who live there;
Rejoice, surety of their salvation!
Rejoice, fervent mediatrix for them that live in thy portion;
Rejoice, terror of all their enemies!
Rejoice, thou who hast promised the mercy of thy Son to that place until the end of time;
Rejoice, thou who didst foretell that its grace would be constant!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to the faithful!

Kontakion III

The power of the Most High overshadowed the Holy Mountain, its valleys and dales, through the succor of the Mother of God, and showed it to be a vast estate for all who desire to reap salvation in the monastic life when they chant thus: Alleluia!

Ikos III

Taking thought beforehand concerning thy lot, the people of the land of Iberia, thou didst erect on the place where thou thyself didst land on Athos a monastery for their race, as a calm haven for them that seek salvation, intending to give it thine icon as a shield and bulwark, that all may cry out:

Rejoice, thou who didst send a preacher of the Gospel to the land of Iberia;
Rejoice, thou who didst convert that land from the deception of idolatry to the light of Christ!
Rejoice, branch of an unwithering shoot who gavest to Nina a wondrous branch;
Rejoice, thou who through her didst cause the grapes of miracles and good faith to spring forth!
Rejoice, thou who didst plant a spiritual garden on Athos;
Rejoice, thou who didst pour forth therefrom a stream of spiritual enlightenment upon the Iberian land!
Rejoice, golden-worded mouth of Euthymius;
Rejoice, invincible might of Tornicius!
Rejoice, strengthening of pious kings;
Rejoice, bulwark of monks!
Rejoice, calm haven for them that seek salvation;
Rejoice, thou who preparest everlasting rest for them!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to the faithful!

Kontakion IV

Beset by a raging tempest of doubting thoughts, the honorable widow in Nicæa was troubled, beholding the holy and revered icon of the Mother of God, on being pierced by the spear of the iconoclastic soldier, straightway shed blood; and, seized with terror, weeping, she cast the holy icon into the sea, praying the while that it not be subjected to mockery. But seeing it making its way straight over the surface of the water, heading toward the west, she cried out with gladness: Alleluia!

Ikos IV

The monks of the Holy Mountain beheld a flame which appeared on the sea like a pillar of fire, whose top reached to heaven, shining like the sun; and at night they made haste down to the edge of the sea and, seeing the holy icon of the Mother of God borne upon the sea by power from on high, they cried out to her who is full of grace:

Rejoice, O bush seen before by the law-giver;
Rejoice, pillar of fire guiding them that are in darkness!
Rejoice, ladder reaching up to the heavens, whereby God descended;
Rejoice, bridge leading men from earth to heaven!
Rejoice, ray of the mystic Day;

Rejoice, star revealing the Sun!
Rejoice, thou who gavest birth unto the ineffable Light;
Rejoice, thou who didst teach no one how this came to be!
Rejoice, thou who art arrayed in the sun, shining with grace and glory
upon the whole universe;
Rejoice, lightning illumining the souls and irradiating the thoughts of
the faithful!
Rejoice, effulgence shining forth in the darkness;
Rejoice, for thou shinest forth enlightenment of great splendor!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to
the faithful!

Kontakion V

Desiring to bestow thy divinely guided icon upon the Monastery of Iveron, O Mother of God, thou didst say to the venerable Gabriel: Go thou with the choir of monks to the shore of the sea; walk out upon the deep, and take up mine icon! And, upborne by faith and love, he strode upon the water as upon dry land, and took it in his arms; and having attained a treasure inaccessible to others as an heirloom for the monks of his own Iberian race, he chanted in gladness: Alleluia!

Ikos V

Oft-times the monks of Iveron beheld the icon of the Mother of God borne by an invisible power from the church to the gates of the monastery, to be like a city's rampart; and they were filled with awe and stood, crying out to her such things as these:

Rejoice, thou whose pleasure it was to give us thy holy icon;
Rejoice, thou who didst promise that it would be a protection for us!
Rejoice, thou who hast shown thy love for the Monastery of Iveron;
Rejoice, thou who hast manifested good forethought concerning it!
Rejoice, our hope in a foreign land;
Rejoice, consolation amid our wandering!
Rejoice, good-will of God towards us;
Rejoice, our boldness before God!
Rejoice, deliverance from our tears;
Rejoice, defender of us orphans!
Rejoice, our bulwark;
Rejoice, our only joy!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to
the faithful!

Kontakion VI

Making Gabriel the herald of thy will, O Mistress, thou didst say unto him: "I have not come to be kept by you, but that I may be your keeper, not only in this present age, but in the age to come, as well. Lo! I give you a sign: As long as ye see mine icon in the monastery, the grace and mercy of my Son will not fail, that all may cry out to Him: Alleluia!"

Ikos VI

Great joy shone forth on them that heard of thy promises, O Mother of God, and with gladness the monks constructed a temple for thee, the heavenly gate-keeper, over the portal of the monastery; and they cried out thus:

Rejoice, our preserver in this present age;
Rejoice, our intercessor in the age to come!
Rejoice, thou that teachest us the fear of God;
Rejoice, thou that guidest us to the path of virtue!
Rejoice, our boldness and hope;
Rejoice, our expectation and protection!
Rejoice, thou who hast inclined the compassion of thy Son toward us;
Rejoice, thou who declarest that His grace will remain with us
without fail!
Rejoice, thou who hast bestowed the holy icon as a pledge of mercy;
Rejoice, thou who hast imparted to it the gift of working wonders!
Rejoice, thou that dost fend off the assault of every evil from thy
monastery;
Rejoice, thou who clearest the way for every good thing!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to
the faithful!

Kontakion VII

When the impious Amirah desired to destroy the Monastery of Iveron and scatter the flock of monks gathered there, he became quickly aware of the mighty assistance rendered the monastery by the Mother of God, beholding his ships engulfed in the deep and his henchmen perish; and approaching with humility, he gave silver and gold to the monastery, asking for prayers. And the monks, seeing this, cried out to God: Alleluia!

Ikos VII

New and innumerable miracles did the Mother of God show forth, remedying the lack of wine, wheat and oil in the monastery, healing the demonized, granting to the lame the ability to walk and sight to the blind, treating every infirmity, that they that see these miracles may chant unto thee:

Rejoice, champion leader who vanquishest the foe;
Rejoice, thou who hastenest to the aid of them that call upon thee!
Rejoice, thou who dost not disdain our supplication;
Rejoice, thou who breakest not thy promise!
Rejoice, thou who transformest the sorrow of the monastery into joy;
Rejoice, thou who fillest the dearth of the monastery!
Rejoice, recovery of sight for the blind;
Rejoice, ability to walk for the lame!
Rejoice, healer of all the infirm;
Rejoice, consoler of all the sorrowful!
Rejoice, for thou dost not cease to take thought for us and save us;
Rejoice, for thou deliverest us from so many misfortunes!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to the faithful!

Kontakion VIII

Patriarch Nikon of Moscow, hearing of the Monastery of Iveron, which is wondrously protected by the icon of the Mother of God, desired to acquire a share in its grace for the land of Russia; wherefore, having constructed a monastery dedicated to the glorious image, he earnestly requested a copy of the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God, that, defended by her protection, the faithful of the Church of Russia may cry out to God: Alleluia!

Ikos VIII

While dwelling wholly in the highest, yet without departing from those below, O Mother of God, it was thy good pleasure to bestow upon thy new monastery in the land of Russia the grace wherewith thou didst bless Athos, in the copy of thy precious image, as of old the blessing of Mount Athos was given to the venerable Anthony to found the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev. Wherefore, we cry out to thee:

Rejoice, protection of the Russian land, broader than a cloud;
Rejoice, bulwark and confirmation of the Orthodox Faith therein!
Rejoice, unshakable pillar of the Orthodox Church;

Rejoice, denunciation of heresies and schisms!
Rejoice, thou who illuminest the whole land with the splendid rays of
wonderworking icons;
Rejoice, thou who pourest forth gifts of healing and mercy therefrom!
Rejoice, confirmation of Orthodox rulers;
Rejoice, terror of enemies!
Rejoice, gladness of holy hierarchs;
Rejoice, boast of priests!
Rejoice, guide of monks;
Rejoice, salvation of the whole world!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to
the faithful!

Kontakion IX

Making all haste to paint the precious image of the merciful gate-keeper, the assembly of the fasters of Iveron chanted hymns of supplication, washed the board on which the precious copy was to be made with water from the wondrous icon, and sanctified the venerable Iamblichus, who, having exercised himself in fasting, prayer and vigils with all the brethren, painted the honored visage of the Mother of God using colors hallowed with holy water and sacred relics, praying continuously and crying out to God: Alleluia!

Ikos IX

We see the most eloquent of orators fall as mute as fish when they try to speak of thee, O Theotokos; for they are at a loss how worthily to praise all thy wonders revealed to our race through thy holy icon. For it worked wonders while on the way to the Russian land, commanding the pious Manuel to bribe the infidels who were hindering the progress of the holy icon toward the land of Russia, and afterwards repaid him twofold. And we, marvelling, faithfully cry out to thee:

Rejoice, inexhaustible wellspring of miracles;
Rejoice, bestower of every mercy!
Rejoice, thou who art ever a mediatrix for us before God;
Rejoice, treasury of His providence concerning us!
Rejoice, refuge of those in trouble;
Rejoice, consolation of the sorrowful!
Rejoice, healing of the sick;
Rejoice, strengthening of the weak!
Rejoice, aid of widows;

Rejoice, merciful Mother of the orphaned!
Rejoice, return of the lost to the path of the Truth;
Rejoice, summons of sinners to repentance!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to
the faithful!

Kontakion X

Desiring to save many people from misfortunes and sorrows, O Mother of God, thou pourest forth from thy holy icon an inexhaustible spate of mercy upon our race; for, lo! in the reigning city of Moscow thou didst reveal thyself as a good gate-keeper to all who bowed down before thee, granting them speedy assistance; and in the new Monastery of Iveron, and in other cities, monasteries and villages, thou hast put forth torrents of grace from thine icon, fulfilling the good requests of them that honor thee. Wherefore, glorifying God Who hath given us such grace, we cry out to Him: Alleluia!

Ikos X

Thou art a rampart for the monastic ranks and for all who have recourse unto thee, O Theotokos; for the Creator of heaven and earth, Who made His abode within thy virginal womb, hath taught all lovers of purity and chastity to cry out to thee:

Rejoice, chosen vessel of virginity;
Rejoice, most pure image of chastity!
Rejoice, bridal chamber of a seedless union;
Rejoice, unwedded Bride!
Rejoice, thou who gavest birth to the Sower of purity;
Rejoice, thou who hast united the faithful to the Lord!
Rejoice, speedy helper amid the storm of temptations;
Rejoice, thou who fendest off the assaults of the foe!
Rejoice, thou who dispellest the gloom of soul-harming passions;
Rejoice, thou who cleansest the thoughts of men!
Rejoice, thou who teachest us to spurn the pleasures of this earth;
Rejoice, thou who directest our minds and hearts to the Highest!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to
the faithful!

Kontakion XI

Every hymn which attempteth to do homage to the multitude of thy compassions is vanquished; for even were we to offer thee hymns equal in

number to the sands of the sea, O Theotokos, our Mistress, we would have accomplished naught worthy of what thou bestowest upon us that cry to God: Alleluia!

Ikos XI

We see thy holy icon as a light-receiving lamp revealed to those who find themselves in the darkness of misfortunes; for, receiving the immaterial Fire of grace, it illumineth all with rays of miracles, teaching us to cry out thus to her who is full of grace:

Rejoice, speedy help in every need;
Rejoice, quick hearkening amid sorrows!
Rejoice, thou who deliverest us from the sword and invasions of aliens;
Rejoice, thou who freest us from famine and sudden death!
Rejoice, thou who preservest us from contagion and deadly plague;
Rejoice, instantaneous help for those in trouble while travelling on the dry land or by water!
Rejoice, healing of wounds of body and soul;
Rejoice, thou who takest in thine arms them whom physicians have abandoned!
Rejoice, merciful consoler of all who sorrow and are heavy laden;
Rejoice, thou who dost not spurn the despised and rejected!
Rejoice, thou who dost rescue the most despondent from the pit of destruction;
Rejoice, thou who in thy protection and aid dost not forsake even me, who have been stripped bare of good works!
Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to the faithful!

Kontakion XII

The Remitter of all men's debts, desiring to show Himself gracious to ancient debts, came Himself unto men that had departed from His grace; and having rent asunder the record of our sins, He granted us the mighty mediation of her who is full of divine grace, that by her supplications we may all cry out: Alleluia!

Ikos XII

Hymning thy wonders which are revealed to us in this life, we praise thee, O Theotokos, as an inextinguishable wellspring of mercy. And falling down before thee and before thy wonderworking icon, we humbly entreat

thee: Be thou a protection and defense for us both on the day of our repose and when we will have to stand trial before the dread tribunal of thy Son, that we may cry out to thee:

Rejoice, thou who sittest in glory by the throne of thy Son, and there art mindful of us;

Rejoice, thou who reignest everlastingly with thy Son and God, and dost mediate in our behalf!

Rejoice, thou who grantest an unashamed end to life unto them that place their trust in thee:

Rejoice, thou who arranges for us a peaceful end, free of pain!

Rejoice, deliverance from bitter way-stations;

Rejoice, liberation from the authority of the prince of the air!

Rejoice, disregard of our sins;

Rejoice, our hope of the blessed life, after the Lord!

Rejoice, thou who appointest a place at the right hand of thy Son for them that hope in thee;

Rejoice, thou who countest us worthy to hear His blessed voice promising us the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven!

Rejoice, good Mother who givest unto all who honor thee a habitation with thyself;

Rejoice, mighty hope of eternal salvation for all Christians!

Rejoice, O good gate-keeper, who openest the portal of paradise to the faithful!

Kontakion XIII

O most hymned Mother, all-holy Lady, Virgin Theotokos: Look down upon us who with tears humbly offer these meager supplications before thine all-pure image, and who place all our hope and expectation in thee; and deliver us from all misfortunes and dangers in this life, and rescue from everlasting torment, that, saved by thee, we may cry out continually: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

This Kontakion is recited thrice, whereupon Ikos I and Kontakion I are repeated.

Prayer before the Iveron Icon of the All-holy Theotokos

O all-holy Virgin Mother of Christ, Queen of heaven and earth: Attend thou to the painful aspiration of our souls, and look down with mercy from thy holy height upon us who with love worship before thine all-pure image. For, lo! engulfed by our sins and tempest-tossed by sorrows, gazing at thine image we offer thee our humble entreaties, as to one who liveth with us. For we have no other help, no other intercessor, nor any

consolation, save thee, O Mother of all who sorrow and are heavy laden. Help us who are weak; assuage our sorrow; direct us who are lost to the right path; heal and save the hopeless; grant that we may spend the remaining time of our life in peace and tranquility; bestow upon us a Christian end; and at the dread tribunal of thy Son show thyself to us as a merciful helper, that with all who have been pleasing unto God we may ever hymn, magnify and glorify thee as the good helper of the Christian race. Amen.

**Second Prayer to the All-holy Theotokos
Recited Before Her Myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon**

O most glorious Lady, Queen of heaven and earth, Virgin Theotokos! Falling down now before thy precious icon, with compunctionate heart we give voice to this, our meager entreaty; for we are unprofitable servants who deserve condemnation, yet hope to find mercy through thine almighty mediation before the Judge. We believe and trust, O Mistress, that thy Son, Who desireth not death of sinners, will hearken to thy mediation, and have now been informed of this by the wondrous sign of myrrh streaming from thy holy icon, from whence thou hast poured forth healings in abundance upon all who with love and faith have recourse unto thee. Wherefore, we cry out to thee with tears: Have pity on our wretchedness, forgive us our unfaithfulness, break thou the arrogance of our pride, dispel the numbness of our hardened hearts, regard the sighing of those beset by despondency, and make us chaste by the expectation of future reward. And grant, O Lady, that our Church may stand unshakably in the Truth and a goodly increase in love. Protect us from all the wiles of the demons and the vain beliefs of the heretics, and gather the scattered faithful together, that all who glorify thee in Orthodox manner on earth may also be vouchsafed to glorify with song in the heavens the most worshipful name of the Holy Trinity and thy merciful aid to us, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Service and prayer translated from the Church Slavonic by Reader Isaac E. Lambertsen. The Second prayer was translated from the Church Slavonic by Rev. Anatole Lyovin. All rights reserved by the translators.