

Akathist Hymn to the Nativity of Christ



Kontakion I

O Christ our God, Who didst choose the most pure Virgin from among all generations and wast born of her in the flesh, we Thy servants offer hymns of thanksgiving unto Thee. As Thou art possessed of ineffable loving kindness, O Master, from all manner of misfortunes free us who cry: O Jesus, Son of God, Who becomest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Ikos I

A multitude of angels assembled in Bethlehem to behold the unapproachable Nativity; and seeing their Creator lying in the manger as a babe, they were filled with awe. And offering homage with fear, they honored the godliness of Him Who was born and of her who bore Him, chanting such things as these:

Glory to Thee, O Son of God, Who wast begotten of the Father before time began!
Glory to Thee Who with the Father and the Spirit didst create all things!
Glory to Thee Who earnest to save the perishing!
Glory to Thee Who didst condescend even to assume the form of a servant!
Glory to Thee Who wast ineffably born of the Virgin!
Glory to Thee Who searchest for the lost!

Glory to Thee, O Saviour of the perishing!
Glory to Thee Who hast demolished the wall of separation!
Glory to Thee Who again hast opened paradise, which was shut by disobedience!
Glory to Thee Who ineffably lovest the human race!
Glory to Thee Who didst show the cave to be heaven on earth!
Glory to Thee Who hast shown the Virgin, who gave Thee birth, to be the throne of the cherubim!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becomest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion II

Seeing that their Master had received flesh from the pure Virgin, the incorporeal angels were filled with awe and said one to another: "This is an all-glorious mystery past understanding!" And marveling at His ineffable condescension, they chanted with fear: Alleluia!

Ikos II

All of noetic creation is filled with awe and with thanksgiving hymneth the mystery of Thy nativity, O Master. The hosts of heaven rejoice, chanting: "Glory to God in the highest!"; earth and men are filled with gladness; and we unceasingly cry out:

Glory to Thee, O God, Who art glorified in the highest!
Glory to Thee Who didst reveal Thyself to us on earth!
Glory to Thee Who hast reconciled Thyself with us!
Glory to Thee Who didst appear to us on earth!
Glory to Thee Who wast ineffably incarnate of the Virgin!
Glory to Thee Who didst cause the star to shine forth!
Glory to Thee Who by it summoned the Magi to worship Thee!
Glory to Thee Who didst mercifully accept their gifts!
Glory to Thee Who hast taught all creation to minister unto Thee!
Glory to Thee Who hast given us the understanding to hymn Thee!
Glory to Thee Who hast united Thyself with us!
Glory to Thee Who Thyself hast saved, us!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who became incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion III

The God of peace and Father of compassion, Who is mighty in strength, came to earth to save the world which is perishing; and in Bethlehem He is now born as a babe of the Virgin, whom He hath shown to be a Mother and Mediatress of salvation for all who glorify His incarnation and chant: Alleluia!

Ikos III

Having her who gave Thee birth in an all-pure manner praying unceasingly for us, rejoicing, we hymn the mystery of Thy becoming man: O Master; and glorifying Thy nativity from the God-pleasing Virgin, we cry:

Glory to Thee O Son of God!
Glory to Thee, O Son of the Virgin!
Glory to Thee Who upon us hast shown forth the abyss of Thy love for mankind!
Glory to Thee Who hast ineffably loved us!
Glory to Thee Who hast sought out the lost sheep!
Glory to Thee Who hast told the angels to rejoice in its finding!
Glory to Thee Who hast taken it upon Thy shoulders!
Glory to Thee Who hast led it to the Father!
Glory to Thee Who hast united men and angels in a single flock!
Glory to Thee Who hast delivered the world from delusion!
Glory to Thee Who hast shown us great and ineffable mercy!
Glory to Thee Who lovest us more than all other creatures!
O Jesus Son of God, Who becamest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion IV

The chaste-minded Joseph, who before had within him a storm of doubting thoughts, now beholdeth all-glorious things within the divine cave; for even though he beheld as a man Him Who was born of the Virgin, yet did he understand from things revealed to him that He is the true God. Wherefore, doing homage to His divinity, He chanted with joy: Alleluia!

Ikos IV

The shepherds heard the angel proclaiming to them that the Saviour of the world was born in the city of David, and running swiftly, they beheld Him lying in the manger, like an unblemished lamb which had been tended in the womb of the Virgin, and her who had given birth to Him reverently ministering unto Him, and Joseph standing by with fear. And they spake of what they had been told, and, bowing down before Newborn, they said:

Glory to Thee, O Lamb of God, Saviour of the world!
Glory to Thee, O Son of God, Who hast revealed to us an ineffable miracle!
Glory to Thee Who hast caused us to hear the song of angels!
Glory to Thee Who hast taught us to glorify Thee with them!
Glory to Thee Who hast moved angels and men to hymn Thee!
Glory to Thee Who hast brought joy to earth and heaven!
Glory to Thee in Whom those in heaven rejoice with those on earth!
Glory to Thee, for by Thee are those on earth united with those in heaven!
Glory to Thee Who hast shown the power of the devil to be impotent!
Glory to Thee Who hast delivered us from His tyranny!
Glory to Thee, O ineffable joy of those who believe in Thee!
Glory to Thee, O unspeakable delight of those who love Thee!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becamest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion V

Beholding the divinely guided star which pointed beforehand to the nativity of Christ, the Magi observed it; and by its guidance they reached the Unapproachable One and beheld Him Who is invisible. And they rejoice, crying out to Him: Alleluia!

Ikos V

The Persian kings, seeing the King of kings sitting on the arm of the Virgin as upon the throne of the cherubim, and understanding Him to be the Master, even though He had assumed the form of a servant, hastened to offer Him gifts-gold, as to the King of all; frankincense, as to God; and myrrh, as to One immortal;-and making obeisance, they chanted:

Glory to Thee Who hast shone forth light upon all!
Glory to Thee Who by a star hast summoned us to do Thee homage!
Glory to Thee Who didst reprove the malice of cruel Herod!
Glory to Thee Who didst show his plotting to be in vain!
Glory to Thee Who hast delivered us from his deception!
Glory to Thee Who hast taught us to worship Thee, the Sun of righteousness!
Glory to Thee Who hast enlightened all with the light of understanding!
Glory to Thee Who by Thy nativity hast abolished the delusion of polytheism!
Glory to Thee Who hast utterly laid low the dominion of the enemy!
Glory to Thee Who hast taught us to worship Thee with the Father and the Spirit!
Glory to Thee Who hast crushed the head of the serpent who beguiled us!
Glory to Thee Who hast delivered us from everlasting death!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becamest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion VI

Fulfilling the prophecies concerning Thee, which were uttered by the God-bearing heralds, Thou hast revealed Thyself on earth, O Saviour, being born now of the pure Virgin in a wretched cave; and though rich, Thou didst willingly impoverish Thyself for our sake, that Thou mightest enrich men, who chant to Thee with faith: Alleluia!

Ikos VI

Thou didst shine forth from the Virgin, Thy Mother who knew not man, shining like the sun and driving away the darkness of falsehood; for all the demons trembled, unable to withstand Thy might, and hades, beholding the miracle, was filled with terror. And we cry out to Thee in thanksgiving:

Glory to Thee, O Saviour of men!
Glory to Thee, O Destroyer of the demons!
Glory to Thee Who by Thy birth didst fill the prince of lies with dread!
Glory to Thee Who hast abolished the delusion of the idols!
Glory to Thee Who hast illumined all with the light of the knowledge of God!
Glory to Thee Who hast driven away the darkness of ignorance!

Glory to Thee, O Rock Who hast poured forth the water of salvation upon all!
Glory to Thee Who hast quenched the thirst of Adam and David!
Glory to Thee Who like the sun hast enlightened all by Thy nativity!
Glory to Thee Who hast made the whole world radiant with beams of grace!
Glory to Thee Who hast shown us the promised land!
Glory to Thee Who hast delivered us from the curse of our whole race!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becamest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion VII

Desiring to reveal to us the mystery hidden from before time began, Thou didst show the mystery to servants from all creation, O Saviour: to Gabriel from among the angels, to the Virgin from among men, to the star from among the heavens, and from an earth to the cave wherein it was Thy good pleasure to be born. Wherefore, marveling at Thine ineffable wisdom, we cry out: Alleluia!

Ikos VII

The Creator of all showed forth a new creation, revealing Himself in flesh, springing forth from a seedless womb, which He preserved incorrupt; and He showed it to be the mediation of salvation for those who chant:

Glory to Thee, O Son of God, Who hast shown her who bore Thee to be a Mother of lovingkindness!
Glory to Thee Who didst preserve her a virgin even after she gave birth!
Glory to Thee Who earnest to save Adam!
Glory to Thee Who hast comforted the tears of Eve!
Glory to Thee Who camest to save all men!
Glory to Thee Who hast shone forth an image of the resurrection!
Glory to Thee Who hast rent asunder the record of our sins!
Glory to Thee Who has given us a model of humility!
Glory to Thee Who didst impoverish Thyself for our sake!
Glory to Thee Who hast enriched us with Thy poverty!
Glory to Thee Who hast clothed us in the raiment of salvation!
Glory to Thee Who hast delighted us by Thy love!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becamest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion VIII

Seeing Thy strange and all-glorious nativity which took place in the cave, let us all the more spurn the vanities of the world, for the divine Mind appeared on earth as a humble man, that He might lead up to the heavens those who cry out to Him: Alleluia!

Ikos VIII

Thou art all desire, all delight for those who love Thee and glorify Thy divine condescension, O Christ God; for, having been born of the pure Virgin on earth, Thou ledest up into the heavens those who chant:

Glory to Thee, O Son of God, Who wast born on earth!
Glory to Thee Who wast ineffably incarnate of the Virgin!
Glory to Thee Who hast shown Thyself to us!
Glory to Thee Who summoned to Thee those afar off!
Glory to Thee, our ineffable Joy!
Glory to Thee, O delight of our hearts!
Glory to Thee Who in Thy nativity hast shone forth the light of salvation!
Glory to Thee Who didst shed tears for our salvation!
Glory to Thee Who hast thereby quenched the flame of our passions!
Glory to Thee Who hast cleansed us of the defilement of sin!
Glory to Thee Who hast set at nought our transgression!
Glory to Thee Who hast delivered us from corruption!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becomest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion IX

No mind or understanding of angels or men is able to comprehend the mystery of Thine unapproachable nativity, O Master; yet do Thou accept our love and faith, O good Master, and save us who chant unto Thee: Alleluia!

Ikos IX

We see the most eloquent of orators mute as fish when confronted by Thine incarnation, O Master; for they are at a loss how, being perfect God, thou didst appear as a perfect man, and how Thou wast born of the Virgin who knew not wedlock. But we, refusing to delve into these mysteries, glorify Thee with faith alone, crying:

Glory to Thee, O hypostatic Wisdom of God!
Glory to Thee, O ineffable Joy of all!
Glory to Thee Who didst show those lacking in wisdom to be lovers of wisdom!
Glory to Thee Who hast given understanding even to the simple!
Glory to Thee Who didst put to shame those who tested Thee!
Glory to Thee Who didst break the webs of all who devise myths!
Glory to Thee Who hast shone forth the light of divine knowledge upon all!
Glory to Thee Who didst pour forth wisdom in Thy works!
Glory to Thee Who hast enlightened the minds of many!
Glory to Thee Who hast shown us the path to salvation!
Glory to Thee, O unfathomable abyss of loving kindness!
Glory to Thee, O depth of compassions and love for mankind!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becomest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion X

Desiring to save the world which is perishing, the Adorner of all is born of the Virgin as a babe; He Who looseth the intricate bonds of transgressions is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger; and being the Son of God, He becometh the Son of the Virgin, and wisely arrangeth all things, that He might save those who chant unto Him: Alleluia!

Ikos X

Herod, the enemy of God, showed himself to be a pillar and wall of God-opposing malice and a spawn of great iniquity, who tried to slay Him Who giveth life unto all, and at his command innocent babes were reaped by the sword, like unripe grain; wherefore, having driven all malice from our hearts, let us glorify Him Who came to save us, crying:

Glory to Thee Who didst show Herod's intention to be in vain!
Glory to Thee Who hast numbered with the angels the babes he slew!
Glory to Thee, O Destroyer of malice!
Glory to Thee, O Instructor in humility and Lover of mortals!
Glory to Thee Who hast broken the horn of pride!
Glory to Thee Who hast shone the light of righteousness upon all!
Glory to Thee Who Thyself hast taught meekness and humility to all!
Glory to Thee Who hast brought all to acknowledge Thee!
Glory to Thee Who by Thy nativity didst sanctify the womb of her who bore Thee!
Glory to Thee Who didst accept the shepherds' wonder and the gifts of the Magi!
Glory to Thee Who didst teach even irrational creatures to serve Thee!
Glory to Thee Who hast sanctified all creation!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becamest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion XI

All laudation of Thine incarnation for our sake falleth short, and for those who wish to offer fitting praise, silence is better. For even were we to offer Thee hymns as numerous as the sands of the sea, O all-holy King, we would accomplish nought that is meet; wherefore, we chant with fear: Alleluia!

Ikos XI

They who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, beholding Thee the never-waning Light Who shone forth from the Virgin, were illumined by the fire of Thy divinity, and hymned Thee, the Bestower of wisdom and understanding, crying out such things as these:

Glory to Thee, O Son of God, ineffable Light!
Glory to Thee, O Sun of righteousness, Who hast enlightened all by Thy nativity!
Glory to Thee Who hast shone forth most radiant enlightenment!
Glory to Thee Who hast poured forth upon us a most torrential river of grace!
Glory to Thee Who hast richly provided the water of salvation as drink!
Glory to Thee Who hast shown to those who love Thee that Thy yoke is easy and Thy burden is light!
Glory to Thee Who hast lifted from us the weight of sin!
Glory to Thee Who hast delivered us from slavery to the enemy!
Glory to Thee Who hast filled all with gladness by Thine appearance on earth!
Glory to Thee Who hast given us consolation through rebirth!
Glory to Thee Who hast shown Thyself to us as our utmost Desire!
Glory to Thee Who hast reconciled with the Father us who are His enemies!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becamest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion XII

O our Saviour, Who didst come to give grace unto all and to loose the debts of men by Thine incarnation, loose also our debts and rend asunder the record of our sins, that we may glorify Thine ineffable nativity and chant without ceasing: Alleluia!

Ikos XII

Hymning Thy becoming man, we praise, bless and worship Thee, O our Saviour; and we believe that Thou art the Lord and God Who saveth all who hope on Thee, who glorify Thine ineffable nativity from the Virgin, and chant such things as these:

Glory to Thee, O Son of God, Who art worshiped in the highest with the Father and the Spirit!
Glory to Thee Who art glorified by all the ranks of heaven and earth!
Glory to Thee Who hast disclosed the mystery hidden from before time began!
Glory to Thee Who hast revealed Thine ineffable love for us!
Glory to Thee, O Adorner of all creation!
Glory to Thee, O our most merciful Saviour!
Glory to Thee Who makest firm the scepters of those who reign with piety on the earth!
Glory to Thee Who adornest devout hierarchs and priests with wisdom and majesty!
Glory to Thee, O foundation and confirmation of the Church!
Glory to Thee, O salvation and adornment of all the faithful!
Glory to Thee, O Physician and Healing of our bodies!
Glory to Thee, O Adorner and Saviour of our souls!
O Jesus, Son of God, Who becamest incarnate for our sake, glory be to Thee!

Kontakion XIII

Jesus all-sweet and most compassionate, our Saviour, Creator and Master! Accept this, our meager supplication, thanksgiving and glorification, as Thou didst accept the gifts and worship of the Magi; and preserve us, Thy servants, from all perils. Grant us the forgiveness of sins, and from everlasting torment deliver those who with faith glorify Thy nativity from the pure Virgin, and who cry out to Thee: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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

Prayer to Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ On the Day of His Holy Nativity

O great and unapproachable God, unoriginate
Father, Son Who art equally without beginning,
and Spirit Who art equally eternal, Who givest
being to things which were not in existence,
Who savest the
perishing, Who givest life to the dead, Who

doest what Thou willest among the hosts of
heaven and in Thine earthly habitation, and
directest all according to Thy wondrous
providence! Incline Thine ear from the heights
of Thy holiness, and accept from us, Thy lowly
and unworthy servants, to whom Thou hast

revealed Thy great salvation from misfortunes and plague, these grateful supplications, confessions and glorifications, which we offer to Thee with heart and mouth.

For Thou hast not dealt with us according to our iniquities, O Lord, neither hast Thou rewarded us according to our sins. Thou didst say of old to the children of Israel that if they would not act to keep Thy words and do all Thy commandments, Thou wouldst bring against them a nation of unashamed countenance, which would assail them in their cities until the walls thereof were broken. And we have come to realize that this dread sentence hath been directed against us and our fathers as well. For, failing to fear Thy threat and paying no heed to Thy lovingkindness, we have forsaken the path of Thy righteousness and walked in the will of our own hearts, and have made no attempt to hold Thee, the God of men's understanding and hearts, in our mind. Moreover, treating the traditions of our fathers as of no import, we have abandoned Thee for others. For these reasons, grievous ill fortune overtook us, as it did the children of Israel of old, and because we paid no heed to their lessons, mindless and savage-minded foes have come against us.

But do Thou, O compassionate and merciful Lord God, Who art long-suffering, greatly merciful and true, Who maintainest justice and workest mercy among the thousands, Who takest away iniquities, injustices and sins, having abandoned us for a little time, have mercy upon us according to Thy great mercy, and having visited our unrighteousness with the rod, as a compassionate father doth his children, so do Thou spare us. For Thou hast looked down on our tribulation, and upon our entreaties which, trusting not in our own righteousness,

but upon Thy many compassions, we cast at Thy feet O Lord; and Thou hast shown us the back of our ungodly adversaries, for, melting away before the face of Thy Christ, Thine enemies have vanished like smoke, and those who love Thee shine forth like the rising of the sun in their power. We have seen, O Lord, we have seen, and in us all nations have seen, that Thou art God, and there is none other besides Thee. Thou slayest and makest to live, Thou smitest and healest, and there is no one who can deliver from Thy hand. Wherefore, our heart hath been established in our Lord, our horn hath been lifted up in our God, and we have been gladdened in Thy salvation. We thank Thee, O Lord, that, chastizing us, Thou hast chastened us but a little, lest Thou give us over utterly unto death. Grant, O Lord, that we may hold the memory of this, Thy glorious visitation, firmly and continually within us, that made steadfast in Thee by filial fear, faith and love, and protected by Thy might, we may ever, as we do today, hymn and glorify Thy holy name.

Confirm Thy blessing also upon our civil authorities, that Thy good Spirit may continually rest upon them. In our land grant holiness unto pastors, judgment and justice to those who govern, peace and tranquility to the people, efficacy to the laws and advancement to the Faith. O Lord of all loving kindness, extend Thy mercy unto those who know Thee; and reveal Thyself even unto those who seek Thee not; turn the hearts even of our enemies unto Thee; and make Thyself known to all nations and peoples in Thy true Christ: that from the rising of the sun, even unto the setting thereof, all nations may with one heart cry out to Thee with a voice of rejoicing: Glory to Thee, the God and Saviour of all, unto the ages of ages! Amen.