

The Akathist Hymn

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 566. 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 Akathist hymn consists of praises directed to the Mother of God, beginning with the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel: "Rejoice." As the hymn is chanted all of the events related to our Lord's Incarnation pass before us for our contemplation. The Archangel Gabriel marvels at the Divine self-emptying and the renewal of creation which will occur when Christ comes to dwell in the Virgin's womb. The unborn John the Baptist prophetically rejoices. The shepherds recognize Christ as a blameless Lamb, and rejoice that in the Virgin "the things of earth join chorus with the heavens." The pagan Magi following the light of the star, praise Her for revealing the light of the world.

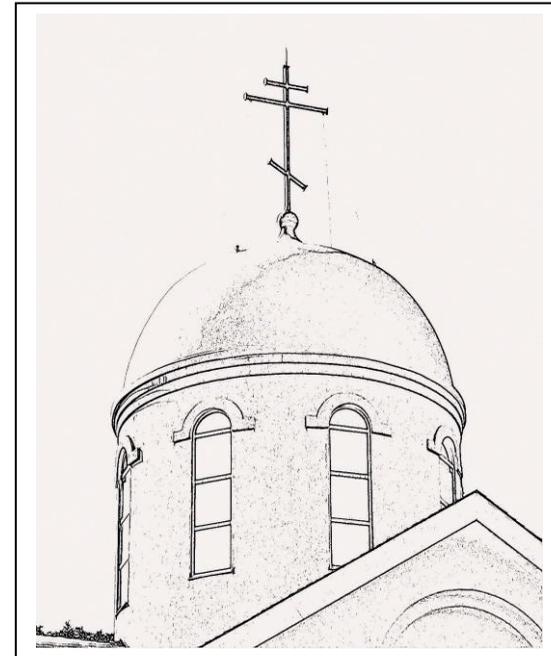
The word "akathistos" means "not sitting," i.e., standing; normally all participants stand while it is being prayed. The hymn is comprised of 24 stanzas, arranged in an acrostic following the Greek alphabet. The stanzas alternate between long and short. Each short stanza is written in prose and ends with the singing of "Alleluia." Each longer stanza ends with the refrain: "Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded."

The first part of the hymn is about the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary by the Angel. It describes Mary's surprise at the news, her visit to her mother and Joseph's doubts as to her innocence. The second part is about the birth of Christ, the worship of the Shepherds and Magi, the flight to Egypt and the visit to Saint Simeon in the Temple. In the third part the hymn directs our attention to the renewal of the world by Christ's coming, and the amazement of the Angels and the wise men at the sight of the Incarnation of God's Son. The fourth and the last part is once more a lyric and rhetorical appraisal of Virgin Mary, whom the poet adorns with the most beautiful of adjectives asking her to accept his poetical offering and to intercede for the salvation of human race from the earthly sin.

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WEEKLY



BULLETIN

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!

Troparion of the Annunciation to the Theotokos

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Matthew Petrides, *Senior Warden*

Matushka Mary Buletza-Breton, *Choir Director*

April 14, 2024
FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT
St. John Climacus (of The Ladder)

Tone 4. St. Martin the Confessor, Pope of Rome (655). Martyrs Anthony, John, and Eustathius of Vilnius (Lithuania—1347). Martyr Ardalion the Actor (4th c.). Martyr Azades the Eunuch and 1,000 Martyrs of Persia (ca. 341).

Today's Readings:

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 and Ephesians 5:9-19

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31 and Matthew 4:25-5:12

Upcoming Service Schedule:

Today – **9:00am Divine Liturgy**

Today – **5:00pm Deanery Lenten Vespers @ Bayonne**

Wednesday – **6:00pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts**

Thursday – **6:00pm Great Canon & Life of St. Mary of Egypt**

Friday – **6:00pm Akathist (Theotokos)**

Saturday – **9:00am Divine Liturgy (Akathist Hymn)**

Saturday – **6:00pm Great Vespers**

Sunday – **9:00am Divine Liturgy**

Sunday – **5:00pm Deanery Lenten Vespers @ Wayne**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 and Galatians 3:23-29

Gospel: Mark 10:32-45 and Luke 7:36-50



*Ladder of
Divine Ascent*

Annunciations

TODAY – Please join us for **Coffee Hour** in the Parish Hall after the Veneration of the Cross. **Team #2** is in charge.

TODAY – **Church School** class will be held during Coffee Hour.

TODAY – The **Lenten Food Drive** is underway. Grocery bags and lists of needed items are located both in the church narthex and in the parish hall.

TODAY – The **Deanery Lenten Mission Vespers** will be served at Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Bayonne at 5:00 PM. Archbishop Michael will preside. Father Gary welcomes anyone who wishes to accompany him on the trip up and back.

THIS WEDNESDAY - The **Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts** will be served at 6:00pm. An agape pot-luck meal will follow, to which everyone is invited to bring a Lenten dish.

We are in the midst of Great Lent during which we are encouraged to participate in the **Lenten discipline of fasting** from meat and dairy until the Great Feast of Holy Pascha. All fasting should be undertaken with regard to each person's ability to tolerate its physical demands. If you have questions about the Lenten discipline, please contact Father Gary for further clarification.

If we wish to receive the **Eucharist at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts**, some fasting should precede the reception. Ideally, no food or drink should be taken from the midnight prior to the service. If this is not possible, then fasting after a light breakfast or an early lunch is advised.

Many thanks to those who participated in yesterday's **Parish Clean-up Day**. Much was accomplished. The **next clean-up day** will take place in June.

Dessert Rolls are available for sale. Please speak with Cathy Berger or Olga Pasick to make purchases today.

Next Sunday – The **Deanery Lenten Mission Vespers** will be served at Holy Resurrection Church in Wayne at 5:00 PM. Archbishop Michael will preside.

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Special Prayers

We pray for **all** our parish family members, but we pray especially for those who are ill and afflicted. Among them are **Mary Herelick, Zoran Pejovic, Betty James, Manya Shark, Deryl Tczap, Mary Tczap, George Stavrou, Margaret Makara, Dennis & Ann Marie Gahr, Michael Getmanov, Alan Diaz, Mary Ann Sivilic, Ellen Norman, and Lori Ratushnik.**

We are happy that you have joined us for worship today and hope that you will join us for Coffee Hour after the veneration of the Cross. **The reception of the Holy Eucharist** is only for baptized members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared with prayer, fasting, and periodic confession. You are encouraged to receive the blessed bread that is offered at the end of the service and which may also be offered to you by one of your neighbors during Communion.

MANY YEARS

Birthdays this week:

Monday – James Petrides

Wednesday – Deborah Anderson

***Please pray for vocations to
the Holy Priesthood!***