

**THE OFFICE OF
THE AKATHIST HYMN TO THEOTOKOS,
NURTURER OF CHILDREN**

****INSTRUCTIONS****

An icon of the Theotokos is placed on a stand in the middle of the solea. The candles are lit and the church is semi-illuminated. The censer is used during the stases of the Akathist Hymn.

Priest: Blessed is our God always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.
...or in the absence of a Priest

Reader: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

Choir: Amen.

Reader: Glory to Thee, O God, glory to Thee.
O heavenly King, the Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present, and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life, come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity; and save our souls, O good one.

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (THRICE)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.
Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come; 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 the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and
of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.
...or in the absence of a Priest

Reader: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

Choir: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve Times*)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

- *A metania is made after each verse below.*

Reader: Come, let us worship and fall down before God our King.
Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.
Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God.

- *The Priest goes to stand at the chanters stand.*

PSALM 50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy Great Mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness. O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with whole-burnt offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure unto Zion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be built up. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

THE NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried. And on the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose Kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THEOTOKION (Plain Reading)

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, who art ever-blessed and all-blameless, and the mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Thou who without corruption bearest God the Word; and art truly Theotokos: we magnify thee.

KONTAKION 1

Priest/Reader: Victorious Leader and Good Nurturer of the Christian race, we Thy servants, delivered from evil, sing out grateful thanks to Thee. But as Thou hast invincible might deliver my children from all dangers that with tears I may cry to Thee: Raise my children (names), to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven, and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

IKOS 1

Priest/Reader: Intercede with Thy Son and God, O most Holy One, that an angel from heaven be sent to my children, just as to Thee was sent a most mighty protector, the Archangel Gabriel; and vouchsafe me to cry to Thee thus:

Raise my children to be earthly angels.

Raise my children to be heavenly men.

Raise my children to be Thy servants.

Raise my children to cry out to Thee:

“Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee!”

Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom Of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 2

Priest/Reader: As thou seest my maternal entreaty for my children, begging help of Thee alone; do Thou take them under Thine honorable and compassionate protection, that we may cry to God: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 2

Priest/Reader: Send my children understanding, that they may know how to serve Thee well; fill their hearts with heavenly wisdom and grant that they may love it alone and scorn the things of the world. Do not hinder my lips from crying such things as these:

Raise my children to be wise as serpents and as innocent as doves.

Raise my children to have knowledge of good but not of sin.

Raise my children to be wise against the snares of the devil.

Raise my children to order their lives wisely, following the examples of the saints.

Raise my children, nourishing them with the milk of the hidden wisdom of God, that they may seek it all of their lives.

Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings

KONTAKION 3

Priest/Reader: May the power of the Most High overshadow my children through Thine unceasing intercession before Thy Son, and on account of this, having come to know Thy maternal compassion towards all who run to God with faith, may they cry to God: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 3

Priest/Reader: Having received my children from God, I do not desire to behold them dwelling in eternal torment, but rather to see them written in the Book of Life and made inheritors of eternal life. For Thy sake, O Most Pure Virgin, incline Thine ear to my supplication, as I cry to Thee:

Raise my children to flee eternal torment.

Raise my children to inherit life eternal.

Raise my children to pass the course of their life in Repentance.

Raise my children to labor to acquire the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Raise my children to exert effort to attain the Kingdom of Heaven.

Raise my children to be written in the Book of Life.

Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 4

Priest/Reader: Having within a tempest of doubting thoughts, and wanting to give my children to drink of eternal life, I weep. Thus, having remembered Thy most rich mercies, I sing to Thy Son with hope and with a contrite heart: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 4

Priest/Reader: Having heard Thy voice, crying to Thy Son, “Preserve in Thine inheritance those whom Thou hast given me unto the ages,” I stretch out my hands and my heart towards Thy loving-kindness, entreating that Thou wilt keep my children among Thy servants, and fulfill these my petitions:

Raise my children in thy most holy inheritance.

Raise my children with all Thy Saints.

Raise my children to be Thy servants, fulfilling all Thy commands.

Raise my children to seek help from Thee alone.

Raise my children to inherit eternal life.

Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 5

Priest/Reader: May the Morning Star, which is Thy Son, O Most Holy Virgin, shine with unfading light in the hearts of my children, that they may cry to God: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 5

Priest/Reader: Having seen my diligent supplication rising like incense to Thy glory, turn not Thy face away from my children, though they turn away from Thee, but all the more, hear the cry of my lips, singing to Thee:

Raise my children to be poor in spirit, that they May inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.
Raise my children to weep, that they may be comforted.
Raise my children to be meek, that they may inherit the earth.
Raise my children to hunger and thirst after righteousness, that they may be filled.
Raise my children to be merciful, that they may obtain mercy.
Raise my children to be pure in heart, that they may see God.
Raise my children to be peacemakers, that they may be called the sons of God.
Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 6

Priest/Reader: All we the faithful ever proclaim Thee the defense of orphans, widows and mothers, and of all Thy children who pray and cry out to Thee: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 6

Priest/Reader: With rays of grace teach my children so that enlightened by Thee on high they may see they path leading to life eternal and follow on it, nourished beneath Thine all-powerful protection in the Church of Thy Son where there is unending light. For the sake of this, hear me who dost cry to Thee thus:

Raise my children to be the light of the world, that their light may shine before men, and that seeing their good deeds, men will glorify their Father in Heaven.
Raise my children to be the light of the world, that their light may shine before men, and that seeing their good deeds, men will glorify their Father in Heaven.
Raise my children to be enlightened by Thy Son, that in His light they may see light and direct their steps towards Him.
Raise my children always to turn the eyes of their heart to the Redeemer of all.
Raise my children to be guided to the habitation of the Righteous by the Morning Star which is Thy Son.
Raise my children to be meek and silent and to tremble before the word of God.
Raise my to love Thee and Thy Son not only with their minds but also with their Hearts.
Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 7

Priest/Reader: Desiring for my children eternal salvation, with tears I stand before Thy most honorable icon, O Lady, that disdain not my supplication, thou wilt cry to Thy Son: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 7

Priest/Reader: By the wondrous and incomprehensible action of Thy Son, lead my children with Thy merciful hand beneath Thy gracious protection, that with sincerity I may cry to Thee:

Raise my children to seek first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness.

Raise my children to walk the narrow way leading to life eternal.

Raise my children to do the will of Thy Son and God in every place.

Raise my children to long to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

Raise my children to be numbered among Thy chosen ones.

Raise my children (names), of Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 8

Priest/Reader: Where will my children, wandering in the greatly perilous and stormy valley of the world, receive joy and consolation, if not in Thee, O Most Pure One. Travel with them and teach them the true path, that they may cry to God: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 8

Priest/Reader: To all art Thou a merciful Mother, O Lady, and I desire that I may become Thy child. Thus I place my children in Thy hands and in humility I beg of Thee:

Raise my children to keep vigil and pray that they may not fall into temptation.

Raise my children to be merciful so that their Father in Heaven will be merciful to them.

Raise my children in purity of childhood, for to children belongs the Kingdom of God.

Raise my children to be the least of all, that they may be great before God.

Raise my children to fulfill the Word of God,

and to be partakers of the heavenly blessedness for which they came into being.

Raise my children to have good hope in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 9

Priest/Reader: Fill the souls and hearts of my children with all good, driving away from them the spirit of evil atheism, giving to each of them as is needed from Thy compassion toward all, that I may cry to God: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 9

Priest/Reader: Deliver my children from association with falsely-theorizing orators, who speak lies about Thine all-powerful intercession, and look upon me, faithfully singing:

Raise my children to love Thee with all their hearts and minds.

Raise my children to open their lips only in the praise and glory of Thy blessings.

Raise my children to await the coming of Thy Son with tears.

Raise my children in watchful and continual prayer.

Raise my children to stand always before Thee with reverence.

Raise my children to bear good fruit.

Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 10

Priest/Reader: Desiring to save the world, Thy Son came from heaven to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. For the sake, of this, pray to Thy Son that having been saved through Thee my children may call to God: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 10

Priest/Reader: Surround my children with indestructible walls, O Heavenly Queen, that under Thy blessed protection, they may accomplish a multitude of good deeds, and that with them I may cry to Thee thus:

Raise my children to be leaders in doing the will of Thy Son and God.

Raise my children to hate sin and all transgression.

Raise my children to love good and all virtue.

Raise my children in blameless purity.

Raise my children to ascend the ladder of their lives every day.

Raise my children to turn their eyes to Thy compassion in the midst of sorrows.

Raise my children to serve Thee in obedience and chastity.

Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 11

Priest/Reader: Make my children (names) worthy always to hymn Thine unshakable intercession, and through Thy grace direct their lips to sing to God: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 11

Priest/Reader: O Shining lamp from on high, make the lives of my children to burn and their hearts to melt day and night with love for Thee, and Thy Son, and for their neighbors, and disdain me not who cry to Thee:

Raise my children to love Thee with all their hearts and minds.
Raise my children to open their lips only in the praise and glory of Thy blessings.
Raise my children in watchful and continual Prayer.
Raise my children to stand always before Thee with reverence.
Raise my children to bear good fruit.
Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven
and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 12

Priest/Reader: Fill the hearts of my children with the inexpressible grace of the Holy Spirit, so that they may love only Thy Son and God, and Thee, O Most Good One, that being inspired by Thee, I may cry to the King of all: Alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia!

IKOS 12

Priest/Reader: Singing of Thy loving-kindness, I pray Thee, who feeds and hast mercy on my children; cease not to intercede for them with Thy Son, for I believe that all is possible for Thee, and do Thou fulfill these my entreaties:

Raise my children to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
Raise my children to be found on the right hand at the Judgement Seat of Thy Son.
Raise my children to live in a holy manner.
Raise my children to dwell securely on the path of faith by the grace of the Spirit of God.
Raise my children to dwell securely on the path of faith by the grace of the Spirit of God.
Raise my children to hunger and thirst insatiably for the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.
Raise my children to perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect.
Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

KONTAKION 13

Priest/Reader: O All Hymned Mother of our Sweetest Jesus! Accept this small hymn of supplication for my children as a sweet fragrance and take them under Thy compassionate protection. Grant them to think, know, near, say and do, only that which brings them close to Thee and Thy Son, and helps them attain eternal salvation. And send them in this present life all that is profitable for the salvation of their souls, that they may cry to God: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! (*This Kontakion is chanted three times*)

Choir: Alleluia!

KONTAKION 1

Priest/Reader: Victorious Leader and Good Nurturer of the Christian race, we Thy servants, delivered from evil, sing out grateful thanks to Thee. But as Thou hast invincible might deliver my children from all dangers that with tears I may cry to Thee:

Raise my children (names), to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven, and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

IKOS 1

Priest/Reader: Intercede with Thy Son and God, O most Holy One, that an angel from heaven be sent to my children, just as to Thee was sent a most mighty protector, the Archangel Gabriel; and vouchsafe me to cry to Thee thus:

Raise my children to be earthly angels.

Raise my children to be heavenly men.

Raise my children to be Thy servants.

Raise my children to cry out to Thee:

“Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord with Thee!”

Raise my children (names), O Lady, to be made worthy of the Kingdom Of Heaven and make them heirs of eternal blessings.

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (THRICE)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name’s sake.

Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come; 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 the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

...or in the absence of a Priest

Reader: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

Choir: Amen.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Choir: More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Thou who without corruption bearest God the Word; and art truly Theotokos: we magnify thee.

DISMISSAL in the absence of a Priest

Reader: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

Choir: Amen.

Choir: Bless, Father, in the Name of the Lord.

Priest: May God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, and be merciful unto us.

Choir: Amen.

THE DISMISSAL

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to Thee.

Choir: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy (*thrice*). Father, bless.

- *Facing the congregation, the Priest says:*

Priest: May Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; at the supplication of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; *of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community*; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

Choir: Amen.

- *The faithful now come forward to venerate the central icon and receive a blessing from the priest, as the choir sings a Dismissal Hymn.*
- *After all have passed, the Priest faces the icon of Christ and says:*

Priest: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

Choir: Amen.

*A Prayerful Sighing of Parents
For Their Children*

LORD Jesus Christ, Son of God, for the sake of the prayers of Thy Most Pure Mother, hearken unto me, Thine unworthy servant (name), O Lord, govern in mercy my children, Thy servants (names). Have mercy on them and save them, for Thy name's sake.

O Lord, forgive them all their transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, that they may be perfected before Thee. O Lord, set them on the true path of Thy commandments and enlighten their minds with the Light of Christ unto salvation of their souls and the healing of their bodies.

Bless them, O Lord, at home, at school, in their journeys and in every place of Thy dominion. Preserve and shelter them, O Lord, from flying bullets, arrows, the sword, poison and fire, from mortal wounds and sudden death. Guard them, O Lord, from all visible and invisible enemies, and from all danger, evil and misfortune.

Heal them O Lord, from all sickness, deliver them from every impurity, and lighten their spiritual sufferings. Grant them, O Lord, the grace of Thy Holy Spirit and a long life; grant them health and chastity in all piety and love, and to live in accord with all their neighbors, near and far.

Multiply and strengthen them, O Lord, in mental ability and bodily strength, given to them by Thee. Bless them to lead a pious life and, if it is pleasing to Thee, grant them married life and honorable childbearing.

For Thy name's sake, O Lord, give me, Thy sinful and unworthy servant, a parental blessing for my children and Thy servants, both in this present time, morning, noon and night, and also in Thine eternal, almighty and all-powerful Kingdom.

Amen. O God, Maker of all creation, Thou hast made me worthy to be the mother of a family, and through Thy goodness hast bestowed children upon me; and so I dare to say: these children are Thine, for Thou hast given them being, hast infused them with an immortal soul, and hast raised them to life through baptism.

And in accordance with Thy will Thou hast adopted them and received them into the bosom of Thy Church. Send down to me Thy gracious help in raising my children, for the glory of Thy name. Bestow on me patience and strength to do Thy will.

Teach me to plant in their hearts the root of true wisdom-the fear of the Lord-that all their lives they may tremble at Thy words. Open to them the understanding of Thy law. Until the end of their days let them act with the sense that Thou art everywhere present.

Plant in their hearts loathing for every transgression, that they may be pure in their signs. O Righteous Judge, who punishes children for the sins, but sprinkle them with the dew of Thy grace.

O Heavenly Father, order the fate of my children according to Thy blessings, do not deprive them in this life of their daily bread, send down to them in due time all that is necessary for the acquisition of blessings in eternity.

Be merciful to them, when they sin before Thee; look not upon the sins of their youth and ignorance; chastise them and have mercy on them, but turn not Thy face away from them.

Turn not Thy face from them in the day of their tribulation, that they may not fall into temptations beyond their strength.

Cover them with Thy mercy, that Thine Angel may walk with them and preserve them.

Abandon not my children, O Lord, and give them that which is profitable for salvation.

Amen.

Prayer to the Mother of God

O Most Holy Lady Virgin Theotokos, do Thou save and preserve under Thy protection my children (names), all youths and infants, baptized and unnamed, and those in their mother's wombs. Cover them with Thy maternal garment, preserve them in the fear of God and in obedience to their parents. Entreat my Lord and Thy Son that He may give them that which is profitable for their salvation. I entrust them to Thy maternal care, for Thou art a Divine protection for Thy servants.

Prayer to the Guardian Angel

O Holy Angel, Guardian of my children (names), keep under Thy protection my children (names) from demonic arrows, and from the eyes of the seducer, and preserve their hearts in angelic purity. Amen, amen, amen.