

The Salutations to the Theotokos

Katavasias (Canon): “My Mouth I Shall Open Up”
from the Akathist Service

Translated so that it will work with any Greek version melody.

Modern English Translation by N. Takis

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Ode One

1. My mouth shall I open up, and by the Spirit shall I be filled; and words shall pour forth from me unto the Mother and Queen. Then shall I be seen in gladsome celebration, and joyfully I shall sing, praising her miracles.
2. Pure Maiden, beholding you, the great Archangel called out to You: “Rejoice, for in you is held all of our gladness and joy!” Living Book of Christ, the Spirit has confirmed you, for you have removed the curse wrought by the Mother, Eve.
3. Rejoice, Virgin Bride of God, the restoration of Adam’s fall. To Hades do you bring death, all-blameless Maiden. Rejoice, for our only God has made of you his palace. Rejoice, the Almighty One makes of you His fiery Throne.
4. Rejoice Maiden; you alone have blossomed forth the Unfading Rose. Rejoice, for to you was born the Apple fragrant and sweet, for the King of all has found you to be pleasing. Rejoice, never-wedded Bride, Ransom of all the world.
5. O Treasure of Purity, rejoice! Through you are we lifted up. Most delicate Lily are you, Maiden; sweet is your scent, filling all the faithful with your gentle fragrance! O most precious Myrrh of all, incense beyond compare.

Ode Three

1. Make steadfast, O Holy Theotokos, our living and never-failing Spring, the chorus that is gathered here to sing your praise in one accord, and by the glory God gave you, let them be worthy of glory's crowns.

2. From you, who are untilled Land, has burst forth the wheat that is holy and divine. You, Maiden, are a living Table, who has held the Bread of Life. You are a never-failing Spring of Living Water: to you we cry.

3. Rejoice, Mother, who has given birth to the Calf that is free from any sin. Rejoice, you are the Mother of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of all the world. Rejoice! O greatest Mercy of faithful men.

4. O Daybreak most radiant, rejoice! You alone did give birth to Christ the Sun! Rejoice, for in you dwells the Light that has dispelled the gloom of night, and banished to oblivion the darkened ranks of demonic hosts.

5. Rejoice, for you are the only Gate through which none but the Word of God has passed. Rejoice, you are the Holy Entrance of the Saved, and ever-praised, for you have by your giving birth torn down the gates and the bars of hell.

Ode Four

1. Jesus, God above all others, has appeared on a cloud of light in His holy glory, seated on a throne of divinity. And He has given salvation by His spotless hands to those crying to Him: Glory, O Christ, to your mighty pow'r!

2. We in faith raise up our voices, singing praises to you. Rejoice: Worthy of all praises! Mountain that is rich with the Spirit's grace! Rejoice, O lamp and rejoice, O Vessel: filled are you with the manna so sweet that has delight for all righteous men.

3. Mercy-Seat of all creation, Purest Maiden, are you: Rejoice! Ladder, which has raised up everything on earth by your grace: Rejoice! You are the Bridge that has truly led the way from death into Life for all who sing your praises in hymns. Rejoice!

4. More exalted than the heavens are you, Maiden Immaculate, free from pain of childbirth, bearing the Foundation of all the earth. Rejoice, O Seashell that colored in your virgin blood the divine crimson robe worn by the King of angelic pow'rs.

5. Truly Maiden, you have brought forth Him who set down the law to us, granting to all sinners pardon from transgressions against the law. The Depth we never can fathom, and the Height beyond words! Bride Unwedded, rejoice! We are made children of God through you.

6. For the world's sake, have you woven a pure crown fashioned not by man. With our hymns we praise you, crying out "Rejoice!" Virgin Bride, to you. You are the fortification and defending wall, and the strength of men, the sacred refuge of all mankind.

Ode Five

1. Creation beheld amazed to see you, ever-Virgin Bride, seated in the midst of holy glory, for in your womb you have held the God of all; from you comes the everlasting Son, who bestows salvation unto all who sing praise to you.

2. Rejoice, Maiden ever-pure, who has brought forth the Way of Life, saving all of mankind from the torrent of our transgressions; Rejoice O Bride of God! Too awesome to speak of or to hear! Who has been a place of rest for the Master of all the world.

3. Rejoice, Maiden free from sin, the fortress and the strength of men! Brightest Chamber and delight of angels. A blessed temple to hold the Glory of God! Rejoice! You have put an end to death, and you are the source of help to the faithful who call to you.

4. Rejoice, Maiden, for the fiery chariot of the Word are you! In you has the Tree of Life been planted, which is the Lord God, O Living Paradise! His sweetness grants life to all mankind who in faith partake of Him, though corruption has held them fast.

5. Made firm by your power we cry out to you with faithful hearts, City of the King of all creation! Rejoice, O Mountain that is not hewn by man! Rejoice, O unfathomable Depth! Glorious and wonderful are the things that are told of you.

6. Rejoice, Purest Maiden, spacious Tabernacle of the Word; Seashell that has brought forth the Divine Pearl! O Theotokos, most wondrous miracle who truly has reconciled with God all of those who call you blest at all times and in ev'ry age.

Ode Six

1. Ye godly minded, come clap your hands, and join in celebration of this most honored, sacred festival, and let the Mother of God be praised, and let us sing the glory of God who is her Son.
2. O Bridal Chamber that holds the Word, you are for all your people the source of godliness, All-Purest One! You are the Truth of the Prophets' words; Rejoice, for you adorn the Apostles with your grace.
3. From you has flowed forth the godly dew, extinguishing the flames of the adoration of the pagan gods. For this, O Virgin, we cry Rejoice! You are the dewy fleece as foretold by Gideon.
4. We cry Rejoice, calling out to you to be a port and haven for all who sail upon the stormy sea, engulfed by sorrows and stumbling blocks and by deceits unnumbered the enemy has set.
5. From you come all joy and happiness; be gracious to our hearts and our minds that we may cry Rejoice to you who are the Bush that will not be burned! You are the Cloud most brilliant which shelters faithful men.

Ode Seven

1. Bravely trampling down the fiery flames, the godly-minded youths would not bow down before creations wrought by men, but steadfast, to God alone, Maker of all, they bowed, as they sang with joy, "O Lord most praised, who is the God of our fathers, you are blessed."

2. With our voices raised in hymns of praise, we cry to you, Rejoice, O Chariot that carries forth the living Sun. The true vine that brings forth fruit: clusters of ripened grapes flowing sweet with wine and making glad the souls of those who in faith sing out your glory.

3. From you, Bride of God, the Healer of mankind is born. Rejoice, O mystic Rod: from you the never-fading Rose has budded and blossomed forth. Mankind is filled with joy, crying out to you: "Rejoice, Our Lady, for through you, we are heirs of life eternal."

4. All the tongues of men cannot acclaim you worthily, Our Lady, who is raised yet higher than the Seraphim in bringing forth Christ the King; Ask Him for our sakes to deliver us from every harm that threatens us, who in faith bow down before you.

5. All the world sings praise, Pure Maiden, unto you, and cries out blessing you. Rejoice! You are the Scroll on which the Word is penned by the Father's Hand. Mother of God, we ask you implore your Son to enter in the Book of Life all the names of those who serve you.

6. We your servants come, entreating you on bended knee, with hearts bowed down to you. Incline your ear to our prayer, and save us from sinking down, drowning in suffering, and preserve your flock; and, Theotokos, guard your City from all foes that assault her.

Ode Eight

1. The holy children cast into the furnace were saved, Theotokos, by the Child born of you. He, who was foreshadowed then, now upon the earth has come, and all creation gathers near that we may sing to Him. Let all His works now sing the Lord's praises, and exalt Him greatly from ages to all ages.

2. Pure Maiden, in your womb have you received Him, the Word, and have given birth to Him who bears all things. He Who at your breast took milk, now through you doth feed the world, by His own will, and unto Him does all creation cry: Let all His works now sing the Lord's praises, and exalt Him greatly from ages to all ages.

3. Moses in the burning bush perceived the great Mystery of a child being born of you, Holy Virgin undefiled. In a clear foreshadowing, the children standing in the flames were unconsumed by fire. For this we sing a hymn of your praises, and exalt you greatly from ages to all ages.

4. We who by deceit are left unclothed have been robed in a garment free from any stain of sin. Seated in the dark of sin, we have come to see the light, for in you, Maiden full of grace, is the abode of Light! For this we sing a hymn of your praises, and exalt you greatly from ages to all ages.

5. Through you, are the dead brought back to life, for from you has been born the One Who is Himself the Life. Speechless men are made to speak; lepers have been purified, all of the spirits that are lurking in the air depart, and all disease is cast off, defeated, for you are, O Virgin, humanity's salvation!

6. Pure Maiden, who brought forth the world's salvation, through you we are raised from earth unto the heaven's heights. Ever-blessed One, rejoice! Shelter and protecting veil, a wall and rampart you have been to those who sing to you. Let all His works now sing the Lord's praises, and exalt Him greatly from ages to all ages.

Ode Nine

1. Let all men on earth in spirit leap up for joy, with festal torches lit. Let angelic ranks rejoice, and with due honor, celebrate this festival, and on this holy feast, sing praises to the Mother of God. Let them cry out, Maiden ever-blest, rejoice! Theotokos, most pure, ever-blest are you.

2. Save us from all harm, all evil and enemies which threaten mortal men, coming on the heels of sins too great to number which befall humanity. And let the faithful who believe in you call out Rejoice! as partakers of the everlasting joy that through you is bestowed over all mankind.

3. You have come to us as our confirmation and our brightly shining light, wherefore unto You we call, "Rejoice, Pure Virgin," Never-setting Star are you which to the world has given forth the greatest Sun of all. Fiery Pillar leading us to life above, who reopened the Gates into Paradise.

4. Let us stand in awe as we in the Temple of the Lord cry out to you. Queen of all the world, Rejoice! Rejoice, O Mary, Vessel of unending myrrh which has been emptied into you, and so we cry out Rejoice! Our Lady, Purest and most beautiful among women are you who have known no sin.

5. Gentle Dove, rejoice, for God the Compassionate has been brought forth from you. Ever-Virgin Maiden, Hail! The Crown of martyrs, Glory of the saints are you, and the divine adornment of all just and righteous men. We the faithful come before you crying out, O Salvation of those who believe: Rejoice!

6. Overlook our sins! Forgive your inheritance, O God, and heed the prayer of her who has without seed on earth conceived You. She has come before you now to plead for us, O Christ, her Son, who has for mankind's sake in Your mercy chosen to become a man, and be clothed in a form that is not your own.