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Akathist Hymn Honoring the Epistles of Saint Paul

Kontakion 1

O God, we awake into a glorious morning and retire into a peaceful night when we have within our reach the words of Your faithful servant, the zealous and bountiful Saint Paul the Apostle. May his Epistles illuminate the darkness and may each day open to wheat fields ready for harvest, while we walk together on the road to Damascus with our sight restored unto salvation and therefore our lives freed from bondage, for we say:

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Ikos 1

To know Christ and Him Crucified, and thereby resolving beforehand to be fruitful at all times and in all places, is to be a stable disciple of Christ and a blessed member of His true family. Saint Paul, you were called to

apostleship in Christ and to fulfill your part in His Church, so that all generations might work out their salvation. We also wish to know Christ, for only in His sacrifice shall we find life and love:

Rejoice, called forth as a preacher after the Resurrection and Ascension.

Rejoice, sent out as a missionary by land and sea and as far as Spain.

Rejoice, disciple of Jesus Christ though not one of the Twelve.

Rejoice, apostle of the Church though not present at Pentecost.

Rejoice, for you courageously stood firm in the glad news.

Rejoice, for you remained in the flesh for the sake of mankind.

Rejoice, for we celebrate with you as the fruits of your mission.

Rejoice, for we unite with you as like-minded and of one accord.

Rejoice, victorious over depravity and the powers of darkness.

Rejoice, triumphant over divisions and the promoters of deviation.

Rejoice, teacher of that which leads to eternal life in Heaven.

Rejoice, laborer to make every believer holy and perfect.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 2

Saint Paul, you entrusted the Deaconess Phoebe to deliver your Epistle to the Romans. Because of this dedicated woman, your words went forth: “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to

faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” And therefore Phoebe joyfully said: Alleluia.

Ikos 2

You understood evangelism, Saint Paul, for you found strength in the Cross of Christ and in His mercy, in His message of sacrificial love for sinners and in His gift of salvation, and of this we are not ashamed but we respond with faith and gratitude. Saint Paul, we who live in Christ do not live in misery, even though we suffer hardship and hostility, for we reach for your Epistles and we are drawn back to the source of all fortitude and tranquility, even Christ our Lord:

Rejoice, for belief erases shame.

Rejoice, for love builds disciples.

Rejoice, for faith overcomes wretchedness.

Rejoice, for sacrifice saves souls.

Rejoice, for humility conquers ingratitude.

Rejoice, for compassion nurtures hearts.

Rejoice, for hope defeats futility.

Rejoice, for dedication fulfills life.

Rejoice, for salvation includes the unfortunate.

Rejoice, for redemption reaches the undesirable.

Rejoice, for prayer connects sinners and solitaires.

Rejoice, for worship unites seekers and strangers.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 3

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility,

not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” And all the beloved in Rome said: Alleluia.

Ikos 3

Just as the Romans were honored to receive your Epistle, we also welcome this spiritual marvel into our churches and homes. You knew suffering, Saint Paul, and now you know glory, and because of the road to Damascus you knew Christ and Him Crucified and thereby gained your purpose in life. Yet, you regarded your suffering as not worthy of Eternity. Our suffering also is not worthy compared to the glory that awaits the saints, for you speak to us as saints and as the children of God:

Rejoice, apostle of Christ who sacrificed for the sake of everlasting life.

Rejoice, saint of God who anticipated the deliverance of all creation.

Rejoice, sender of holy letters who began as a persecutor of Christians.

Rejoice, greeter of Christians who was then persecuted for the Faith.

Rejoice, for in former days you walked according to the law of sin.

Rejoice, for in the days of your ministry the Lord was with you.

Rejoice, for if we obey the flesh we shall die.

Rejoice, for when we are led by the Spirit we cry out, "Father."

Rejoice, educated in Jerusalem and a member of the Synagogue.

Rejoice, Jewish convert to the Church and a follower of the Way.

Rejoice, rejected by Jewish leaders and a preacher of the Kingdom.

Rejoice, citizen of Rome and a servant of the brethren in Christ.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 4

“And we know that all things work together for the good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Saint Paul, all those who love God, everyone who is called, no matter their nationality, both men and women, including children, we all say: Alleluia.

Ikos 4

Saint Paul, from the pit of our sins, in the midst of our earthly tribulations, and because we are tempted by the devil to do things which we already know are destructive, we forget that we have been called to God’s purpose. We forsake the glorious mornings and the peaceful nights, and we neglect the Epistle to the Romans which was preserved for us that we might know truth. Therefore, may we

quickly arise to God's calling while we have the breath of life:

Rejoice, for Christ is risen from the dead not for Himself but for us.

Rejoice, for Christ is the Head of the Church into which we are baptized.

Rejoice, for Christ spoke to you as the One Whom you were persecuting.

Rejoice, for Christ set you apart for the purpose of spreading the Gospel.

Rejoice, for you regarded yourself as the chief of all sinners.

Rejoice, for God called you to a purpose greater than yourself.

Rejoice, for you responded with your entire being.

Rejoice, for God worked everything to your good and for mankind.

Rejoice, for we treasure the New Testament.

Rejoice, for we see Christ in the Old Testament also.

Rejoice, for light casts out darkness.

Rejoice, for prayer closes up distances.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 5

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely; does not seek its own, is not provoked; thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquities, but rejoices in truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Thus you wrote, Saint Paul, in your First Epistle to the Corinthians. This community had severe problems, even to the extent that it seemed incompatible to be both Corinthian and Christian. Nevertheless, you instructed them and also corrected them as appropriate, so that every Corinthian might truly say: Alleluia.

Ikos 5

Whether we admit or not, Saint Paul, some of us are also Corinthians, enmeshed in the world around us more than immersed in the cycle of Church feast days. Some of the baptized Corinthians had returned to avarice and carnality, they were disorderly during worship in church, and were generally argumentative. Saint Paul, you became aware of the situation because those of Chloe's household contacted you. Therefore, when you sent your Epistle to the people of Corinth, Chloe gave thanks to God. We also praise God for the edifying words which we have inherited:

Rejoice, trustworthy writer of letters for the faithful and the wayward.

Rejoice, responsive apostle to the needs of each community.

Rejoice, consistent model of the love of Christ among the people.

Rejoice, valid admonishment of those living in unspeakable sins.

Rejoice, for God assigned you a great responsibility and privilege.

Rejoice, for you related to others through your gift of literary skill.

Rejoice, for God gave you the grace to proceed to the end.

Rejoice, for you suffered many things for the sake of His calling.

Rejoice, fellow worker in the fields of God.

Rejoice, wise builder on the cornerstone of Christ.

Rejoice, begetter of children through the Gospel.

Rejoice, fool for Christ and barren without Him.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 6

Saint Paul, you felt compelled to write a Second Epistle to the Corinthians, for some were undermining your God-given role as an apostle. There were false apostles, pretending to be what they were not and wanting to dominate hearts and minds. In response, you wrote: “Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” And to this the Corinthians said: Alleluia.

Ikos 6

The road to Damascus, your journeys and your sufferings, your preaching and your letters: all proofs, if necessary, Saint Paul, of your true love for Christ and your excellent service to the Church. What anguish you must have felt, on a human level, to be diminished in a church which you yourself had founded. Yet, you wrote to the Corinthians not to grieve them but to make

them glad in Christ. Your triumph was in Christ and now you partake in Heavenly joy:

Rejoice, for you acquired all strength in Christ our Savior.

Rejoice, for you received all consolation in Christ our Shepherd.

Rejoice, for you gained all abundance in Christ our Lord.

Rejoice, for you absorbed all wisdom in Christ our King.

Rejoice, for though you never fished with nets in the sea, you were an apostle like Andrew.

Rejoice, for though you never stood at the foot of the Cross, you were an apostle like John.

Rejoice, for though you never hastened to the empty tomb, you were an apostle like Peter.

Rejoice, for though you never touched the side of Christ, you were an apostle like Thomas.

Rejoice, for infirmity bids wholeness.

Rejoice, for adversity extends faith.

Rejoice, for need invites completion.

Rejoice, for persecution brings Heaven.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 7

Saint Paul, to this day there are Christians who prefer sternness over a spiritual disposition. When you wrote the Epistle to the Galatians, you said: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And, those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.” We therefore choose life and we thank you for your affirmation of true Christian virtues, saying: Alleluia.

Ikos 7

Let us be filled with love, joy and peace, not with opinionated judgments of one another, and not with fleshly tendencies rather than spiritual qualities. Help us to be true Christians, Saint Paul, inwardly and outwardly, not only when we are admired but also when we are rejected, not just on Sunday but also in public throughout the week, and not for status but for service. Saint Paul, we implore you to direct us to the Gospels and the Epistles, to guide us to wise authorities and nurturing friendships, so that we never go astray but pray unceasingly:

Rejoice, inward man of virtue and a prayerful disposition.

Rejoice, outward man of impeccable conduct toward the brethren.

Rejoice, encourager of true religion and not an instigator of conflict.

Rejoice, doer of the will of God without envy of any man's gifts.

Rejoice, for you fought the good fight with a clean conscience.

Rejoice, for you persevered through all encounters and challenges.

Rejoice, for you sought purity and avoided pleasures and hypocrisy.

Rejoice, for you wished to please God and bring everyone to Christ.

Rejoice, teacher of truths which are sacred and everlasting.

Rejoice, believer in the promises of God and love of neighbor.

Rejoice, crucifier of the flesh with its inappropriate cravings.

Rejoice, caretaker of churches and beautifier of souls.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 8

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom you are also being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” And thus, Saint Paul, while under imprisonment you wrote your Epistle to the Ephesians. Yet, you were never secluded from Christ and you never ceased to serve Him as an apostle, for you continued to say: Alleluia.

Ikos 8

Saint Paul, life is fleeting and yet seems very long when we are beset with problems and troubles, with losses and separations, and with corruption and incompetence. We find ourselves in various prisons, waiting for release or planning escape, as dysfunction takes its toll on the heart and mind. However, you tell us to redeem the time and to live

wisely, that we belong with the saints who are in Heaven, and therefore we are never without help. Christ is our only and our all, for the prophets prepared us and the apostles formed us, that we might pray wholeheartedly:

Rejoice, for we are freed by Christ from the prison of sin.

Rejoice, for we cherish the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice, for we are no longer Jews or Greeks or lepers.

Rejoice, for we are Christians without bitterness or bias.

Rejoice, for we shall not be scattered by false teachers.

Rejoice, for we shall not be dominated by cruel captors.

Rejoice, for we are fashioned together into the whole.

Rejoice, for we are members of the household of God.

Rejoice, for we are of the same body through the Gospel.

Rejoice, for we are united as one people through the Cross.

Rejoice, for we are abundantly nourished and strengthened.

Rejoice, for we are plentifully enriched and invigorated.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 9

“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and He renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true

righteousness and holiness.” Saint Paul, if you had not decided to bypass Ephesus, where you were loved as a father in Christ, on your journey to Jerusalem, where you were hated intensely, we would not have the Epistle to the Ephesians. We therefore thank God for His sovereignty and wisdom, and we say: Alleluia.

Ikos 9

Let us move ever onward and upward, leaving behind what we used to be, repenting of the sinful things we said and did, renouncing error and misunderstanding, and not even resting on our achievements for we are unworthy servants doing what we were called to do. Let us be now what we were created to be, and let no fabricated piety or false authority or former acquaintance take our God-given gifts away from us. Saint Paul, if we are prisoners then we are prisoners for Christ, and if we are chained then we are chained to truth:

Rejoice, wonderful father in the peace and boldness of Christ.

Rejoice, marvelous apostle worthy of Heavenly citizenship.

Rejoice, communicator of the glad tidings among diverse peoples.

Rejoice, worker who stood side-by-side with the Twelve and the Seventy.

Rejoice, for you voyaged far across time and into the churches of today.

Rejoice, for you journeyed deep into the hearts and minds of believers.

Rejoice, for we read your Epistles even if despised for it.

Rejoice, for we put off the old self even if ridiculed for it.

Rejoice, foreigner to empty words.

Rejoice, alien to false arguments.

Rejoice, fulfillment of eternal purpose.

Rejoice, tranquility of one Lord.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 10

Saint Paul, it was in Philippi that you met Lydia, a Gentile seller of purple cloth, who believed in God and who opened her home to you. Thus began the Church at Philippi. In an outpouring of love for this church, you wrote the Epistle to the Philippians: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things.” All believers concur and gladly say: Alleluia.

Ikos 10

It is beneficial to ponder and meditate, to think and reason, to enjoy and appreciate, to pray and worship, and to choose whatever things affirm life and love. Most of all, Saint Paul, we choose the Gospels and Epistles, and we shun any works and activities that do not build up the life in Christ. We walk toward the

light and not darkness, we open our homes to good influences and not folly, and thus, living faithfully, we also welcome visitors into our churches:

Rejoice, for you wished all the churches to be fruitful.

Rejoice, for you furthered the Gospel in faith and gratitude.

Rejoice, for you delighted in the spiritual progress of others.

Rejoice, for you supported Christian maturity in everyone.

Rejoice, for you prayed that nobody would perpetrate evil.

Rejoice, for you desired everybody to be filled with virtue.

Rejoice, for you never abused the kindness of others.

Rejoice, for you found God's grace to be sufficient.

Rejoice, for you boasted rather in your infirmities.

Rejoice, for you thereby glorified God in His mercy.

Rejoice, for you were a servant to all that you might reach all.

Rejoice, for you were entrusted to preach the Gospel freely.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 11

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in Heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church, Who is the beginning.” Therefore, Saint Paul, in the Epistle to the Colossians, you affirmed Jesus

Christ as the only Savior of mankind and the only One through Whom we can confidently say: Alleluia.

Ikos 11

Although you never founded a church in Colossae, a resident of that town had heard you speaking in Ephesus. This man's name was Epaphras, and he relayed your teachings to his fellow Colossians. In support of Epaphras, and in response to some misunderstandings of doctrine in that community, you wrote an eloquent letter to them. Saint Paul, your concern for the churches was boundless and your love of the people was endless:

Rejoice, friend to those whom you had never met.

Rejoice, unifier of strangers into the congregation.

Rejoice, loved by those who had never seen you.

Rejoice, attendant to churches miles away.

Rejoice, for your reputation was pleasing in the eyes of God.

Rejoice, for your labor benefitted the entire Church.

Rejoice, for you belonged not to yourself but to your Redeemer.

Rejoice, for you had obeyed Him since traveling the road to Damascus.

Rejoice, doer of the will of God in the towns and cities.

Rejoice, minister who reached even towns beyond the towns.

Rejoice, preacher of the word of God without coercion.

Rejoice, missionary who understood the blessings of hospitality.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 12

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ Who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” Saint Paul, we pray for your help, even as you helped Epaphras, for we struggle to solve problems in the churches while also living a life hidden in Christ. May we set our minds on Heaven foremost, praying to Christ for holy guidance, and exalting Him in all our decisions and choices, saying: Alleluia.

Ikos 12

Saint Paul, your life was so full and productive that we lack the ability to praise you adequately for every lesson you taught, for every hardship you suffered, for every church you nurtured and for every letter you wrote. There are those who doubt you and criticize you even to this day, but we endeavor to understand you with the mind of the Church and not from human vanity. You were

crucified with Christ, and only those who repent of their sins can be called His disciples:

Rejoice, for you served the God Who works in mysterious ways.

Rejoice, for you obeyed the God Who is sovereign and almighty.

Rejoice, for you established the repentant in the Church and not in a cult.

Rejoice, for you pointed all believers to Heaven and not to idols.

Rejoice, for we are known of Christ and hidden in Him.

Rejoice, for we are crucified with Christ and abide in Him.

Rejoice, for the Cross is our path.

Rejoice, for the Resurrection is our light.

Rejoice, for God has chosen the fools and the weak.

Rejoice, for if we glory, we glory only in Christ.

Rejoice, for God dispenses His gifts and talents.

Rejoice, for what we do, we do only for Christ.

Rejoice, Saint Paul, knower of Christ and Him Crucified.

Kontakion 13

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

(Repeat Kontakion 13 three times.)

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