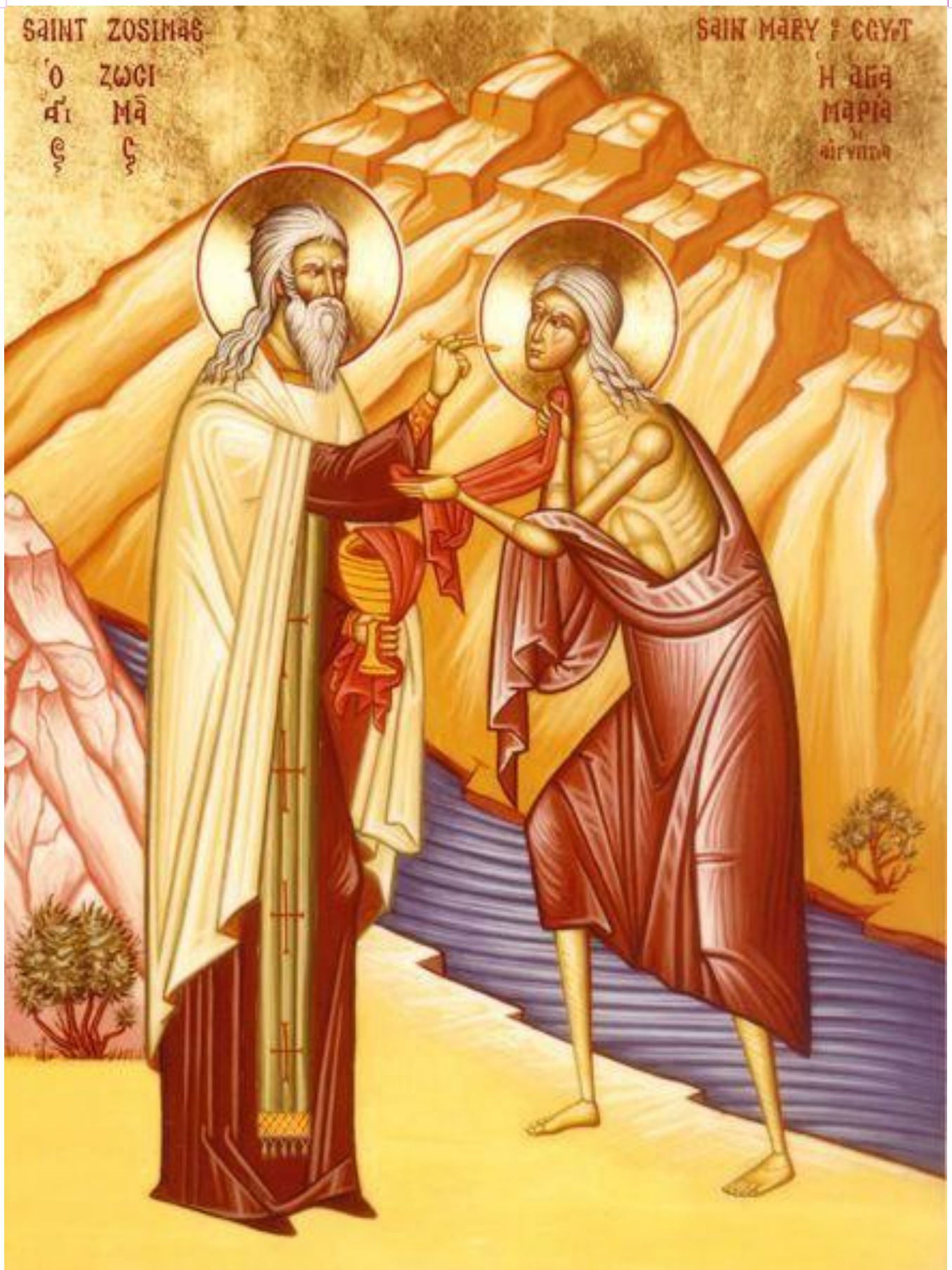


01 APRILIE

**ACATISTUL
SF. CUVIOASE
MARIA
EGIPTEANCA
DE LA
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ACATISTIER-EG



SAINṬ ZOSIMAS
O ZOCI
M̄i M̄a
C̄ C̄

SAINṬ MARY OF EGYPT
H̄ aḡā
M̄ariā
M̄ aḡyptō

Akathist Hymn to Saint Mary of Egypt and Saint Zosimus

Kontakion 1

We glorify You, Heavenly Father, for You raise up sinners to sainthood in response to their repentance and from the boundless creativeness of Your compassionate and merciful ways. Whether we live in the depth of depravity or in the peace of prayer, You know our heart and You call us forth into Your marvelous light. We see Your unfathomable love illustrated so clearly in the lives of the penitent Saint Mary of Egypt and the priest Saint Zosimus. We therefore exalt You, Gracious Father, and cry out to Your holy saints, saying:

Rejoice, Saint Mary, beloved penitent and giver of hope.

Rejoice, Saint Zosimus, humble priest and finder of true holiness.

Rejoice, unity of all saints from every walk of life.

Ikos 1

“Forgive me for God’s sake,” said Saint Mary when she was found by Saint Zosimus in the desert beyond the Jordan River. Indeed, forgive us, holy saints of God, as we approach you with our praises and supplications. Forgive us, in the Name of God, for we are sinful men and women and we humbly bow down before you. Henceforth, let all the repentant say, “Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner,” as we devotedly bring forth words of praise to God’s wonderful saints:

Rejoice, for you are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice, for you pour out your blessings upon us.

Rejoice, for you left behind your former pursuits.

Rejoice, for you satisfied your spiritual thirst in the desert.

Rejoice, for you understood each other’s desire for purity.

Rejoice, for you beheld each other’s holiness of life.

Rejoice, for God filled you with interior peace and beauty.

Rejoice, for your repentance and humility were acceptable.

Rejoice, for you fill us with awe and inspiration.

Rejoice, for you accept our quest for spiritual prosperity.

Rejoice, for God shines His wisdom and forgiveness through you.

Rejoice, for you manifested the Church in a wilderness gathering.

Rejoice, unity of all saints from every walk of life.

Kontakion 2

Saint Mary of Egypt, holy desert dweller, may we not depart this life until we understand the ways of repentance and the benefits of prayer. To that end, may we also not live another day devoid of your guidance. Lead us beyond the dreadful sins of our disobedience and above the plateau of any spirituality gained thus far. Let us touch your feet in veneration of your holiness, Saint Mary, as we reach out from our entrenched and habitual wickedness. We implore you to cause the desert sun to burn away the coarseness of our conduct and melt the hardness of our heart, so that we may assemble in peace and say to one another: Alleluia.

Ikos 2

The fruit of your repentance, blessed hermitess, provides holy nourishment for all those enslaved to character defects and demonic tendencies. Many people are poisoned and corrupted, not only by carnality but by escapism and intellectualism. Among believers and unbelievers, there is widespread starvation for purity and serenity. We therefore turn to you, Saint Mary, hoping to receive the fruits of your labor, so that we may partake of holiness and offer you rightful praises in return:

Rejoice, holy desert mother, for the modern world is refreshed by your fruitful austerity.

Rejoice, woman of prayer, for the Church celebrates your feats of piety during Great Lent.

Rejoice, Godly-minded penitent, for the consequences of your solitude are of comfort to many.

Rejoice, grace-filled servant of God, for the results of your obedience bring hope to all.

Rejoice, for God blessed you with spiritual insight, and we turn to you with our defects.

Rejoice, for God fed you with His Word, and we run to you with our heartaches.

Rejoice, for though you were driven by unseemly passions, you were drawn close to God.

Rejoice, for though you sank down into the pit of perversion, you found your true purpose in prayer.

Rejoice, for the power and mercy of God were confirmed in your life.

Rejoice, for you spurned the lies of Satan and kept your eye single.

Rejoice, for all true Christians rejoice with you in your victory.

Rejoice, for we also pray to overcome all impurities through Christ.

Rejoice, Saint Mary, beloved penitent and giver of hope.

Kontakion 3

Saint Zosimus, blessed abba, your lifetime of holiness endears you to those who have loved God since childhood as well as those who have tasted the bitterness of waywardness. You are a light in the darkness, for the love of God's Commandments always filled your heart and directed your steps throughout your entire life. All those blessed with your holy intercession therefore say: Alleluia.

Ikos 3

You have shown us, Saint Zosimus, that true holiness springs forth from a pure heart. Until we worship God in repentance and humility, and unless we love one another, then all our achievements are open to delusion and division. You are admirable, for you overcame sundry temptations to which many people, believers and unbelievers, have submitted their souls with either relish or regret. We therefore turn to you, holy priest and monk, and ask your blessing upon us as we offer you these praises:

Rejoice, man of virtue, for God infused you with a desire for sacred humility.

Rejoice, holy father, for you acquired the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice, blessed elder, for you died to self and rose with your Savior, Jesus Christ.

Rejoice, monk-priest, for you were devoted to the Church from your childhood onward.

Rejoice, for God chose you for a purpose, and we turn to you in our imperfection.

Rejoice, for God granted you ultimate meaning, and we run to you in our insufficiency.

Rejoice, for though you were already a monk, you endeavored to bring forth new spiritual fruit.

Rejoice, for though you practiced the monastic rule, you sought further illumination upon your path.

Rejoice, for you journeyed from a familiar monastery and into the mysterious wilderness.

Rejoice, for there you found salvation from your own thoughts.

Rejoice, for you walked forward into a desolate land under the sun.

Rejoice, for there you met a living human being who had conquered the devil.

Rejoice, Saint Zosimus, humble priest and finder of true holiness.

Kontakion 4

We see that the saints arise from various walks of life, both men and women, to the glory of God and for the edification of the faithful. They come from respected parents as well as dysfunctional backgrounds, from the educated and the unschooled, from the priesthood and the workforce, and many from the monastery and the

desert. Whether known or unknown to us, their constant prayers enable us to say: Alleluia.

Ikos 4

Saint Mary and Saint Zosimus, we venerate you and all the saints who exhibit God's diversity in creation and unity of Church. You have shown us that all people can find a path and a purpose, if only we repent and exercise humility. May everyone answer the divine call to service, as we honor some of our predecessors who continue to shine forth a glorious light upon our spiritual journey:

Rejoice, Saint Matrona of Moscow, through sightlessness you transcended all barriers to holiness.

Rejoice, Saint Xenia of St. Petersburg, through homelessness you blessed people and built a church.

Rejoice, Saint Sofia of Suzdal, through imprisonment you lived in the freedom of unceasing prayer.

Rejoice, Saint Anna of Kashin, through renunciation of the world you gained the love of the people.

Rejoice, Saint Arsenius of Konevits, monk and coppersmith who brought an icon of the Theotokos to Russia from Mount Athos.

Rejoice, Saint Herman of Alaska, Russian missionary who became a cherished saint in the New World.

Rejoice, Saint Patapios of Thebes, simple hermit who preached the Word of God.

Rejoice, Saint Publia of Antioch, widow and deaconess who raised her son in holiness of life.

Rejoice, Saint Theodore of Novgorod, Fool for Christ who wisely foretold of impending famine.

Rejoice, Saint Gregory the Byzantine, humble monk of Mount Athos who gave spiritual guidance to Saint Gregory Palamas.

Rejoice, Saint Caluf, martyr of Egypt, who said, "I endure everything in expectation of the future life."

Rejoice, Saint Benedict of Nursia, who said, "The evil of murmuring must not for any reason at all be shown by any word or deed."

Rejoice, unity of all saints from every walk of life.

Kontakion 5

Saint Mary, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, you were obstructed from entering a church by an invisible force. You were not accepted, because you had not yet renounced your unacceptable pursuits. Nonetheless, our merciful God desired your salvation. While others entered the church unobstructed, you were left alone outside to ponder the meaning of your life and the way of the Holy Cross, so that you might say: Alleluia.

Ikos 5

You later said to Saint Zosimus, “May God defend us from the evil one and from his designs, for fierce is his struggle against us.” You have thereby taught us, holy mother, that although the devil can tempt and torment, God seeks us and offers us a path to the Eternal Kingdom where all the righteous dwell. In recognition of our own struggles, and in repentance of our harsh ways, we bring these supplications to you:

Rejoice and remove all coldness from our heart.

Rejoice and banish all competition from our mind.

Rejoice and eliminate all negativity from our speech.

Rejoice and rid all delusions from our service to the Church.

Rejoice and demolish the barricade of our impure passions.

Rejoice and clear the snags of our corrupted perceptions.

Rejoice and break the chains of our defiled choices.

Rejoice and crumble the tower of our tainted customs.

Rejoice and fill us with hope and faith.

Rejoice and move us to repent and pray.

Rejoice and encourage us to persevere and overcome.

Rejoice and lead us to victory through the Cross of Christ.

Rejoice, Saint Mary, beloved penitent and giver of hope.

Kontakion 6

As you lamented your former pursuits, Saint Mary, you saw an icon of the holy Theotokos. Then, with deep faith and profound humility, you repented before the Mother of God and you implored her

mercy upon your grievous condition. You asked her to open the doors of the Church to you, so that for the first time in your life you could truly say: Alleluia.

Ikos 6

Saint Mary, you were then included with the others who were entering the church to celebrate the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Your repentance was accepted, and you were able to understand the lifegiving power of the Holy Cross and the Blood of Jesus Christ. You dedicated yourself to the Virgin Mother, referring to her as the Acceptress of Repentance. In like manner, may we all bow to the Theotokos today with heartfelt praises:

Rejoice, Mother of God, for your Innocent Son calls sinners to repentance.

Rejoice, Virgin Birthgiver, for your pity extends to those who have defiled their purity.

Rejoice, for you offer help to those who have no other resources.

Rejoice, for you accept the repentance of the most disgraceful.

Rejoice, for you desire the salvation of all the possessed.

Rejoice, for you take back what the devil has captured.

Rejoice, for you commiserate with the turmoil of the human heart.

Rejoice, for you understand the misperceptions of the mortal mind.

Rejoice, for you hear those who pray with sincere words.

Rejoice, for you lift up those who admit to their failings.

Rejoice, for Saint Mary of Egypt is the fruit of your mercy.

Rejoice, for you instilled within her confidence in your compassion.

Rejoice, Acceptress of Repentance who opened the doors of the Church to Saint Mary of Egypt.

Kontakion 7

Saint Mary, you devotedly prayed to the Theotokos for guidance, from that day onward and throughout the remainder of your life of solitude.

Your only desire was to please God and to honor the wishes of the holy Virgin Mother. This new pursuit led you into the desert beyond the Jordan River, where you would pray unceasingly and continue to say: Alleluia.

Ikos 7

Never again did you see another human being, not until many years later when you were found by Saint Zosimus, for you were immersed in prayer and fasting. You kept before you the image of the icon of the Mother of God as you worked out your salvation in the arena of the desert, hidden in Christ. We therefore beseech your acceptance, Saint Mary of Egypt, of our earnest praises:

Rejoice, brilliant sunray of repentance.

Rejoice, desert lily of humility.

Rejoice, firm rock of faith.

Rejoice, spacious sky of hope.

Rejoice, amazing variety of creation.

Rejoice, glad receiver of salvation.

Rejoice, sturdy root of unity.

Rejoice, lasting fragrance of prayer.

Rejoice, luminous star of vigilance.

Rejoice, splendid morning of obedience.

Rejoice, pure oasis of victory.

Rejoice, enduring vine of sanctity.

Rejoice, Saint Mary, beloved penitent and giver of hope.

Kontakion 8

Saint Zosimus, lover of God since childhood, you reached the peak of spirituality in accordance with rules and standards, as well as through study of the Scriptures. However, since it is the way of Satan to especially target those who love God, the evil one planted within you germs of pride in your achievements. You began to regard yourself as perfect and not in need of any assistance. “Is there a man in the desert who has surpassed me?” Nonetheless, God had compassion upon your struggle, and you said: Alleluia.

Ikos 8

An angel came to you and directed you to undertake a spiritual journey, leaving behind your former pursuits and opening your heart to learn the merciful ways of God through someone who had conquered the devil. We marvel at God’s

tender care of His beloved ones and His calling forth of all sinners to salvation. For this reason, Father Zosimus, we bring rightful praises to you:

Rejoice, for an angel guided your steps.

Rejoice, for you humbly proceeded as instructed.

Rejoice, for you sought to live in the presence of God.

Rejoice, for you avoided the approval of men.

Rejoice, for you went forward into the unknown.

Rejoice, for you repudiated the taunting of Satan.

Rejoice, for you hungered for imperishable food.

Rejoice, for you thirsted for redemptive waters.

Rejoice, for you crossed over the Jordan as a seeker of truth.

Rejoice, for you entered the desert as though it were a church.

Rejoice, for the sun shone like a glowing candle.

Rejoice, for the vast land was open to the prayerful.

Rejoice, Saint Zosimus, humble priest and finder of true holiness.

Kontakion 9

We know that Jesus Christ can cause the lame to walk and the blind to see, and even raise the dead back to life again. Saint Zosimus, may our feet follow the Savior wherever He leads, for He desires to give us abundant life and not death. May our eyes, like yours, behold the image of God in everyone we meet, that with you we may say: Alleluia.

Ikos 9

Father Zosimus, you exalted the Holy Cross in the good soil of your heart. After a lifetime of serving God and others, you separated the wheat from the chaff in your acquisition of knowledge and practices. You believed in God and yearned for deeper faith and utter repentance, wandering the desert with childlike trust and priestly conviction. May we emulate your holy quest as we offer you these praises:

Rejoice, strong oak of patience.

Rejoice, ample foliage of virtues.

Rejoice, flowing shroud of worship.

Rejoice, perpetual wave of prayer.

Rejoice, bright springtime of truth.

Rejoice, delicate scent of devotion.

Rejoice, rich reservoir of Psalms.

Rejoice, golden vessel of blessings.

Rejoice, ready seeker of righteousness.

Rejoice, new journey of faith.

Rejoice, full profit of consecration.

Rejoice, pure heart of renewal.

Rejoice, Saint Zosimus, humble priest and finder of true holiness.

Kontakion 10

The lives of Saint Mary of Egypt and Saint Zosimus demonstrate the sovereignty of God over His creation. God created male and female, and both can attain to true holiness through repentance and humility. Let us not puff ourselves up in superficial adherence to rules, or delude ourselves in the adoption of false spiritual notions, or surrender ourselves to worldly systems of thought, for all these things can be achieved without purity of heart. Instead, let us emulate Saint Mary and Saint Zosimus who intercede for us as they say: Alleluia.

Ikos 10

All the saints were clean of heart, no matter their walk of life, or their family history, or their cultural heritage. Nobody is instantly acceptable by birthright, and no seeker is unacceptable if they repent of their former pursuits. With this in mind, let us again honor some of our predecessors with fitting praises:

Rejoice, Saint Lucillian at Byzantium, upon reaching old age you were baptized a Christian and became a martyr.

Rejoice, Saint Bessarion of Egypt, upon being baptized as a youth you made a pilgrimage to the desert monasteries.

Rejoice, Saint Anysia of Thessalonica, upon the death of your parents you lived a life of prayer and were martyred.

Rejoice, Saint Athanasios of Athos, upon being orphaned you were raised by a nun and you founded a monastery on Mount Athos.

Rejoice, Saint Gleb Andreivich, for you were the holy and youngest son of Saint Andrei Bogolyubsky.

Rejoice, Saint Concordia of Rome, for you were the foster mother of Saint Hippolytus.

Rejoice, Saint Theodore of Novgorod, for you were the holy brother of Saint Alexander Nevsky.

Rejoice, Saint Nahum of Ochrid, for you were a disciple of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

Rejoice, Saint Gurias of Kazan, while falsely imprisoned you wrote a book for children.

Rejoice, Saint Eutropia of Alexandria, while ministering to imprisoned Christians you were arrested and martyred.

Rejoice, Saint Julian of Dalmatia, who said, “Do not trust the gods you have made with your hands, rather know the God Who out of nothing created Heaven and earth.”

Rejoice, Saint John of Damascus, who said, “What right have emperors to style themselves lawgivers in the Church?”

Rejoice, unity of all saints from every walk of life.

Kontakion 11

When Saint Zosimus found Saint Mary in the desert, she told him the story of her life. Saint Zosimus was edified by her example of utter

repentance and profound humility. Herein we see again the marvel of holiness in diversity: for a priest who was accustomed to serving at the altar learned from a woman who had been hindered from entering a church. Through God's mercy, two people heretofore unknown to each other were now unified for a purpose, and they said: Alleluia.

Ikos 11

Each one implored the prayers and blessings of the other, and related to each other in acceptance of their mutual pursuit of truth and sanctity. Let us also pray for one another and learn something from everyone, always exalting the Cross of Christ with our words and deeds. Now, let us bring more praises to the wondrous Saint Mary of Egypt and the honorable Saint Zosimus:

Rejoice with all the monasteries old and new.

Rejoice with all the priests in every church.

Rejoice with all the people during Great Lent.

Rejoice with all the solitaries in clefts of rocks.

Rejoice in every language known to man.

Rejoice in every Christian home under Heaven.

Rejoice in the farthest corner of the earth.

Rejoice in the smallest town in the world.

Rejoice by the Jordan River.

Rejoice on the Mount of Olives.

Rejoice from the sycamore tree.

Rejoice at the Pool of Siloam.

Rejoice, unity of all saints from every walk of life.

Kontakion 12

“Glory to God Who bestows great gifts on those who love Him,” said Saint Zosimus. The holy father returned to the monastery, but beheld Saint Mary one more time when he went to her a later with Holy Communion. Upon approaching the Jordan River, he saw Saint Mary on the other side. She then walked on the water, crossing over the Jordan to receive Holy Communion. Father Zosimus trembled and said: Alleluia.

Ikos 12

Saint Mary departed this life shortly after receiving Holy Communion. She was found by Saint Zosimus, another year later, when he again entered the desert in search of her. He buried her, with the help of a lion that dug up the earth for the old priest. Saint Zosimus then glorified God for the

remainder of his life, passing on the story of Saint Mary of Egypt. We therefore dutifully offer praises to these two magnificent saints of God:

Rejoice, for you give us a spiritual perspective on life.

Rejoice, for you provide us with a model for human relationships.

Rejoice, for your ways were acceptable to the Eternal God and to the holy Theotokos.

Rejoice, for you were of service to each other and to the whole Church of Christ.

Rejoice, for you show us that purity of heart is the utmost pursuit.

Rejoice, for you teach us that God responds to those who seek Him.

Rejoice, for you fill us with the joy of repentance.

Rejoice, for you endow us with the peace of humility.

Rejoice, for all the priests learn piety from you.

Rejoice, for the monks and nuns are encouraged by you.

Rejoice, for all the people find hope in you.

Rejoice, for the sinners are awakened by you.

Rejoice, unity of all saints from every walk of life.

Kontakion 13

From the monasteries to the deserts, from the great cathedrals to the simple missions, the holy influence of Saint Mary of Egypt and Saint Zosimus is felt by all the faithful. Let us apply their spirituality to our various walks of life, according to God's purpose and mercy, so that we may all gather together now and in the Kingdom of Heaven. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

(Repeat Kontakion 13 three times.)

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