

**17 SEPTEMBRIE
NATALIA GARLAND**

**ACATISTUL
SF. MUCENIȚE
SOFIA, PISTIS,
ELPIS ȘI AGAPIS
DE LA ROMA**



ACATISTIERUL PE SEPTEMBRIE-EG



Akathist Hymn to Saint Sophia and Her Three Daughters Kontakion 1

Dear God in Heaven, we bow before You as we celebrate Saints Sophia, Faith, Hope, and Love, who lived in complete imitation of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Because their lives defined the virtues of their Christian names, and because of the blood of martyrdom shared among sisters and upheld by a courageous mother, they deserve exaltation and admiration from all the faithful of the Church. Therefore, in amazement at the flowing-forth of their sacrifice and fidelity, we humbly implore:

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Ikos 1

This devout woman and these dignified girls, mother and daughters, carried the names and

honored the virtues which were so beloved of the Apostle Paul. He said, “So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Let us also invoke the Divine Wisdom of God, Hagia Sophia, which pours out through Christ to all those who hunger and thirst for life eternal. By this means, we are able to bring forth praise and supplication to these wondrous saints who lived in Rome during the reign of the wicked Emperor Hadrian:

Deliver us, Saint Sophia, from the senselessness and worthlessness of present-day cultural tendencies.

Deliver us, Saint Faith, from the falsehood and deception of the influential institutions of today’s society.

Deliver us, Saint Hope, from the covetousness and self-indulgence of people who would enchain our heart.

Deliver us, Saint Love, from the disobedience and self-justification of people who would be rulers of our mind.

Deliver us, holy saints, from the haughtiness and self-importance of those who crush virtue and validate ignorance.

Deliver us, blessed saints, from the decadence and self-gratification of those who deride purity and promote indecency.

Deliver us, for we hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Deliver us, for we are ridiculed and hated for righteousness' sake.

Deliver us, for we pray every morning and evening, "Father, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come."

Deliver us, for we know that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

Deliver us, blessed mother who takes her precious children by the hand.

Deliver us, blessed children who listen to the wisdom of their Godly-minded mother.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 2

Saint Sophia, as a Christian mother, your attitude toward your children was that of motherly tenderness and spiritual fortitude. You instructed your daughters in the True Faith, nourishing them with a divine understanding of all trials and tribulations. In the same manner, you encouraged them in their suffering and martyrdom, always saying: Alleluia.

Ikos 2

Like the Apostle Paul in his holy ministry, you labored for your children until Christ was formed in them. Saint Sophia, you understood the promise of the Savior when He said, “He who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” You knew that martyrdom would fulfill all hunger and thirst, and is in itself the fruit of faith. We beseech you, holy Sophia, to look

upon us as your children and give us also that guidance in our personal struggles:

Deliver us from our innermost pride.

Deliver us from all residue of delusion.

Deliver us from our private vanity.

Deliver us from all dregs of imaginings.

Deliver us into the hands of the God of truth and love.

Deliver us into the Church of the saints and martyrs.

Deliver us into the divine light of knowledge and understanding.

Deliver us into the gathering of the apostles and holy fathers.

Deliver us over the canyon of doubt.

Deliver us over the gulf of ambivalence.

Deliver us beyond the forest of confusion.

Deliver us beyond the desert of barrenness.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 3

You were a widow, Saint Sophia, and you raised your daughters alone. You taught them how to work and how to pray, how to study the Scriptures and how to acquire the virtues. Your trinity of daughters — Faith, Hope, and Love — brought you gladness and comfort, and you said in thanksgiving to the Life-Giving Holy Trinity: Alleluia.

Ikos 3

Because of their excellence in all things, your daughters gained renown throughout the region. The Emperor Hadrian took an interest in you and your girls, and he summoned you before him. Upon his questioning, you said, “I am a Christian.” Since you had also dedicated your daughters to Jesus Christ, the emperor was offended and he demanded their

allegiance to the goddess Artemis. You anticipated the emperor's evil intentions, and you began to prepare your children for their crowns of martyrdom. Come to our aid also, Saint Sophia, as we turn to you because of your strength in spirituality:

Deliver us, for the Father revealed His Divine Wisdom to you.

Deliver us, for you were also blessed with faith, hope, and love.

Deliver us, for you lived in humility and kept the Commandments.

Deliver us, for you always gave thanks for your family and home.

Deliver us, for you listened to God and submitted to His will.

Deliver us, for you renounced the false notions of this world.

Deliver us, for you inspired your children to follow Jesus Christ.

Deliver us, for you showed your motherly care by securing life eternal for them.

Deliver us, for you predicted their persecution and prepared each child accordingly.

Deliver us, for you looked upon their suffering with deep faith and Christian dispassion.

Deliver us, for a fit mother wants what is best for her children.

Deliver us, for a Christian mother desires the salvation of her family.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 4

In your humility and wisdom, Saint Sophia, you viewed all events on earth from the perspective of eternity and from your intimacy with God. Your reality was that of the Resurrection of Christ and, like the Apostle Paul whose teachings you pondered, you

desired the completion of the Holy Church,
that all might say: Alleluia.

Ikos 4

The Apostle Paul said that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ, and this, Saint Sophia, is how you raised your children and what you wanted for them in the life to come. You taught them not to be swayed by the illusory inclinations of this world, nor to fear the loss of life, but to keep their eyes on Jesus Christ in Whom there is proper glory and true riches. We therefore praise you, holy Sophia, and ask for your blessings upon our petitions and endeavors:

Deliver us, for we appeal to your wise direction.

Deliver us, for you subdued pride and vanity.

Deliver us, for we desire unity as children with their mother.

Deliver us, for your household was a domestic church.

Deliver us, for we yearn to be stable in our Christian adulthood.

Deliver us, for you always loved Jesus and kept His word.

Deliver us, for we need help to withstand the stress of this world.

Deliver us, for God is Love, and you rejoiced to say, "I am a Christian."

Deliver us, for we long to live in humility and thanksgiving.

Deliver us, for Jesus Christ is faithful, and you lived in this reality.

Deliver us, for we wish to accept suffering if it be God's providence.

Deliver us, for you understood the transformative power of obedience.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 5

Saint Faith, it was inevitable that the Emperor Hadrian would begin his cruelties with the eldest daughter. He knew that if he could break you down, then your sisters would follow suit. However, to his shame and dismay, he underestimated your religious upbringing and the fortification which you had received from your mother in preparation for this moment. Most of all, he miscalculated a young girl's faith in Jesus Christ, and therefore you said: Alleluia.

Ikos 5

Your confidence was in your Savior, and in His compassion and endless mercies. Saint Faith, you were spiritually joined with your Lord and with your mother and sisters. In this unity of tender mercies, wisdom, faith, hope, and love, you were able to withstand evil and to confess Christ. It is therefore fitting that we humbly sing praises to you:

Deliver us, young martyr for Christ, clean of heart.

Deliver us, first among your sisters in sacrifice, strong in mind.

Deliver us, cherished daughter of a pious mother, her firstborn saint.

Deliver us, virtuous child in a family unity of holiness, leading the way.

Deliver us, glowing light of martyrdom in the city of Rome.

Deliver us, radiant Christian who never feared the tortures of the emperor.

Deliver us, seeker of the Kingdom of God.

Deliver us, beholder of life eternal in Heaven.

Deliver us, for you refused to worship a barren idol.

Deliver us, for you were impervious to the pagan goddess.

Deliver us, for you gladly confessed the Name of Jesus Christ.

Deliver us, for you were ready to die and unite with Him forever.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 6

You were twelve years old, Saint Faith, when the emperor began torturing you. He even cut off your breasts — you, who had hardly entered womanhood — for such was his madness and lust for power. Nonetheless, from your breasts flowed milk instead of blood, and therefore even some of the onlookers said: Alleluia.

Ikos 6

Our Lord Jesus Christ has said, “A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you.” This means that we Christians should not expect the world to embrace us. Let us be thankful if we have a caring family and upright friends. If we truly want to imitate Christ, then let us be

thankful also for all rejection and slander as we cry out to the holy Saint Faith:

Deliver us, that we might die to the ways of the world.

Deliver us, that we might find consolation in the Cross of Christ.

Deliver us, that we might escape the punishment we deserve.

Deliver us, that we might be thankful for our blessings.

Deliver us, that we might discern the divine plan of God in all events.

Deliver us, that we might patiently complete our time on earth.

Deliver us, that we might endure persecution from today's society.

Deliver us, that we might rejoice in the promise of heavenly rewards.

Deliver us, that we might imitate Christ and exalt Him for Who He is.

Deliver us, that He might be our only satisfaction and reason for being.

Deliver us, that we might become worthy children of the Heavenly Father.

Deliver us, that He might bestow upon us His abundant mercies.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 7

Saint Hope, it was through hope in Christ that you were able to endure extreme suffering in this temporal life on earth. You looked forward to life eternal, where you would find genuine happiness, and you trusted in God to bless and reward you with His Heavenly Kingdom. All things are possible with God, both the basic things and the glorious things, all of which we ourselves cannot procure

without His grace, and to this you said:
Alleluia.

Ikos 7

In your renunciation of all things that were not within the will of God, you were able to align yourself with your martyred older sister and accept torture for the sake of Christ. You looked over at your mother who was praying to God for you, and you rejoiced at the prospect of rising to Heaven. May we emulate your patience and fortitude as we bring these praises:

Deliver us, for you consecrated your girlhood to your Lord, Jesus Christ.

Deliver us, for you found His love more desirable than womanhood.

Deliver us, for in martyrdom you bore the fruitfulness of your belief.

Deliver us, for you shed your blood before the emperor and his soldiers.

Deliver us, for you witnessed of Christ our Savior even unto death.

Deliver us, for you completed your life on earth through the grace of God.

Deliver us, for you heeded the wise guidance of your mother who prized you as her joy.

Deliver us, for you followed the example of your older sister who took you under her heavenly wings.

Deliver us, holy child of the Church.

Deliver us, worshipper of the True God.

Deliver us, worthy sufferer for Christ.

Deliver us, firm believer in His promises.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 8

You were ten years old, Saint Hope, when the emperor tried to force you to worship the pagan goddess Artemis. In his cunning, he offered to adopt you as his own daughter if only you would conform to his fancy and worship an idol. Then, in his rage over your loyalty to Christ, he ordered your skin to be scraped off. When your blood poured forth, a sweet fragrance filled the air, and you said: Alleluia.

Ikos 8

Our Savior Jesus Christ has said, “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” In your martyrdom, Saint Hope, you produced ripened fruit even as a child. Although the emperor stubbornly refused to acknowledge Christ, many generations of Christians since then have found strength in your worthy example. We therefore rightfully sing to you in this manner:

Deliver us and teach us to find our life in Christ.

Deliver us and help us to obtain immortality through His word.

Deliver us and teach us to pray sincerely for one another.

Deliver us and help us to support those who are suffering on earth.

Deliver us, for Christians are being persecuted in many parts of the world today.

Deliver us, for these new saints and martyrs are numbered with your mother and sisters.

Deliver us, for we desire to answer the calling of God upon our life.

Deliver us, for we pray for strength to accomplish the will of God.

Deliver us into the joy of the Resurrection of Christ.

Deliver us into the peace of His promises.

Deliver us into the victory over suffering and death.

Deliver us into the unity of all the righteous.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 9

Saint Love, you were the third and last sister to go forward into martyrdom and into the fullness of life. From Adam and Eve until the present day, God has desired to bestow abundant life upon those who keep His Commandments and do His will. Your mother taught and modeled this relationship with God from your infancy, and you therefore grew up and said: Alleluia.

Ikos 9

Through your suffering, you showed that children are capable of loving Jesus and understanding the difference between light and dark. In unity with Abraham and Moses,

with Martha and Mary, with Peter and Paul, you and your holy sisters participated in the Body of the Holy Church as child martyrs — suffering the same as adult martyrs. All the faithful, young and old, therefore glorify you with praises such as these:

Deliver us, for you joined with your sisters in holy martyrdom.

Deliver us, for you loved Jesus and served Him in a family union of pure sacrifice.

Deliver us, for you were true, Love, and bonded with Faith and Hope in confessing Christ.

Deliver us, for you were dedicated, and completed the trinity of sisterly inheritance of the Kingdom.

Deliver us, for you listened to your mother who treasured you.

Deliver us, for you knew that she would never harm or mislead you.

Deliver us, for your childlike trust and dependence were superior to the emperor's persuasion and temptations.

Deliver us, for your devotion and zeal were more powerful than the emperor's brutality and inhumanity.

Deliver us, for you fulfilled your mother's prayers and did not betray Christ.

Deliver us, for Christ filled your entire family with fortitude and resolve.

Deliver us, for only your mother remained after your repose.

Deliver us, for you prayed in Heaven for your mother's glorification.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 10

You were nine years old, Saint Love, when you willingly sacrificed your life for the God Who

created you and Who revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ. Just as Christ gave His love and His life freely, you willingly walked into the fiery furnace which the evil emperor had arranged for you. Miraculously, you were not burned. However, the furnace spewed out flames and burned the unbelieving spectators. Meanwhile, you sang a song to God, and said: Alleluia.

Ikos 10

The Theologian John has said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” You believed in Him, Saint Love, and you imitated Him in the giving of your life in continuance of the undefeated Church of Christ, giving witness of the life eternal that awaits those who are loyal to the word of God. In thanksgiving for your sacrifice and in need of your heavenly help, we entreat you:

Deliver us, Saint Love, for God is Love.

Deliver us that we might all sing a song of praise with you.

Deliver us, blessed child, for you accepted the fiery furnace as though it were a heavenly cloud.

Deliver us that we might also never fear the evil of this world.

Deliver us, virtuous girl, for you went from your mother's loving arms into the fiery furnace of torture.

Deliver us that we might be ready at any moment to depart this life with a clean conscience.

Deliver us, for you lived by the grace of God.

Deliver us, for you died to glorify Christ.

Deliver us, for your love was brighter than any fire.

Deliver us, for you were vindicated by God.

Deliver us, beloved daughter of a truehearted woman.

Deliver us, angelic sister of tenderhearted girls.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 11

Undergoing many and various tortures, Saints Faith, Hope, and Love, died the death of martyrdom when they were brutally beheaded. First, Saint Faith, then Saint Hope, and finally Saint Love — the virtuous sisters who refused to worship an idol and who confessed Christ until the end. Their mother, Saint Sophia, buried them and prayed over their graves for three days, and then she herself departed this life to the Lord Who glorified her daughters, saying: Alleluia.

Ikos 11

Saint Sophia, in your humility and wisdom, you knew that martyrdom leads to life eternal and not to death. You knew that the virtuous life is the only truly happy life and that all else is deception and death. You fulfilled the will of God, giving your children the precious gift of life and then guiding them to life eternal. We know, Saint Sophia, with faith and hope in Jesus Christ, that your prayers can guide us into His endless mercies and His incomprehensible love for us. For this reason, we turn to you with our requests:

Deliver us, for we are born again in Christ.

Deliver us, for we live to please the Heavenly Father.

Deliver us, for we grow spiritually day by day.

Deliver us, for we cultivate the interior life every minute.

Deliver us, for we know that God and the saints are for us.

Deliver us, for who then can be against us?

Deliver us, for we have only one Lord and Master.

Deliver us, for He knows the sheep of His pasture.

Deliver us, for we shall not want.

Deliver us, for God is with us always.

Deliver us, for all things are possible when we do His will.

Deliver us, for He establishes a relationship with us.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 12

Saint Sophia, mother of children and mother of saints, yourself a holy saint in Heaven because of your virtuous life and sacred motherhood, we beseech your aid and

blessings for all the children on earth. They have no choice, Saint Sophia, in how the adult world treats them. They hunger and thirst for righteousness in a society that scorns any conversation about Jesus Christ. May these children learn of His goodness, and say: Alleluia.

Ikos 12

Our King Jesus Christ said, “Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven.” Come then, let us all be like children and depend upon the Lord for everything. Let us also imitate Christ as responsible adults and attend to those who need our aid and wisdom. Let us pray to God in humility and unity:

For all the children of the Church, may God keep them in the Faith and fill their hearts with love of the Scriptures.

For all the children all over the world, may God bring them into the fold that they may know their true Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

For all the children suffering for their Christian beliefs, may God strengthen them and provide a way forward.

For all the children who have been killed in violence against Christians, may God bestow upon them crowns in Heaven.

For all the trafficked and abused women and children, may God deliver them from their tormentors and restore them to wholeness.

For all the homeless children and families, may God provide food and shelter and His heavenly grace.

For all the fathers imprisoned for their faith, may God change the hearts of their captors and provide for their wives and children.

For all the single and working mothers, may God send them help to teach their children the Christian virtues in a hostile society.

For all the children working in the factories and fields, may God lift their burdens and shine His divine light upon them.

For all the handicapped and challenged children, may God protect their dignity and provide appropriate resources and true riches.

For all the parents of special-needs children, may God bless them with understanding and contentment in family life.

For all the professionals who work with the troubled and disadvantaged, may God direct them to give caring and ethical assistance.

Deliver us, Saint Sophia and virtuous daughters: imitators of Christ and witnesses of the Faith.

Kontakion 13

The Church is perpetual, as proven by the saints and martyrs and all the righteous men, women, and children. Because of them, and through the tender mercies of God, we are able today to worship and to work out our salvation. Although lands have been seized and church buildings have been destroyed, the blood of the martyrs and the virtues of the saints continue generation after generation.

Let us praise God for our Baptism, let us be thankful for our Bibles and icons, and let us light our candles for all the brethren and the world to see, saying: Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

(Repeat Kontakion 13 three times.)

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