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An Akathist to St. Lawrence of Rome

Kontakion 1 The holy fire of Pentecost burned in your heart, filling you with joy and courage, O holy martyr Lawrence. Therefore the fire of the godless could not separate you from the love of Christ, but was transformed into an altar fire through which you ascended as a fragrant sacrifice to God. Now that you stand victorious before the Lord whom you served with zeal, cease not to pray for us who cry to you: Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Ikos 1

Your holy defiance of godless demonic power sounds forth like a trumpet throughout the world, calling the Church to battle against the spiritual hosts of wickedness. Like the Protomartyr Stephen, you refused to tremble before your persecutors, but rebuked their impiety with the boldness of a lion. Like him your countenance shone with joy like the face of an angel, and now that you have taken your place among the angels in the joy of heaven, you hear from all your earthly fellow-soldiers these songs:

Rejoice, fire of Christ, kindled by the Lord in the midst of the earth!

Rejoice, cold water to weary pilgrims, bringing the Gospel to a distant land!

Rejoice, blazing inferno, incinerating our passions and sins!

Rejoice, cool morning dew, refreshing our tired souls!

Rejoice, trumpet of the Trinity, rousing us to victorious battle!

Rejoice, song of the Church, leading us in our hymns of praise!

Rejoice, agitator of the godless, cutting them to the heart!

Rejoice, peace of the righteous, bringing them to Christ!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 2

Despite your youth, your bishop ordained you and set you over the other deacons of Rome, so that your humility might lead all to the heights of exaltation. Taught the ways of service by the One

who Himself came to serve, you imitated His self-sacrifice, giving your life as an example to many, and teaching us to cry: Alleluia!

Ikos 2

Your selfless diaconal service to the poor of Rome shone like a beacon to the ends of the world, summoning all to forsake the scramble for earthly wealth and to give to the poor, finding their true treasure in God. As an obedient servant of Christ, you fulfilled His example, and washed the feet of your brothers, and now that you abide in blessedness, we bring you these words:

Rejoice, you that give away all you have to feed the poor!

Rejoice, you that in love deliver your body to be burned!

Rejoice, you that rebuke unrighteousness and rejoice in the truth!

Rejoice, you that bear and endure all things!

Rejoice, holy archdeacon, crown of the Roman diaconate!

Rejoice, devoted attendant, joy of the Roman bishop!

Rejoice, humble servant, support of the desolate and impoverished!

Rejoice, exalted martyr, pride of the angels and archangels!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 3

The words of the crucified Lord were fulfilled, O Lawrence, and His disciples came to be hated by all because they bore His Name. Your city of Rome became a crucible of fiery suffering as many Christians perished there for the King of Glory, and as the noble army of martyrs reached His heavenly halls, they sang aloud: Alleluia!

Ikos 3

The mistress of the world became the bloody city, full of lies, the great harlot, drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus. Rome fulfilled the Lord's words, for His disciples had tribulation in this world. But you, O Lawrence, together with your fellow-martyrs, took courage and overcame the world, and now you hear such hymns as these:

Rejoice, ever-victorious martyr, faithful unto death!

Rejoice, God-crowned athlete, resplendent with the crown of life!

Rejoice, true Lawrence, crowned with the imperishable laurels of victory!

Rejoice, true sacrifice, stained with the glorious blood of self-offering!

Rejoice, for you were reviled for the Name of Christ!

Rejoice, for the Spirit of glory and God rests on you!

Rejoice, you that experienced the fiery ordeal of testing!

Rejoice, you that even now exult with gladness!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 4

The beast from the abyss raged against the clergy of Rome, and all who bore clerical rank were soon dragged to their deaths. Thus the bishop Stephen perished with honour for his Lord, and Sixtus came forth to succeed him, like God's gladiator stepping into the arena of death. As bishop he stood at the altar to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and as God's appointed martyr he prepared to offer

the sacrifice of himself. Seeing his impending offering, O holy Lawrence, you cried out: Alleluia!

Ikos 4

As Sixtus was being led away to martyrdom, O holy Lawrence, you cried after him, “Father, where are you going without your son? What sacrifice are you preparing to offer without your deacon? You have never offered the Sacrifice without me before—have I displeased you that you are now offering your sacrifice without me?” And the holy bishop replied to you, “No, my son, but a more glorious triumph awaits you. Do not weep. In three days the deacon will follow the priest.” Now that you both stand before the Lord’s heavenly altar, we on earth sing to you:

Rejoice, devoted deacon, humbly serving your spiritual father and bishop!

Rejoice, zealous martyr, eager to die for your heavenly Lord and Master!

Rejoice, follower of St. Paul, desiring to depart and to be with Christ!

Rejoice, imitator of St. Peter, glorifying God with your martyr’s death!

Rejoice, for you despised the pleasures of earth!

Rejoice, for you hastened to the joys of heaven!

Rejoice, you that wept when once separated from your bishop!

Rejoice, you that exult when now joined to your Lord!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 5

When your bishop committed to you the task of immediately distributing the church's resources to the poor lest they fall into the hands of the persecutors, you rejoiced to empty the church's coffers into the hands of those who looked to God for help, even selling the church's golden chalices to feed the widow and the orphan. As they received the church's bounty from your holy hands, they gave thanks to Christ and cried: Alleluia!

Ikos 5

You proved yourself to be an imitator of Christ, O holy Lawrence, following in the steps of Him who emptied Himself, taking on the form of a servant. As a true servant, you also emptied yourself, holding nothing back, giving up all the wealth of the Church to the poor as well as your

own life to the Lord. Seeing that you humbled yourself even to the point of death, God highly exalted you, and bestowed on you a place before Christ's throne, where you hear our praises:

Rejoice, you that dried the tears of the despairing!

Rejoice, you that filled the hungry with good things!

Rejoice, for you followed Christ who became poor for our sakes!

Rejoice, for you served the poor and made them rich!

Rejoice, father of the fatherless and support of widows!

Rejoice, terror to the demons and destroyer of our enemies!

Rejoice, welcome oasis in the desert of this world!

Rejoice, sumptuous banquet to the hungry of the earth!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 6

When the pagan prefect of Rome, greedy for failing riches, saw the wealth of the Roman Church, he summoned you, O holy Lawrence, and demanded that you surrender all the church's treasures, for he knew you to be the archdeacon, in charge of its bounteous wealth. Seeing the opportunity to mock the devil and his servants, you gave thanks to God and prayed in your heart: Alleluia!

Ikos 6

The persecuting prefect exalted himself like Nebuchadnezzar, and raged against God's people like Pharaoh, thinking himself to be all-powerful. In haughty pride he commanded you to obey him, O holy Lawrence, despising you as weak, and not knowing that the weakness of God is stronger than men. Marvelling at your invincible meekness, we offer these songs:

Rejoice, for like the three holy children, you refused to bow before the idolatrous power of men!

Rejoice, for like Daniel, you obeyed the commands of God alone!

Rejoice, for like Moses, you did not fear the wrath of the King!

Rejoice, for you endured the godless torments,
seeing Him who is unseen!

Rejoice, heavenly rebel against the apostate
powers!

Rejoice, godly submission to the divine will!

Rejoice, you that did not fear any earthly
intimidation!

Rejoice, you that sanctified Christ as Lord in your
heart!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high
God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 7

Having received the royal command to surrender
the treasures of the Church, you asked for three
days to collect together its bountiful wealth. In
that time you went throughout the city,
distributing the church's wealth to the poor, and
asking those who received the bounty to meet
together with you in three days' time to greet the
prefect. The angels in heaven saw your earthly
boldness and sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 7

After three days, you met the prefect, surrounded by the poor, the sick, the lepers, the orphans and the widows who had received the church's bounty. When in perplexity he demanded to be shown the treasures of the Church, you pointed to the teeming crowd, saying, "Behold the treasures of the Church! The poor of the earth are the treasures of the Church!" Amazed at your prophetic courage, we sinners sing:

Rejoice, Roman Elijah, confronting the latter-day Ahab in his city!

Rejoice, prophet of Rome, defying the ravaging Beast to his face!

Rejoice, for you fulfilled your diaconate to the end!

Rejoice, for you proved yourself faithful to the death!

Rejoice, you that openly defied the Roman Pharaoh before all!

Rejoice, you that like Moses lead us into the Promised Land!

Rejoice, immovable rock of faith!

Rejoice, dynamic example of courage!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 8

Enraged at your holy boldness, the prefect condemned you to a slow and painful death, unless you denied your faith and sacrificed to the gods. Filled with Christ's peace, you remained unmoved by his fury, and serenely called upon him to forsake his idols and worship the one true God. Watching your contest in the arena of faith, the angels cheered you on with the shout: Alleluia!

Ikos 8

All the pomp and power of Rome could not sway you from your steadfastness, nor topple you from the pedestal of faith, O holy Lawrence. No threat of torture or prolonged pain could drive you from Christ's side. The Roman power has long since decayed into the dust, but you remain, triumphant in the heavens, and from there you hear these songs:

Rejoice, for your wisdom makes foolish the boasts of men!

Rejoice, for your weakness overcomes the strength of men!

Rejoice, flame devouring the blasphemies of unbelievers!

Rejoice, light illumining the souls of the faithful!

Rejoice, you that remained serene in the face of men's fury!

Rejoice, you that were taught by the Spirit in that hour what to say!

Rejoice, courage more unshakable than the mountains!

Rejoice, joy more exalted than the clouds!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 9

Determined to break your spirit and ignorant of the power of God within you, the wicked ruler ordered you to be tried by terrible tortures, and placed your body upon a red-hot grid-iron to make you renounce your holy faith. Seeing the crown of unspeakable glory that awaited your victory in the arena, you lifted up your voice, shouting: Alleluia!

Ikos 9

Having captured God's champion in the nets of men, the wicked demons drove the persecutor to

inflict all manner of torments, burning your flesh with red-hot sword blades, beating you with leaden whips and chains studded with iron hooks. The weaker your flesh became, the stronger your spirit grew, as the Spirit of God filled you with His power and enabled you to endure these tortures with joy. Thanking the Lord for His wonders to the sons of men, we cry:

Rejoice, you that gladly bore pain for the sake of your Lord!

Rejoice, you that rejoice evermore in the pleasures at His right hand!

Rejoice, you that are punished in the sight of men!

Rejoice, you whose hope is full of immortality!

Rejoice, for you came out of great tribulation!

Rejoice, for you whitened your robes in the blood of the Lamb!

Rejoice, jubilant warrior in the earthly arena!

Rejoice, peaceful victor in the courts of our God!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 10

Defying the impious blasphemies of the adversaries, you refused to allow their torture to break your spirit, O Lawrence, and trusting in divine aid from on high, you mocked their pride. When the heat of the grid-iron to which you were bound had burned your flesh to the very innards, you smiled and said to the torturer, "I am done on this side; you may turn me over to the other now!" Marvelling at how God's power is wondrous in His saints, we sing to Him: Alleluia!

Ikos 10

All the instruments of cruelty could not make you cower, O blessed Lawrence, but your spirit stood tall and unbowed before the demonic fury of the foe. By your holy mockery you revealed the impotence of the demons and the invincible power of our God, and by your constancy you call us to win our own crowns for Christ. Strengthened by your radiant example, we offer to you our grateful praises:

Rejoice, enduring witness to the unconquerable power of Christ!

Rejoice, eternal song of love to our merciful God!

Rejoice, abiding bulwark against the onslaughts of the devil!

Rejoice, haven of rest for souls faithful to Christ!

Rejoice, for you overthrew the powerless boldness of demons!

Rejoice, for you taught us to trust in the matchless might of the Lord!

Rejoice, you whose defiance infuriated the Evil One!

Rejoice, you whose steadfastness rejoices the souls of the saints!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 11

When you died under your tortures, O blessed Lawrence, you passed from death to life, and left the enemy to helplessly rage against the victory of our God. Rejoicing that you have prevailed, we salute you in your hour of triumph and with you sing aloud to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 11

Commending your holy soul to God, O blessed martyr, you inherited the eternal crown and left in

the dust of death all the pain of this age. Now that you are drenched in joy and stand exultant before your God, you share His glory and receive these words from us on earth:

Rejoice, you that serve God day and night in His heavenly temple!

Rejoice, you that are guided by the Lamb to the springs of the water of life!

Rejoice, for you have put off mortal clothing and have put on the immortal!

Rejoice, for you have confessed the Name of the Son of God in this world!

Rejoice, piercing light, shining forth to those in darkness!

Rejoice, warmth of Christ, banishing the coldness of our hearts!

Rejoice, for you overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your witness!

Rejoice, for you loved not your life, even to the death!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 12

A generation after your death, the Emperor Constantine built a basilica next to the catacomb where you were buried on the Tiburtine Way. Following his pious example, your Church sounds your praises throughout your city of Rome and throughout the world as we hymn your victory, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 12

Your divine intercession, O blessed martyr Lawrence, gives all the world hope in the mercy of our God. Not only the poor and widows look to you now for help, but all men everywhere rely on your heavenly assistance. Trusting that you will show us the kindness which you always showed to the poor, we lift up these songs:

Rejoice, powerful patron for all who look to you!

Rejoice, fervent intercessor for those who seek the Lord!

Rejoice, for you served faithfully at God's altar in Rome!

Rejoice, for you stand in power before His altar in heaven!

Rejoice, humble deacon and servant of the poor!

Rejoice, exalted saint and sharer in God's glory!

Rejoice, you whose witness strengthens our hearts!

Rejoice, you whose prayers converted the city of Rome!

Rejoice, holy Lawrence, servant of the most-high God and witness to His triumphant power!

Kontakion 13

O holy archdeacon and martyr Lawrence, you burned with zealous love for Christ and offered up your own life to Him in the fire of persecution. Do not cease to pray for us sinners who love you, that we may join you in the Kingdom and with you sing the endless doxology to God: Alleluia!

(thrice; then:)