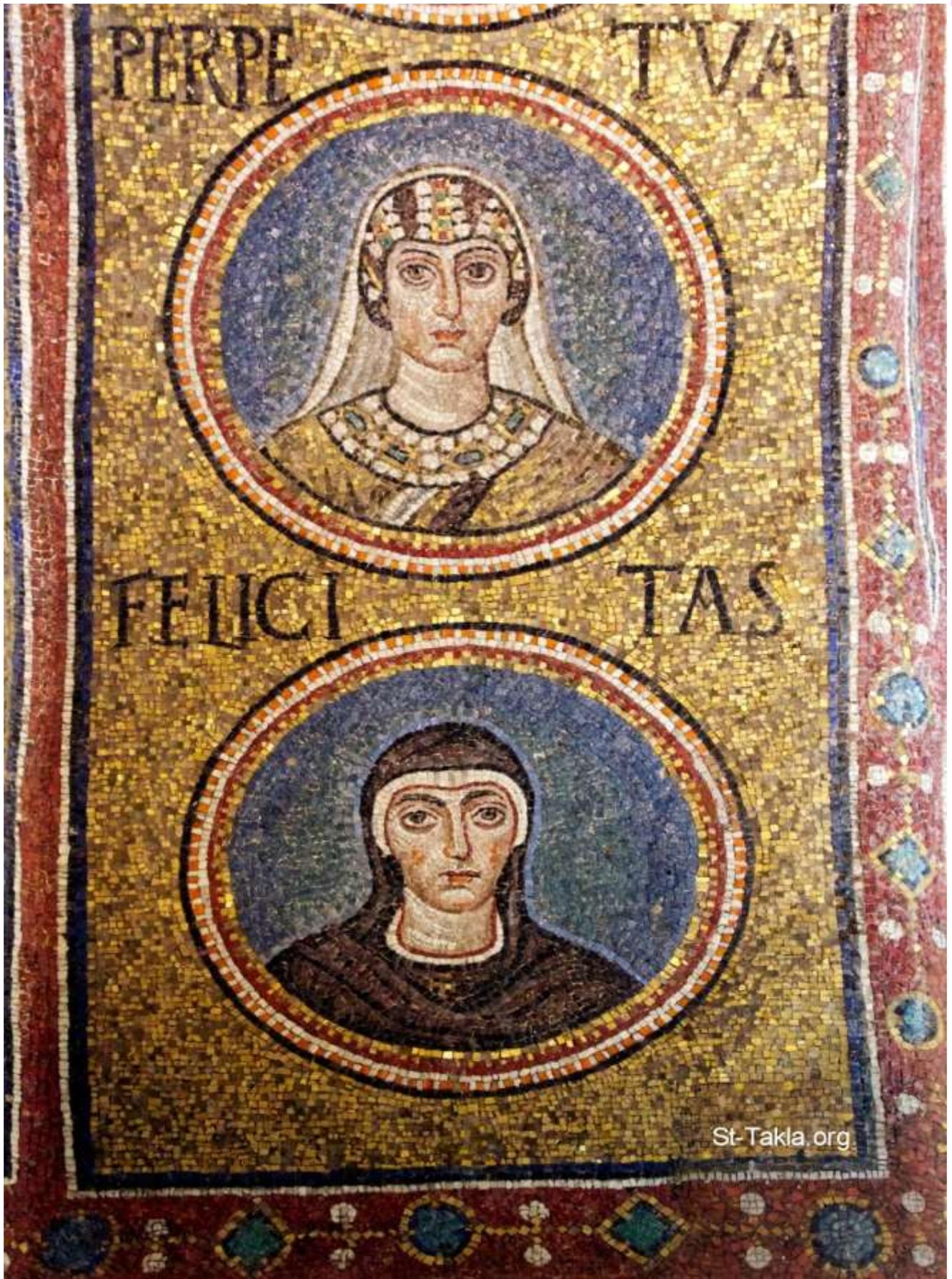


01 FEBRUARIE

**ACATISTUL
SF. MUCENICI
PERPETUA,
FELICITAS...
DE LA
CARTAGINA**



ACATISTIERUL PE FEBRUARIE-EG



Akathist **to the African Martyrs**

When the Lord deemed it fitting He called His saints out of the African lands: holy Perpetua, Felicity, Saturus, Saturnius, Revocatus and Secundulus, to witness to their faith through suffering death. Thus, we have as an inheritance the flourishing tree of Orthodoxy, for they shed their blood, watering the seedling. Wherefore we cry aloud:

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity, and your companions!

As a catechumen, O holy Perpetua, thou wast taken captive and while in prison thy father besought thee to denounce Christ. But boldly thou didst proclaim that thou couldst be called by no other name but Christian.

Wherefore we marvel at thy conviction and cry out to thee thus:

Rejoice, thou who art a shining example for all catechumens

Rejoice, thou who chose the heavenly over thine earthly father

Rejoice, thou who refused to be called anything other than a Christian

Rejoice, being freed from the bondage of sin through baptism while yet in prison

Rejoice, for being informed by the Spirit thou prayed only for endurance of the flesh

Rejoice, Married Matron mother of a son

Rejoice, thou who wast tempted by womanly anxiety for thy suckling child

Rejoice, thou who wast ministered to by the holy deacons Tertius and Pomponius

Rejoice, thou who didst commend thy son to the care of thy mother

Rejoice, thou who didst comfort thy brother, a catechumen in the faith

Rejoice, thou who didst look upon the dungeon as a palace

Rejoice, Bold One asking the Lord whether thou wouldst die a martyr's death

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and your companions!

Beholding a heavenly vision, holy Perpetua wast informed of her martyrdom. She was found worthy to see with spiritual eyes the contest of salvation. And looking upon the bronze ladder she didst see holy Satorus going up ahead of her, calling after her to follow. Wherefore we call to her: Alleluia!

Contemplating the narrow ladder holy Perpetua didst understand the struggle to enter Paradise, for as a vile serpent the devil lies waiting to strike. Yet encouraged by her teacher she didst trod on its head and ascended the ladder, her gaze fixed upward. Wherefore we cry to her:

Rejoice, thou who didst declare the serpent powerless in the name of the Lord

Rejoice, thou who didst proclaim the way to Life impossible for the negligent

Rejoice, thou who didst follow holy Satorus' example in death as in life

Rejoice, thou who didst ascend and enter a vast garden

Rejoice, thou who didst stand in the company of many clothed in white

Rejoice, thou who wast greeted by the
venerable Shepherd

Rejoice, thou who wast given to eat food
sweeter than honey

Rejoice, thou who didst awake from thy vision
at the word 'amen'

Rejoice, Holy Saturus who wast found worthy
to ascend the ladder first

Rejoice, O father who gave thyself up for the
sake of the catechumens

Rejoice, Encourager of Perpetua to follow after
thee in thine ascent

Rejoice, you who confidently forsook all hope
in this world

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and
your companions!

During their meal the martyrs were all called
to the tribunal, and once there they all
proclaimed themselves Christians. Refusing to
offer sacrifice to the idols for the Emperor's
prosperity, they left the procurator Hilarian
baffled, who knew not how to chant: Alleluia

Ever faithful to the Lord the martyrs professed their faith before the procurator, and the crowd which had gathered. The sentence was read out against them, they were to be sent to the beasts. Cheerfully they returned to the dungeon, and thus we cry out:

Rejoice, Holy Contesters in the stadium of Carthage

Rejoice, Firm Pillars of the faith, convicted for the sake of Christ

Rejoice, Blessed Martyrs whose blood watered Orthodoxy

Rejoice, Holy Perpetua whose father once again tempted thee

Rejoice, thou who didst refuse to sacrifice even for the sake of thy child

Rejoice, thou who didst sorrow for thy father in his ignorance of the Faith

Rejoice, thou who didst proclaim nothing happens outside of God's providence

Rejoice, thou who stood firm though confronted by the familial bonds of nature

Rejoice, thou who didst trust God would provide for thy son

Rejoice, thou whose child wast miraculously weaned though still a small infant

Rejoice, Band of Martyrs bound together by common love for Christ

Rejoice, you who were led to the dungeon as though to a bridalchamber

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Pertetua, Felicity and your companions!

Fervently praying, Perpetua didst hear the name “Dinocrates”, who wast her departed brother in the flesh. As she didst behold in a dream, the little one was in a dark place and thirsty. But he was unable to drink of the fountain for the height was very great.

Wherefore, she didst supplicate for him and we cry to her: Alleluia!

Great was her joy when Perpetua saw yet another vision wherein Dinocrates was healed of his infirmities. He drank his fill from the fountain – for he had been benefited by her ardent prayers, wherefore we praise her thus:

Rejoice, thou who didst help thy brother
though a gulf was fixed between you

Rejoice, Deliverer from the suffering torments
of Hades

Rejoice, thou who didst deem it laudable to
pray with tears for thy brother

Rejoice, thou who didst spend thy days and
nights supplicating God

Rejoice, Holy Martyr who supplicates for us on
earth as thou didst for thy brother

Rejoice, little Dinocrates for thou wast
delivered by thy sister's prayers

Rejoice, thou whose face was healed once
diseased by ulcers

Rejoice, thou who is now clothed in fine
apparel

Rejoice, all ye in Hades, comforted by the
prayers of the righteous

Rejoice, O fountain for thy ledge was lowered

Rejoice, O ever-flowing water who dost satisfy
those who drink of thee

Rejoice, Golden Cup who dost provide
nourishment for the thirsty

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and
your companions!

Having seen the joy of her brother, Perpetua
didst rejoice that he no longer was tormented
– for where once was an ulcer there remained
only a scar. And in drinking the water from
the golden cup his thirst was quenched.

Whenceforth, he ran off to play as children do,
and we cry to her: Alleluia!

Influenced by the grace of the martyrs,
Pudens, the prison-guard's heart was softened
and he began to magnify them. Thus being
filled with mercy he permitted many to enter
the dungeon so that all might be comforted.
Wherefore they extolled the martyrs thusly:

Rejoice, Bold Intercessors before the throne of
God

Rejoice, Bright Lamps burning in Northern
Africa

Rejoice, for you patiently abided in dark
dungeons

Rejoice, for you are now delivered into the light of Paradise

Rejoice, Perfect Examples of Christian friendship

Rejoice, Salt of the earth and light of the world

Rejoice, for you were condemned to death by the earthly Emperor

Rejoice, for you are now crowned with life by the Heavenly King

Rejoice, Contesters with unconquerable courage

Rejoice, Brave Warriors setting out to do battle for Christ

Rejoice, Peaceful souls eagerly awaiting His embrace

Rejoice, for from your bloodshed an abundance of life sprung forth

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perptua, Felicity and your companions!

Just before the games, holy Perpetua beheld a vision of the upcoming day's spiritual contest: hearing a loud knock she opened to the

deacon Pomponios, clad all in white. He besought her to follow him and with much effort they arrived at the arena, wherefore we cry: Alleluia!

Knowing she was to contend with beasts, Perpetua marvelled that none were sent out against her, but soon saw an Egyptian of ill-repute approach as her opponent. Thus she was striped and clothed with oil, while the Egyptian wallowed in dust. Wherefore encouraged by her vision we cry out:

Rejoice, thou who didst not shrink back in fear of the Egyptian

Rejoice, Brave Contender against the forces of evil

Rejoice, thou who wast found worthy to have angels as thine helpers

Rejoice, thou who wast offered a branch of golden fruit if victorious

Rejoice, Solider of Christ combating in the front lines

Rejoice, Fierce Fighter who didst smote thine enemy while trotting on air

Rejoice, Champion who didst dash thine enemy to the ground

Rejoice, thou who didst step on his head as though on a serpent

Rejoice, Victor over the enemy who hinders our ascent to heaven

Rejoice, thou who didst receive thy prize from the master of the gladiators

Rejoice, Conqueror of him who leads us to the gate of death

Rejoice, thou who didst understand that thine was the victory

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and your companions!

Lifted into the air by angels, O holy Saturus, in thy vision thou and holy Perpetua wert carried into the heavens. For contending well you were granted the promise the Lord had given you. Wherefore with the angels we cry out to you: Alleluia!

Marvolous trees with flowers of all kinds didst you pass by while being upborne by angels to venerate the Heavenly King. Trembling, they

laid you down and you entered clothed in white raiment, and thus we cry out:

Rejoice, you who were carried by angels toward the East

Rejoice, you who didst pass over the Earth's edge

Rejoice, Blessed Ones who didst overlook wondrous gardens

Rejoice, Marvelled at by angels more glorious than the rest

Rejoice, Witnesses to the beauty of the heavenly kingdom

Rejoice, you who looked upon trees unknown to this earth

Rejoice, Spectators of leaves that sang without ceasing

Rejoice, you who met thy fellow-martyred companions

Rejoice, called upon by angels to go in and salute the Lord

Rejoice, Worthy Ones clothed in white raiment

Rejoice, Observers of a palace with walls made of light

Rejoice, Hearers of the thrice holy hymn chanted unto the Trinity

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and your companions!

Noticing in that place a man sitting, having hair like white as snow – yet youthful of countenance – you were borne up by angels to reverently kiss him. Whereupon he passed his hand over your faces and you offered the kiss of peace to the surrounding elders. And thus, together with them we cry to you: Alleluia!

Optatus the bishop, and Aspasius the priest and teacher stood on either side of the door from which you exited. Falling at your feet they supplicated the two of you to make peace between them. Wherefore you rose them up and embraced them with love. Marvelling at your humility we cry to you:

Rejoice, Holy Ones worthy to see divine visions

Rejoice, Encounterers of spiritual parents in the heavenly garden

Rejoice, you who didst keep company in
heaven with those on earth

Rejoice, you who didst receive humble bows
done in your honour

Rejoice, you who didst humbly reciprocate the
simple gesture

Rejoice, Peacemakers among thy fellow
Christians

Rejoice, Poor in Spirit who didst win the
kingdom of heaven

Rejoice, Mourners who art comforted eternally

Rejoice, Thirsters for Righteousness who have
been satiated

Rejoice, Meek Ones who shall inherit the earth

Rejoice, Merciful Ones who have obtained
much mercy

Rejoice, Pure of heart for you dost see God
perpetually

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and
your companions!

Putting aside the dissensions between them, Optatus and Aspasius followed the instructions of the angels and took heed of the advice given them. Thus did the angels warn Optatus to correct his people so that they might not continue in their crooked ways; wherefore we cry: Alleluia!

Quivering at the thought that thou might be prohibited to contend – for thou wast with child – O holy Felicity, thou and those with thee didst pour out your supplication to the Lord, that He might grant thee His favour. Immediately He didst hearken unto thy prayer and thou didst bring forth a daughter, wherefore we cry to thee:

Rejoice, thou who didst join in prayer with thy fellow martyrs

Rejoice, Slave in this life but servant of God eternally

Rejoice, Contester for the grace of martyrdom

Rejoice, Fervent Supplicator to God for His favour

Rejoice, Worthy One granted the grace of a safe and early labour

Rejoice, thou who wast not hindered by the ties of thine kindred

Rejoice, thou who didst entrust thy babe to a fellow Christian

Rejoice, thou who didst answer wisely in the face of insult

Rejoice, Wise Councillor proclaiming the strength of Christ in weakness

Rejoice, Sanctified One through the act of childbearing

Rejoice, Brave Martyr who dost remember those in want of children

Rejoice, thou who tasted of the felicity of dying for our Lord

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and your companions!

Readily prepared to die a martyr's death, holy Secundulus wast called from this life while still in prison. For though his body knew not the sword his soul had suffered a martyrdom. Wherefore, in His ineffable mercy God preserved him from the beasts, and thus we cry to Him: Alleluia!

Spectators having gathered to gawk at the martyrs, the holy Satorus didst prophetically rebuke them: “Remember our faces for us you will see on the fearful Day of Judgement”.

Wherefore, many departed astonished and of those that heard many were converted, and thus we proclaim:

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs whose martyrdom was recorded by the faithful

Rejoice, you who were treated harshly by the fearful tribune

Rejoice, Persecuted Ones out of fear of your escape

Rejoice, Bold Perpetua who didst scold the cruel adjutant

Rejoice, Faithful Ones who didst convert many while in prison

Rejoice, Workers of the vineyard who converted more by your common passion

Rejoice, Partakers of an Agape meal instead of common food

Rejoice, Communioners of the feast of the Body and Blood of our Lord

Rejoice, you who longed to be nourished by Christ instead of meat

Rejoice, you who forewarned the spectators of the coming Judgement

Rejoice, Brave Contesters prepared to fight on the birthday of Caesar

Rejoice, Saints of the Lord eagerly awaiting your death in His name

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and your companions!

The day of the games having dawned, the holy martyrs prepared for battle. Bravely entering the stadium, they were filled with joy as though in heaven. At the sight of Perpetua many cast down their eyes. Felicity came to her second baptism – from blood to blood, from midwife to gladiator. Wherefore we cry out: Alleluia!

Unable to convince the martyrs to put on the robes of idolaters, the tribune suffered that they should be brought forth as they were. Perpetua began to chant psalms, Revocatus, Saturninus, and Saturus mocked the senseless Hilarian, saying, “Thou judgest us

and God thee,” and in this way displayed their bravery. Wherefore we cry to them:

Rejoice, Holy men refusing to wear the dress of the priests of Saturn

Rejoice, Holy women refusing to wear the dress of the priestesses of Ceres

Rejoice, you who refused to have anything to do with lifeless idols

Rejoice, for by your boldness injustice didst yield to justice

Rejoice, for you were scourged before the line of the gladiators

Rejoice, Rejoicers in your sufferings for the sake of Christ

Rejoice, Brave Soldiers fighting in the trenches of a spiritual battle

Rejoice, Holy Perpetua, singing as though trampling on the head of the Egyptian

Rejoice, Holy Felicity, rejoicing that thou wast not left behind in prison

Rejoice, Holy Revocatus, who didst boldly glare at the gawking crowd

Rejoice, Holy Saturninus, who didst taunt the darkened Hilarian

Rejoice, Holy Satorus, who didst yearn only for the heavenly kingdom

Rejoice, Holy martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and your companions!

Virtue being her first concern the holy Perpetua bound up her dishevelled hair, lest any should think she mourned her glory. Being brought out against the mad cow – placed there to mock their sex – the crowd shuddered at the sight of milk running from the breasts of holy Felicity. Wherefore, we cry to them: Alleluia!

Wishing to wear the more glorious crown, holy Saturninus asked to go against all the beasts, while Revocatus faced the leopard and the bear. In one bite by the leopard holy Satorus was bathed in much blood, wherefore the crowd mockingly called out, “saved and washed,” but we cry out thus:

Rejoice, Holy Revocatus who wast torn by a bear on a raised bridge

Rejoice, Holy Saturninus who wast granted
thy desire to fight all beasts

Rejoice, Holy Saturus who would die first as
thou didst prophesy

Rejoice, for the wild boar didst instead turn on
its huntsman

Rejoice, for the bear knew better than to
attack a martyr

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs for you were covered in
the blood of a second baptism

Rejoice, Holy Perpetua, being caught up
in *theoria* while in the arena

Rejoice, for thou wast more concerned for
modesty than thy pain

Rejoice, Counsellor of catechumens to keep
the faith and love among them

Rejoice, Holy Felicity who wast smote for
Christ's sake by the fierce cow

Rejoice, for thy fellow martyr, Perpetua, didst
raise thee up

Rejoice, Fair Maidens who didst forsake the
beauty of your youth for eternal life

Rejoice, Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicity and your companions!

Xenial friendship did the holy Saturus extend to Pudens when he did leave him a token of his love – a ring soaked in the blood of his wound. Joining the rest, assembled to be slain by the sword, each did die a martyr's death. Perpetua directed the hand of the gladiator to her throat, by this showing that the evil spirits feared her most of all. Wherefore, moved by their sacrifice, we cry: Alleluia!

