

AKATHIST TO SAINT CUTHBERT OF LINDISFARNE

Commemorated March 20 / April 2

DISMISSAL HYMN

Second Tone

What tongue can speak calmly of the gifts of God? What eye hath seen the joys of Paradise? These shall only be possible when we leave behind our earthly bodies, and are received into the heavens by the Lord Himself. Yet see how He now honoureth an earthly body with the greater glories to come! Thou hast caused Thy power to flow from the beloved bones of Cuthbert, O Lord, filling Thy Church with the radiance of Paradise, preserving Thy holy one as Thou hast preserved Jonah, the Israelites, and the Three Holy Children of old! Raise us again, by his prayers, for the sake of Thy Son, at the sounding of the final trumpet!

KONTAKION 1

Second Tone

O Cuthbert, the great and admirable warrior who shineth forth with thy many merits: now the Lord shineth through thee in thine eternal reward, for thou crushest the fires of the flesh. With thy heart didst thou scorn all passing things in thy duty and love for Christ, and in thy labour didst not scorn the Lord's commandments, for in thy generosity and eagerness thou didst flow with the Light of Christ, opening an everlasting stream of grace where none had been found before. O thou, who broughtest forth an abundant harvest in rocky earth, do thou ever pray to the Thrice-Holy Lord that our souls may be saved.

IKOS 1

As an infant thou didst play as a child, O holy Cuthbert, and wast reproved by thy friend for thine indulgence at play, urging thee to exercise watchfulness over mind and body. For he upbraided thee by the Holy Spirit: Why dost thou persist in doing what is contrary to thy nature and rank, most holy bishop? The Lord hast marked thee to instil virtue into thine elders! Thereby didst he prophecy thine illustrious life to come, and fulfilled the words of the holy scripture, for out of the mouths of babes hast the Lord perfected the praise of His saints:

Rejoice, thou whom the Lord admonished with the words of a child.

Rejoice, thou who heeded the words of His angel, and was thereby healed.

Rejoice, thou whose eyes were opened at thy priestly call.

Rejoice, thou whose eyes beheld the angel of God.

Rejoice, thou who was made whole by a soldier of Christ.

Rejoice, thou whom like Judas Maccabeus beheld an angelic soldier.

Rejoice, thou whose childish prayers were mocked by an earthly brood.

Rejoice, thou whose prayers were accepted by the heavenly hosts.

Rejoice, thou whose boyish weakness was despised by those in trouble at sea.

Rejoice, thou whose manly prayers preserved souls on storm-tossed waters.

Rejoice, thou whose youthful piety caused men to burn inwardly with shame at their impiety.

Rejoice, thou whose praise never ceased to flow from their mouths.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 2

Thy holy prayers were heard freely in heaven, O holy one, since thou didst rid thyself of the chains of this life: for as thou didst pray to deliver faithful men from the sea as did Moses of old, so too didst thou despise the curses of the pagans who refused to turn away from the darkness that had swallowed them; now thou prayest for us as thou didst pray for their deliverance of old, that we may be saved from the jaws of darkness and cry aloud: Alleluia.

IKOS 2

Upon seeing the holy soul of Aidan carried by angels to heaven, thou didst set to thanking God and exhorting thy companions: Know thine own wretchedness, which blindeth us with sleep before the glory of God! O brethren, what marvels I have seen! The gate of Heaven opened, and an angelic band bearing the soul of God's holy one. While we remain in darkness, he is taken to the Heavenly Light! While we remain on earth, he treadeth the path to Heaven! Just as holy Cuthbert didst enflame the hearts of all with heavenly zeal, let us now call out to him with joyous hearts:

Rejoice, O holy father who wast fed with bread from Heaven.

Rejoice, O holy one who feedeth us through thy holiness of life.

Rejoice, O keeper of the holy fasts.

Rejoice, O faster, fed for the sake of thy piety.

Rejoice, O new Elijah, who refused hospitality from a widow.

Rejoice, O pious one whose Host dwelleth among the Heavenly hosts.

Rejoice, thou who saith to God, I was fasting for love of Thee.

Rejoice, thou who with thy beast wast fed, and who thereby blessed the Name of the Lord.

Rejoice, O thou who from nothing is granted the heavenly food.

Rejoice, O new prophet who testifieth to the fruits of fasting.

Rejoice, O holy one who treadeth the paths of the Lord.

Rejoice, O righteous saints whose paths led thee to the glory on high.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 3

Thou didst approach the Holy Isle mounted on thy steed, and laying down thy spear and reins thou didst take up the monastic life. Crossing the waters on dry land as did Moses of old, thou didst leave the worldly Egypt behind as the waters came together. Pious Boisil

greeted thee with the words of the Lord to Nathaniel: Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile! And foreseeing thy progress on the ladder of the monastic life, he persuaded the abbot to bless thee to place thy foot on the lowest rung. Thus thou didst then begin in all things to ascend to the heights of ascetic ways, that we may now raise our voices to God and cry: Alleluia.

IKOS 3

As the steward of hospitality at Ripon, thou didst welcome strangers as thy loving charge, and like Abraham didst welcome unwittingly an angel sent to test thy devotion, washing his feet as a true emulator of Christ. Urging the angelic one to wait on thee for his morning bread, thou wast instead given by him spiritual food: for on thy return thou didst find no footprint in the snow, but the fragrance of holiness awaiting at the door for thee. Then Cuthbert cried, Now I know it was an angel, come not to be fed but to feed. He hath brought the bread that cannot be brought forth on earth, whiter than the lilies, sweeter than roses, more deliciousthan honey! It is no wonder that he refused earthly food when he can enjoy in Heaven the bread of eternal life! Thus the miracle moved the saint to greater zeal, calling us all to cry to the Lord of All:

Rejoice, thou who didst resort to prayer when thy elder was cast down.

Rejoice, thou whose prayers raised him up whole again.

Rejoice, thou who seest God's strength made perfect in weakness.

Rejoice, thou who didst seek strength in the Theologian's Gospel.

Rejoice, thou who didst pore over the Gospel at the deathbed of thy friend.

Rejoice, thou who didst pour out tears at his passing from this life.

Rejoice, thou who didst lament for the cares of this fleeting world.

Rejoice, thou who wouldst run from them to an island on the ocean.

Rejoice, thou who sawest flight from the world as a treasure to be desired.

Rejoice, thou who sawest in worldly cares the passions that only fly away with death.

Rejoice, thou spiritual son of a prophet.

Rejoice, thou spiritual father of thy Holy Isle.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 4

Thou didst follow in the footsteps of thy spiritual father, taking up his mantle and the spiritual care of his flock, preaching the Word zealously, seeking the conversion of all, calling the lost back from idolatry as the prophets of old! Thou didst labour day and night to find the lost, hidden in hills and caves of the earth, and they in turn gathered round thee to witness thine angelic countenance, and to hear thy holy words that they might sing: Alleluia.

IKOS 4

Reverence could not master a brother driven by the curiosity of the first Adam, desiring to see the nightly wonders of holy Cuthbert on the shores of the sea: he witnessed there the ministrations of dumb animals to the holy one as he spent his night in prayer, seeking fellowship with the New Adam, Our Lord. The holy one bade him tell no-one of the miracle until the Second Coming of Christ, a vow which he there made before the holy one, silently crying from the depths of his soul:

Rejoice, holy saint, tasting Paradise on earth.

Rejoice, holy one, converser with beasts as our first ancestors in Eden.

Rejoice, thou who offerest thy prayers on the ocean shore.

Rejoice, thou in whom the ocean of Grace overwhelmeth the shores of the flesh.

Rejoice, thou who didst shine forth the Light of Heaven.

Rejoice, beacon to those sailing the stormy waters of life.

Rejoice, blessed friend of the Lord.

Rejoice, blessed husbandman of the Lord's creation.

Rejoice, blessed carer of human souls.

Rejoice, blessed companion to man and beast.

Rejoice, foreshadowing of renewed nature.

Rejoice, sanctified nature in the fallen world.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 5

Wondrous is God in His saints, Who glorifieth them as they were in the first days in Paradise! For as then Adam enjoyed a peaceable kingdom betwixt the beasts and man, so didst Thou vouchsafe to Thy servant Cuthbert, who in his preachings hungered for bread from heaven, and like the prophet Elijah was fed by the birds from the heavens! O holy father, thou didst honour the Lord's words that the labourer should not be without his wages, and didst share thy meat with the winged servant who brought it, as a type of the Communion between the Lord and His Creation, and an image of the manna sent by the Lord to His New Israel who ever singeth to Him: Alleluia.

IKOS 5

The sons of men beheld in the upstretched hands of holy Cuthbert the power of the hand of God, for He Who calmeth the fires of the passions by the prayers of His holy one calmed the fires of the evil one, both real and illusory, and didst turn the hearts of men from distraction, to do homage to the True God, crying with one voice:

Rejoice, stream that causeth the fires of the demons to cease.

Rejoice, water that washeth clean the eyes of the spiritually blind.

Rejoice, thou who quenchest the delusions of the mind.

Rejoice, thou who enlightenest the eyes of the faithful.

Rejoice, thou who dost deliver from the mire of earthly delusion.

Rejoice, thou who dost rescue from the flames of sin.

Rejoice, thou who dost teach the hearts of those with ears to hear.

Rejoice, thou who dost reconcile the senseless to the Lord.

Rejoice, thou who didst calm the fears of thy mother.

Rejoice, thou who didst work miracles by the power of the Son.

Rejoice, thou who didst work wonders like the fathers of old.

Rejoice, thou who didst shine like a new flame before thy kinsmen.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 6

The sheriff sent word to the holy one: she whom I love perisheth in the captivity of the demons; only speak the word, and she shall receive healing in the spirit and release from the flesh. But the holy one replied: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! And returning thence, loosed her by the touch of his bridle from the chains of demonic captivity, loosing from her lips the joyful cry: Alleluia.

IKOS 6

On the Holy Isle shining forth the illumination of Truth, thou didst dispel the darkness of the demons, for unable to bear thy holiness, their strength failed, and those who were divided by darkness were united by enlightenment in brotherhood, and cried aloud in joy:

Rejoice, unity of monastics.

Rejoice, divider from the ways of sin.

Rejoice, thou who hast trampled upon the unrepentant hearts of men.

Rejoice, thou who hast censured the rebellious spirit of disunity.

Rejoice, gentle tide which drowned the sins of repentant hearts.

Rejoice, island of silence refreshing those athirst for Christ.

Rejoice, beacon guiding those on the stormy sea of life.

Rejoice, protector of the faithful in thy psalmody.

Rejoice, succour of the common people.

Rejoice, restorer of the suffering from all manner of affliction.

Rejoice, house of prayer unseen by the eyes of the world.

Rejoice, thou who laid the One Foundation in the island of thy heart.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 7

When holy Cuthbert was nigh unto departing from the sight of men, the birds of the air presented to him repentance: for when in their pride they stole from him grain and straw, they humbled themselves with offerings of fat and prostrations. Wherefore he marvelled at the mercies of God toward His creatures, crying aloud: Alleluia.

IKOS 7

New was the countenance God's servant Cuthbert showed to the brethren, when he joined with them each year at the Passion of Christ: for he preserved the gift of meekness undiminished in his heart, and by prayer brought forth a wellspring of humility, springing up on the dry land of Farne, that seeing this marvel, all might cry out:

Rejoice, thou who by prayer turnest solid rock to a watery fountain.

Rejoice, constant stream of prayer, neither diminished nor lost.

Rejoice, clear pool reflecting the servitude of Christ.

Rejoice, thou who showest forth the ministry of the Apostles.

Rejoice, joyful feet carrying forth the Gospel.

Rejoice, soles worn thin on the road of preaching.

Rejoice, guide of monks to prayerfulness.

Rejoice, thou who didst redeem thy brethren by unceasing prostrations.

Rejoice, supplication before the merciful God.

Rejoice, forgiveness won by prayer and fasting.

Rejoice, thou whose window was open to all thy brethren in need.

Rejoice, recluse who closed the doors of thy heart to the passions.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 8

As Solomon of old received the offerings of the tribes of Israel for raising up the Holy Temple of God, so too did the Creation serve holy Cuthbert, for in raising up a hut to house him in prayer and supplication to Christ, he received timber from the seas themselves, though his brethren failed to provide it. For in such strange ways does the Lord reconcile those estranged from Him, that they might cry with grateful hearts: Alleluia.

IKOS 8

Wholly present in the counsel of the saints is the grace of the Holy Spirit, while in no way absent from their ascetic struggle, for these labours bring forth holiness of life, whose fruit is sweetness for all who taste of it, thereby yearning all the more to know the sweetness of Him Who was born of the Virgin, and to sing such words as these:

Rejoice, thou who by Divine providence pourest forth abundant healings.

Rejoice, thou whose miracles draw the faithful to Christ.

Rejoice, thou who in thy life didst heal thy sister by the touch of thy relic.

Rejoice, thou whose relics are given by God for veneration in the present age.

Rejoice, thou earthly Cherubim.

Rejoice, thou flesh-bearing Seraphim.

Rejoice, thou who dost restore broken flesh to completeness.

Rejoice, thou who yoked together dust of earth and godliness.

Rejoice, thou who by prayer healest the sickness of transgressions.

Rejoice, thou who by supplications grantest the taste of Paradise.

Rejoice, cincture, binding the wounds of the lovers of Christ.

Rejoice, thou hope in eternal healings.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 9

All angelkind was amazed as Thy servant Cuthbert, O Lord, who like an angel in the flesh saw things to come as if they were wholly present with him; for he beheld the inaccessible foreknowledge of God, making it accessible to all, speaking with boldness and hearing from all: Alleluia.

IKOS 9

Orators most eloquent fall dumb before the prophecies of Thy saints; for they are at a loss to explain how Thou couldst raise up royal heirs where there were no offspring, or how Thou couldst call forth from solitude the holy to rule with wisdom over Thy flock. But as for us, marvelling at the mysteries Thou hast revealed in prophecy through Thy saints, we cry with faith:

Rejoice, vessel of the prophecies of God.

Rejoice, treasury of the secrets of His providence.

Rejoice, thou who revealest the foolishness of kings.

Rejoice, thou who provest their ambitions frail as spiders' webs.

Rejoice, for unbelievers are confounded.

Rejoice, for the boastings of the faithless are faded away

Rejoice, thou who didst bow thy heart to the will of God.

Rejoice, thou who didst accept thy bishopric when kings and bishops bowed before thee.

Rejoice, thou whose prophecy drew a king from across the sea.

Rejoice, thou whose news blessed thy people with a humble sovereign.

Rejoice, worthy helmsman of Christ's Church on the Holy Isle.

Rejoice, haven by thy prayers for those who fare on the sea of life.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 10

Wishing to do God's will, like a new Elijah, thou didst see the chariot of thy soul ready to rise to heaven; and, though God's providence was revealed to thee the prayer of thy friend Herbert that was heard by God; for by his intercessions He called thee both to thy repose at like time, that the Lord Himself might hear thy cry: Alleluia.

IKOS 10

Thou art a rampart for those who doubt wakefulness beyond the grave, O holy Cuthbert; for the Maker of heaven and earth revealed to thee at table the vision of things beyond this world: the soul of a pious servant of God, borne heavenward by the angels. By thy testimony, O holy one, thou dost prepare us for the journey of our soul to judgement, and teachest all to cry out to thee:

Rejoice, pillar of holiness.

Rejoice, gate of visions of heaven.

Rejoice, revealer of spiritual revelations.

Rejoice, bestower of Divine consolations.

Rejoice, for thou didst convict those drowning in the mire of shame.

Rejoice, for thou didst admonish the unbelieving in mind.

Rejoice, for thou didst bring to nought the doubts of the faithless.

Rejoice, for thou didst strengthen the hope of the faithful.

Rejoice, confirmation of the judgements of God.

Rejoice, thou who wouldst join the souls of the just to the Lord.

Rejoice, holy father of the repentant.

Rejoice, witness of the angelic escorts of holy souls.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 11

Defeated is every hymn that striveth to reckon the multitude of miracles worked through thee, O holy Cuthbert; for even should we offer thee, O blessed father, hymns of praise numberless as the waves of the sea, we should still have done nothing worthy of the great abundance of mercies poured out on us who cry to thee: Alleluia.

IKOS 11

As a brilliant staff of healing shining to those in sickness and despair, we behold the holy Cuthbert, for he cultivated a life of prayer, and by it healed suffering souls; still he reacheth out his arm with mercy, and blessing us, is honoured by these our cries:

Rejoice, thou who dost bear the Cup of Life.

Rejoice, thou who dost overturn the chalice of death.

Rejoice, holy one, anointing mankind with healing.

Rejoice, blessed one, deliverer of ailing souls.

Rejoice, for thou hast caused new hope of life to dawn.

Rejoice, for thou hast caused Christ's ever-flowing river of healings to gush forth.

Rejoice, thou who didst restore a dying son to his mother.

Rejoice, thou who didst wash away the odour of sickness.

Rejoice, dispenser of the Bread of Life.

Rejoice, bearer of the Wine-cup pouring forth salvation.

Rejoice, sweet-scented fragrance of deliverance from the plague of death.

Rejoice, life-bringing healer to those in despair.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 12

Wishing to show forth His grace, He that healeth the infirmities of men granted great healing to His servant Cuthbert, who having on his death bed staunched the ailment of his brother, heareth from all: Alleluia.

IKOS 12

Whilst hymning the Lord Christ, we all sing praises to His servant Cuthbert, as a dwelling-place of the Lord's grace; for the Lord Who foreseeeth all things and healeth all infirmities was present with him, and He glorified His servant in both life and death, and taught all to praise him thus:

Rejoice, dwelling-place of grace in thy tomb.
Rejoice, thou who rested within the Holy of Holies.
Rejoice, preacher of brotherly love to thy brethren.
Rejoice, inexhaustible treasury of healing.
Rejoice, restorer of the servants of kings.
Rejoice, sustainer of thy brother priests.
Rejoice, unshakeable tower of Lindisfarne.
Rejoice, impregnable bulwark of Durham.
Rejoice, thou through whom soil is raised to holiness.
Rejoice, thou through whom storms are cast down.
Rejoice, healer of mortal flesh.
Rejoice, salvation of a multitude of souls.
Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

KONTAKION 13

O glorious saint who didst hallow thy island home with thy healings, that it might receive thy holy relics at thy repose, free us from every calamity and disease of body and soul, and deliver from every torment those who cry with one voice: Alleluia.

This Kontakion is said thrice, then the first Ikos is recited:

IKOS 1

As an infant thou didst play as a child, O holy Cuthbert, and wast reproved by thy friend for thine indulgence at play, urging thee to exercise watchfulness over mind and body. For he upbraided thee by the Holy Spirit: Why dost thou persist in doing what is contrary to thy nature and rank, most holy bishop? The Lord hast marked thee to instil virtue into thine elders! Thereby did he prophecy thine illustrious life to come, and fulfilled the words of the holy scripture, for out of the mouths of babes hast the Lord perfected the praise of His saints:

Rejoice, thou whom the Lord admonished with the words of a child.

Rejoice, thou who heeded the words of His angel, and was thereby healed.

Rejoice, thou whose eyes were opened at thy priestly call,

Rejoice, thou whose eyes beheld the angel of God.

Rejoice, thou who was made whole by a soldier of Christ,

Rejoice, thou whom like Judas Maccabeus beheld an angelic soldier.

Rejoice, thou whose childish prayers were mocked by an earthly brood,

Rejoice, thou whose prayers were accepted by the heavenly hosts.

Rejoice, thou whose boyish weakness was despised by those in trouble at sea.

Rejoice, thou whose manly prayers preserved souls on storm-tossed waters.

Rejoice, thou whose youthful piety caused men to burn inwardly with shame at their impiety.

Rejoice, thou whose praise never ceased to flow from their mouths.

Rejoice, O Holy Wonderworker Cuthbert!

PRAYER TO SAINT CUTHBERT

Holy Father Cuthbert, Pray to God for us!

O Lord, Thou Who alone preservest us unfailing in divine love and oneness of mind, grant that we may live in concord with all the servants of Christ's holy Church, and show patience to us who seek hospitality in the household of faith. Preserve us from entanglement with those who have forsaken the Faith, deliver us from schisms and heresies, grant that we may learn the teachings of our Fathers and live by them. Strengthen us to carry out the rule of life which Thou in Thy mercy hast seen fit to grant us through the witness and prayers of thy holy servant Cuthbert and all Thy saints, for Thou art holy, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

ANOTHER PRAYER TO SAINT CUTHBERT

(For the Feast Day, from the ancient Mass of St Cuthbert)

Holy Father Cuthbert, Pray to God for us!

O Lord our God, it is truly meet and just, right and availing to our salvation, that we should always and in all places give thanks unto Thee, Father Almighty, Everlasting God, upon this day of the departure to Christ of our most holy Father Cuthbert, who first became an example in daily life, in temperate and most chaste conduct, and afterwards took up the monastic yoke, nourished only by the love of God, who did not seek to shepherd Thy Church, but rather was invited to do so by Thy providence, and the counsel of the churches. He had ever fought manfully and mightily against flesh and blood, and the rulers of this realm, seizing victory with the helm of hope for salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Word of God; through him Thou didst make manifest many miracles, and grant him before time a vision of his repose: Therefore, O Lord, We entreat Thee through the intercessions of our holy Father Cuthbert, that we may be counted worthy to reach the haven of joy and the heavenly realms of Thee, before Whom stand the countless choirs of Angels and Archangels, singing the Thrice Holy hymn. For Thou art a merciful God, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.