

Akathist to Matushka Olga Michael

by Archpriest Lawrence R. Farley

Kontakion 1 (Tone 4)

Our God who makes the moving curtain of the Northern Lights made you as a living light, shining in the far north and lighting up the desolate with His great beauty.¹ Beholding this radiance, we your children lift up our voices and sing: Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Ikos 1

You laboured in the far north as a new Tabitha, making clothes to shelter the poor from the cold and warming their souls with your love. We who endure the icy winds of this age also find shelter in your heavenly intercession and offer you these praises:

Rejoice, you that provided boots and parkas for the bodies of those in need!

Rejoice, you that still provide God's grace for the souls of the afflicted!

Rejoice, for your ceaseless labour clothed many throughout your village!

Rejoice, for your glorious praises are sung by many throughout the world!

Rejoice, strong consolation of peace for widows and orphans!

Rejoice, invincible tower of defense for the crushed and despairing!

Rejoice, haven of peace in the tumultuous world!

Rejoice, silent witness to the eternal Word!

Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 2

Born in the humble Yup'ik village of Kwethluk, you walked humbly with your God, doing justice and loving kindness², and were manifested to all as a real person.³ Now that your God has exalted you to the heavenly heights, you hear from your earthly Church the song: Alleluia!

¹ After her death, Matushka Olga appeared with Theotokos to a woman receiving counseling for severe sexual abuse. In the vision, Olga assisted the woman in the process of healing, and, showing her the Northern Lights, said "the moving curtain of light is a sign that God can create great beauty even from desolation".

² Micah 6:8 RSV: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to the walk humbly with your God?"

³ The word "Yup'ik" means "real person", "ideal personality".

Ikos 2

In your youth you married the village post-master and manager of the general store, supporting him by your prayers so that he became an archpriest. As a matushka, you were a true mother to all you met, and we your children delight to run to you with these songs:

Rejoice, you whose maternal embrace comforts us in our pain!

Rejoice, you whose unfailing strength fills us with new hope!

Rejoice, for you dry our tears as a loving mother!

Rejoice, for you come to us with the strength of the heavenly Father!

Rejoice, you that sewed the priestly vestments of your husband that he might stand in beauty before God!

Rejoice, you that clothe us also in true holiness that we might stand unashamed in the Kingdom!

Rejoice, open door to the mercy of the Lord!

Rejoice, high wall of protection against the assaults of the enemy!

Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 3

As the handmaid of the Lord, you obeyed His first command and fruitfully multiplied,⁴ bearing thirteen children, loving each one and sorrowing over the ones who died.⁵ Now that you stand with them in heaven, you hear from us your children still on earth the hymn: Alleluia!

Ikos 3

Even during your earthly sojourn you were life-giving, bearing many children and filling their lives with the love of God. Now that your sojourn has ended and you sing in the heavenly choir of the saints, you continue to give life to us your spiritual children, who thankfully offer these words:

Rejoice, you that taught your earthly family the ways of the Lord!

Rejoice, you that watch over your spiritual family with the love of Christ!

Rejoice, you that received each of your children as the gift of God!

Rejoice, you that welcome all of us who come to you as your own children!

Rejoice, healing maternal embrace for the wounded!

Rejoice, victorious divine defense against the demons!

Rejoice, consolation of all your troubled children!

⁴ Gen. 1:28: "And God said, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'"

⁵ Only eight of her thirteen children survived.

Rejoice, joy of all who seek your help!
Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 4

During your life you gave away your children's clothing and taught them to preserve the dignity of the poor by not saying anything when they saw others wearing their clothes. Not that you stand before God clothed in the vestments of glory, you cry aloud to Him: Alleluia!

Ikos 4

You toiled ceaselessly, Matushka Olga, making traditional fur boots and parkas to raise funds for the needy throughout Alaska, so that your maternal care was felt by those far distant from you. We needy ones also cry to you from the ends of the earth, taking refuge in your maternal intercession and offering you these hymns:
Rejoice, for the Lord has covered you with the robe of gladness!
Rejoice, for the Bridegroom adorns you with the jewels of His Kingdom!⁶
Rejoice, you that clothe the poor children with the love of God!
Rejoice, you that restore their dignity before the eyes of men!
Rejoice, shining garment of our earthly vindication!
Rejoice, radiant vestment of our heavenly triumph!
Rejoice, boast of the widows!
Rejoice, song of the orphans!
Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 5

Like your Lord who wanted to gather Jerusalem's children together the way a hen gathers her brood,⁷ so you also, Matushka Olga, sheltered the broken children who needed your care. Now that you stand in glory as their strong intercessor, you hear from them the cry: Alleluia!

Ikos 5

Those defenseless ones who suffered abuse at the hands of men looked to you for healing, O blessed Matushka, and you never disappointed them, but comforted

⁶ Is. 61:19: "The Lord has covered me with the robe of gladness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a crown, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels".

⁷ Mt. 23:37

their hearts and filled them with hope. We your children who also suffer our own wounds in the world turn to you with confidence and say:
Rejoice, you that give rest to the weary and heavy-laden!⁸
Rejoice, you that fill the fallen with new strength!
Rejoice, for your counsel empowered the battered and despairing!
Rejoice, for your wisdom delivered them from all their fears!
Rejoice, for they looked to you and were made radiant!
Rejoice, for you took from them their guilt and shame!⁹
Rejoice, ceaseless advocate before God for those molested and injured!
Rejoice, unconquerable stronghold for all needing refuge!
Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 6

Even though your children and their playmates were noisy and made a mess in your house, you never scolded them or raised your voice in anger to them, but your silence showed them your love and understanding. Marveling in your divine patience and maternal compassion, we your children also cry: Alleluia!

Ikos 6

None who suffered neglect could fail to find their help in you; O blessed Olga, for in your wisdom you knew how to feed the hungry as you preserved their failing self-esteem. We who hunger and thirst for the righteousness of the Kingdom look up to you for aid, calling aloud:
Rejoice, for you fill the hungry with the good things of the Kingdom!¹⁰
Rejoice, for you satisfy the poor with the bread of God!¹¹
Rejoice, for your prayers scatter the proud and end their oppression!
Rejoice, for your love exalts those of low degree and sets them on high!¹²
Rejoice, you that lift up the heads of the ashamed and beaten!
Rejoice, you that heal of the hearts of the broken and weary!
Rejoice, inexhaustible abundance!
Rejoice, eternal banquet!
Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

⁸ Mt. 11:28

⁹ Ps. 34:5: "Look to Him and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed."

¹⁰ Lk. 1:53

¹¹ Ps. 132:15

¹² Lk. 1:51-52

Kontakion 7

You laboured as a midwife, O blessed Matushka, caring for the women of your village, and in your prophetic insight you knew when a woman was pregnant in her first weeks, even before she did. Marveling at how God is wonderful in His saints, we give thanks to Him with the hymn: Alleluia!

Ikos 7

The weak and vulnerable came to you for strength, O Matushka Olga, and you guided them through the sorrow of childbirth into joy. We who walk through this life of sorrow and who seek the joy of the life to come offer you these songs: Rejoice, gentle healer, working to bring many newborn children into the world! Rejoice, spiritual midwife, labouring through your prayers until Christ is formed in us!¹³

Rejoice, for your heart knew when God had formed a child in the womb!

Rejoice, for your hands brought many children to the light!

Rejoice, hidden prophetess, deep in the counsels of God!

Rejoice, manifest sanctity, revealing the goodness of the Lord!

Rejoice, you whose patient labours filled many with joy!

Rejoice, you whose constant intercession bring many to the Kingdom!

Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 8

The old and ill found cause to praise God for you, O Matushka Olga, for you visited them in their infirmity and did their housework when they could not, quietly serving the Lord through His people. Knowing that you continue to serve the Lord through your heavenly intercession, we lift up our prayers to you, singing aloud: Alleluia!

Ikos 8

Like your Lord before you, O blessed one; you girded yourself in the radiant garments of humility and washed the feet of your fellow-servants, and inherited the blessing He promised for those who follow Him in humble service.¹⁴ Now that He has exalted you on high, you hear our fervent praises:

¹³ Gal. 4:19

¹⁴ Jn. 13:14, 17

Rejoice, you that visited orphans and widows in their affliction!
Rejoice, you that kept yourself unstained from the world!¹⁵
Rejoice, you whose labours refreshed the hearts of the lowly!
Rejoice, you whose prayers lifted them up to God's throne!
Rejoice, never-flagging zeal, aglow with the Spirit!
Rejoice, never-failing intercession, serving the Lord!¹⁶
Rejoice, for you never ceased in your work of love!
Rejoice, for your toil always gave the weary new hope!
Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 9

God formed you for Himself to declare His praise,¹⁷ O blessed matushka, and you knew by heart all the words of the services for many feast days, Holy Week and Pascha, so that you might lift up a ceaseless song to your Lord. Joining you in singing His matchless praise, we also cry aloud: Alleluia!

Ikos 9

God opened your lips that your mouth might declare His praise,¹⁸ and your lips poured forth His praise, since by His Spirit He taught you His statutes.¹⁹ Like the Mother of God before you, your soul magnified the Lord, and we who have heard your song also rejoice in God our Saviour,²⁰ saying to you:
Rejoice, you that dwell in the courts of the Lord!
Rejoice, you that sing for joy to the living God!²¹
Rejoice, song of triumph, silencing the din of the demons!
Rejoice, eternal melody, joining with the heavenly choir!
Rejoice, for the words of the Church's praises were written on your heart!
Rejoice, for the pure words of adoration came pouring from your lips!
Rejoice, you whose heart overflowed with good Word of God!
Rejoice, you who addressed your verses to the King!²²
Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

¹⁵ James 1:27

¹⁶ Rom. 12:11

¹⁷ Is. 43:21

¹⁸ Ps. 51:15

¹⁹ Ps. 119:171

²⁰ Lk. 1:46-47

²¹ Ps. 84:2

²² Ps. 45:1

Kontakion 10

God, who sends forth His word and melts the ice,²³ cared for you even in death, for even though you died in the frozen month of November, a warm wind blew in and melted the river, enabling many of your friends to come to your funeral unexpectedly and allowing your grave to be easily dug. Then, after they departed, the cold returned, the river froze and the ground hardened. Observing the care the Creator lavishes on His saints, we sinners lift up the cry: Alleluia!

Ikos 10

When the mourners at your funeral escorted your holy body to the graveyard, they saw that a flock of summer birds flew overhead, as if joining in the sacred procession, though after the funeral feast the unseasonable birds were seen no more. As the created order joins in honouring God's saint, we too hasten to add our praises:

Rejoice, for your whole life was a witness to God's healing love!

Rejoice, for in even your death you testified to His sovereignty over creation!

Rejoice, you that gathered all to the Lord by your humble acts of service!

Rejoice, you that assembled all to worship Him at your final appearance on earth!

Rejoice, for your prayers bring God's warmth to our souls!

Rejoice, for your presence banishes icy fear from our hearts!

Rejoice, fire of love in the bitter Arctic snows!

Rejoice, pillar of light in the long night of the north!

Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 11

The villagers who sang hymns from house to house at Christmas-time and who sang "Memory Eternal" at the homes of those who died the past year refused to let you die from their hearts, O blessed Olga, for even twenty years after your repose, they still come to sing "Memory Eternal" before your empty house. We who love you also join them in their ceaseless devotion, singing to you the hymn: Alleluia!

Ikos 11

Those who carried the Christmas star from house to house, illuminating the night with their carols, still carry you in their heart, Matushka Olga, as they stand in song

²³ Ps. 147:18

before the home you vacated when your soul left us for the mansions of heaven. As the North Star shines brightly among the stars in heaven, so you stand among the choir of the saints, and hear from us these songs:

Rejoice, you whose healing love binds us to you with the cords of devotion!

Rejoice, you whose gentle touch looses us from the bonds of pain!

Rejoice, for you never forsake your people!

Rejoice, for your people ever turn to you for aid!

Rejoice, ever-present bulwark in the midst of your church!

Rejoice, never-failing intercessor before the throne of God!

Rejoice, song of joy in the night!

Rejoice, flame of hope in the morning!

Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 12

In your maternal love you continue to care for us, Matushka Olga, praying for our souls and granting peace through your holy icon. Thankful to God for your miracles among us, we offer up the doxology: Alleluia!

Ikos 12

Those abused from childhood know you as a mighty healer, O blessed matushka. You appeared in a dream to one undergoing counseling for abuse, leading her through a forest, massaging her like a midwife so that all her years of painful trauma poured out from her, leaving her restored and joyful in spirit. Exulting in your healing love, we offer you these praises:

Rejoice, companion of the Theotokos, granting us maternal protection!

Rejoice, heir of St. Herman, shining forth from Alaska!

Rejoice, you that straighten the tangled cords of the darkened past!

Rejoice, you that give to the hurt and fallen a radiant future!

Rejoice, for you dry the tears of children!

Rejoice, for you drench us with the joy of Christ!

Rejoice, peace for the traumatized!

Rejoice, wholeness for the wounded!

Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Kontakion 13

O blessed Matushka Olga, accept these songs of us who trust in you, and in the compassion which you have always shown us, rescue us from distress, pain and

despair. Fill us up with the light of Christ, so that we may sing with you to God the eternal hymn of victory: Alleluia!

(thrice; then:)

Then: Ikos 1

You laboured in the far north as a new Tabitha, making clothes to shelter the poor from the cold and warming their souls with your love. We who endure the icy winds of this age also find shelter in your heavenly intercession and offer you these praises:

Rejoice, you that provided boots and parkas for the bodies of those in need!

Rejoice, you that still provide God's grace for the souls of the afflicted!

Rejoice, for your ceaseless labour clothed many throughout your village!

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Rejoice, haven of peace in the tumultuous world!

Rejoice, silent witness to the eternal Word!

Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

And again: Kontakion 1

Our God who makes the moving curtain of the Northern Lights made you as a living light, shining in the far north and lighting up the desolate with His great beauty. Beholding this radiance, we your children lift up our voices and sing:

Rejoice, Matushka Olga, healer of the abused and broken!

Prayer to Matushka Olga

O blessed Matushka Olga, hear our prayer as we lift up our hearts to you, trusting in the power of your ceaseless intercession. Even as you spread the warmth of your maternal love over the souls of the needy, abused and broken, so warm our souls also, healing our pain and bringing us the love of Christ. Through your prayers, may we walk in the paths of peace, pleasing our Lord and glorifying His Name, and so finally fail not to enter into the joy of His eternal Kingdom, praising our God forever before His throne: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.