

Akathist to St. Arseny of Winnipeg

Kontakion 1 (*Tone 8*)

O holy Father Arseny, beacon of light in America and Canada! Like Chrysostom of old you endured the slanders of men and suffered for the truth! Through your unquenchable zeal you nourished your flock and restored many to the Orthodox Faith! Praising God who is wondrous in His saints, we cry aloud: Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher¹ of the grace of God!

Ikos 1

O holy Arseny, by your life among us God shows that He never abandons His Church, but comforts us as a father comforts his children.² Through your preaching, the power of God for salvation is revealed to everyone who believes,³ and through your prayers we are made strong. Marveling at the wonders God has worked through you, we believers lift up this song:

¹ St. Arseny was called “the Canadian Chrysostom” – “Chrysostom” meaning “golden-tongued.”

² Ps. 103:13.

³ Rom. 1:16.

Rejoice, herald of God's love, illumining the world!
Rejoice, light of Christ's truth, scattering the darkness of error!
Rejoice, for the anointing of Christ is upon you!
Rejoice, for the Lord sent you to preach His Gospel to the poor!⁴
Rejoice, you whose words set free the oppressed!
Rejoice, you whose prayers give release to the captives!⁵
Rejoice, holy hierarch of the Church and strong bulwark for our souls!
Rejoice, gentle shepherd, feeding the young lambs of the Lord!
Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 2

Born into a poor family⁶ in Kharkov⁷ in Ukraine, O holy Arseny, you tended your father's flock, learning the ways of a good shepherd, so that you might one day care for the human flock of your heavenly Father. After being orphaned at a young age, you rejoiced in years of school life in Kharkov Theological Seminary, where God filled you with knowledge and called you to be His deacon and priest. Praising God for His providential care in your life, we also cry out: alleluia!

Ikos 2

Widowed in the prime of life, O holy Arseny, you were left with the care of your son Dionysius, and you strove with all your might to serve Christ's holy bride as a village priest even though storms of grief thundered about you.⁸ Having sown with tears in your youth, you reaped the Lord's harvest with joy⁹ in your maturity, and we who share that joy cry aloud:

⁴ Lk. 4:18.

⁵ Lk. 4:18.

⁶ St. Arseny's own self-description.

⁷ The current spelling of the name of this Ukrainian city is Kharkiv.

⁸ St. Arseny: "Ominous clouds gathered over my happiness, a storm broke out, the thunder roared and of my happiness remained only broken pieces...I accepted the heavy lot of a widower in the prime of life."

⁹ Ps. 126:5.

Rejoice, you whose untiring labour inspires the souls of priests!
Rejoice, you whose perseverance in times of sorrow makes the people rejoice!
Rejoice, seasoned pilot for the tempest-tossed!
Rejoice, safe haven for those enduring the storms of life!
Rejoice, unfailing intercessor, who turn our mourning into dancing!
Rejoice, heavenly priest, whose help girds us with gladness!¹⁰
Rejoice, for on earth you served at the Lord's altar with St. John of Kronstadt!
Rejoice, for in heaven you stand at the Lord's throne with all His saints!
Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 3

Having endured great trials and made many journeys throughout Russia, you found your home in the harbor of monasticism, embracing the mantle of a monk. Seeking God in the stillness of your heart, you found Him who gives rest to all who labour and are heavy-laden,¹¹ and you taught us to sing to Him: alleluia!

Ikos 3

Having humbled yourself in monastic lowliness, you were exalted by God to be an abbot in Kuriansk monastery, for your zeal for holiness was known to all. We who also seek after God feast on the hidden manna¹² of the wisdom you learned there, and rely on your holy prayers, crying aloud:

¹⁰ Ps. 30:11.

¹¹ Mt. 11:28.

¹² Rev. 2:17.

Rejoice, you that mourned over your sins and overflow with divine comfort!

Rejoice, you that hungered and thirsted after righteousness and are filled with God!¹³

Rejoice, for you blossomed profusely in the desert of the world!

Rejoice, for you led your monastic brothers to see the glory of the Lord!¹⁴

Rejoice, you that manifest openly the divine love to all!

Rejoice, you whose life is hidden with Christ in God!¹⁵

Rejoice, bearer of the Cross, for you died to sin and are alive to God!

Rejoice, herald of the Resurrection, for you walk in the newness of eternal life!¹⁶

Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 4

After a brief time in monastic solitude, you were transported by the right hand of God from the desert to the city, and brought by Him to the new world¹⁷ to sow the seed of the Gospel and reap a harvest of salvation. There you taught saving wisdom to many souls, teaching them to cry: alleluia!

Ikos 4

As a missionary in America, you left as the seal of your apostolate many believers in Troy, Mayfield and Simpson,¹⁸ having admonished them with all wisdom that you might present them complete in Christ, striving according to His mighty power.¹⁹ We who continue to labour in your North American vineyard praise God for you in these songs:

¹³ Mt. 5:4,6.

¹⁴ Is. 35:1-2.

¹⁵ Col. 3:3.

¹⁶ Rom. 6:11,4.

¹⁷ St. Arseny: "The right hand of God transported me to the side of the new world."

¹⁸ St. Arseny: "The seal of my apostolate are the believers in Troy, Mayfield and Simpson, and the brethren scattered in many places which I brought back into the fold of the Orthodox Church."

¹⁹ Col. 1:28-29.

Rejoice, initiate of God's long-hidden mystery!
Rejoice, steward of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge!²⁰
Rejoice, for you offered up as a priestly sacrifice the souls you
converted by the Gospel of God!
Rejoice, for you fully preached the Gospel of Christ from Russia as far
as the new world!²¹
Rejoice, for you brought back many into the fold of the Orthodox
Church!
Rejoice, for you strengthened the young lambs in the true apostolic
Faith!
Rejoice, for your proclamation of the Gospel has gone out through all
the earth!
Rejoice, for the heavens are telling of God's glorious work in you!²²
Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 5

Filled with compassion for the orphans, you became a father to the fatherless and strove to build an Orphans' Home in northeastern Pennsylvania, that the little ones of Christ might find rest and joy in Him. Through you, the desolate find a home to dwell in²³ and coming finally to the Father's House in heaven they raise the song: alleluia!

Ikos 5

Filled with zeal for God and longing to make His praise resound in the New World, you also strove to build a Monastery in these American lands, working always with the blessing of your bishop, Metropolitan St. Tikhon. You were tireless in your efforts to raise funds for this goal, that many might come there to find the Pearl of Great Price. Rich with the spiritual treasure you have stored up for us, we unceasingly sing out:

²⁰ Col. 1:26, 2:2,3.

²¹ Rom. 15:16, 19.

²² Ps. 19:1, 4.

²³ Ps. 68:5-6.

Rejoice, truly-worthy Igumen of the new monastery you founded through the grace of God!²⁴
Rejoice, never-failing leader, guiding our souls from earth to heaven with skilful hands!²⁵
Rejoice, co-worker with the saints on earth, concelebrating with Sts. Tikhon, Raphael and Alexis!
Rejoice, dweller with the saints above, praising Christ in the midst of His heavenly court!
Rejoice, for at the consecration of your monastery your voice was choked with tears of joy!
Rejoice, for now that you stand in heaven your voice never ceases to declare God's praise!
Rejoice, you that plant the seeds of sanctity so that they might bear fruit in the soil of foreign lands!
Rejoice, you that nourish your Mother the Church so that her children come to glorify the Lord!²⁶
Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 6

Leaving your new American home, you were sent to build Zion in the far north, that those in Canada might know the Lord, the joy of all the earth.²⁷ Arriving in Winnipeg, you cared tenderly for your new Canadian flock, binding their hearts to you with cords of love and teaching them to sing to God: alleluia!

²⁴ When Arseny was named superior of the monastery with the rank of Igumen, this was met with cries of "Truly-worthy!"

²⁵ Ps. 78:72.

²⁶ St. Arseny was elated that the founding of a monastery "took place here, in a foreign land" and exclaimed, "O Mother! O holy Orthodox Church! Behold your children who have come to glorify the Lord!"

²⁷ Ps. 48:2.

Ikos 6

Like a strong man you ran your course with joy,²⁸ bringing the saving Law of Christ to your northern flock, travelling through the depths of virgin forests, through limitless prairies, searching for those who had strayed from the Lord.²⁹ Now that we have been gathered into the sheepfold of salvation, we offer you these praises:

Rejoice, fount of living water, pouring forth rivers of the Spirit from your innermost being!³⁰

Rejoice, banquet of living bread, feeding your children with the food of immortality!

Rejoice, you that preached to men in their own languages with Pentecostal power!³¹

Rejoice, you that lifted high the universal Cross that all might look to Christ and be saved!³²

Rejoice, loving father, begetting many children in Christ Jesus through the Gospel!³³

Rejoice, loving mother, labouring in travail until Christ is formed in your children!³⁴

Rejoice, for you preached the Word in season and out of season, with unflinching patience!

Rejoice, for you endured suffering in your work as an evangelist, fulfilling your ministry!³⁵

Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

²⁸ Ps. 19:5.

²⁹ St. Arseny's own description of his Canadian labours.

³⁰ Jn. 7:37-38.

³¹ St. Arseny preached in Canada in Ukrainian, as well as in Russian language, using many dialects.

³² Jn. 3:13.

³³ 1 Cor. 4:15.

³⁴ Gal. 4:19.

³⁵ 2 Tim. 4:2, 5.

Kontakion 7

Your skilful work in sermons, preached in your Canadian field,³⁶ brought you to the attention of kings,³⁷ for the Tsar read your works and rewarded you with a golden cross to thank you for feeding his soul. Now that you stand before the King of kings you rejoice in your heavenly reward, and with all the saints chant the hymn: alleluia!

Ikos 7

Your tireless ministry of teaching and unstinting service to the souls of men brought you fame far from your field of labours, for even in Russia they knew you as the Canadian Chrysostom. For you, an athlete who has finished the race and kept the Faith, there is laid up a crown of righteousness,³⁸ and we who also love the Lord's appearing cry out: Rejoice, you that devoted yourself to the study of the Law of the Most High God!

Rejoice, you that sought out the wisdom of ancients to share with the children of men!³⁹

Rejoice, you that traveled through the lands of foreign nations as the ambassador of Christ the Lord!

Rejoice, you that served among great men and appeared before rulers offering eternal life to all!⁴⁰

Rejoice, for nations declare your wisdom, and our congregations proclaim your praise!

Rejoice, for your name is greater than a thousand, and your praise will not be blotted out!⁴¹

Rejoice, scribe trained for the Kingdom of heaven, bringing forth

³⁶ His sermons were published in a journal entitled "The Canadian Field."

³⁷ Prov. 22:29.

³⁸ 2 Tim. 4:8.

³⁹ Sirach 39:1.

⁴⁰ Sirach 39:4.

⁴¹ Sirach 39:10, 9.

abundantly from your treasures!⁴²

Rejoice, apostle and unashamed workman, rightly handling the Word of truth!⁴³

Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 8

Your Canadian fame caused you to be recalled to Russia to direct a school for missionary priests, and you worked faithfully, multiplying the talent given you as a good and faithful servant. Now that you have entered into the joy of your Lord,⁴⁴ you extol the Giver of heavenly rewards, saying: alleluia!

Ikos 8

When war broke out in Russia and brought your home-land into the fire of testing, you served as a good shepherd to your fellow countrymen, serving in the trenches amid danger and death, under the whistling of bombs and explosion of shrapnel.⁴⁵ When you were captured by the enemy and were about to be shot the next day, God's providence rescued you, allowing you to flee to a monastery in Serbia. Seeing how you comforted your comrades and were willing to give your life for your brothers,⁴⁶ we offer up these songs of love:

Rejoice, soldier of Christ, fighting the good fight of faith!

Rejoice, good shepherd, willing to lay down your life for your brethren!

Rejoice, you that give new heart to the despairing through your comforting words!

⁴² Mt. 13:52.

⁴³ 2 Tim. 2:15.

⁴⁴ Mt. 25:20-21.

⁴⁵ St. Arseny's own description of his war experiences.

⁴⁶ Again from St. Arseny's own words.

Rejoice, you that strengthen the fainting souls by your fervent prayer!
Rejoice, haven of safety in times of storm and disaster!
Rejoice, sanctuary of peace when chaos and evil overwhelm!
Rejoice, for when the earth was moved in times of war, God was your refuge and strength!
Rejoice, for the Lord was your ever-present help when the mountains slipped into the heart of the sea!⁴⁷
Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 9

When your orphaned Canadian flock learned that God had spared you, they insisted that their Metropolitan send you back to them as their bishop. Though you thought to remain in the peace of retirement, when you learned of God's will, you declared your heart to be ready⁴⁸ and immediately answered His call. Thus you were consecrated a bishop in Belgrade and returned to your flock as the Bishop of Winnipeg, so that your people cried out to God with joy, saying: alleluia!

Ikos 9

During your absence, many tares had grown up in the Lord's field, and you diligently laboured to preserve the Lord's planting. You waged war against our spiritual enemy, traversing the vast country to the furthest west and calling all to unity and peace.⁴⁹ When the enemy came in like a flood, you lifted up the standard of Christ's truth against him,⁵⁰ and we who have rallied to that standard sing aloud:

Rejoice, fearless proclamation of truth in the midst of a crooked generation!

⁴⁷ Ps. 46:1-2.

⁴⁸ St. Arseny answered the call by saying, "I am coming! My heart is ready! O my God! Ready!"

⁴⁹ St. Arseny convoked many clergy assemblies throughout the country, even traveling to Vancouver to consecrate a church with Metropolitan Platon.

⁵⁰ Is. 59:19 (KJV).

Rejoice, unfading light shining in the darkness of this world!
Rejoice, vigilant shepherd, terrible to the wolves who menace Christ's flock!
Rejoice, consolation of heart for those who love the light!
Rejoice, for you set your face as hard as flint against those who rebelled against God!⁵¹
Rejoice, for you melted the hearts of those who sought the truth of the Lord!
Rejoice, you that ceaselessly strove to protect your little flock!
Rejoice, you that guarded them by your preaching and your constant prayer!
Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 10

Looking to the future and knowing that the Church is not of this world, you founded monasteries in Sifton, Bluffton and throughout Alberta, that their watchmen might stand on the walls and call the Church to its true and heavenly homeland. These angels in the flesh learned from you how to unite their praises with the angels in heaven, and together they cry to God: alleluia!

Ikos 10

While holding fast to the fullness of the Church's Faith, you reached out in love to those beyond her walls, nurturing fraternal ties with other Christian confessions and with those separated by schism.⁵² Grateful to God for your open heart and steadfast spirit, we sing to you:

Rejoice, you that faithfully sang the Lord's song in a foreign land!⁵³
Rejoice, you that shine the Lord's light in the darkness of this age!

⁵¹ Ezek. 3:8-9.

⁵² St. Arseny was known to be unusually ecumenical both in his relationship with non-canonical Orthodox churches and also with other Christian confessions.

⁵³ Ps. 137:4

Rejoice, you that embraced as brothers all that confessed the saving Name Christ!

Rejoice, you that offered to all men the fullness of the Orthodox Faith!

Rejoice, for you clung to the teaching of the Fathers, preserving it undefiled for all generations!

Rejoice, for you imitated the zeal of the apostles, heralding the eternal Gospel in all the world!

Rejoice, gentle heart, who strove to bring all to unity in Christ!

Rejoice, firm foundation of faith, who confirmed the Orthodox in the Church's truth!

Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 11

Furious at the mighty works you accomplished for God's Kingdom, the enemy of our souls stirred up a band of evildoers to attack you when you gathered with your clergy, and you were shot in the leg. Poison from this wound forced you to retire from your missionary journeys, yet even then you did not cease from your evangelical labours, but founded a Pastoral School to train up priests to work in the Lord's vineyard. Marveling at your unquenchable zeal, we cry out: alleluia!

Ikos 11

As an Archbishop residing at the Pastoral School you founded in Pennsylvania, you were loved by all, both by the students in the school and by the faithful in the surrounding parishes, for you poured yourself out in service to them, sharing not only the Gospel but also your own soul.⁵⁴ The students there brought you bouquets of flowers on your name's day and on your birthday,⁵⁵ and now that you reside in the courts of the heavenly King, we your children bring you as fragrant garlands these praises:

⁵⁴ 1 Thess. 2:7-8.

⁵⁵ According to the Tikhonaire, the yearbook of St. Tikhon's School.

Rejoice, beloved teacher, whose students drink in your words and find the quiet waters of life!

Rejoice, gentle shepherd, whose sheep follow you in love and are guided into the paths of righteousness!⁵⁶

Rejoice, for your love encouraged the parishes to be steadfast and to abound in the work of the Lord!

Rejoice, for your prayers give them victory through Jesus Christ, and your toil in Him was not in vain!⁵⁷

Rejoice, you that blessed the church altars as a hierarch in Pennsylvania!

Rejoice, you that bless us now from the altar of the Lord Christ in heaven!

Rejoice, for God taught you from your youth and you continued to declare His wondrous deeds!

Rejoice, for God did not forsake you even in your old age, but you declared His power to all who were to come after!⁵⁸

Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 12

Weakened by the wound you sustained, you died and were buried with reverence in the monastery you founded. Throughout your entire life of preaching, you taught the faithful to give glory to God for all things,⁵⁹ and now that you stand in triumph before the Lord whom you proclaimed, with preachers and saints throughout all the ages, you lift up the final hymn of victory: alleluia!

Ikos 12

At your burial, all those whose lives you touched with your holy love came in sorrow to bid you farewell and commend your soul to the Lord. Archbishops, bishops, and more than fifty clergy gathered with the

⁵⁶ Ps. 23:2-3.

⁵⁷ 1 Cor. 15:58, 57.

⁵⁸ Ps. 71:17-18.

⁵⁹ The final words of St. John Chrysostom.

faithful around your sacred relics to sing as your funeral dirge the triumphant alleluia song,⁶⁰ and we who honour your memory gather to offer these exultant songs:

Rejoice, you that were strengthened by the Lord and fully heralded the Gospel that all peoples might hear!

Rejoice, you that the Lord delivered from every evil deed and brought safely to His heavenly Kingdom!⁶¹

Rejoice, light kindled by Christ in Russia, burning brightly in North America!

Rejoice, warmth of the faithful throughout the earth, preserving us by your prayers in heaven!

Rejoice, you whose words of fire taught our hearts to love the living Word!

Rejoice, you whose life of love called us to serve the Life of all!

Rejoice, for your heart was always ready to go where your Lord would send you!⁶²

Rejoice, for even now your heart is always ready to hear the prayers of His people!

Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Kontakion 13

O holy Arseny, untiring preacher of the eternal Word and steadfast bishop of His apostolic Church, receive these songs from your servants who offer them with hearts grateful for all the wonders God has worked through you. Grant that through your intercession we may join you before His throne and with you sing forever the eternal hymn: alleluia!
(*This kontakion is read thrice*)

And again Ikos 1 and Kontakion 1:

⁶⁰ From the Ikos hymn of the Funeral Service.

⁶¹ 2 Tim. 4:17-18.

⁶² From St. Arseny's writings regarding the call for him to return to North America: "I am coming! My heart is ready. O my God! Ready!"

Ikos 1

O holy Arseny, by your life among us God shows that He never abandons His Church, but comforts us as a father comforts his children. Through your preaching, the power of God for salvation is revealed to everyone who believes, and through your prayers we are made strong. Marveling at the wonders God has worked through you, we believers lift up this song:

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Kontakion 1

O holy Father Arseny, beacon of light in America and Canada! Like Chrysostom of old you endured the slanders of men and suffered for the truth! Through your unquenchable zeal you nourished your flock and restored many to the Orthodox Faith! Praising God who is wondrous in His saints, we cry aloud: Rejoice, holy Arseny, golden-tongued preacher of the grace of God!

Prayer to St. Arseny

O holy Arseny, blessed bishop and preacher, pastor and teacher, bulwark for the distressed and intercessor for our souls! As the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, so has Christ our God sent you to be His ambassador and herald of the truth, and in obedience to Him, you shone like the rising sun upon His Church, traveling in your course from the east even to the furthest west, proclaiming His saving Gospel and teaching us to love the Lord. Now that you have fulfilled all His will and stand before Him in glory, hear our humble prayers and pray for us to the Lord of all. Grant that through your intercessions He might have mercy on His Church in this land. May He manifest the Church's unity in its fullness, reunite the separated to His saving fold, quiet the ragings of the heathen and shine the light of His Gospel into the hearts of all. Thus blessed and provided for, may we ever praise the Lord our Saviour, who together with His eternal Father and His all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, lives and reigns, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

This service has been composed by Reverend Father Lawrence Farley of the St Herman of Alaska Church in Surrey, BC, with the blessing of His Eminence the Right Reverend Seraphim, Archbishop of Ottawa and All Canada