

An Akathist to St. Herman

Kontakion 1 (Tone 4)

O holy Father Herman of Alaska, advocate of the oppressed, and protector of defenseless orphans: cool the heat of sorrow which melts our hearts, wipe away our tears and grant us to know the meaning of consolation. Pray for us your children that with new strength we may glorify God and sing to you: Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Ikos 1

The Lord of Hosts chose you, O holy Father Herman, to be His warrior in the far north, fighting your way through the regiments of the unseen enemy and leading us, your fellow soldiers, to our heavenly homeland. Now that Christ has crowned you with the laurels of victory, we offer you these songs of praise:

Rejoice, struggler against world rulers of this present darkness!

Rejoice, victor over the spiritual hosts of wickedness under heaven!

Rejoice, warrior triumphant over the forces of evil!

Rejoice, athlete who vanquishes the demonic adversary!

Rejoice, valiant pilgrim journeying through this life to life eternal!

Rejoice, unerring guide to our homeland in heaven!

Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Kontakion 2

Aflame with love for the souls of the lost, O holy Father Herman, you left Valaam monastery with nine others of the angelic life, traversing all the Russian lands to bring the Gospel to those at the ends of the earth. Zeal for the salvation of America hastened your steps as you travelled and sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 2

Arriving at Kodiak Island, with your fellow missionaries you built the Church of the Resurrection for the worship of the Saviour of all, and worked in humility in the bakery, caring for the needs of your brothers. Glorifying God for your perseverance and humility, we cry aloud to you: Rejoice, you whose prayers fill the hungry with food!
Rejoice, you whose words bring us the Bread of Heaven!
Rejoice, lowly Herman, for your lowliness has brought you to the heights!
Rejoice, humble monk, for your humility has exalted you to heaven!
Rejoice, worshipper of the risen Christ, for your prayers sustain us all!
Rejoice, friend of the heavenly saints, for your love brings us home to God!
Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Kontakion 3

Driven from Kodiak by those who would exploit the newly-converted children of God, O holy Father Herman, you retired to Spruce Island, digging a cave for your dwelling with your own hands and establishing your hermitage of New Valaam. United in bonds of love to your abbot Nazarius and his monks in far-away Russia, you nursed the souls of your converts in Alaska, teaching them to sing to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 3

Working with your spiritual daughter Sophia, and upheld by the divine wisdom, O holy Father Herman, you taught the children at your school, and sustained with love all who came to you, inspiring them with your holy joy. For forty years you lived among them as their advocate and protector, a sign of God's compassion for all men. Trusting in your constant love, we lift up our voices and say:

Rejoice, Grandfather to little children!

Rejoice, Father to all who seek your aid!

Rejoice, gentle embrace of the Good Shepherd!

Rejoice, healing touch of the mighty Saviour!

Rejoice, Shield to those attacked by the foe!

Rejoice, Shelter for those who take refuge in Christ!

Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Kontakion 4

O blessed Elder of the north, you saved from disaster those who trusted in you, for when they were menaced by a flood, you put an icon of the Theotokos on the beach, declaring that the waters would go no further than that place; and so it came to pass. Marvelling at your faith and your miracles, we glorify God, singing to you: Alleluia!

Ikos 4

When a forest fire threatened your beloved children, O holy Father Herman, you dug a trench, and said, "Be at peace; the fire will not cross this line"; and your words were fulfilled. Seeing how God is wonderful in His saints, we bring to you these praises:

Rejoice, you whose faith is stronger than raging forest fire!

Rejoice, you whose prayers save us from the eternal fire to come!

Rejoice, bringer of peace to the anguished and anxious!

Rejoice, giver of joy to the hopeless and despairing!

Rejoice, our bulwark against disaster and ruin!

Rejoice, our intercessor and friend to those in need!
Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in
North America!

Kontakion 5

Like a desert-dweller of old, O venerable Elder, you subdued your flesh
by wearing heavy chains, having only a rough board for your blanket,
and none could imitate your deeds. Your hard life brought you the grace
of the Spirit, and overflowing with divine grace, you sang to God:
Alleluia!

Ikos 5

Through the grace given to you, O holy Father Herman, you made the
wilderness a Paradise, for you tamed the wild animals, feeding both the
ermine and the bear with your hands. Through you the monastic desert
flowers again in the New World, adorning the Church here with divine
beauty, and causing us to sing:
Rejoice, you who taught us to seek the joys above!
Rejoice, you whose prayers now help us toiling here below!
Rejoice, you who warred mightily against the demons who assailed you!
Rejoice, you whose intercessions rescue us from every attack of the foe!
Rejoice, example for monastics striving in solitude!
Rejoice, help of all Christians struggling in the world!
Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in
North America!

Kontakion 6

Though living in solitude in the forest of Spruce Island, O holy Father
Herman, you were never alone, for you had God and His holy angels as
your companions. Hidden from the eyes of men, you poured out your
soul to the God of heaven in prayers and psalms and freely conversed
with the angels, who joined you in your praises, crying: Alleluia!

Ikos 6

Like a treasure hidden in a field, O holy Father Herman, you remained hidden in the forest of Spruce Island, singing aloud to the Holy Trinity and turning the unkempt woodland into a temple of God. All the trees of the forest sing for joy with you, as from the ends of the earth you cry, "Glory to the Righteous One!" Inspired by your praises, we also cry out:
Rejoice, converser with angels and benefactor of men!
Rejoice, faithful intercessor and devotee of Christ!
Rejoice, God's treasure, hidden in the far north!
Rejoice, citizen of the Kingdom, dwelling in the heavenly Zion!
Rejoice, joy of all the earth, adornment of the Church!
Rejoice, stronghold of the weak, protection of all who seek your intercession!
Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Kontakion 7

Although those who exploited and hurt your poor American children persecuted you as well, O holy Father Herman, you never abandoned those who took refuge in your love. Rather, you remonstrated with the ones who were glorious on the earth, and ceaselessly cried to the God of heaven. Now that God has heard your prayers and vindicated you, you hear from all your Church the song: Alleluia!

Ikos 7

Although those who persecuted you deprived you even of paper for keeping Church records, O holy Father Herman, your many accomplishments and great deeds are written in heaven. Those you baptized acclaim you in the Kingdom; the many whose tears you wiped away give thanks to God for you before His throne. Joining with these multitudes in heaven, we on earth offer these praises:
Rejoice, gentle shepherd of the lambs of Christ!
Rejoice, mighty champion of the children of God!

Rejoice, for you spoke truth to the powerful of the land!
Rejoice, for your courage gave new hope to the oppressed!
Rejoice, comforter of orphans and teacher of the truth!
Rejoice, light to those who seek the pathway to heaven!
Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in
North America!

Kontakion 8

You walked among the worldly-wise as a spiritual man, O holy Father Herman, for God gave you a mouth and a wisdom which none of them could refute or resist. In the midst of Russian sailors, you spoke the Gospel with such power that all were at a loss before your wisdom, and you taught them to love God above all else. Glorifying God who makes foolish the wisdom of the world, we sing aloud: Alleluia!

Ikos 8

God gave you His little ones, the humble of the earth, O holy Father Herman, that you might teach them His ways and guide them to heaven. You were a blazing light to those in darkness, a patient instructor in righteousness, a rescuing hand for those sinking in error. We who love the Orthodox Way you brought to Alaska turn to you and say:
Rejoice, you who love the Law of God!
Rejoice, you who proclaim the Gospel of the Lord!
Rejoice, for your testimony makes wise the simple!
Rejoice, for your teaching restores our souls!
Rejoice, delight of little orphans!
Rejoice, boast of aged elders!
Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in
North America!

Kontakion 9

The feet which carried you across the Russian continent were beautiful,
O holy Father Herman, for you came bearing Good News of Christ's

salvation. Over seven thousand received baptism when your Mission came to Alaska, and still you reached out to bring more lost sheep into the Lord's saving fold. This mighty throng now stands before the throne of God, praising His grace and singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 9

The heavens are telling the glory of God, and we who have witnessed your life also proclaim your wonders, O holy Father Herman. As God's handiwork, you revealed to all His power to sanctify those who seek Him, and like the apostolic fishermen of old, you caught many souls in your Alaskan net. We who have inherited your apostolic mission now cry to you:

Rejoice, you whose words gather the scattered children of God into the one fold of Christ!

Rejoice, you who pastor with skilled hands the flock of the Lord!

Rejoice, trumpet of the far north, sounding abroad the glory of the Father!

Rejoice, proclaimer of divine pardon, calling all to the embrace of Jesus!

Rejoice, for you brought to Alaska the eternal and saving Gospel!

Rejoice, for you revealed the universal Kingdom at the ends of the earth!

Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Kontakion 10

When the time for your death drew near, O wonder-working Father Herman, you foreknew that day and hour, and told your disciple Gerasim. For after lighting the candles and reading the Acts of the Apostles, you commanded that the reading be stopped, saying that God had granted you another week of life. Then, after that week, you commanded the candles to be re-lit and the Acts of the Apostles read again, and so you reposed in the Lord as you had said. Seeing your radiant face and smelling the sweet fragrance of your departure, Gerasim sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 10

When giving orders regarding your burial, O holy Father Herman, you commanded that your holy face be covered with your mantle, in your humility not wishing that anyone should see your face. Even in death you preached the Cross of Christ, for you ordered that the Cross be placed in your hands for the mourners to kiss at your funeral. Now that you stand as our intercessor in heaven, your face is always turned to us, and we your suppliants lift high the Cross you proclaimed, saying:

Rejoice, prophet and foreseer of the things to come!

Rejoice, messenger and herald of the blessings of God!

Rejoice, sweet fragrance of the Kingdom of Christ!

Rejoice, radiant light of the uncreated Trinity!

Rejoice, for you walked in humility to the end!

Rejoice, for you preached the Cross without ceasing!

Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Kontakion 11

At the time of your blessed death, O venerable Father Herman, a light was seen over Spruce Island that reached to heaven, and those who knew your holy life perceived that you had left them. Having illumined us through your teachings and shining example, you illumined us also through your death, lighting up the sky as you ascended to heaven. Glorifying God who has glorified you, we lift up the song: Alleluia!

Ikos 11

O wonderworker of the north, your holy relics remained incorrupt in the warm chapel for many days where you lay, witnessing to the truth of your Gospel and of your enduring love for us. From your burial place on Spruce Island your relics and your prayers continued to be a source of miracles, and we praise God for your intercession, bringing our songs:

Rejoice, you who stand before the throne of God in glory!

Rejoice, you who never forsake your people on earth!

Rejoice, unfailing physician of our souls and bodies!
Rejoice, faithful intercessor of the Orthodox Church!
Rejoice, for you remain with those who love you!
Rejoice, for you lead us all to heaven above!
Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Kontakion 12

A few years after your repose, O holy Father Herman, you saved the missionary St. Innocent from a storm at sea. For as he neared Kodiak, his ship was caught in a tempest, and he feared that he would perish in the stormy waters, just as his predecessor Bishop Joasaph did before him. Looking toward Spruce Island, he invoked your prayers, asking that the wind might change, and it did within a quarter of an hour. We who are caught in the storms of life also call out to you, crying: Alleluia!

Ikos 12

We who follow the Orthodox Way you planted in North America praise God for the gift of your holy relics and your ceaseless prayer. Having transferred your sacred body to Kodiak, the Church now celebrates your memory with joy and splendour, exulting that God still works wonders through you. Grateful to the Lord for your presence among us, we offer you these hymns:

Rejoice, confirmation of the truth of God!
Rejoice, image of the beauty of holiness!
Rejoice, for you laid the foundation of Orthodoxy in the new world!
Rejoice, for you challenge and inspire us to continue your holy work!
Rejoice, boast and crown of all Orthodox Christians!
Rejoice, first saint of our land!
Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Kontakion 13

O holy Father Herman of Alaska, joy of our hearts and blessing of God to us, accept these humble prayers and pray for us before the throne of God. Grant that through your intercessions we also might stand before His throne, and with you exult in endless joy before Him, singing forever and ever: Alleluia!
(*thrice*)

Then: *Ikos 1*

The Lord of Hosts chose you, O holy Father Herman, to be His warrior in the far north, fighting your way through the regiments of the unseen enemy and leading us, your fellow soldiers, to our heavenly homeland. Now that Christ has crowned you with the laurels of victory, we offer you these songs of praise:

Rejoice, struggler against world rulers of this present darkness!

Rejoice, victor over the spiritual hosts of wickedness under heaven!

Rejoice, warrior triumphant over the forces of evil!

Rejoice, athlete who vanquishes the demonic adversary!

Rejoice, valiant pilgrim journeying through this life to life eternal!

Rejoice, unerring guide to our homeland in heaven!

Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

And again: *Kontakion 1*

O holy Father Herman of Alaska, advocate of the oppressed, and protector of defenseless orphans: cool the heat of sorrow which melts our hearts, wipe away our tears and grant us to know the meaning of consolation. Pray for us your children that with new strength we may glorify God and sing to you: Rejoice, O Father Herman of Alaska, joyful defender of your Church in North America!

Notes

Kontakion 1: Compare St. Herman's letter to Governor Yanovsky: "...[we ask you to] wipe away the tears of defenseless orphans, cool the heat of sorrow in melting hearts, grant us to know the meaning of consolation..."

Ikos 1: From the writings of St. Herman: "A true Christian is a warrior fighting his way through the regiments of the unseen enemy to his heavenly homeland. According to the words of the Apostle, our homeland is in heaven, and about the warrior he says, 'Our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the world-rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness under heaven'...we who travel on the journey of this life...ought to divest ourselves of (sin)..." Also, the book *Writings of Rev. John Bunyan* (author of *Pilgrim's Progress*) was found in St. Herman's library; compare "valiant pilgrim" in the *Ikos*.

Ikos 2: St. Herman signed his letters as "lowly Herman."

Ikos 3: St. Herman's people referred to him as their 'apa' or 'grandfather.'

Kontakion 5: St. Herman's disciple, the Aleut Ignatius Aliaga, said, "Yes, Apa [Grandfather] conducted a hard life, and no one can imitate it."

Kontakion 6: Father Herman was once asked, "How do you manage to live alone in the forest? Don't you get bored?" He replied, "No, I'm not alone there! There is God, and God is everywhere! There are holy angels! With whom is it better to converse, angels or people? Angels, of course!"

Ikos 6: "A treasure hidden in a field," Mt. 13:44; "all the trees of the forest sing for joy," Ps. 96:12; "from the ends of the earth we hear songs, 'Glory to the Righteous One!'" Is. 24:16; "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion in the far north...God has made Himself known as a stronghold," Ps. 48:2-3.

Kontakion 7: from the "Alleluia" of Holy Week: "Bring more evils on them, O Lord; bring more evils on the ones who are glorious on the earth." Also, St. Herman wrote to his abbot Nazarius: "...all the merchants (here) care about is money and they hurt the poor Americans."

Kontakion 8: The Lord said to His disciples, "I will give you a mouth and a wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute;" Lk. 21:15. St. Herman's Russian convert, Yanovsky, wrote: "Father Herman...desired to convert me. He spoke so powerfully and argued so convincingly that it now seems to me that no education and earthly wisdom could withstand his words." The captain of a Russian frigate admitted, "Before him we were at a loss what to answer, like fools!" St. Herman urged the sailors, "From this day, from this hour, from this minute, let us love God above all else." St. Paul wrote, "Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" 1 Cor.1:20.

Ikos 8: "The Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple," Ps. 19:7.

Kontakion 9: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News of good things!" Rom. 10:15, Is. 52:7.)

Ikos 9: From the Prokeimenon for the apostles: "The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork," Ps. 19:1. Also, the O.C.A. was once referred to simply as "the Mission." And, from Jn. 11:52: "[Christ would die] to gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad."

Kontakion 11: It was reported by Gerasim Vologdin and his wife Anna, who saw the light over Spruce Island, "It looks as if Father Herman has left us!"

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 Grace the Right Reverend Seraphim, Bishop of Ottawa and All Canada