

## Introductory Essay: Zion as a Type of the Mother of God

Christians have always read the Old Testament and found the Gospel contained therein. The realities revealed in the Law and the Prophets point not just to historical events, persons and truths the significance of which has now been exhausted; those realities also point beyond themselves to the Kingdom of God.

Thus, when the Christians read in the Greek version of Is. 7:14 that a *parthenos* or virgin will conceive, and that her child will mean that God is with us, it is impossible for them not to think of Christ's birth from the holy Virgin Mary. In the same way, when Zechariah prophesies that God would come to the daughter of Zion to dwell in her midst (Zech. 2:10), it is also impossible not to think of Christ's Incarnation, of the time when Christ God did in literal fact come to dwell in the physical midst of Mary. Mary is thus revealed as the fulfilment of Jerusalem, the City of Zion.

The Scriptures are remarkably consistent in pointing to Jerusalem (or Zion) as the locus of God's Presence among men, and as the place where He would choose to dwell. This indwelling by God was thought to confer a certain blessing on Zion (Ps. 132:13f), even a measure of invincibility. The city was therefore referred to as the Virgin Daughter of Zion (Is. 37:22)—that is, she was considered to be intact, impenetrable, unconquerable. (It was a status many thought would remain regardless of the sins of its inhabitants; the Babylonian exile was to prove them wrong.)

Zion is thus an image, a prophecy, a type, of the holy Mother of God. As God chose to dwell in Zion and thus blessed and glorified her (the city is often referred to in the feminine, as a woman), so God also chose to dwell in Mary, and to bless and glorify her. The glory of the holy City points forward to her glory as well.

This is all the clearer in the New Testament. St. Paul refers to heaven, the dwelling place of God, as the "Jerusalem which is above," as "our mother" (Gal. 4:26). Thus Jerusalem is revealed as both a virgin and as a mother—just like the holy Theotokos. She remains ever-virgin in her invincible purity, and also is Mother to Christ and (spiritually) to all His disciples.

The following Akathist is therefore offered to the Church along with the passages of Scripture upon which each Kontakion and Ikos is a meditation. One may read the Scripture first, before the liturgical praises based on them. It is my prayer that this meditation may redound to the greater glory of Christ our God and His holy Mother, as we see anew His Gospel work revealed in the Old Testament.

--Archpriest Lawrence R. Farley

## AKATHIST TO THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS, DAUGHTER OF ZION

### KONTAKION 1 (Tone 8)

Shine, shine, O holy Mother of God! You are the New Jerusalem, our Mother! The glory of the Lord has shone on you! Save us, your children and exiles, that we may return home and sing to you: Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

### IKOS 1 (*see Zechariah 2:8-13*)

The Lord of Hosts came to dwell in your midst, O holy Virgin, just as He promised through the holy prophet Zechariah. Seeing this, you sang for joy and were glad, knowing many nations would join themselves to the Lord and become His People, and from all of us you hear this song:

Rejoice, for the Lord chose you for His own dwelling!  
Rejoice, for the Almighty set up His royal dwelling in your flesh!  
Rejoice, for he who touches you touches the apple of God's eye!  
Rejoice, for you abide under the Almighty's protection!  
Rejoice, O royal pavilion of the King!  
Rejoice, O mystical courts of the Lord!  
Rejoice, for through you Judah enters his inheritance!  
Rejoice, for through you Israel receives the blessing of God!  
Rejoice, for all flesh is silent before your fame!  
Rejoice, for the Lord is roused up and has come to dwell in you!  
Rejoice, for God is a wall of fire around you!  
Rejoice, for He is the glory in your midst!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

### KONTAKION 2 (*see Is. 28:16*)

Christ was firmly placed in you as the precious Corner-stone, O Virgin Theotokos, mystical Zion, and those who believe in Him will not be ashamed. As living stones of His spiritual Temple, we marvel at this prophetic mystery and call out to you in peace, Alleluia!

### IKOS 2 (*see Gen. 14, Heb. 7*)

Melchizedek, King of Salem, went out to bless Abraham after his victory, and he brought forth bread and wine as a priest of the Most High God. He was, by translation of his name, the King of Righteousness, and he abides a priest forever, a type and image of your Son, O holy Mother of God. Through him, your Son first united Jerusalem to Himself, and thereby taught us to sing to you:

Rejoice, for through you the Lord's peace shines forth!  
Rejoice, for through you His righteousness is revealed!  
Rejoice, O giver of the Bread of Life!  
Rejoice, O bestower of the Wine of Immortality!  
Rejoice, O sacrificial altar of prophecy!  
Rejoice, O mystical table of the Eucharist!  
Rejoice, for you gave birth to Him who has no father on earth!  
Rejoice, for you gave life to Him who abides forever!  
Rejoice, you that bless the nations!  
Rejoice, you that bring renewal to Jacob!  
Rejoice, O victory over our enemies!

Rejoice, O ransom from our foes!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 3 (*see Isaiah 59:20*)

Christ our Redeemer came to dwell in you, the mystical Zion, O holy Virgin; and we who have turned from our transgressions now sing to you, Alleluia!

IKOS 3 (*see Deut. 12:5-18*)

The great Moses revealed that God would choose a place out of all the tribes of Israel for His Name to dwell, that all His People should come there to find His glory. By so doing, he also foretold your glory, O holy Theotokos, showing how all Christians should turn to you with praises such as these:

Rejoice, for God chose you out of all women on the earth!  
Rejoice, for all generations will call you blessed!  
Rejoice, O rest from our enemies!  
Rejoice, O victory over our foes!  
Rejoice, for he who has no portion finds his abundance in you!  
Rejoice, for the dispossessed finds in you his inheritance!  
Rejoice, O festal table fully-laden with good things!  
Rejoice, O wealth of the Kingdom freely-given to all!  
Rejoice, for through you the hungry eat and are filled!  
Rejoice, for through you the true desires of the world are satisfied!  
Rejoice, O place where the Sacrificial Lamb is found!  
Rejoice, O you that gave your blood to Him whose Blood is the life of the world!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 4 (*see 2 Sam. 5:6-7*)

By the power of God, David captured the stronghold of Jerusalem, which was called Zion, meaning “height”; thus he prophesied of the height of your glory, O Theotokos, whom God exalted to be higher than the cherubim. Amazed at such transcendent splendour, we lowly sinners cry out, Alleluia!

IKOS 4 (*see 2 Sam. 6:6-17*)

The city of Zion received the Ark of God’s Presence, O Mother of God, and you were overshadowed by the Power of the Most High. David offered sacrifices and danced before the Ark with all his might, and we his heirs also offer our spiritual songs:

Rejoice, you that receive the Fire that breaks out against our enemies!  
Rejoice, you that contain the Flame that warms our souls!  
Rejoice, you that the hosts of heaven praise with all their strength!  
Rejoice, you that we sinners on earth exalt in our weakness!  
Rejoice, O tent receiving the Ark of Christ!  
Rejoice, O temple containing the infinite God!  
Rejoice, for all the blessing of God abides on you!  
Rejoice, for you are the source of blessing for all!  
Rejoice, O city of God!  
Rejoice, O dwelling of Israel’s King!  
Rejoice, for those who despise God’s humility are confounded in you!  
Rejoice, for in you the humble find salvation!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 5 (*see 2 Chron. 7:1-3*)

Solomon the son of David built a Temple for the Most High, and thus made Jerusalem the place where His Name dwelt. At the dedication of the Temple, the glory of the Lord descended in power and filled the House, foretelling the time when His glory would dwell in the handmaiden of Nazareth. Meditating on these ancient mysteries, we worshippers of God also prostrate ourselves before His might as we exclaim, Alleluia!

IKOS 5 (*see Ps. 2, Acts 4:25-27*)

The kings of the earth and its rulers, Pilate and Herod, took their stand against the Lord and against His Christ, but God had established His Son upon Zion, His holy mountain. We who take refuge in Him find our eternal blessedness as we worship Him, and we sing to His Mother with whom He now reigns, such songs as these:

Rejoice, O bulwark against the darkness of this age!  
Rejoice, O haven of safety in the midst of our foes!  
Rejoice, Mother that nourished the King of the World!  
Rejoice, city on which the King has been established!  
Rejoice, for the Lord decreed that He would dwell in you!  
Rejoice, for in you the prophecies of old have been fulfilled!  
Rejoice, victory given to kings!  
Rejoice, wisdom given to judges!  
Rejoice, for through you the wrath of God has come to cease!  
Rejoice, for you gave birth to the Peace of our souls!  
Rejoice, O refuge for the lost!  
Rejoice, O home found by the homeless!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 6 (*see Ps. 24:7-10*)

The ancient gates of Zion were lifted up, allowing the King of Glory with His Ark to enter the holy City, and foretelling the time when the divine Presence would enter the Handmaiden of God and dwell in her holy flesh. Amazed at such holiness dwelling among men, we royal soldiers sing to her, Alleluia!

IKOS 6 (*see Ps. 46*)

God our refuge and strength is with us; the God of Jacob is mighty in His City. He is in the midst of her, so that she will not be moved, and He will help her right early. Knowing the Theotokos to be a bulwark of protection for us weak sinners, we cry out boldly to her:

Rejoice, O refuge from our enemies!  
Rejoice, you that make our troubles to cease!  
Rejoice, O immovable mountain when the waters roar and foam!  
Rejoice, O place of peace when the earth begins to quake!  
Rejoice, for God came to dwell in the midst of your holy body!  
Rejoice, for God is your helper who will not fail!  
Rejoice, O intercessor through whom wars cease to the ends of the earth!  
Rejoice, O Mother of the Victorious Lord!  
Rejoice, O bestower of divine stillness!  
Rejoice, you through whom we come to know our God!  
Rejoice, you that exalted God in your life!  
Rejoice, O humble one through whom God is exalted among the nations!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 7 (*see Ps. 65:1*)

There will be praise before God in Zion, as the holy Virgin of Nazareth receives from the angel Gabriel the Good News of Christ's Incarnation. Worshipping her God, she lifted up her voice and sang, "My soul magnifies the Lord", and we poor sinners also praise Him, singing, Alleluia!

IKOS 7 (*see Ps. 48*)

Great is Christ our God, and greatly to be praised, through you, O holy Virgin. Beautiful in the heights of holiness, you are the joy of the whole earth, and through you God is praised to the ends of the world. Because of His judgements and power through your birth-giving, all the universe cries to You:

Rejoice, O radiant height of life-giving holiness!  
Rejoice, O bottomless depth of the divine compassion!  
Rejoice, O daughter of Zion in the far north, city of the great King!  
Rejoice, O intercessor, accessible to all the corners of the earth!  
Rejoice, for God has shown His strength through your weakness!  
Rejoice, for He has made you stronger than the strength of men!  
Rejoice, O you that cause demons to take flight!  
Rejoice, O you that bring the saints near to God!  
Rejoice, O mother whose childbirth ends our anguish!  
Rejoice, O Lady whose Son calms our fears!  
Rejoice, O city of many towers and ramparts!  
Rejoice, O our security and guide forever!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 8 (*see Ps. 50:1-3*)

From you, the perfection of spiritual beauty, God has shone forth, O Theotokos; and the devouring Fire dwelt in your womb as in the Burning Bush. He has not kept silence, but has come as the Word from heaven, and through Him we are taught to offer you the hymn, Alleluia!

IKOS 8 (*see Is. 51:11*)

The Gospel-bearing Prophet Isaiah proclaimed that the ransomed of the Lord would return to Zion with singing, having everlasting joy like a crown upon their heads; and we, ransomed by Christ's Blood, turn in prayer to you, O Theotokos, singing with gladness such praises as these:

Rejoice, O Mother of the ransomer of our souls!  
Rejoice, you that gave life to the Life-giver!  
Rejoice, O eternal joy of the saints in heaven!  
Rejoice, O resounding song of the Church on earth!  
Rejoice, O banisher our sorrow!  
Rejoice, you that make our sighing to cease!  
Rejoice, O road for the exiles to return!  
Rejoice, O path to heaven!  
Rejoice, O shining crown of the redeemed!  
Rejoice, O everlasting reward of the faithful!  
Rejoice, you that make the hearts of sinners to sing!  
Rejoice, you that cause the saints to exult!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 9 (*see Ps. 122*)

David was glad to go to Jerusalem, the city to which all the divine tribes went up to give thanks to the Lord's Name, and he prayed that they would prosper who loved Zion. We pilgrims on earth also resort to the heavenly Theotokos, offering her the glad song, Alleluia!

IKOS 9 (*see Ps. 78:67-72*)

God chose you, O holy Virgin, from all others in Israel, setting His love upon you. He made you a sanctified Temple, fit for His dwelling-place, setting your glory above the high heavens, and teaching us to chant to you praises like these:

Rejoice, O holy Sanctuary, dwelling in the heights!  
Rejoice, O courts of the Lord, founded forever!  
Rejoice, for you brought forth the Son of David!  
Rejoice, for you gave birth to the Shepherd of our souls!  
Rejoice, Lady unique among the children of men!  
Rejoice, you that gave birth to the Creator of all!  
Rejoice, O blameless and immaculate Virgin!  
Rejoice, O Mother of the holy Church!  
Rejoice, for the holy flock of Christ finds pasture through you!  
Rejoice, for you shelter the tender sheep of God!  
Rejoice, O boast of the upright of heart!  
Rejoice, O hope of the penitent sinner!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 10 (*see Ps. 125*)

Pilgrims knew that those who trusted in God were like the immovable Zion which abides forever, and we who have taken refuge in you, holy Mary, know the power of your invincible intercession. Trusting in the power of God in you, O Theotokos, all the upright in heart raise the triumphal shout, Alleluia!

IKOS 10 (*see Ps. 132*)

The Lord chose you for His mystical Zion, O holy Lady, desiring you for His holy habitation. You are His eternal resting place, for you gave birth to the Son of David, and we, your saints, shout for joy, saying:

Rejoice, O sought out of the Lord!  
Rejoice, O dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob!  
Rejoice, O city welcoming the Ark of the divine Presence!  
Rejoice, O royal throne of God!  
Rejoice, you that prepare the covenant in which we are made sons!  
Rejoice, you that make us to rule with your Son!  
Rejoice, for you bless the hungry with abundance!  
Rejoice, for you satisfy the poor with bread!  
Rejoice, O bright salvation of priests!  
Rejoice, O resounding song of the saints!  
Rejoice, O strength of the House of David!  
Rejoice, O prepared Lamp shining with the light of Christ!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 11 (*Lam. 2:18-19*)

Simeon the Righteous prophesied that the daughter of Zion would cry aloud to the Lord, pouring out her heart like water in His presence when she saw Him dying on the Cross. Even though her heart was pierced with a sword, she looked to Him in faith and prayed, Alleluia!

IKOS 11 (*see Is. 52:1-2*)

The angel cried to the Lady Full of Grace that her Son was risen from His three days in the tomb. In so doing, he bode Zion awake to a new day of joy, and exchange the garments of mourning for the beautiful garments of the Kingdom. Like her, we mourners also shake ourselves and arise from the dust, and cry to the Mother of our freedom:

Rejoice, you upon whom the risen Lord has shone!  
Rejoice, you that are radiant in His resurrection!  
Rejoice, O everlasting exultation of the faithful!  
Rejoice, O boundless gladness of the heart!  
Rejoice, for you clothe the beggars in the royal garments of the Kingdom!  
Rejoice, for you cause the despairing to increase in strength!  
Rejoice, O invincible City in which we are protected!  
Rejoice, O unconquerable shelter in which we find peace!  
Rejoice, you that awake those in the slumber of sin!  
Rejoice, you that open the eyes of the simple!  
Rejoice, O fullness of Paschal joy!  
Rejoice, O glory of universal Kingdom!  
Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 12 (*see Is. 62:11-12*)

The Lord proclaimed your reward to the end of the earth, O daughter of Zion, for when He came to receive your soul, He bestowed salvation and translated you to life. He sought you out when you fell asleep, so that even then you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos. Seeing you receive such a glorious recompense, even the angels fall down before you in awe, crying, Alleluia!

IKOS 12 (*see Ps. 87*)

The Theotokos stands forever as a holy mountain, chosen by the Lord above all others. Glorious things are spoken of her through all the world, for she is the Mother of the faithful from all nations on earth, and we her servants never cease to praise her, saying:

Rejoice, for through you the heathen become the sons of God!  
Rejoice, for through you Israel rejoices with all the nations of the earth!  
Rejoice, O song of the singers!  
Rejoice, O strength of the dancers!  
Rejoice, for all the springs of joy in you!  
Rejoice, for in you all creation rejoices!  
Rejoice, you whom the Most High Himself has established!  
Rejoice, O Mother of all peoples!  
Rejoice, O saving knowledge for the heathen!  
Rejoice, O festive joy of the Church!  
Rejoice, O gate of wisdom!  
Rejoice, O eternal mountain!

Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

KONTAKION 13, said thrice. (*see Zeph. 3:14-20*)

O Daughter of Zion and dwelling place of the Lord, you yourself rejoice in God and exult with all your heart, for Christ the King of Israel has come into the midst of you. Accept these our humble praises and gather us outcasts. Change our shame into praise and bring us home that we might all unite before the throne of God and sing, Alleluia!

*And again, IKOS 1 (see Zechariah 2:8-13)*

The Lord of Hosts came to dwell in your midst, O holy Virgin, just as He promised through the holy prophet Zechariah. Seeing this, you sang for joy and were glad, knowing many nations would join themselves to the Lord and become His People, and from all of us you hear this song:

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Rejoice, for he who touches you touches the apple of God's eye!

Rejoice, for you abide under the Almighty's protection!

Rejoice, O royal pavilion of the King!

Rejoice, O mystical courts of the Lord!

Rejoice, for through you Judah enters his inheritance!

Rejoice, for through you Israel receives the blessing of God!

Rejoice, for all flesh is silent before your fame!

Rejoice, for the Lord is roused up and has come to dwell in you!

Rejoice, for God is a wall of fire around you!

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*And again, KONTAKION 1 (Tone 8)*

Shine, shine, O holy Mother of God! You are the New Jerusalem, our Mother! The glory of the Lord has shone on you! Save us, your children and exiles, that we may return home and sing to you: Rejoice O Theotokos, Virgin Daughter of Zion!

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS, DAUGHTER OF ZION:

O most holy Lady Theotokos, our God has made you a city set upon a hill, and your light gives light to the world. Like Zion of old, you are our bulwark and protection; like the Jerusalem which is above, you are our Mother, and it is upon your maternal love and intercession that all Christians rely. Trusting in your prayers, we come to you for help: heal the sick, bind up the broken-hearted, lead back those who wander that they may return to the truth and find their home in the holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Do not despise the petitions we bring you in our brokenness and sin, but restore us through your powerful prayers. Thus restored, may we finally come to inherit the Kingdom of your Son, and to stand before His throne with rejoicing on the Last Day, ceaselessly giving thanks to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.