Akathist to the Holy Great Martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-Streamer

October 26 (November 8 on the Old Calendar)

Kontakion 1. Chosen soldier of Christ the King, you exchanged the honors of this world for the crown of martyrdom, and the Lord made your tomb a fountain of myrrh. O holy Demetrius, we gather around your memory with love. Pray to Christ our God for us, that we may be steadfast in the faith and may cry to you:

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Ikos 1. You were born in Thessaloniki to noble parents who secretly confessed Christ, and they had you baptized and taught in the faith within the walls of their home. Growing in wisdom and in grace, you learned to love the Lord above all things, and so we sing to you:

Rejoice, blessed fruit of a faithful household;
Rejoice, child of prayer in a pagan city;
Rejoice, for you were washed in the waters of baptism;
Rejoice, for you learned the Scriptures from your youth;
Rejoice, for you loved Christ above every earthly honor;
Rejoice, for your heart was guarded by the fear of God;
Rejoice, glory of the city of Thessaloniki;
Rejoice, flower of Macedonia;

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 2. The emperor Maximian, seeing your wisdom and courage, appointed you governor of Thessaly, not knowing that you were a servant of the heavenly King. In the office of a ruler, you remained a disciple of Christ, singing to God in secret: Alleluia!

Ikos 2. You used your authority not to persecute the Christians, as the emperor commanded, but to teach the people of Thessaloniki the way of salvation. Like a second Apostle Paul in that city, you turned many from idols to the living God, and so we cry to you:

Rejoice, ruler who served the King of kings;
Rejoice, teacher of the people of Thessaloniki;
Rejoice, for you followed in the footsteps of Paul;
Rejoice, for you turned many from idols;
Rejoice, for your words were sealed by your life;
Rejoice, for you preferred truth to the favor of Caesar;
Rejoice, lamp set upon a lampstand;
Rejoice, herald of the Gospel;

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 3. When the emperor learned that you were a Christian, he raged and ordered you to be thrown into prison, in a bathhouse near the stadium. You went to your bonds with joy, as to a wedding feast, singing to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 3. Before your arrest, you gave your possessions to your faithful servant Lupus, telling him to distribute them to the poor, for you were looking to the treasure that does not fade. Seeing your freedom from the love of money, we cry out:

Rejoice, for you gave away your wealth to the poor;

Rejoice, for you laid up treasure in heaven;
Rejoice, for you went joyfully to your bonds;
Rejoice, for the prison became for you a place of prayer;
Rejoice, for God strengthened you in the darkness;
Rejoice, for the sign of the Cross struck the scorpion dead;
Rejoice, for an angel visited you in your prison;
Rejoice, prisoner of Christ;

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 4. In those days, the emperor rejoiced in a giant gladiator named Lyaeus, who slew many Christians in the arena. The young Nestor came to you in prison and asked your blessing to fight him, and you sealed him with the sign of the Cross, saying, "God of Demetrius, help him!" Seeing the victory of the weak, the faithful sang: Alleluia!

Ikos 4. Nestor went into the stadium and cried out, "O God of Demetrius, help me!" and he struck down the proud Lyaeus, as David once struck down Goliath. The emperor, put to shame, ordered his death, and the young athlete received the crown of martyrdom. Marveling at the power of your prayer, we sing:

Rejoice, for your blessing armed the young Nestor;
Rejoice, for the giant Lyaeus was struck down;
Rejoice, for the pride of the emperor was put to shame;
Rejoice, for Nestor followed you to martyrdom;
Rejoice, for through you the Lord strengthened the weak;
Rejoice, for you taught Nestor to call on God;
Rejoice, for David's victory was renewed in Thessaloniki;
Rejoice, father in Christ of martyrs;

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 5. The emperor sent soldiers to your prison, and they pierced you with spears, while you raised your hands in prayer. You gave your spirit to the Lord as a pure sacrifice, and the Church glorifies Christ, who grants victory to His martyrs: Alleluia!

Ikos 5. The faithful Lupus took your blood-stained garment and your ring and dipped them in your blood, and through them the Lord worked many healings. For this, he too was put to death, adding his witness to yours. Seeing the faithfulness of the servant and the master, we cry out:

Rejoice, for you were pierced with spears like your Master;
Rejoice, for you died with your hands raised in prayer;
Rejoice, for your blood watered the Church of Thessaloniki;
Rejoice, for the Lord worked healings through your garment;
Rejoice, for Lupus followed you to martyrdom;
Rejoice, for the servant shared the crown of his master;
Rejoice, for you laid down your life for Christ;
Rejoice, unconquered martyr;

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 6. The Christians buried your holy body in secret, and from your tomb flowed fragrant myrrh, which brought healing to all who anointed themselves with faith. Seeing this fountain of grace, the faithful glorified God, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 6. The prefect Leontius, suffering from an incurable disease, came to your tomb and was healed by the mercy of God. In thanksgiving, he built a church over your relics, which became the glory of the city. Rejoicing in this sign of God's love, we cry to you:

Rejoice, for your tomb poured forth myrrh;
Rejoice, for the sick were healed by God's mercy;
Rejoice, for Leontius was raised from his sickbed;
Rejoice, for a church was built over your relics;
Rejoice, for Thessaloniki became a place of pilgrimage;
Rejoice, for the fragrance of Christ rose from your grave;
Rejoice, for the Lord glorified His martyr;
Rejoice, fountain of myrrh;

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 7. In later centuries, when barbarians besieged Thessaloniki, the people prayed in your church, and the Lord delivered the city, as the ancient Book of the Miracles of St Demetrius records. Thanking God for His protection through your prayers, they sang: Alleluia!

Ikos 7. The people of Thessaloniki saw you in visions on the walls of the city, and they called you their defender, for God answered their prayers when they gathered at your shrine. Calling on your prayers in our own trials, we sing:

Rejoice, for the Lord heard the prayers of your city;
Rejoice, for Thessaloniki was kept in times of siege;
Rejoice, for the faithful sought your prayers in danger;
Rejoice, for you are called the defender of your city;
Rejoice, for your miracles were written for our instruction;
Rejoice, for the faithful flee to your intercession;
Rejoice, for you teach us to trust in God alone;
Rejoice, protector of the faithful;

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 8. The holy brothers Cyril and Methodius, sons of Thessaloniki, grew up in the light of your memory, and they carried the Gospel to the Slavic peoples. The Slavs learned to honor you as their own, and they sang to God in their own tongue: Alleluia!

Ikos 8. The faithful of Rus' loved you as a champion, and the holy prince Dimitri Donskoy bore your name when he went out to defend his land. The Church of Russia remembers its fallen warriors on the Saturday before your feast, and so we cry out to you:

Rejoice, for Cyril and Methodius were nurtured by your memory;
Rejoice, for the Slavs received the faith from your city;
Rejoice, for Rus' honored you as a patron;
Rejoice, for Dimitri Donskoy bore your name;
Rejoice, for the Church prays for the departed on your Saturday;
Rejoice, for your feast unites East and North;
Rejoice, for your name is honored among many peoples;
Rejoice, friend of the Slavs;

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 9. The angels marveled at your courage, for you, a man of flesh, overcame the cruelty of tyrants and the fear of death by the grace of Christ. With the angels, we glorify the God who strengthens His martyrs, and we sing: Alleluia!

Ikos 9. Wise philosophers cannot explain how love for Christ could make a young man despise honor, wealth and life itself. Your witness proclaims that the Kingdom of God is more precious than all the kingdoms of this world, and so we sing:

Rejoice, for you preferred Christ to every earthly good;
Rejoice, for you despised the fear of death;
Rejoice, for you confound the wisdom of this world;
Rejoice, for you show the power of faith;
Rejoice, for the Kingdom of God was your treasure;
Rejoice, for the tyrants could not shake your resolve;
Rejoice, for your courage inspires the fearful;
Rejoice, teacher of steadfastness;
Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 10. Desiring to save the soul of every man, Christ calls us to take up our cross and follow Him. You heard His call and gave your life for Him, and so you teach us to carry our own crosses with patience, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 10. On your icon you are shown as a young warrior, sometimes on a red horse, piercing the gladiator Lyaeus with a spear, for your prayer gave victory to Nestor over the enemy of the Christians. Venerating your holy image, we cry out:

Rejoice, warrior of Christ on horseback;
Rejoice, for your spear is faith and prayer;
Rejoice, for evil was overcome by the power of the Cross;
Rejoice, for your icon shines in many churches;
Rejoice, for your armor is the armor of God;
Rejoice, for you fought the good fight;
Rejoice, for you kept the faith to the end;
Rejoice, victor through Christ;
Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 11. Every hymn is too weak to praise your sufferings, O martyr Demetrius, but receive our song, offered with love. Pray that the Lord may accept it as incense, while we sing with you: Alleluia!

Ikos 11. Your basilica in Thessaloniki, burned and rebuilt many times, still stands as a witness that the memory of the righteous endures forever. Pilgrims come from every land to venerate your relics and to pray, and with them we cry to you:

Rejoice, for your basilica rose again from the ashes;
Rejoice, for your relics returned to your city;
Rejoice, for pilgrims come to you from every land;
Rejoice, for your church is a house of prayer for all;
Rejoice, for the myrrh of your relics still gives comfort;
Rejoice, for the righteous are remembered forever;
Rejoice, for your feast gathers the faithful;
Rejoice, joy of the city of Thessaloniki;
Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 12. Grace flows abundantly from your relics, for the Lord who glorified you in life glorifies you also after death. Remembering the earthquake that shook Constantinople on your feast, when God spared the city, we sing with thanksgiving: Alleluia!

Ikos 12. Singing of your victory, we glorify Christ, who made you a great martyr and a myrrh-streamer. We honor your struggles, your patience and your love, and we ask your prayers, crying out:

Rejoice, great martyr of Christ;
Rejoice, myrrh-streamer of Thessaloniki;
Rejoice, companion of the holy martyrs;
Rejoice, for you stand before the throne of God;
Rejoice, for you intercede for those who love you;
Rejoice, for your life calls us to courage;
Rejoice, for your death leads us to life;
Rejoice, crown of the martyrs;

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Kontakion 13. O holy and glorious Great Martyr Demetrius, receive this our offering of praise. Pray to Christ our God that He may strengthen us in the faith, keep our cities and our homes in peace, heal our souls and bodies, and grant us to stand at His right hand with you, singing: Alleluia!

This kontakion is said three times.

Ikos 1 (repeated). You were born in Thessaloniki to noble parents who secretly confessed Christ, and they had you baptized and taught in the faith within the walls of their home. Growing in wisdom and in grace, you learned to love the Lord above all things, and so we sing to you:

Rejoice, blessed fruit of a faithful household;
Rejoice, child of prayer in a pagan city;
Rejoice, for you were washed in the waters of baptism;
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Kontakion 1 (repeated). Chosen soldier of Christ the King, you exchanged the honors of this world for the crown of martyrdom, and the Lord made your tomb a fountain of myrrh. O holy Demetrius, we gather around your memory with love. Pray to Christ our God for us, that we may be steadfast in the faith and may cry to you:

Rejoice, holy Great Martyr Demetrius, myrrh-streaming glory of Thessaloniki!

Prayer

O holy Great Martyr Demetrius, faithful soldier of Christ the King, you exchanged the honors of this world for the crown of martyrdom, and the Lord made your tomb a fountain of healing. We sinners come to you with faith and ask your prayers.

Pray to Christ our God that He may give us courage to confess Him in a world that has forgotten Him, patience in our trials, and a heart free from the love of possessions. Help us, by your example, to use whatever authority we have for the good of others, as you did in Thessaloniki. Pray for our cities and our lands, for those who serve in the armed forces, and for all who suffer for their faith.

Through your prayers, may the Lord grant us a peaceful and blameless end, and a good defense before His dread judgment seat, so that we may glorify with you the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.