Akathist to Saint John the Dwarf

November 9 (November 22 on the Old Calendar)

Kontakion 1. Chosen by Christ to show the power of obedience, O venerable John, you made the desert of Scetis bloom with the fruit of humility. Since you have boldness before the Lord, pray for us who honor your memory, that we may learn patience and lowliness of heart, as we sing to God: Alleluia!

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Ikos 1. Born in Egypt of Christian parents, you were small in body but great in soul, and the Lord, who looks upon the heart, chose you for the angelic life. Marveling at His wisdom, which exalts the humble, we cry out to you:

Rejoice, for God chose you from your mother's womb;
Rejoice, child of a Christian household in Egypt;
Rejoice, small in body and great in spirit;
Rejoice, for the Lord looks upon the heart;
Rejoice, for you were humble from your youth;
Rejoice, for the world could not hold your love;
Rejoice, flower of the Egyptian desert;
Rejoice, joy of Scetis;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 2. As a young man of about eighteen, you left your home with your elder brother and went into the desert of Scetis, seeking an elder who would teach you the way of salvation. Finding Abba Ammoes, you placed yourself under his guidance and sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 2. Your elder was stern and demanding, yet you received his words as the voice of God and gave him your whole will. In the school of obedience, you learned to cut off your desires, and therefore we praise you:

Rejoice, faithful disciple of Abba Ammoes;
Rejoice, for you gave your will into the hands of your elder;
Rejoice, for you received rebukes with gratitude;
Rejoice, for you learned humility in the school of Scetis;
Rejoice, for you sought no honor for yourself;
Rejoice, for you were silent when corrected;
Rejoice, for obedience became your wings;
Rejoice, model for novices;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 3. Your elder planted a dry stick in the ground and told you to water it until it bore fruit. The water lay far away, so that you walked through the night to bring it, yet you did not murmur, and as you walked, you sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 3. For three years, you watered the dry wood, and in the third year it put forth leaves and bore fruit. The elder took the fruit to the church and said to the brethren, "Take and eat the fruit of obedience." Marveling at this wonder, we cry out:

Rejoice, for a dry stick blossomed through your obedience;
Rejoice, for God rewarded your patience with fruit;
Rejoice, for you walked through the night without complaint;

Rejoice, for your labor was offered to the Lord;
Rejoice, for the tree of obedience fed the brethren;
Rejoice, for barren ground became fruitful;
Rejoice, for your patience was crowned by grace;
Rejoice, gardener of virtues;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 4. Your elder fell ill and suffered for twelve years, and you served him day and night, though he never spoke a word of thanks. At his death, he took your hand and said to the elders, "This is an angel, not a man," and you, still humble, sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 4. You cared for the sick old man as for Christ Himself, seeking no reward from men, and the Lord who sees in secret honored your hidden labor. Praising your patience, we say to you:

Rejoice, for you served your elder for twelve years;
Rejoice, for you asked no thanks from men;
Rejoice, for you saw Christ in the sick;
Rejoice, for your patience was stronger than weariness;
Rejoice, for your elder called you an angel;
Rejoice, for the Lord rewarded you openly;
Rejoice, model for those who care for the sick;
Rejoice, servant without pride;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 5. In the fervor of youth, you desired to live without care, like the angels, who do not labor but ceaselessly serve God. Taking off your cloak, you went into the desert, yet after a week you returned, having learned the measure of human nature, and you sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 5. When you knocked at the door, your brother answered, "John has become an angel and is no longer among men," and left you outside until morning. Then he said, "If you are a man, you must work again in order to eat," and you bowed down and asked forgiveness. Learning from your humility, we cry out:

Rejoice, for you accepted correction from your brother;
Rejoice, for you learned the measure of human nature;
Rejoice, for you bowed down and asked forgiveness;
Rejoice, for you returned to work with prayer;
Rejoice, for you teach us to beware of pride;
Rejoice, for you were not ashamed of your mistake;
Rejoice, for humility is the path of the angels;
Rejoice, wise through repentance;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 6. Many came to you for a word of salvation, and you taught them with few words and many tears. You said that we had thrown off the light burden of self-accusation and taken up the heavy burden of self-justification, and those who heard you sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 6. You said that no one builds a house by starting from the roof, for the foundation is our neighbor, whom we must win, and upon whom everything else is built. Treasuring your teaching, we sing to you:

Rejoice, for you taught the way of self-accusation;
Rejoice, for you warned us against self-justification;
Rejoice, for you made our neighbor the foundation;
Rejoice, for you built your house upon love;

Rejoice, for you taught that a monk is toil;
Rejoice, for your words were few and full of grace;
Rejoice, teacher of the desert;
Rejoice, voice of the fathers;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 7. Seeing your humility, the fathers of Scetis honored you, and, as tradition tells, you were ordained to the priesthood. You stood at the holy altar with fear and trembling, and when you came out of the church, you kept silence, guarding the grace you had received and singing to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 7. Disciples gathered around you, and you guided them with gentleness, teaching them to watch over their thoughts and to keep the remembrance of God. Honoring your fatherly care, we say to you:

Rejoice, servant of the holy altar;
Rejoice, for you celebrated the Mysteries with awe;
Rejoice, for you guarded the grace of the Liturgy;
Rejoice, father of many disciples;
Rejoice, for you taught watchfulness over thoughts;
Rejoice, for you loved the remembrance of God;
Rejoice, gentle guide of souls;
Rejoice, lamp of Scetis;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 8. Paesia, an orphan who had once welcomed the monks, fell into a life of sin, and the fathers asked you to go to her. You went with tears and prayer, desiring only her salvation, and as you walked, you sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 8. Your tears softened her heart, and she followed you into the desert to begin a life of repentance. That very night, she departed this life, and you saw her soul carried up by angels, for God had accepted her conversion. Glorifying His mercy, we cry out:

Rejoice, seeker of the lost sheep;
Rejoice, for you wept for the soul of a sinner;
Rejoice, for your tears led Paesia to repentance;
Rejoice, for you saw angels receive her soul;
Rejoice, for God accepted her conversion in one night;
Rejoice, for you teach us never to despair;
Rejoice, herald of the mercy of God;
Rejoice, friend of sinners;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 9. You loved stillness, and when you wove your baskets, your mind remained with God, so that you sometimes forgot the work of your hands. The brethren marveled at your recollection, and you sang to God in the silence of your heart: Alleluia!

Ikos 9. You watched over your soul like a man sitting under a tree, seeing the beasts of the passions approach and climbing up to God in prayer. Learning from your vigilance, we praise you:

Rejoice, lover of stillness;
Rejoice, for your mind remained with God;
Rejoice, for you fled from the passions to prayer;
Rejoice, for you kept watch over your thoughts;
Rejoice, for you labored with your hands and prayed;

Rejoice, for silence was your treasure;
Rejoice, mirror of recollection;
Rejoice, watchful soul;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 10. At the beginning of the fifth century, raiders from the desert fell upon Scetis, and the monks were scattered. You did not cling to your cell, but went out as a pilgrim, trusting in God, and you sang to Him: Alleluia!

Ikos 10. You withdrew toward Clysma, near the Red Sea and the mountain of the great Anthony, and there you lived your last years in prayer. Admiring your trust in providence, we cry out:

Rejoice, for you did not fear the raiders;
Rejoice, for you trusted in the providence of God;
Rejoice, pilgrim who had no city here below;
Rejoice, for you dwelt near the mountain of Anthony;
Rejoice, for exile did not weaken your prayer;
Rejoice, for you were at home wherever God was;
Rejoice, for you sought the city that is to come;
Rejoice, stranger for Christ;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 11. Having finished your course, you reposed in peace, full of years and of grace. The angels received your humble soul, and the fathers who heard of your departure glorified God, who exalts the lowly, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 11. The Egyptian Church preserved your memory, and, according to its tradition, your relics were brought back to Scetis, where a monastery bearing your name stood for many centuries. Honoring your holy remains, we sing to you:

Rejoice, for you departed to the Lord in peace;
Rejoice, for angels received your humble soul;
Rejoice, for your relics returned to Scetis;
Rejoice, for a monastery was built in your name;
Rejoice, for your memory is honored in Egypt;
Rejoice, for the Greek and Slavic Churches praise you;
Rejoice, for your sayings are read in every land;
Rejoice, treasure of the desert;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 12. Desiring to honor the humility that God exalted, the Churches keep your feast, and your sayings guide monks and lay people alike. With the fathers of the desert, we glorify the Lord who glorified you, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 12. Praising your obedience, your patience and your love for sinners, we, your unworthy children, gather to keep your memory, asking you to remember us before Christ. With love, we sing to you:

Rejoice, intercessor for those who struggle with pride;
Rejoice, for your prayers support the obedient;
Rejoice, for your example comforts the weary;
Rejoice, patron of novices and of the humble;
Rejoice, for your life teaches us patience;
Rejoice, for you shine among the desert fathers;

Rejoice, glory of Egypt;
Rejoice, adornment of monks;

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Kontakion 13. O venerable father John, small in stature and great in obedience, accept this small offering of praise. Pray to Christ our God for us, that He may uproot our pride, teach us patience and make our barren souls bear fruit, so that we may sing with you forever: Alleluia!

This kontakion is said three times.

Ikos 1 (repeated). Born in Egypt of Christian parents, you were small in body but great in soul, and the Lord, who looks upon the heart, chose you for the angelic life. Marveling at His wisdom, which exalts the humble, we cry out to you:

Rejoice, for God chose you from your mother's womb;
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Kontakion 1 (repeated). Chosen by Christ to show the power of obedience, O venerable John, you made the desert of Scetis bloom with the fruit of humility. Since you have boldness before the Lord, pray for us who honor your memory, that we may learn patience and lowliness of heart, as we sing to God: Alleluia!

Rejoice, O venerable John, small in stature and great in obedience!

Prayer

O venerable father John, you watered a dry stick in obedience until it bore fruit, you served your elder without thanks, and you wept for sinners until they turned to God. We sinners come to you with love, asking you to pray for us before Christ our God.

Pray that the Lord may grant us humility and obedience, that He may free us from self-justification and teach us to accuse ourselves, and that He may make our neighbor the foundation of our life. Help us, by your example, to labor without complaint, to care for the sick and the elderly, to seek the lost with tears, and never to despair of the mercy of God. Intercede for monastics, for novices and for all who struggle with pride, that the Lord may make their lives fruitful.

For to Him belong all glory, honor and worship, with His unoriginate Father and His all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.