Akathist to Saint Martin the Merciful, Bishop of Tours

November 12 (also October 12)

Kontakion 1. Chosen by God from the ranks of the soldiers to become a shepherd of His flock, O holy Martin, you clothed Christ in the person of a beggar and brought the light of the Gospel to the villages of Gaul. Accept our song of praise, and pray to the Lord for us, that we may become merciful and cry to you:

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Ikos 1. You were born around 316 in Sabaria of Pannonia, to a pagan father who was an officer in the Roman army, and you were named after Mars, the god of war. Yet the God of peace called you from your childhood, and at ten you sought out the church as a catechumen. Seeing grace at work in a pagan home, we sing:

Rejoice, child of Pannonia;
Rejoice, son of a Roman officer;
Rejoice, for the God of peace called you from childhood;
Rejoice, for you sought the church at ten years old;
Rejoice, for you became a catechumen against your father's will;
Rejoice, for you longed for the desert as a boy;
Rejoice, for God prepared you for great things;
Rejoice, flower of the Danube lands;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 2. At fifteen, you were enrolled in the army by your father, and you served in the cavalry. You lived among the soldiers as a monk, with one servant whom you treated as a brother, and you sang in your heart: Alleluia!

Ikos 2. At the gate of Amiens, in a bitter winter, you met a beggar shivering with cold, whom no one helped. Having nothing else to give, you drew your sword, cut your military cloak in two and gave him half. Marveling at your mercy, we cry out:

Rejoice, soldier of the cavalry;
Rejoice, for you lived among soldiers as a monk;
Rejoice, for you treated your servant as a brother;
Rejoice, for you saw the beggar at Amiens;
Rejoice, for you cut your cloak in two;
Rejoice, for you clothed the naked in winter;
Rejoice, for your sword became an instrument of mercy;
Rejoice, merciful soldier;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 3. That night, Christ appeared to you wearing the half cloak you had given, and He said to the angels, "Martin, who is still a catechumen, has clothed Me with this garment." Hearing His words, you hastened to baptism, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 3. You were baptized at eighteen, but you remained in the army for some years more, until you said to the emperor Julian, "I am a soldier of Christ; it is not lawful for me to fight." Seeing your courage, we sing:

Rejoice, for Christ appeared to you in the cloak;
Rejoice, for you clothed the Lord in the beggar;
Rejoice, for you hastened to baptism;

Rejoice, for you were washed at eighteen;
Rejoice, for you declared yourself a soldier of Christ;
Rejoice, for you would not shed blood;
Rejoice, for you offered to face the enemy unarmed;
Rejoice, soldier of the King of peace;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 4. Released from the army, you went to Poitiers and became a disciple of St Hilary, the great defender of Nicaea against the Arians. He wished to ordain you deacon, but you accepted only the humble order of exorcist, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 4. You traveled to your homeland in Pannonia and brought your mother to the faith of Christ. When you opposed the Arians there, you were beaten and driven out, and you lived as a hermit on the island of Gallinara. Seeing your love for the truth, we cry out:

Rejoice, disciple of Hilary of Poitiers;
Rejoice, for you accepted only a humble office;
Rejoice, for you brought your mother to Christ;
Rejoice, for you defended the faith of Nicaea;
Rejoice, for you were beaten by the Arians;
Rejoice, for you lived as a hermit on Gallinara;
Rejoice, for you were faithful in exile;
Rejoice, confessor of the true faith;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 5. When Hilary returned from exile, you followed him and founded the monastery of Ligugé, the first in Gaul, around 361. Many disciples gathered around you, and together you sang: Alleluia!

Ikos 5. At Ligugé, the Lord worked wonders through your prayers, and a catechumen who had died without baptism was raised to life when you lay upon him and prayed, as the prophet Elisha once did. Glorifying God, we sing:

Rejoice, founder of Ligugé;
Rejoice, father of monasticism in Gaul;
Rejoice, for many disciples gathered around you;
Rejoice, for you taught them prayer and labor;
Rejoice, for a catechumen was raised at your prayer;
Rejoice, for you prayed like Elisha;
Rejoice, for the dead man received baptism;
Rejoice, wonderworker of Gaul;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 6. In 371, the people of Tours desired you as their bishop, and they brought you to the city by a trick, saying that a sick woman needed your prayers. Though some bishops scorned your poor appearance, the people cried out that you were worthy, and they sang: Alleluia!

Ikos 6. As bishop, you lived not in a palace but in a cell, and you founded the monastery of Marmoutier outside the city, where you lived with eighty monks in caves and huts. Marveling at your humility, we cry to you:

Rejoice, bishop of Tours;
Rejoice, for the people chose you for your holiness;
Rejoice, for you were mocked for your poor clothing;
Rejoice, for you remained a monk as bishop;

Rejoice, founder of Marmoutier;
Rejoice, for you lived with your monks in caves;
Rejoice, for you loved poverty and silence;
Rejoice, humble shepherd;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 7. You traveled through the villages of Gaul, where the people still worshiped idols and sacred trees, and you preached Christ to them. When the pagans challenged you to stand beneath a falling pine, you made the sign of the Cross, and it fell the other way. Seeing this, they believed and sang: Alleluia!

Ikos 7. Wherever you destroyed a pagan shrine, you built a church or a monastery, so that the villages of Gaul were filled with the praise of God. Rejoicing in your apostolic labors, we sing:

Rejoice, apostle of the villages of Gaul;
Rejoice, for you preached to the rural pagans;
Rejoice, for the falling pine turned at the sign of the Cross;
Rejoice, for the pagans believed at this wonder;
Rejoice, for you built churches where idols stood;
Rejoice, for you founded parishes in the countryside;
Rejoice, for Gaul was filled with the praise of God;
Rejoice, enlightener of the Gauls;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 8. You stood before emperors without fear, and when you dined with the emperor Maximus, you gave the cup first to your priest rather than to the emperor, honoring the priesthood of Christ. Seeing your boldness, the faithful sang: Alleluia!

Ikos 8. When the heretic Priscillian was condemned to death by the emperor, you pleaded that no Christian should be put to death for heresy, and you refused communion with the bishops who sought his execution. Learning from your mercy, we cry out:

Rejoice, for you stood before emperors without fear;
Rejoice, for you honored the priesthood above the crown;
Rejoice, for you pleaded for the life of a heretic;
Rejoice, for you taught that faith is not spread by the sword;
Rejoice, for you opposed the shedding of blood;
Rejoice, for you were merciful even to the erring;
Rejoice, for you loved justice;
Rejoice, defender of the condemned;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 9. In 397, you went to Candes to reconcile the clergy there, and when peace was made, you fell ill. You lay on ashes, refusing a bed, and when the devil appeared to you, you said, “Abraham’s bosom will receive me.” You gave your soul to God singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 9. Your disciples begged you not to leave them, and you prayed, “Lord, if I am still needed by Thy people, I do not refuse the labor; Thy will be done.” Marveling at your obedience, we sing:

Rejoice, for you went to Candes as a peacemaker;
Rejoice, for you reconciled the clergy before your death;
Rejoice, for you lay on ashes at the end;
Rejoice, for you did not fear the devil;
Rejoice, for you were ready to labor or to rest;

Rejoice, for you said, "Thy will be done";
Rejoice, for Abraham's bosom received you;
Rejoice, blessed end of a holy life;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 10. The people of Tours and of Poitiers contended for your body, and the men of Tours carried it by night along the Loire to their city. The trees blossomed out of season as your relics passed, and the faithful sang: Alleluia!

Ikos 10. Your life was written by your disciple Sulpicius Severus, and your tomb at Tours became one of the great places of pilgrimage of the West. Thousands of churches bear your name, and so we cry to you:

Rejoice, for Tours received your holy body;
Rejoice, for the trees blossomed as your relics passed;
Rejoice, for Sulpicius Severus wrote your life;
Rejoice, for your tomb drew pilgrims from every land;
Rejoice, for thousands of churches bear your name;
Rejoice, for the West honors you as a father;
Rejoice, for the East remembers you with love;
Rejoice, glory of Tours;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 11. Every hymn falls short of your mercy, O holy Martin, for you gave your cloak, your labors and your life for the sake of Christ. Receive our song, offered with love, as we sing to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 11. You are one of the first saints honored without martyrdom, for your life was a long confession, and you show that holiness is possible in every state of life. Calling on your prayers, we sing:

Rejoice, confessor without the blood of martyrdom;
Rejoice, for your life was a long witness;
Rejoice, for you show holiness in every state;
Rejoice, patron of soldiers and travelers;
Rejoice, friend of the poor and the beggar;
Rejoice, model of bishops and monks;
Rejoice, for you unite East and West in honor;
Rejoice, saint of the undivided Church;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 12. The grace of God works through your prayers, and your memory reminds all Christians of the unity of East and West in the faith of the Fathers. Glorifying the Lord who gave you to His Church, we sing: Alleluia!

Ikos 12. Singing of your mercy, we praise Christ, who wore your cloak and made you a shepherd. We honor your memory and cry to you:

Rejoice, soldier of Christ;
Rejoice, clother of the naked;
Rejoice, disciple of Hilary;
Rejoice, father of monks in Gaul;
Rejoice, bishop of Tours;
Rejoice, apostle of the villages;
Rejoice, defender of the condemned;
Rejoice, joy of the Churches of the West;

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Kontakion 13. O holy hierarch Martin, merciful soldier of Christ, receive this our hymn of praise. Pray to the Lord for us, that He may open our hearts to the poor, give us courage in the truth and peace in our Churches, and grant us to stand with you in His Kingdom, singing: Alleluia!

This kontakion is said three times.

Ikos 1 (repeated). You were born around 316 in Sabaria of Pannonia, to a pagan father who was an officer in the Roman army, and you were named after Mars, the god of war. Yet the God of peace called you from your childhood, and at ten you sought out the church as a catechumen. Seeing grace at work in a pagan home, we sing:

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Kontakion 1 (repeated). Chosen by God from the ranks of the soldiers to become a shepherd of His flock, O holy Martin, you clothed Christ in the person of a beggar and brought the light of the Gospel to the villages of Gaul. Accept our song of praise, and pray to the Lord for us, that we may become merciful and cry to you:

Rejoice, holy Hierarch Martin, merciful enlightener of Gaul!

Prayer

O holy hierarch Martin, you who clothed Christ in the person of a beggar, who laid down the sword to become a soldier of the King of peace, and who brought the light of the Gospel to the villages of Gaul, we come to you with faith and ask your prayers.

Pray to Christ our God for the poor and the homeless, especially those who suffer from the cold, that He may clothe and shelter them through the hands of the merciful. Pray for soldiers, that they may serve with justice and mercy; for bishops and priests, that they may be humble shepherds; and for the Churches of East and West, that the Lord may restore their unity in the faith of the Fathers. Help us, by your example, to share what we have, even if we have only half a cloak to give.

Through your prayers, may the Lord grant us to say at the end of our life, "Thy will be done," so that with you we may glorify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.