Akathist to Saint Willibrord, Apostle of the Frisians and First Bishop of Utrecht

November 7

Kontakion 1. Chosen by Christ from the north of Britain, and sent across the sea to the people of the marshes and the coasts, you carried the light of the Gospel to those who sat in darkness, O holy Willibrord. Gathering to honor your memory, we offer you this song of praise, and we cry out to you:

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Ikos 1. An angel of peace in human form, you were given to the Church from your childhood, for your father Wilgils, newly baptized, offered you to God at Ripon. There, under the guidance of holy Wilfrid, you learned the psalms and the monastic way, and we, marveling at the seed sown in your young heart, sing to you:

Rejoice, child offered to God by a newly baptized father;
Rejoice, young monk of Ripon, nourished on the psalms;
Rejoice, for you loved prayer before you knew the world;
Rejoice, disciple of Wilfrid, learning zeal for the Church;
Rejoice, flower of Northumbria, blooming for the Lord;
Rejoice, for Christ called you from your earliest years;
Rejoice, lamp prepared to give light to many nations;
Rejoice, chosen vessel of the Lord;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 2. Seeing the holiness of the monks of Ireland, you crossed the sea in your youth, and at Rath Melsigi you placed yourself under the blessed Egbert. For twelve years you grew in learning, in watchfulness and in prayer, and you were raised to the holy priesthood, singing to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 2. Seeking a deeper understanding of the Scriptures, you embraced the life of a pilgrim for Christ, the exile that the monks of Ireland so loved. Fasting and vigils became your bread, and the word of God your delight, so that we, beholding your preparation for apostolic labor, cry out:

Rejoice, pilgrim who left your homeland for the sake of Christ;
Rejoice, faithful disciple of the blessed Egbert;
Rejoice, for in Ireland you learned holy stillness;
Rejoice, student of the Scriptures, filled with their wisdom;
Rejoice, priest of the Most High, offering the bloodless sacrifice;
Rejoice, for your heart burned to make Christ known;
Rejoice, ascetic made strong by fasting and vigils;
Rejoice, servant of the Word;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 3. The power of the Most High guided your steps when Egbert, longing to bring the Gospel to the kinsmen of the English, sent you forth with eleven companions. Like the Twelve sent out by the Lord, you crossed the sea to Frisia in the year 690, and together you sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 3. Having in Pepin, ruler of the Franks, a protector for the mission, you began to preach among the Frisians, who honored trees, springs and idols. Going to Rome, you received the blessing of Pope Sergius and holy relics for the new churches, and we, admiring your obedience, sing to you:

Rejoice, leader of the twelve who went out to Frisia;

Rejoice, herald of Christ among a people in darkness;
Rejoice, for you sought the blessing of the Church of Rome;
Rejoice, bearer of holy relics for new altars;
Rejoice, sower who scattered the seed of faith;
Rejoice, for the pagan groves heard the name of Christ;
Rejoice, fisher of men along the northern shores;
Rejoice, apostle sent by God;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 4. With unshaken trust in God amid every storm, you journeyed once more to Rome, and in the church of the holy martyr Cecilia, Pope Sergius consecrated you archbishop of the Frisians, giving you the name Clement. Rejoicing in the grace poured out upon you, you sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 4. The faithful heard how you returned from Rome clothed with the grace of the episcopate, and how Pepin gave you the fortress of Utrecht for your see. There you restored a ruined church and raised a house of prayer to Christ the Savior, so that we cry out to you:

Rejoice, first shepherd of the church of Utrecht;
Rejoice, archbishop consecrated in the city of the apostles;
Rejoice, Clement in name and gentle in deed;
Rejoice, for you built a church to Christ the Savior;
Rejoice, restorer of ruined altars;
Rejoice, faithful steward of the mysteries of God;
Rejoice, for many came to holy Baptism through your word;
Rejoice, firm foundation;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 5. Like a star guided by God, you sought a place of prayer for your monks, and the pious Irmina gave you lands at Echternach. There you founded a monastery in 698, a house of learning and of praise, from which the light of the Gospel shone far and wide, and with your brethren you sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 5. Seeing your love for the monastic life, nobles and poor alike brought gifts to Echternach, and the abbey became a school for missionaries and a haven of peace. From that house of prayer you went forth to preach, and to it you returned to pray, so that we sing to you:

Rejoice, founder of the holy abbey of Echternach;
Rejoice, father of monks and teacher of missionaries;
Rejoice, for your monastery became a lamp of learning;
Rejoice, for psalms rose day and night from your house;
Rejoice, lover of silence amid apostolic labors;
Rejoice, for the poor found bread at your door;
Rejoice, for your scribes copied the holy Gospels;
Rejoice, abbot and pastor;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 6. You preached Christ beyond the borders of the Franks, going even to the Danes, whose king Ongendus received you kindly but would not believe. Undaunted, you took thirty youths of that people to instruct them in the faith, entrusting the harvest to the Lord of the harvest, and you sang to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 6. A light shone in the darkness when a storm drove your ship to the island sacred to the god Fosite, where no one dared to touch anything. Fearing God alone, you baptized new believers in its sacred spring and let your companions eat from its herds, so that we cry out to you:

Rejoice, preacher who bore the Gospel to the Danes;
Rejoice, for you sowed the faith in the far north;
Rejoice, for you were not afraid of the pagan gods;
Rejoice, for you made a pagan spring a font of Baptism;
Rejoice, for you proclaimed that Christ alone is holy;
Rejoice, teacher of the Danish youths;
Rejoice, for the sea itself served your mission;
Rejoice, fearless confessor;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 7. Wishing to destroy the missionaries, the pagan king Radbod cast lots three times, and the Lord preserved your life, though one of your companions received the crown of martyrdom. Glorifying God, who watches over His servants and crowns His witnesses, you sang: Alleluia!

Ikos 7. A new wonder was seen on the island of Walcheren, when you broke the idol that the people worshiped. The keeper of the shrine struck you on the head with a sword, yet you were unharmed, and you would not let your companions avenge you, so that we sing to you:

Rejoice, for you overthrew the idol of Walcheren;
Rejoice, for the sword of the angry could not harm you;
Rejoice, imitator of Christ, who forgave His enemies;
Rejoice, for you returned mercy for blows;
Rejoice, for you gave thanks to God for your martyred companion;
Rejoice, for the Lord kept you for further labors;
Rejoice, meek one strong in the power of God;
Rejoice, gentle victor;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 8. Strange and hard was the trial when, after the death of Pepin, Radbod returned in fury, burned the churches, and scattered the flock you had gathered. Still you did not lose hope, trusting that the Lord would raise up what had fallen, and you sang to Him: Alleluia!

Ikos 8. Wholly devoted to the work of God, you returned to Frisia after the death of Radbod, under the protection of Charles Martel. The young Boniface labored at your side for three years, learning from you the ways of the mission, and we, beholding one apostle forming another, cry out:

Rejoice, for you rebuilt the churches that were burned;
Rejoice, for you gathered again the scattered flock;
Rejoice, patient laborer who never gave up hope;
Rejoice, teacher of holy Boniface, apostle of the Germans;
Rejoice, for you wished to share your burden with him;
Rejoice, father of many missionaries;
Rejoice, for the Frisians turned again to Christ;
Rejoice, tireless shepherd;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 9. All the angels rejoiced as the Frisians, once given over to idols, came in great numbers to the waters of Baptism. In village after village, churches rose where groves had stood, and the name of the Holy Trinity was praised on the shores of the northern sea, and with them we sing: Alleluia!

Ikos 9. Orators cannot worthily tell of your labors, O holy father, for during nearly fifty years you journeyed by land and by water, in cold and in hunger, so that the Gospel might reach every dwelling. Unable to praise you as you deserve, we offer you these words:

Rejoice, untiring traveler by road and by river;
Rejoice, for you endured cold and hunger for Christ;
Rejoice, for you sought the lost in every village;
Rejoice, for churches rose where idols had stood;
Rejoice, for you taught the Frisians to praise the Trinity;
Rejoice, for your word was gentle and your life pure;
Rejoice, for you became all things to all people;
Rejoice, true apostle;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 10. Desiring the salvation of all, you labored in your old age as in your youth, and at last, full of years, you withdrew to your beloved Echternach to prepare for your departure. There you gave your soul into the hands of God on the seventh of November, in the year 739, singing: Alleluia!

Ikos 10. Your prayers were a wall for your flock in life, and they did not cease at your death. Your monks laid your body to rest in the abbey church of Echternach, and the faithful soon began to gather at your tomb, so that we sing to you:

Rejoice, for you reposed in peace among your monks;
Rejoice, for you finished the race and kept the faith;
Rejoice, for your old age was crowned with glory;
Rejoice, for the Lord received you into His joy;
Rejoice, for your tomb became a place of prayer;
Rejoice, for your memory is blessed among the faithful;
Rejoice, for you now stand before the throne of Christ;
Rejoice, faithful servant;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 11. A hymn of praise was raised by your kinsman, the learned Alcuin, who wrote your life in prose and verse, so that the generations to come might know the wonders that God worked through you. Joining our voices to his, we sing to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 11. Your relics rest in Echternach like a hidden treasure, and the sick come to your tomb with faith, praying to the Lord through your intercession. Those who suffer from convulsions and the falling sickness have long sought your prayers, and many have glorified God for His mercy, so that we cry out:

Rejoice, for through you God has shown His mercy;
Rejoice, intercessor for those who suffer from convulsions;
Rejoice, for the afflicted find comfort at your tomb;
Rejoice, for your relics are a treasure of the Church;
Rejoice, for the sick pray to Christ, trusting in your prayers;
Rejoice, for God has glorified you with wonders;
Rejoice, for many have been healed by the Lord at your shrine;
Rejoice, ever-praying intercessor;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 12. Grace has made your memory a feast for many peoples, and every year on the Tuesday after Pentecost, the pilgrims of Echternach go in procession through the streets to your tomb, step by step, with prayer and song. Seeing their faith, we glorify God, who is wonderful in His saints, and we sing: Alleluia!

Ikos 12. Singing of your labors, the Netherlands and Luxembourg honor you as their apostle and patron, and the Orthodox faithful of these lands keep your memory as a saint of the undivided Church. We, too, praise you with love as your spiritual children:

Rejoice, apostle of the Netherlands;
Rejoice, patron of the land of Luxembourg;
Rejoice, for pilgrims dance with joy on the way to your tomb;
Rejoice, saint of the undivided Church of East and West;
Rejoice, for the faithful of the Low Countries honor you;
Rejoice, for your memory unites many nations in praise;
Rejoice, for you pray for the lands you enlightened;
Rejoice, glory of Utrecht;

Rejoice, holy Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians and light of the Low Countries!

Kontakion 13. O holy and blessed Willibrord, apostle of the Frisians, first bishop of Utrecht and father of the monks of Echternach, accept this small offering of praise. Pray to Christ our God, that He may grant us steadfast faith, zeal for His Gospel, and healing of soul and body, and that, with you, we may sing to Him forever: Alleluia!

This kontakion is said three times.

Ikos 1 (repeated). An angel of peace in human form, you were given to the Church from your childhood, for your father Wilgils, newly baptized, offered you to God at Ripon. There, under the guidance of holy Wilfrid, you learned the psalms and the monastic way, and we, marveling at the seed sown in your young heart, sing to you:

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Kontakion 1 (repeated). Chosen by Christ from the north of Britain, and sent across the sea to the people of the marshes and the coasts, you carried the light of the Gospel to those who sat in darkness, O holy Willibrord. Gathering to honor your memory, we offer you this song of praise, and we cry out to you:

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Prayer

O holy father Willibrord, chosen by God from your childhood and sent across the sea to bring the light of Christ to the Frisians, we come to you with faith and love. You left your homeland for the sake of the Gospel, you endured hardship, danger and the burning of your churches, and you never ceased to hope in the Lord. Pray for us, that we too may leave behind whatever separates us from God, and that we may bear witness to Christ with gentleness and courage in the places where He has set us.

Intercede before the Lord for the lands you enlightened, for the Netherlands and Luxembourg, and for all who labor to make Christ known among those who do not yet know Him. Pray for those who suffer from epilepsy, convulsions and every affliction of body and mind, that Christ the Physician may heal them and grant them patience and peace. By your example, may we learn to love prayer, to cherish the Scriptures, and to serve our neighbor without counting the cost.

At the hour of our departure, pray that the Lord may receive us in His mercy, so that with you we may glorify the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.