

The Canon

Ode i. Mode 4. The Heirmos.

My mouth shall I open wide, and it will thus be with Spirit filled. A word shall I then pour out unto the Mother and Queen. I will joyously attend the celebration and sing to her merrily, lauding her miracles.

Troparia.

OLady, let David your forefather sing to you as he strikes the harp of the Spirit: "Listen, O Daughter, to the voice that is filled with joy, of Gabriel the Angel. For he is announcing joy ineffable to you."

Gabriel

Rejoicing, I speak to you. Incline your ear and give heed to me, as I am announcing the seedless conception of God. For before the Lord, you found exceeding favor, all-pure one, as no one else before you ever found.

Mary

OAngel, make known to me the full significance of your words. How shall what you say occur? Clearly explain to me. How shall I conceive and thus become the mother of God my Creator, when I am a virgin still?

Gabriel

It seems that you think I am possibly speaking deceitfully. And seeing your cautiousness causes me to rejoice. But be not afraid, O Lady; for when God wills, then wonderful miracles easily come to pass.

Ode iii. The Heirmos.

Establish your servants who extol you, O Mother of God, for they have formed a spiritual choir for you the living and abundant fount; and crowns of glory graciously in your divine glory grant to them.

Troparia

Mary

From Judah the scepter has departed; the time has indeed therefore arrived, when Christ, the expectation and hope of all the nations, should appear. But you, explain to me how I, a virgin girl, shall give birth to him.

Gabriel

OMaiden, you seek an explanation of how you, a virgin, will conceive. But this is inexplicable. Yet when He overshadows you with His creative energy, the Holy Spirit will accomplish it.

Mary

My ancestral mother was evicted of old from the Garden of delight, when she accepted bad advice from the serpent. And therefore I am cautious of your curious greeting, lest I make the same mistake.

Gabriel

Iwho stand before the Lord in heaven was sent to reveal His will to you. But why are you afraid of me, when I am here in awe of you? And why are you in awe of me revering you, O immaculate?

Ode iv. The Heirmos

He who sits in holy glory on the throne of Divinity, on a swift and light cloud, Jesus, has arrived, the surpassing God, and by the might of His undefiled hand has saved those who cry aloud: Glory, O Christ, to Your power be.

Mary

Ihave heard the holy Prophet; he foresaw and proclaimed of old that a sacred Virgin shall conceive and bring forth Emmanuel. But what I earnestly long to know is how shall man's mortal nature sustain the mingling with the Divinity.

Gabriel

Bride unwedded, Virgin Mary, you remember the burning bush: while sustaining fire, it was not consumed, Maiden full of grace. It thus prefigured your own amazing mystery: after giving birth, you shall remain ever-virgin pure.

Mary

You, O Gabriel, illumined by the light of almighty God, since you are the herald of the truth, do tell me most truly how I shall give birth in the flesh unto the bodiless Word, with my purity remaining wholly inviolate.

Gabriel

As a slave before his mistress, I respectfully wait on you. Maiden, I am awestruck, and with fear and reverence I gaze on you, on whom the Word of the Father shall softly come down like rain on a fleece, as was His perfect good will to do.

Ode v. The Heirmos.

Amazed was the universe by your divine magnificence. For while never consummating wedlock, you held, O Virgin, the God of all in your womb, and gave birth unto a timeless Son, Who awards salvation to all who chant hymns of praise to you.

Mary

Unable am I to grasp the total meaning of your words. For while often miracles have happened, wrought by divine power, which were symbols and types in the Law and in the sacred Books, never has a virgin borne without agency of a male.

Gabriel

You marvel, all-blameless one. Your miracle is strange indeed. As the King of all becomes incarnate, you will receive Him into your virginal womb. The types and the symbols of the Law, and the words and riddles of the Prophets prefigure you.

Mary

The Lord is invisible to all and uncontainable. He is, with the Father and the Spirit, without beginning. So, I do not understand: How can I conceive the Word of God? How can the Creator dwell in my womb, which He made himself?

Gabriel

To David your Forefather the Lord once swore an oath in truth, to set upon the throne of his kingdom one from the fruit of his loins forevermore. And you, Jacob's beauty, which He loved, He has chosen over all as His animate dwelling place.

Ode vi. The Heirmos

Prefiguring in the whale the divine three-day burial, Prophet Jonah cried aloud, in affliction beseeching God: "From corruption save me, O Lord Jesus the King of angelic hosts."

Mary

O Gabriel, I believe and accept your most joyful words and I am completely filled with divine joy and happiness. For you are a herald of joy, announcing a joy that will never end.

Gabriel

The godly joy has been given to you, O Mother of God. All creation cries rejoice to you who are the Bride of God. O pure one, for only you were preordained Mother of the Son of God.

Mary

Let mother Eve's condemnation, through me, be rescinded now, and through me let what she owed to Adam be returned today. Let her ancient debt be more than fully repaid through my childbirth,

Gabriel

God made a vow to your forefather Abraham, promising that the nations would be blessed in his descendant, O Maiden pure; and today the promise is through you now beginning to come to pass.

Ode vii. The Heirmos.

Godly-minded three did not adore created things in the Creator's stead, but bravely trampling upon the threat of the furnace fire chanted joyfully: O supremely praised and most exalted Lord and God of the fathers, You are blessed.

Mary

You declare to me the bright good tidings that the Light the immaterial shall for great mercy unite with physical matter. And divine announcements now you cry out to me, saying, "O blessed is the fruit of your womb, O purest Maiden."

Gabriel

Virgin Maid, rejoice. Rejoice, O Mistress wholly pure. Rejoice, container of God. Rejoice, O lampstand of Light, Adam's restoration and deliverance of Eve. Holy mountain, rejoice, chamber of immortality, and resplendent holy temple.

Mary

The coming on me of the All-holy Spirit now has purified my soul; my body it sanctified. It made me a living shrine, a Tent adorned by God, the pure Mother of God, a Temple that is capable of containing the Creator.

Gabriel

As a burning torch emitting light I see you, And a chamber built by God. And as the gold-covered ark receive now, O Bride of God, the Giver of the Law, Who was thus well pleased through you to grant deliverance to corrupted human nature.

Ode viii. The Heirmos.

Gabriel

Hearken, O Damsel," let Gabriel say. "Incline your ear, O Virgin pure, and hear the counsel of the Most High, ancient and true; and make ready for your own reception of God. For through you the Uncontainable associates with mortal men. And I am therefore rejoicing and shouting: O all you works of the Lord, praise and bless the Lord."

Mary

Answered the Virgin, "Every mortal mind is overwhelmed which seeks to grasp the wondrous tidings that you now announce to me. I delight in your words, yet am also perplexed, fearing lest as Eve through trickery you send me far away from God. But even so am I already shouting: O all you works of the Lord, praise and bless the Lord."

Gabriel

Gabriel uttered responding, "Behold, the problem has been solved for you who rightly called it a thing hard to demonstrate. Persuaded, therefore, by the word of your own lips, no more doubt it as factitious, but believe it to be factual. For I myself am rejoicing and shouting: O all you works of the Lord, praise and bless the Lord."

Mary

There is for mortals a God-given law," replied the blameless one again, "that gamic union must precede a child's birth. But the pleasure of a mate I know not at all. So, how do you say that I shall bear? I fear lest now you speak with deceit. But, notwithstanding, behold I am shouting: O all you works of the Lord, praise and bless the Lord."

Gabriel

O chaste one," the Angel cried out once again, "the maxim you declare to me is the convention for childbirth of mortal men. But I announce unto you that the very God, past conception and intelligence, as He knows, shall take flesh from you. And I am therefore rejoicing and shouting: O all you works of the Lord, praise and bless the Lord."

Mary

The Virgin assented, "To me you appear to be a herald of the truth. For you came as an Angel of universal joy. Since, then, by the Spirit my soul is purified, be it unto me according to your utterance, and God dwell in me. For unto Him now with you am I shouting: O all you works of the Lord, praise and bless the Lord."

Ode ix

O Earth, announce the good tidings of great joy; You heavens, praise the glory of God.

Now let no uninitiated hand approach the living Ark of God to touch it. Rather let believers' lips sing out in exultation the Angel's salutation unceasingly to the Theotokos and cry out: "Rejoice, Maiden full of grace; the Lord is with you."

O pure Maid, you eluded nature's laws, conceiving God in ways past understanding. You evaded things proper to mothers in childbirth, even if by nature you were prone to change. Therefore you are worthily hearing: "Rejoice, Maiden full of grace; the Lord is with you."

How can you, O pure Virgin, nurse with milk? No human tongue is able to explain it. For you are displaying something alien to nature, transcending the order of lawful childbirth. Therefore you are worthily hearing: "Rejoice, Maiden full of grace; the Lord is with you."

It is mystically spoken of you in Sacred Writ, IO Mother of the Most High. For of old when Jacob saw the ladder that prefigured you, he said, "This is none other than the base of God." Therefore you are worthily hearing: "Rejoice, Maiden full of grace; the Lord is with you."

The bush and the fire revealed to hierophantic Moses a strange portent. Seeking its fulfillment in the course of time, he uttered, "I shall see it fully in a Damsel pure, to whom as Theotokos be it spoken: Rejoice, Maiden full of grace; the Lord is with you."

You are called, by Daniel, spiritual Mountain; and the Mother of God, by Isaiah. Gideon perceives you as a Fleece. And by David you are called Holy Place, and Gate by Ezekiel. Gabriel addresses you, saying: "Rejoice, Maiden full of grace; the Lord is with you."