



SALUTATIONS TO THE THEOTOKOS

March 22



Did you know the Service of the Salutations to the Theotokos is celebrated in honor of her role as intercessor?

The Service of the Salutations to the Theotokos is celebrated to give us strength and joy during this time of prayer, fasting, repentance, and spiritual transformation. The Mother of our God and Savior Jesus Christ is our mother too. And there is no better person to lead us to Christ than the one who gave us Christ — the one who birthed, nurtured, and raised Him, and who stood by Him when He was crucified. In fact, it was from the Cross that Christ said to the Apostle John (representing the Church): “Behold your mother,” (John 19:27) and to the Theotokos: “Behold your son” (John 19:26) — representing the Church, which is the Body of Christ.

The Service is celebrated in honor of the Theotokos’s role as “mediatress” — the mother who mediates on behalf of her Son to us and on our behalf to her Son. She is the greatest intercessor among the Saints in Heaven — the “great cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1) — praying to God to save those in great danger and need. We say “Rejoice!” because this is how the Archangel Gabriel greeted the Theotokos (Luke 1:28) to announce the Incarnation, which is the beginning of our salvation. This is called the “Angelic Salutation”.

This Service is celebrated during the first five Friday evenings of Great Lent. The Akathist Hymn comprises 24 stanzas and is divided into four parts. One part is sung on each of the first four Fridays, and on the fifth Friday the entire set is sung.

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