

Akathist to
Our Father among the Saints
RAPHAEL
Bishop of Brooklyn

“Good Shepherd of the Lost Sheep in America”
(November 8, 1860 - February 27, 1915)

Kontakion 1.

O holy Father, called from thy native land to the distant shores of the New World, thou didst take up thy cross and follow after Christ. Wherefore, as to one who hath crucified himself on behalf of his flock, as to our faithful guardian and protector, we fervently cry:

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in America.

Oikos 1.

Thou didst begin thy life in exile, O holy Father Raphael. Child of pious Orthodox parents, successor to the holy hieromartyr Joseph, even in thy mother's womb thou didst enjoy no repose. Thus was thy life of travel mystically foretold. Thou wast chosen to bring the light of holy Orthodoxy to the scattered flock of Christ in the New World, who together with us honor thee in these words of praise:

Rejoice, thou who like thy Master wast born in a city not thine own;
rejoice, recipient of the name of the great Archangel.

Rejoice, thou who didst say, “Man meant it to me for evil, but God for good;”

rejoice, thou who wast anointed with the blood of the martyrs.

Rejoice, thou who didst traverse the world in ministry to the faithful;

rejoice, thou who didst lead all men to the worship of the Holy Trinity.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in America.

Kontakion 2.

A fervent student, from thy youth thou didst dedicate thyself to acquiring knowledge of the truth. Excelling in thy studies, thou didst not despair when thy father in his poverty could no longer afford to send thee to school. But turning thyself to prayer and to the protection of the holy Archangel, thou didst continually cry: Alleluia.

Oikos 2.

Hearing thy prayers and ardent sighs, God raised up for thee an earthly patron who successfully interceded with the Patriarch to accept thee as a student. Wherefore, as to one who in true humility wast exalted by the hand of God, we joyfully cry:

Rejoice, thou who in thy poverty didst learn true humility;
rejoice, thou who in thy distress didst turn thyself to thy heavenly Patron.

Rejoice, thou who wast exalted to become a shepherd of Christ's rational flock;

rejoice, thou who having been exalted didst humble thyself to search for the lost sheep.

Rejoice, consoler of the afflicted;

rejoice, defender of the downtrodden.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in America.

Kontakion 3.

Continuing thine education, thy tender soul was nourished by the riches of patristic theology. Plumbing the depths of Holy Scripture, thou wast instructed by the Holy Spirit. And thou didst show thyself to be a worthy proclaimer of the Holy Gospel, teaching all to sing: Alleluia.

Oikos 3.

The words of the Apostle who was baptized in the town of thy fathers resounded in thine ears: "How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Thou couldst not forget thine own people, living in thy homeland and scattered throughout the world, but didst raise thy voice, enlightening them with the Light of Christian Truth. Taught by thy words and instructed by thine example, the faithful thankfully celebrate thy memory and sing:

Rejoice, thou who didst excel in learning and didst thereby astonish the wise of this world;

rejoice, thou who didst grieve over the ignorance of the people.

Rejoice, thou who with Orthodox doctrine didst instruct those seeking salvation;

rejoice, thou who didst not disgrace this teaching by thy manner of life.

Rejoice, thou who wast patient and gentle with the weak and suffering;

rejoice, thou who like thy Master wast firm with the obstinate.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in America.

Kontakion 4.

Not content with thy knowledge of Scripture and the holy Fathers, thou didst continue thine education in the land of Russia. Like the Apostle Andrew, traveling to the ancient city of Kiev, thou didst exclaim: Alleluia.

Oikos 4.

Receiving the grace of the priesthood, thou wast appointed the head of the Antiochian metochion in Moscow. Seeing in this the hand of God, thou didst accept this new position as an opportunity to do good to others. Never thinking of thyself but always of thy people, thou didst bring many from Syria to Russia to be instructed in theology. Wherefore, the faithful rejoiced and justly honoring thy labors, magnified thee thus:

Rejoice, thou who didst renounce all care for thyself;
rejoice, thou who didst concern thyself only with the cares of others.
Rejoice, for freely thou didst receive and freely thou didst give;
rejoice, thou who didst beget many children for the Church of Christ.
Rejoice, protection of the poor;
rejoice, ardent haven for widows and orphans in their affliction.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in America.

Kontakion 5.

Hearing of thy labors and love for thy people, the children of Antioch in America petitioned thee to come to the New World to pastor them in their place of immigration. Thou didst receive their words as a divine invitation, knowing them to be scattered, deprived of spiritual consolation. Journeying therefore from the East to the West, thou didst pour thyself into the life-sustaining prayers of the Church, and through them, didst find the guidance and inspiration to gather the lost sheep to which thou wast being sent, ever chanting; Alleluia.

Oikos 5.

Upon thine arrival, thou didst devote thyself to the ministry thou hadst been given, establishing a holy place in which to offer prayers on behalf of the people. Thou didst furnish the entire chapel of thine own substance, offering it without cost to the faithful. Together with them, remembering thy holy example, we glorify God for bringing thee to this land and honor thee with these words:

Rejoice, for thy dedication equaled that of the Apostles;
rejoice, for thy perserverance was a gift of the Holy Spirit.
Rejoice, thou who hast won the heights through humility;
rejoice, thou who hast acquired riches through poverty.
Rejoice, thou who didst care for the helpless;
rejoice, thou who didst distribute thine own funds to the poor.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in
America.

Kontakion 6.

Living among the people, they became witnesses of how devoutly and justly and blamelessly thou didst act among them, exhorting, comforting and charging everyone as a father does his own children. Truly, through thee the word of the Gospel came in power and in the Holy Spirit with much assurance, so that the faithful became followers of thee and of the Lord, chanting joyfully: Alleluia.

Oikos 6.

News of small communities of Orthodox Christians began to reach thee. Hearing their call, "Come and help us," thou didst decide to make the first of many missionary journeys. Traveling from the East Coast to the West, thou didst stay in no place for more than four days. Finding Orthodox Christians, thou didst administer the holy Mysteries and preach the Word of God to the spiritually hungry. Receiving thee as if thou wert Christ Himself, the faithful welcomed thee with words such as these:

Rejoice, Bringer of new Life to many children through holy baptism;
rejoice, Giver of the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit through
anointing with Chrism.
Rejoice, Restorer of penitents to the holy Church through the
mystery of Confession;
rejoice, Uniter of spouses together in the Lord.
Rejoice, worthy Celebrant of the divine Liturgy;
rejoice, fiery Proclaimer of pastoral theology.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in
America.

Kontakion 7.

Having been spiritually formed by the Church's cycle of prayers, thou didst prepare liturgical texts for use by thy people. Bringing them true consolation in the divine prayers, thou didst teach them to sing: Alleluia.

Oikos 7.

Seeing the need of the scattered Orthodox people for true pastoral ministry, thou didst devote thyself to finding priests to care for their souls. Bringing priests from the Old World to America and recommending faithful men for ordination, thou didst accept the spiritual welfare of thy people as thine only concern. Accept therefore from us such praises as these:

Rejoice, beacon of Orthodoxy;
rejoice, golden trumpet of the Holy Spirit.
Rejoice, new Paul, who didst take upon thyself the burden of care
for the churches;
rejoice, new John, who didst command all men to love one
another.
Rejoice, new Juvenal, who didst desire everywhere to preach the
holy Gospel;
rejoice, new Herman, who didst always care for the least of the
brethren.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in
America.

Kontakion 8.

When the holy hierarch and confessor Tikhon was sent to America, thou didst receive him as the true shepherd of the flock of Orthodox Christians. Knowing that in Christ all are one, whether Arab, Greek or Russian, thou didst rejoice in God, chanting: Alleluia.

Oikos 8.

As a healer of souls and a peacemaker, whether in an established Temple, a storefront or a family's living room, thou didst gather the people for prayer. Carrying on the apostolic ministry of reconciliation, uniting brother to brother, healing wounds, thou didst establish over them the banner of love. Wherefore, as to one who hast shown himself to be a son of God, we joyfully chant to thee these praises:

Rejoice, thou who didst exhort the people of God not to receive His
grace in vain;
rejoice, thou who didst in all things approve thyself as a minister of
God.
Rejoice, thou who didst live as unknown and yet well known;
rejoice, thou who, though dying, didst live.
Rejoice, as sorrowful, always rejoicing;
rejoice, as poor, thou didst make many rich.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in

America.

Kontakion 9.

Loving God above all, and being sent to serve Him among the least brethren, like an apostle thou didst offer prayers day and night for their salvation. Thou didst raise up a holy Temple for the Orthodox Arabs, dedicating it to Holy Nicholas, Wonder-worker of Myra in Lycia. Now together with him in heaven thou dost exclaim: Alleluia.

Oikos 9.

It is impossible for the worldly-minded to comprehend thy humility. For when thou wast presented with a pectoral cross in appreciation for thy manifold labors, thou didst object, saying: "I am an unprofitable servant, having only done what was my duty. Can we servants of God and spiritual pastors expect anything in life except labor and grief?" In amazement at thy self-abasement, with joy and wonder we cry to thee thus:

Rejoice, thou who wast filled only with love for God and all men;
rejoice, thou whose eye was single.
Rejoice, thou who camest not to be served but to serve;
rejoice, thou who didst give thy life as a ransom for many.
Rejoice, Angel of spiritual comfort for those in tribulation;
rejoice, Model of spiritual meekness.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in
America.

Kontakion 10.

Desiring to save a multitude of people through thy care, the All-merciful Lord chose thee and appointed thee to bear much fruit. Laboring abundantly, thou didst travel from city to city, from village to village, defending the Orthodox from the assaults of the enemy, teaching them to chant in Orthodox fashion: Alleluia.

Oikos 10.

The love of thy people for thee and thy love for them greatly impressed the holy hierarch Tikhon. He saw in thee the image of a true shepherd—one who served not by compulsion, but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; one who was not a lord but a humble servant. Traveling to Russia, he forcefully entreated the Holy Synod to allow him to consecrate thee as his Vicar Bishop. Bearing within thee the abundant grace of the Holy Spirit, thou wast the first to be consecrated to the sacred episcopacy in the New World. Wherefore, grateful to God, we the faithful chant with joy to thee:

Rejoice, O high priest of God Most High, who received divine
grace in abundance at thy consecration;

rejoice, most luminous lamp, burning and shedding light.
Rejoice, thou who hast illumined the whole world with the rays of
thy virtues;
rejoice, thou who offered the divine Sacrifice at the throne of
Christ.
Rejoice, hierarch adorned with the understanding of Orthodoxy;
rejoice, thou who gavest drink to the faithful with the streams of the
doctrine of salvation.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in
America.

Kontakion 11.

Consecrated as a hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, with the blessing of the Patriarch and Holy Synod of Antioch, thy ministry extended to all Orthodox Christians. As a self-proclaimed Syro-Arab by birth, Greek by education, American by residence, Russian at heart and Slav in soul, thou didst minister to all, teaching the Orthodox in the New World to proclaim with one voice: Alleluia.

Oikos 11.

Thine archpastoral burden weighed upon thee; thine omophorion was very heavy. Thy flock was confused, surrounded by many false teachings. Possessing the spirit of understanding and of wisdom, thou didst enlighten the minds of the deceived, proclaiming the Word, preaching in season and out of season, by exhortation and letter. We who are the recipients of thy counsel and the beneficiaries of thy wisdom cry out to thee thus:

Rejoice, thou who didst share the ministry of the Apostles;
rejoice, thou who didst tend the flock according to the words of the
Apostle Peter.
Rejoice, steadfast uprooter of heresy;
rejoice, impartial observer of the canons of the Church.
Rejoice, destroyer of impious doctrines;
rejoice, skillful helmsman of the Church.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in
America.

Kontakion 12.

Knowing the grace of God which hath been given unto thee, O most glorious hierarch Raphael, we who are weak and heavy-laden with the burden of our sins flee to thee as our refuge and mighty defender. Pray fervently unto the Lord that He will preserve His Holy Church from unbelief and schism, from danger and temptation, that we may chant

to God who through thee doeth good things for us: Alleluia.

Oikos 12.

As a faithful servant of thy Master, it was given to thee to suffer at the end of thine earthly life. Wherefore, as to a faithful servant who didst glorify Christ both in thy life and in thy death, to thee who hast received a glorious crown in heaven, we gather to offer these unworthy words of praise:

Rejoice, thou who wast overshadowed with divine power;
rejoice, thou who didst faultlessly preserve the True Faith.
Rejoice, thou who didst reveal thy righteousness in thy Repose;
rejoice, thou who hast received eternal rest in heaven with the
saints.
Rejoice, great warrior of Orthodoxy;
rejoice, invincible defender of piety.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, good shepherd of the lost sheep in
America.

Kontakion 13.

O most holy and most wonderful Father Raphael, look down from the heights of heaven upon thy flock and accept this our present offering. Entreat the Lord God that He will pour out upon us His divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, that we, being delivered from all enemies visible and invisible, may forever chant to Him with thee and all the saints: Alleluia.

Kontakion 13 is chanted thrice;
whereupon Oikos 1 and Kontakion 1 are repeated;
then follows the Prayer to St. Raphael.

Prayer to St. Raphael.

**Let us pray to our holy Father Raphael.
O holy hierarch Father Raphael, pray unto God for us.**

O wise and loving hierarch of the Church of Christ God, good shepherd of the lost sheep in America, sustenance for our souls, admonition for the lost, defense against foes, uniter of the Orthodox world, proclaimer of the truth, uplifter of the oppressed, guardian of the faith, father to orphans, protector of widows, friend of the poor, reconciler of foes, great light from Antioch, new Moses who didst lead thy people out of the wilderness into the Promised Land, new Elias who hast placed within the holy Church a double portion of thy spirit, new Ezra who didst build up the Temple of God, new Apostle of Christ our God, lover of the holy prayers and divine services, adornment of the holy

Church, seeker of the lost, joy of all the Orthodox, son of Antioch, boast of America, O holy Father Raphael: Mercifully hearken unto these supplications which are offered unto thee by thy grateful children. O high priest of the Most High God, lift up thy hands and bless us, O thou who art thrice-blessed of the All-holy Trinity. O comforter of the oppressed who art a bearer of the heavenly King, the Comforter and Spirit of Truth, take us to thy bosom and shelter us from all harm. O shepherd who art a servant of the Lamb and a sheep of His flock, take up thy staff and guide us to secure and verdant pastures. O father who art a son and heir of the Unoriginate Father, lift up thine arms and intercede with him that the Church may be preserved in tranquility; that her God-appointed hierarchs may be granted peace, safety, honor, health and length of days, rightly dividing the word of truth; that her priests may be clothed with righteousness; that her God-fearing monastics may shine forth as paradisaical lights upon the world; and that her Christ-loving people may be granted mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation, pardon and forgiveness of sins. Beseech thou him that we may be granted to live a peaceful life in this age, and to see the good things in the age which is to come, always glorifying the unoriginate Father, the only-begotten Son and the all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, the consubstantial Trinity, unto ages of ages. Amen.