Akathist to Saint Ephrem the Syrian

Kontakion 1
O good and faithful deacon of God, we your spiritual children, delivered from evil through your writings, holy example, and intercessions, sing our grateful thanks to you, Saint Ephrem. As you possess great boldness before the Lord and Master of our lives, protect us from every temptation, so that we may sing:

Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

Ikos 1
Devoutly living the angelic life of consecrated celibacy, Ephrem taught us to honor the Ever-virgin Mary as the New Eve, in whom the Word of God took on our nature at the word of the angel. Seeing the Planter of the Universe Himself becoming the Seed sown in the womb of the Virgin, we stand in awe and cry to the Creator’s favored hymnographer:

Rejoice, North Star of Great Lent!
Rejoice, for the noonday demon of despair has no hold on you!
Rejoice, theologian and wise teacher!
Rejoice, warrior against false doctrine!
Rejoice, friend of Him Who made Adam’s soul a holy censer!
Rejoice, new Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures!
Rejoice, for you carried the Word of God in your heart!
Rejoice, good steward of the King of Glory!
Rejoice, servant of the small of this world!
Rejoice, righteous writer!
Rejoice, captain of the children of the New Israel!
Rejoice, guardian of the sorrowing!
Rejoice, Holy Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

Kontakion 2
Beholding himself in the midst of the storm of temptations as a young man, Ephrem cried out to his Lord, “O You who came to rescue fallen Adam from Sheol, rescue me as well, as I cry: Alleluia!”

Ikos 2
Bishop Jacob of Nisibis, returning from the Council of Nicaea, desired to ordain Ephrem to the holy diaconate. Yet he, in all fear and modesty, cried out in response,
“How can I, who am but dust and ashes, serve the Living God in His glorious Church?” And the saintly bishop joyfully answered:

Rejoice, for God has protected you from soul-corrupting sloth,
Rejoice, for the noonday demon of despair has no hold on you!
Rejoice, for you have not fallen prey to lust of power!
Rejoice, for in your mouth there is no idle talk!
Rejoice, chaste soul that seeks the Lord with singleness of mind!
Rejoice, humble servant of the Humble King!
Rejoice, patient minister of your brothers and sisters!
Rejoice, lover of God and neighbor!
Rejoice, for the Lord has granted you to see your own transgressions!
Rejoice, for you do not judge your brother for whom Christ died!
Rejoice, you who are mindful of your poverty before the Giver of Life!
Rejoice, you who are hopeful of God’s great mercy!
Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

KONTAKION 3
Yearning to fill what was lacking in His creature, the power of the Most High then overshadowed the trembling Ephrem at his ordination to the ranks of the holy diaconate. God made his tongue the pen of a ready scribe which teaches all who long to reap the harvest of salvation to sing: Alleluia!

IKOS 3
Truly bearing God within the temple of his heart, Deacon Ephrem hastened to preach the Gospel of Christ to those who sat in the shadow of darkness and unbelief. Their thirsty souls rejoiced, knowing at once the life-giving truth of his words, and with one voice they sang to him:

Rejoice, for your heart overflowed with a good theme!
Rejoice, composer of spiritual songs!
Rejoice, theologian and wise teacher!
Rejoice, champion of right doctrine!
Rejoice, poet of highest renown!
Rejoice, man after God’s own heart!
Rejoice, instructor of catechumens!
Rejoice, helper on the path of salvation!
Rejoice, revealer of the errors of heresies!
Rejoice, lover of the Scriptures!
Rejoice, guide of blind souls to Christ’s brightness!
Rejoice, proclaimer of what you have seen and heard!
Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

Kontakion 4
Harassed within by a storm of errors, the Church of Nisibis was greatly troubled. Knowing You, O Christ, as a Man with Adam’s nature, many of the people considered You a mere creature. But when they learned from Ephrem that You are co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, they cried: Alleluia!

Ikos 4
Every shepherd of the Flock of Nisibis heard Deacon Ephrem glorify Christ’s coming in the flesh. They left behind their pitchers filled with Arian filth, ran with haste to the Chief Shepherd, and beheld Him as the pre- eternal Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. With thankfulness, they sang praises to Holy Ephrem, saying:

Rejoice, for you rebuked the investigators of God’s mysteries!
Rejoice, protection against all-corrupting Error!
Rejoice, champion of the Trinity!
Rejoice, warrior against false doctrine!
Rejoice, adopted son of the Father!
Rejoice, faithful servant of the Son!
Rejoice, vessel of the Holy Spirit!
Rejoice, for you multiplied the talent given to you!
Rejoice, for you spoke the Truth in love!
Rejoice, for you saved those beaten by robbers!
Rejoice, for you did not judge them in their error!
Rejoice, for you show us how to truly love our neighbor!
Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

Kontakion 5
Persuaded by Deacon Ephrem’s hymns and homilies, the people of Nisibis followed true doctrine, keeping his words before them as a beacon. Through his teachings they have become partakers of the divine nature and reached the unattainable. Therefore, they rejoiced and cried out to God: Alleluia!

Ikos 5
Rapt in wonder, the child of the Syrians saw a vision of the mountain of Paradise between heaven and earth. Though he was a mortal man, yet like Saint Paul he was
granted to perceive with the eye of his heart the beauty of our ancient homeland. And we, his spiritual children, also seeking to return to Paradise, cry out to the Syrian Seer:

Rejoice, poet of the Creator of the universe!
Rejoice, servant of Him Who breathed life into Adam!
Rejoice, vessel of Him Who formed Eve from Adam’s rib!
Rejoice, deacon of Him Who invested Adam with the priesthood of Paradise!
Rejoice, worshipper of Him Who made Adam’s soul a holy censer!
Rejoice, lover of Him Who sought Adam when he disobeyed Him!
Rejoice, supplicant of Him Who gave Adam an opportunity to repent!
Rejoice, confessor of Him Who took on Adam’s nature to free him from Sheol!
Rejoice, preacher of Him Who annihilated the power of Death!
Rejoice, laborer for Him Who clothed the New Eve in obedience!
Rejoice, zealot of Him Who restored to us the garment of light!
Rejoice, child of Him Who brings us back to Paradise!
Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

Kontakion 6
Ephrem the chaste deacon trained choirs of women to sing and make melody in their hearts, that they might become God’s messengers. They fulfilled the prophecy that the wilderness would flower again like Eden, and the desert places like the Garden of the Lord. Preaching You to all as Lord and Christ, they left the apostate emperor Julian to his raving, not knowing how to sing: Alleluia!

IKOS 6
Shining upon Nisibis with the light of truth through Deacon Ephrem’s preaching, the Lord manifested His might and holiness among those who had been taken captive by false teaching. Having abandoned the broken cisterns of heresies, which is rebellion and pride, all who were delivered from them sang to Holy Ephrem:

Rejoice, unswerving soldier of the Lord’s army!
Rejoice, defender of God’s hiddenness!
Rejoice, exegete of His symbols in Scripture and nature!
Rejoice, new Phineas, preacher of purity!
Rejoice, new Elijah, adversary of the enemies of God!
Rejoice, new Apollos, mighty in the Scriptures!
Rejoice, tireless worker in the Lord’s vineyard!
Rejoice, wise gardener in the garden of the Church!
Rejoice, co-worker among the Apostles in the spiritual harvest!
Rejoice, inspiration of poets and writers!
Rejoice, model of purity and humility!
Rejoice, beloved brother in the Lord!
Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

KONTAKION 7
Babylon of old fell to Persian might, and when Nisibis drew near to the time of its conquest by the Persian Empire, Deacon Ephrem received Your consolation in his heart, O God, knowing You to be the Victor over Death and Sheol. Struck with wonder at Your inscrutable Providence, he cried out: Alleluia!

IKOS 7
Your Creator preserved you from war, Holy Ephrem, having safely moved you and your Christian brothers and sisters to the safety of Edessa. You took up residence in this blessed city, preaching Orthodox doctrine as you did before, so that beholding your courage, we might sing your praises with these words:

Rejoice, for you long only for the New Jerusalem!
Rejoice, for you teach us that we have no continuing city!
Rejoice, for you show us the way to the Kingdom of Heaven!
Rejoice, for you were reviled and persecuted for the Lord’s sake!
Rejoice, co-sufferer with the holy Prophets!
Rejoice, for you carried neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals!
Rejoice, for you carried the Word of God in your heart!
Rejoice, for you lacked no good thing!
Rejoice, for you model patient endurance in sufferings!
Rejoice, for you continued to sing the praises of the Lord in a strange land!
Rejoice, for like Abraham, you left the land of your fathers in hope!
Rejoice, for like Jeremiah, for you mourned not for places, but for the peoples’ sin!
Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

KONTAKION 8
Transfixed by the strange sight of the Word of God hanging on the Tree of Life, let us become strangers to the world and fix our minds in heaven, since it was for our sake that the Most High God appeared on earth in the form of man. It is His desire to grant immortality and return to Paradise to those who cry to Him: Alleluia!
IKOS 8
Heaven and earth are amazed that the Great One made Himself small that He might make us small ones great. God descended to Sheol and has risen from the dead as Conqueror. He was born from the womb of Sheol, blasting apart its unbreakable doors by His divine power, and it is to His honored Poet of the Resurrection, Holy Ephrem, that we sing:

Rejoice, for you await resurrection with Adam!
Rejoice, for you have shared the tears of Eve!
Rejoice, for you worship Him Whose hands were pierced for the plucked fruit!
Rejoice, for you honor Him Whose mouth was struck for the mouth that ate the fruit!
Rejoice, for you glorify Him Whose feet were pierced for Adam’s hiding!
Rejoice, for you praise Him Who was stripped that we might become modest!
Rejoice, for you magnify Him Who transformed the gall of the serpent into sweetness!
Rejoice, chronicler of the victory of the New Adam!
Rejoice, revealer of types and symbols!
Rejoice, for you have made the ascent to Paradise in your heart!
Rejoice, for you worship at the heavenly throne!
Rejoice, for the birds of Paradise sang through your voice!
Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

KONTAKION 9
Ranks and choirs of angels wondered at this angelic deacon, for they beheld Ephrem as a New Stephen, a preacher of the Resurrection of Christ and a friend of the poor. Dwelling in our midst as a divinely wise sage, he was also a servant of the destitute and diseased, teaching them all to sing: Alleluia!

IKOS 9
Justly silenced because of their impudence, we see the wise of the world as dumb as fish in your presence, Holy Ephrem, for they are at a loss to explain how you were both learned in worldly wisdom and yet provided for the material needs of the less-fortunate. But we, marveling at your holy example, cry aloud with faith:

Rejoice, for you are blessed of the Father!
Rejoice, for you stand at Christ’s right hand!
Rejoice, for you have inherited the kingdom prepared for you!
Rejoice, for you gave food to the hungry!
Rejoice, for you gave drink to the thirsty!
Rejoice, for you gave shelter to the homeless!
Rejoice, for you visited the sick!
Rejoice, for you brought hope to those in prison!
Rejoice, servant of the small of this world!
Rejoice, lover of the Lord in your neighbor!
Rejoice, for you give knowledge to the uninstructed!
Rejoice, comfort to your brothers and sisters!
Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

Kontakion 10
Our God has sent us His servant Ephrem in His desire to provide us with an example of action and contemplation. As God, He only is our Teacher, yet for our salvation He has given the spiritual gift of teaching to Deacon Ephrem; and as we are inflamed with love for God through his writings, He hears our cry to Him: Alleluia!

IKOS 10
No tongue can rightly speak of your protection for all who cherish your poems, hymns, commentaries, and homilies, pious deacon of the Lord; for the New Adam restored you to the first image, clothed you in uncreated light and glory, and teaches all to sing to you:

Rejoice, protection of all Christians!
Rejoice, pillar of virgins!
Rejoice, friend of monks!
Rejoice, concelebrant with deacons!
Rejoice, support of priests!
Rejoice, staff of bishops!
Rejoice, exemplary exegete!
Rejoice, holy hymnographer!
Rejoice, poet unparalleled!
Rejoice, righteous writer!
Rejoice, servant of the sick!
Rejoice, provider for the poor!
Rejoice, Saint Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

Kontakion 11
Adam and Eve shout for joy, for You descended into Sheol, O King of Glory, that You might grant their desire for immortality; and we, their children, cry out from the belly of Sheol for deliverance, never ceasing to chant: Alleluia!
IKOS 11
The holy deacon Ephrem shines as a warrior arrayed in the whole armor of God, standing firm in the day of battle against temptations. As he trains us to do battle with the spiritual hosts of wickedness, we sing these praises in his honor:

Rejoice, strong warrior of the Church!
Rejoice, for the Lord Himself trained your hands for battle!
Rejoice, slayer of the Goliath of Error!
Rejoice, preacher of the Gospel of peace!
Rejoice, bearer of the shield of faith!
Rejoice, brandisher of the sword of the Spirit!
Rejoice, one mighty in the Word of God!
Rejoice, for you have made the Most High your refuge!
Rejoice, for your doctrine is sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies!
Rejoice, commander of the assembly of ascetics!
Rejoice, captain of the children of the New Israel!
Rejoice, general of the generation of the upright!
Rejoice, Holy Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

KONTAKION 12
How can we adequately praise You, O Lord, the Physician of our souls and bodies? For in Your love for mankind, You offer us starving sinners Your own Body and Blood, the Medicine of Life, as the means of our re-entry to Paradise. We behold You all at once as the True Altar, Priest, Bread, and the Cup of Salvation. And so, falling down in worship, we cry out with love: Alleluia!

IKOS 12
As you approached the time of your entry to eternal life, Righteous Ephrem, you did not cease to care for the suffering people of Edessa, starving from famine; for the Lord who holds all things in His hand made you a chosen instrument of His love. Like the Apostle Paul, you considered it pure joy to spend and be spent for the sake of the poor; and we, who are fed even in these latter days with your sacred words, sing to you in love:

Rejoice, comforter of God’s people!
Rejoice, good and faithful servant!
Rejoice, joyful giver of alms!
Rejoice, laborer in the Lord’s field!
Rejoice, servant of the afflicted!
Rejoice, slave of Christ!
Rejoice, protector of the poor!
Rejoice, well-being of widows!
Rejoice, support of orphans!
Rejoice, fortress of sojourners!
Rejoice, haven of the helpless!
Rejoice, guardian of the sorrowing!
Rejoice, Holy Ephrem, melodious Harp of the Holy Spirit!

Kontakion 13
We implore you, Holy Ephrem, to intercede on our behalf before the Throne of Almighty God that the fire of mercy may come down upon us, consume our sins, and purify our souls and bodies. Accept the entreaties of your spiritual children whom you have taught to chant to the New Adam: Alleluia! (Thrice)

Repeat Ikos 1 and Kontakion 1