

Canon to the Most Holy Mother of God, The Seeker of the Lost

Seeker of the Lost Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos Celebrated February 5/18

Printed with the blessing of His Grace
✠ LONGIN
Serbian Orthodox Bishop of the Diocese
of New Gracanica and Midwestern America

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For additional copies, please contact:
St. Xenia Monastic Community
1901 N. Pennsylvania St.
Indianapolis, IN 46202-1417

mk@westoncounseling.org

Cover icon: From the chapel of the St. Xenia Monastic Community.

Opposite: Miraculous icon painted at the instruction of St. Matrona the Blind of Moscow. Housed near the saint's relics in the Monastery of the Protection of the Mother of God, in the Taganka District of Moscow.



Canon to the Most Holy Mother of God, The Seeker of the Lost

TROPARION

Tone 3

Sweet door of repentance to those in prison, * and those ensnared by demonic delusion and despair, * sure anchor of hope and harbor for the storm-tossed, * searcher out of those who do not know enough to seek, * Most Holy Mother of God, * succor all who cry to thee, * and those for whom they intercede, * O Seeker of the lost!



Canon to the Most Holy Mother of God, Seeker of the Lost

Tone 4

Ode One

Irmos: I shall open my mouth, and the Spirit will inspire it, and I shall utter the words of my song to the Queen and Mother, I shall be radiantly keeping feast, and joyfully praising her wonders.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Thou of whom Isaiah prophesied, as the living Coal which purged his lips, purify also the faculties of my soul, and thou who dost raise up the fallen, raise me up to celebrate thy feast with hymns of thanksgiving.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Thou who dost rescue those perishing on the sea of life, thou life-boat of the drowning and quickening breath of the drowned, thou gateway of rebirth for those long dead in sin, we praise thy holy icon through which thou bestowest grace on mankind.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

O Thou who didst intercede for the repentant Theophilus, after he denied both thee and thy Son, and signed a contract with the devil, thou whose great mercy gives boldness to every sinner who calls on thee for help, we praise thee and thy great boldness before thy Son.

Both now, and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

The marvel of thy great mercy, O Mother of God, is beyond our comprehension. We seize upon it with great hope, falling down before thee and crying out, O Seeker of the lost, refuge of sinners, save us!

Ode Three

Irmos: O Mother of God, thou living and plentiful fount, give strength to those united in spiritual fellowship, who sing hymns of praise to thee: and in thy divine glory, vouchsafe unto them crowns of glory.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Thou who didst break the chains of him who willingly sold himself to the evil one, and return the contract of him who sold himself, thou who didst hear his prayer and restore him to blessedness; we acclaim thee as the return of the prodigal!

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Where there is no grace, how can there be repentance? Wherefore we understand that all who return to Christ receive the heavenly sorrow of repentance as a divine gift while still in their sins. Quicken this gift in us also, O Lady, lest we be revealed as charred logs.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

The whole world is now darkened by apostasy and sin, and all men creep upon the earth like the murderer Cain, but thou, O Lady, hast such great boldness! Open the doors to repentance and salvation to those who are perishing!

Both now, and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

God does not desire the death of a sinner, but that he repent and live. Thus when He paid the world's debt by His death on the Cross, Love incarnate gave thee to the apostle of love, as his Mother and the Mother of all who will return to thy Son.

Sedalion:
Tone 3

O Thou who art the hope of the desperate, and the correction of the erring, seek out all those whom thy Son's Blood has redeemed, hide us from that roaring lion who seeks to devour the souls of men.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

In thee, O Mother of God, we place all our hope, for none do we have after God but thee.

Ode Four

Irmos: He Who sitteth in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, Jesus the true God, is come in a light cloud, and with His pure hand He hath saved those who cry: Glory to Thy power O Christ!

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Through repentance the Ninevites found great mercy; through repentance the harlot Rahab became a foremother of God; through repentance, the Prophet David was restored to the grace he lost through adultery and murder. Wherefore, O Mother, teach us to repent!

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Through repentance, Peter who denied thy Son, became the chief apostle, and Saul the persecutor became Paul the chosen vessel. Through repentance Zacchaeus the publican attained the kingdom of God. We pray thee, O Mother, grant us such sweet repentance.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

Through repentance, Cyprian the sorcerer, became an arch-shepherd and worthy of a martyr's crown. Through repentance the thief, Moses, stole paradise, and became a wonder-working elder.

Through repentance, thy holy ones, Mary of Egypt, Thaisia, and Pelagia, left harlotry and entered the heavenly bridal chamber. Wherefore, O Mother, grant us such holy repentance.

Both now, and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

O thou spotless among women, who wast worthy to receive Christ, thou who art above angels and men, help us thy children who constantly stumble and wander in distraction.

Ode Five

Irmos: The whole world was amazed at thy divine glory, for thou O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, hast held in thy womb the God of all, and hast given birth to an eternal Son, Who granteth peace to all who sing thy praises.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

On this bright feast of thine icon, O Mother, we bring thee petitions for all those who are lost, that thou wouldst seek them out and bring them home, for we know, O Lady, that each lamb returned to the Shepherd brings thee great joy!

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Have compassion on the youth, on all those brought up in impurity, on all who are defiled or who defile themselves, and all those who are taught that they are beasts. Stay the hand of the suicide; bring hope to the desperate, healing and soberness to the alcoholic and the addict.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

Heal the wounds of the abused and of the abuser, bring solace to those who are in prisons, and new life to those who wait on death's row. Seek out those who are raised in crime, dispel the resentment and bitterness of those destitute and wounded by men or demons.

Both now, and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

O thou who art the new Eve, who hast crushed the head of the serpent, thou who art a wound to demons, deliver from demonic darkness, those who are deluded and all who have been exposed to occult arts.

Ode Six

Irmos: As we celebrate this sacred and solemn feast of the Mother of God, let us come, clapping our hands, O people of the Lord, and give glory to God who was born of her.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

O Lady, intercede for those wounded through abortion, through drug abuse during pregnancy, and for all who have abused or murdered their own children. Remember each young woman who is pressed to do wrong by those who should love and protect her.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

O Mother of God, we approach thee with boldness as Theophilus did: Regard not our prayer as sin. For just as we seek thine aid for ourselves, we beg for all who have fallen, knowing that we are no better than they. Look with compassion on all who do not know or have forgotten how to say, "Lord have mercy!"

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

Intercede, O Lady, for those who chase pleasure to escape the emptiness in their hearts. Dispel the confusion of all our young: bring them from false knowledge to the fullness of the truth. Change the hearts of their teachers, parents, and guides that they may also find life.

Both now, and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Have compassion, thou harbor of the storm-tossed, on all students: Deliver them from confusion and lead them to the truth. Calm the disturbed and the agitated; look upon the troubled, the confused and the depressed. Strengthen those persecuted for truth and

those who hunger for justice and all in whom the divine image is buried and obscured.

Kontakion:
Tone 4

Thou art a sure compass to those wandering the trackless wastes of this world, * the Mother of all those abandoned and left to perish, * sweet intercessor for the wronged and embittered heart, * healing balm to those exhausted by sorrows. * Cease not, we beg thee to implore thy Son, our merciful God * to have compassion on every lost and suffering soul * O Seeker of the lost.

Ikos: As the paralytic who was borne of four we come to thee, our hope, borne by the grace of the Church to seek thine aid, and not only that, O beloved Mother of God, we bear with us those whom we know and those whom we do not know. We implore thine aid upon a world in which many are perishing and lost for want of thy help. We praise and glorify thy compassion and the wonder-working grace of thy holy icon and we pray: Thou who dost help us through thy continual intercession and shelter us, who are worthless, have compassion also on every lost and suffering soul, O Seeker of the lost.

Ode Seven

Irmos: The Holy Youths bravely trampled upon the threatening fire, preferring not to worship created things rather than the Creator, and they sang in joy: Blessed art Thou and praised above all, O Lord God of our Fathers.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

O thou who art a Mother to orphans, look now upon all the fatherless children in our inner cities, and all of the children of the poor! Bring them help, O bring them guides and teachers, who will bring them to thy Son. Let thy grace and intercession be known in

their lives, because only the grace of God can lift them out of the abyss of misery.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Have compassion, beloved Mother, on all those children who grow up in group homes and foster care, on all who are prevented from knowing the truth. Have mercy on all who are exposed to corruption and darkness from their infancy. Mother them, O Lady, and bring thy children home.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Intercede, O Lady, and be a special help and solace to those abused or mistreated for their ethnic heritage, for all native peoples, those taken into slavery or tortured, persecuted or denied what is necessary for life. Bring peace and an end of strife to those ravaged by war, and those who suffer from the scar of abuse or neglect, whether to themselves or to their kind, and bring thy children home to Him in Whom there is no east or west.

Both now, and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Thou who dost bring light to the blind and healing to the sick and the infirm, peace, sanity and wholeness to the insane, life to the dead, O Mother of God, bring thy light and thy grace to those who suffer from disorders in the senses, communication, memory or understanding. Protect the simple, the feeble and the innocent. Help the handicapped and all who by the wisdom of God have impairments that cut them off from the world.

Ode Eight

Irmos: The Offspring of the Theotokos saved the Holy Youths in the furnace. He Who was then prefigured, hath since been born on earth, and He gathereth together all the creation to sing: O all ye works of the Lord, praise ye the Lord and exalt Him unto the ages.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Thy Son sent His servants into the highways and the byways of this world, to find the poor, the lost, the destitute, and bring them to His wedding feast so that they might all supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

The Good Shepherd left the ninety and nine to seek the one that was lost, that is the race of man that had fallen from its heavenly home, and through thy prayers, O Mother of God, may each lost sheep be found and praise and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

When thy Son was hanging on the Cross, thou wast witness to the great promise He made to the repenting thief, who willingly acknowledged his own sins, and the divinity of thy Son, and now he, and many other repentant sinners, praise the Lord and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

Both now, and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

We, who are unworthy and wretched, turn also to thy mighty help and intercession, that we may be set aright. We now, at thy holy feast, join in choir with all those who praise the Lord and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

Ode Nine

Irmos: Let every mortal born on earth carrying his torch in spirit leap for joy; and let the order of angelic powers celebrate and honor the holy feast of the Mother of God, and let them cry: Rejoice! O all-blessed Theotokos, pure and Ever-virgin.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

O most pure one, regard not our boldness or our supplication as sin. The darkness of the world increases, and we and those we pray for have such great need of thy help. We beg thee, look upon the desperate and bring enlightenment to those confused and darkened by the mind

of this world. Stop those who seek to make it easier to kill oneself or another for the sake of convenience and mercy misunderstood.

Most holy Theotokos, Seeker of the lost, save us!

Awaken the light of conscience in us, O Lady, and in all those who lead and guide and teach, those who make laws or sit in judgment in courts. Help them to dare to turn from the unrighteousness of this world for the sake of thy Son.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

O Birth-giving Virgin, receive our prayers as thy Son hast received the widow's mite. Bring us, through thy prayers, to the heavenly realms, that we may praise thee and thy Son forever, together with many others who through thine intercession, are delivered from great harm.

Both now, and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Thy holy icon, O Lady, is a source of grace and healing for souls, and gives great boldness to the desperate. Help us, O Lady, who are perishing. Give us strength to endure to the end for the sake of thy Son, that we may magnify thee now and unto all ages.

