

AKATHIST TO THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS
HONORED IN HER ICON OF “THE UNBURNT BUSH”

The following translation is from the Slavonic and blessed by His Grace, the Rt. Rev. BENJAMIN, Bishop of San Francisco and the West of the Orthodox Church in America. It is being provided to the faithful that with it they may offer up prayers for those who have been displaced by the fires of southern California and for those still threatened by them..

Kontakion No. 1

To the chosen leader in battle, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, who hath gladdened God, and also hath gladdened the Church of Christ through the revelation of her Icon radiant with fire, let us address a hymn of praise: O Mother of God, whom we have named “The Unburnt Bush;” as thou dost possess unconquerable dominion and much kind-heartedness, hasten to the aid of us that are in need of thine intercession; and, from all misfortunes deliver those who call to thee: “Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from burning by fire!”

Oikos No. 1

O Queen of the Angels and Mistress of all creation, Lady Theotokos, even as thou receivest hymns of praise from the choirs of Angels on High, vouchsafe us, who are but dust on the earth, to offer up to thee voices of praise and thanksgiving for the sake of thy very great mercy toward the race of mankind. And, if we be unfit to hymn thee worthily; even then, O Gracious One, may thou not shun our inadequate lauds; but, be again like thy Son Who mercifully accepted the two small coins of the Widow, likewise be compassionately loving in hearing us who cry out to thee with compunction:

Rejoice, O thou who hast carried in thy womb the fire of the Divinity without
being consumed!
Rejoice, O thou who hast given birth to the Savior of fallen mankind!
Rejoice, O thou who through thy most pure birthgiving hast shamed the might of
hell!
Rejoice, O thou who hast freed Adam and Eve from the ancient curse!
Rejoice, O thou who without defilement hast served in the incarnation of One of
the Trinity!
Rejoice, for without seed hast thou brought forth in the flesh the Creator of
heaven and earth!
Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from
burning by fire!

Kontakion No. 2

When Moses saw the bush on Sinai aflame with fire, and yet unconsumed, he was amazed; and, then he beheld that a divine voice came to him from out of the bush: “Put off thy sandals from thy feet; for the place upon which thou standest is holy ground!” And so, we humble ones, having heard this; understand it as prefiguring the incarnation of the Word of God through the most pure Virgin in the wonder of the unburnt bush; and in fear do we bow in worship at the place of God’s manifestation, calling out to the Maker of all things: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 2

The mind of man cannot attain to the mystery of God’s providence, for from the foundation of the world man’s redemption hath been predetermined in the counsel of the Tri-Hypostatic Divinity; none-the-less, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the holy Prophets of God long-in-advance foresaw the wonder of wonders, that the Creator would take on the form of a servant in desiring to save the work of His Hands from eternal perdition; and they heralded forth in unerring prefigurings and prophecies, holding to complete the redemption of the race of mankind through a promised Redeemer; and to Whom, thou, O most pure One, hast endowed in taking flesh—for thou hast been accounted to be the Mother of thy Lord, Who exhorteth us to cry to thee:

Rejoice, O pavilion radiant with fire, that sitteth upon the Cherubim!
Rejoice, O most commandeering divan of the Seraphim!
Rejoice, O couch of the great King above the heights of heaven!
Rejoice, O throne of inspiration, that dominateth those above and below!
Rejoice, O sanctified ark of the Divinity, greater than the Holy of Holies!
Rejoice, O urn all of gold, in which the salvific Manna hath been prepared, the
flesh and blood of the Divine Lamb!
Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from
burning by fire!

Kontakion No. 3

By the action of power from on High, O most Gracious Mistress, the might of the nature of fire hath been abashed through thy holy Icon, and through it hast thou worked many wonders throughout the universe; thus, the Christian folk do magnify thee in voices of praise, and, they prayerfully take refuge before thee in unexpected perils and especially in time of the conflagration of fire; that they should receive aid from thee in good time. For this cause do we cry out in thanksgiving, highly glorifying thee to Christ, the King of Glory: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 3

Possessing great love for the people who have been redeemed through the Precious Blood of thy Son and God, O most pure Mother of God; thou hast received the power from Him to direct and protect the Christian folk; for thou art the Surety for sinners in their repentance before the Creator, the hope of salvation for the hopeless, the speedy assistance of those in peril, the sovereign recovery of the perished, and, a shelter for all the world. So to thee, as our kind-hearted and God-loving Advocate, do we offer these things spoken in humble wisdom:

Rejoice, O Joy of all the world, who removest the tears from the eyes of those
who suffer and sorrow!
Rejoice, O divinely tranquil refuge, at which they are saved who are tempest-
tossed in the storm of the passions on the sea of life!
Rejoice, O all powerful Appeaser of the just wrath of God which is directed
towards us!
Rejoice, for the flames of fire are extinguished by the dew of thy prayers before
the throne of the Pantocrator!
Rejoice, for from thunder and lighting are we kept safe through the championship
of thy celestial prayers!
Rejoice, for thine aid is granted in good time to every soul that supplicates thee in
faith!
Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from
burning by fire!"

Kontakion No. 4

When the tempest of fire cometh upon us suddenly, and the flames consume our towns and villages; then, O all merciful Lady, hasten to help us who are helpless, and, through thy precious Icon defend and deliver us from the flaming chastisement which we have come to deserve because of our sins. For, we sinners possess thee as a never-failing Advocate, so upon thee do we set our hope and we highly glorify the power of thy prayers, shouting to the One Who was born of thee as the Savior of the world: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 4

Having heard and beheld the great wonders that have come out of thine Icon, O our most Gracious Queen, which thou hast given us as a comfort and a defense in misfortunes; for behold, even all consuming fire is disabled at thy might before the power of Grace in thy most pure image, just as we have seen and examined many times over; so, we have named thee as the Unburnt Bush in the depiction of this Icon of thee, and before it do we sing to thee these calls of praise:

- Rejoice, O unslumbering Votary before Christ God, that He shall incline His mercy toward us!
- Rejoice, O thou who leadest away from our heads God's chastisement for our iniquities!
- Rejoice, O thou who preservest us from all mischances through thy precious vestment!
- Rejoice, O thou who through the shelter of thy Maternal generousities keepest our dwellings safe from fire and lightning!
- Rejoice, O all merciful hearer of our prayerful calls in tribulations and importunities!
- Rejoice, O our sovereign swift Aid in days of heavy trials!
- Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from burning by fire!

Kontakion No. 5

Like a star that flows from God doth thy most precious Icon shine radiantly with Grace throughout the world through the multitude of its wonders, O Virgin Theotokos; and it illumineth the hearts and souls of mankind, for the knowledge of thy great kind-heartedness, with which thou shelterest the Christian folk and thou advocatest (them) as the One who art good-hearted in mercy. In rejoicing do we give thanks for this to Christ God, Whose Mother thou art in the flesh, and Who hath granted thee to us as Mother in the Spirit; and so we declare to Him in deep compunction: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 5

Truly do we see thine Icon as the Unburnt Bush, O Mistress; for just as it is unconsumed by fire, so hath it rendered the dwellings of mankind unconsumed by flames through (its) residence in them; for to thee hath been granted Grace from on High to abash the might of fire's nature, as thou hast contained the fire of Divinity in thy womb without being consumed. And thus, thy most pure image hath been shown forth as partaking of that Grace, so it hath been named by the believers as "The Unburnt Bush," which we esteem in majesty; and we cry to thee in praise:

Rejoice, O inextinguishable light, which is ever aflame in prayer for us before the throne of the Lord!

Rejoice, O thou who also enkindlest our cold hearts with the fire of the love of God!

Rejoice, O thou who coolest the scorch of our passions with the shade of thy prayers!

Rejoice, O thou who sendest down to us that which is beneficial to the soul at the hour of sorrow and confused thinking!

Rejoice, O thou who hastenest to us in assistance at the time of our helplessness, when we are in peril and have no one to give us aid!

Rejoice, O thou who by thy sovereign arm dost rescue us from perdition at times of sudden misfortunes!

Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from burning by fire!

Kontakion No. 6

The Church of Christ preaches forth thy miracles, O Birth-Giver of God, which are more in number than the sands of the sea and the stars of the heavens, for from the East unto the West is thy name praised for (thy) wonders; and there is not a town or country where the action of God's might hath not been performed through thee for the deliverance, salvation, enlightenment and healing of the people who are named for Christ; and especially, thou hast been in the habit of working miracles through thy holy Icons, pouring out from them streams of mercies and generousities for those in peril and the sick of mankind. For this cause do we doxologize thee in voices of spiritual hymns, and we cry to thy Son and our God: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 6

Thou hast shone forth in a shower of the light of Divine glory, O Virgin and Godly-Maiden, holding the Pre-Eternal Lord Jesus Christ as an Infant in thine arms and surrounded by choirs of Angelic powers; just as we see thee represented on thine Icon, mystically foretold in the Unburnt Bush of Moses, and from which thou grantest gifts of Grace to the faithful; as thou savest (them) from fire and lightning, thou healest the infirm, and thou sendest down to everyone all that is Good and beneficial to the soul; that they can sing to thee these things in never-silent voices:

Rejoice, O thou for whom the assemblies of Angels and the race of mankind rejoice and keep festival!

Rejoice, O thou whose glory surpasseth the praises of heaven and earth!

Rejoice, O thou who through thy Maternal love from the supernal heights lookest after all the universe!

Rejoice, O thou who visitest the earthly vale of many sorrows through thy benefactions!

Rejoice, O thou who through thine immeasurable Graciousness dost not abandon those that are despised and shunned!

Rejoice, O thou who through thy heartache hast rescued the hopeless from the pit of perdition!

Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from joy of the Saints: Alleluia!

Kontakion No. 7

Desiring to reveal His love for the people redeemed through His Blood, the Lord hath granted us His undefiled Mother as a shelter and a defense, and, He hath made her to be as a refuge tranquil in Grace for every Christian soul that is sorrowful and beset by misfortune, so in need of help and mercy. Therefore, beholding thy service for the race of mankind as that, O all Gracious Mistress, unto thee do we direct our eyes in tribulations and stretch out (our) hands in supplication, entreating consolation from thee alone; that thou mayest save us through thine intercession from the temporal sorrows and the eternal ones; and, that thou mayest vouchsafe us in the land of the living, to sing to God in the joy of the Saints: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 7

Marvelously hast thou glorified thy holy Icon called “The Unburnt Bush” in miracles, O Virgin Theotokos, for through it dost thou defend towns and villages from the burning of fire and the lightning strikes of thunder, and, thou blessest the homes of the faithful in which the likeness of thy most pure face is reverently honored. For this cause, have we joyously received thy Gracious image as a much valued gift; and, we bow down before it in due worship, and we magnify thee with these praises as is due:

Rejoice, O alabaster jar of cures, containing medicaments against every infirmity!

Rejoice, O myrrh-chrismatory of the fragrance of Christ’s Goodness, which
scenteth fallen mankind with Grace!

Rejoice, for thou settest penitent sinners free from the fetters of sin!

Rejoice, O thou who bringest the captives of the passions to contrition as those
who struggle for purity!

Rejoice, O sustenance of young virgins and placid gladness of mothers!

Rejoice, O Advocate of widows and good hearted providence of orphans!

Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from
burning by fire!”

Kontakion No. 8

It is strange to see how thine Icon, O Mistress, which is painted on a panel of wood and thereby subject by its nature to the action of combustion, and yet it revealeth a power beyond this nature; for by its presence it humbleth the might of fire. In this can we discern the power of God and the action of thy prayers, so we magnify the Creator and God of All, Who hath magnified thee and granted us thy miraculous image as a delight and comfort, and, through this hath saved us from burning by fire; that we may always shout to Him in gratitude and praise: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 8

The whole of the Christian world glorifies thy most blessed name, O Mary the Theotokos, and for each believer it is sweet and comforting to gaze upon the likeness of thy most pure face, through which thou hast been in the habit of manifesting many and glorious wonders. Behold that we sinners also gaze upon thy holy Icon, and we bow down before it in worship with reverence, kissing it with love; expecting of it thy sovereign aid and intercession, especially in times of our helplessness, as when for the sake of our sins the conflagration shall come upon us unexpectedly; so then, being saved by thee from perishing by flames, we can cry to thee with grateful lips:

Rejoice, O pavilion of the Word of God not made by (human) hands, far superior to the Cherubim and Seraphim and most precedent in holiness and purity!
Rejoice, O light cloud of the Sun of Righteousness, through which He that is of Heaven draweth near to those of earth; that He may lead us forth to heaven with Himself!
Rejoice, O thou who through thy holy birthgiving hast opened the doors of Paradise for fallen mankind!
Rejoice, for heaven and earth have joined together to sing to thee and to the One Who was born of thee in never-silent praises!
Rejoice, O divine fountain that floweth forth with water of life; for those who drink of which shall not die!
Rejoice, O blessed grape-cluster that hath budded forth from the vine of salvation, letting drop the wine of immortality for mankind!
Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from burning by fire!

Kontakion No. 9

Thy glory far surpasseth every praise, O most blessed and most highly glorified Mother of our Lord; for even the minds of the incorporeals cannot comprehend as how to worthily sing of thee, and thus this thing is beyond and unfit to us that are but earth and dust; but, being conquered by love for thee, we make bold to offer thee hymns of praise and thanksgiving according to our strength for the sake of thy mercy toward the race of mankind; which thou hast loved and to whom thou never ceasest being beneficent, moving the faithful of all ages to shout to Christ the Savior Who was born of thee: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 9

Human rhetors are at a loss to comprehend the great mystery of thine Ever-Virginity, O Birth-Giver of God, which the Lord hath hidden from the wise ones of this age, but hath revealed to the humble and pious, who are strangers to curious investigating, by whom art thou preached forth in the Orthodox and unconfused manner as the Virgin before giving birth, in birth-giving and after giving birth. So, O Mother and Virgin, receive also our confession of this with all our soul, and, fortify us to follow after thee in an undefiled life and purity of heart, that we shall be enabled to sing to thee these hymns fit to Goodness:

Rejoice, O lily of virginity and purity, white as snow and blooming on High as never-wilting!
Rejoice, O thou who wondrously joinest motherhood and virginity within thyself!
Rejoice, O thou who hast preserved both of these within thyself as undefiled and holy!
Rejoice, O thou who art the Foreleader of the monastic ranks in God-pleasing virginity!
Rejoice, O Principal of the hosts of virgins in purity of soul and body!
Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from burning by fire!

Kontakion No. 10

In establishing the salvation of mankind, One of the Trinity willed to be incarnate of thee, O Mistress the Bride of God, and He highly glorified the nature of man by sitting at the Right Hand of the Father on the throne of the Godhead as the Only-Begotten Son, and He the same became thy Son in the flesh and glorified thee with Himself, in a glory surpassing all (other) glory; and thereby being overshadowed with Good, mercifully thou dost not forget the race of mankind, but prayerfully before the Creator Who is One in Trinity dost thou intercede for all those who sing to Him in faith the hymn of doxology: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 10

A wall art thou for the choirs of virgins and the assemblies of monastics, O Virgin Theotokos, and also for all those who fervently take refuge before thee in prayer, honoring thy holy Icon with reverence; for to thee alone was given by the Lord the grace to intercede for all the world, and the establishment of the believers in virginity and piety. Thereby, do zealots of the undefiled life take refuge under thy Maternal protection against the tempests of the passions; and so do they encounter serenity of the soul in Grace, as they proclaim to thee in harmony:

Rejoice, O chosen Protectress of pious monks and nuns, and their fervent
Intercessor before God!
Rejoice, O constant Helper of the secret servants of God in the midst of the world,
and Guide in spiritual struggles!
Rejoice, O Teacher of chastity and temperance to the young!
Rejoice, O repose and delight of the reverent elderly!
Rejoice, O thou who overshadowest the Christian homes and families with thy
veil of Grace!
Rejoice, O thou who dost vouchsafe the faithful of every age thy compassionate
care!
Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from
burning by fire!

Kontakion No. 11

The holy Church of Christ offers up to thee a never-silent hymn of praise, O all-hymned Mistress, heralding forth thy mercies and wonders, through which thou hast enriched the whole universe. For in truth, who is like thee in being swift to hear our prayers of entreaty? Yet, thou art accustomed to preceding the (very) petitions themselves, in being merciful and generous to those in need of thy holy assistance; of which may thou also not deprive us humble ones at the hour when we sing the glory of thy name, and cry out to God: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 11

O most pure Mother of God, thine Icon beaming with light illumines our souls so darkened with sin, by the brilliance of the divine wonders in which we recognize the power of Almighty God, and, thine immeasurable kind-heartedness, ever prepared to assist us in repentance and conversion from wicked deeds to the path of salvation. Thereby we pray thee, O most Gracious One, do thou not abandon us to go astray into the ravines of sin and passions; but, lead us to the tranquil haven of the pious and God-pleasing life, that we shall be able to worthily offer up to thee these gifts of hymnody:

Rejoice, O thou who causest our unseen foes to stumble through thy vigilant prayers!
Rejoice, O thou who dost not permit them to dominate us with violence against this mortal body!
Rejoice, for the demons are afraid and tremble at thy holy name!
Rejoice, for through its presence doth thy holy Icon banish all the might of the devil!
Rejoice, O thou who strengthenest the strugglers for piety in the spiritual combat with the enemies of mankind's salvation!
Rejoice, O thou who at the final hour assistest those who have love and faith for thee!
Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from burning by fire!

Kontakion No. 12

We confess thy holy Icon as partaking of God's Grace, O Virgin Graced by God, and brightly do we celebrate the Feast of its appearance; for in this image of "The Unburnt Bush," which thou hast revealed, the action of miracles (of Grace) is also displayed; and, through its presence doth it preserve and protect our dwellings against the flames of fire. Therefore, in possessing thee as a shield and helmet, we magnify thee as our sovereign Aid in hymns of praise, and we cry to our Savior Who was born of thee: Alleluia!

Oikos No. 12

We hymn thee, O Birth-Giver of God, as our only hope and aspiration, and, as we preach forth thy supplications we do not conceal thy wonders; as we highly glorify thine immeasurable Goodness toward the race of mankind, and we bless thy holy name through which myrrh-chrism is truly poured out for those who love thee, as a fulfilling of pious souls with the spiritual fragrance of Grace. So, O Mistress, may thou also scent us with that Grace; for we are mortified with sinful passions, and enable (us) with pure hearts and unbefouled lips to shout to thee:

Rejoice, O thou who springest forth with the myrrh-chrism of sweetness and the soul's salvation, with which God-loving hearts are anointed!
Rejoice, O thou who doctorest the infirmities of the soul and body, even through a single contact to thy holy Icon!
Rejoice, O Gracious Leader on the way that is pleasing to God, and who directest penitent sinners to salvation!
Rejoice, O ladder of the virtues, that leadeth the strugglers for Christ to the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven!
Rejoice, O thou who crownest the humble and patient sufferers with the comfort of Grace!
Rejoice, O thou who refreshest those who are innocently banished and persecuted with a foretaste of the beatitude of Paradise!
Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from burning by fire!

Kontakion No. 13

O all-hymned Mother, who hast given birth to the Word, the Holiest of the Holies, and hast been named “The Unburnt Bush” by us unworthy ones! Attend to the voice of our prayers and hymns, which is offered up to thee fervently before thy holy Icon; and, through thine ardent supplications before the Lord, deliver from temporal and eternal fire us who praise thy name and who glorify thy wonders, as we cry out to thy Son and our God: Alleluia! (x3)

The 1st Oikos and Kontakion

O Queen of the Angels and Mistress of all creation, Lady Theotokos, even as thou receivest hymns of praise from the choirs of Angels on High, vouchsafe us, who are but dust on the earth, to offer up to thee voices of praise and thanksgiving for the sake of thy very great mercy toward the race of mankind. And, if we be unfit to hymn thee worthily; even then, O Gracious One, may thou not shun our inadequate lauds; but, be again like thy Son Who mercifully accepted the two small coins of the Widow, likewise be compassionately loving in hearing us who cry out to thee with compunction:

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being consumed!

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Rejoice, O thou who through thy most pure birthgiving hast shamed the might of
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Rejoice, O thou who hast freed Adam and Eve from the ancient curse!

Rejoice, O thou who without defilement hast served in the incarnation of One of
the Trinity!

Rejoice, for without seed hast thou brought forth in the flesh the Creator of
heaven and earth!

Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from
burning by fire!”

To the chosen leader in battle, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, who hath gladdened God, and also hath gladdened the Church of Christ through the revelation of her Icon radiant with fire, let us address a hymn of praise: O Mother of God, whom we have named “The Unburnt Bush;” as thou dost possess unconquerable dominion and much kindheartedness, hasten to the aid of us that are in need of thine intercession; and, from all misfortunes deliver those who call to thee: “Rejoice, O Full of Grace, The Unburnt Bush who deliverest us from burning by fire!”

A PRAYER

O most holy and most blessed Mother of our sweetest Lord, Jesus Christ! We approach and bow down in worship to thee before thy most precious Icon, through which thou hast worked wonderful and most glorious miracles; as thou savest our dwellings from burning by fire and the lightning-strikes of thunder, thou healest our infirmities and thou fulfilllest all our entreaties in Goodness. So, we supplicate thee humbly, O all-powerful Advocate of our race; vouchsafe us feeble and sinful ones thy Maternal partiality and concern for good. Save and protect, O Mistress, beneath the shelter of thy mercy our Orthodox people, the holy Church, this city/holy habitation, all of our Orthodox lands, and all of us who come, falling down before thee in faith and love, compunctionately beseeching thine intercession with tears. Yea, O most merciful Lady, take pity on us who are tempest-tossed with many sins and so possess no boldness before Christ the Lord; entreat Him for kindness and forgiveness; for so do we place thee before Him for supplication, who art His Mother in the flesh. So, may thou, O most Gracious One, stretch out before Him thy God-receiving arms and be champion for us before His graciousness; beseeching pardon for our transgressions, a peaceful life of piety, a Christian end in Goodness and a good response at His dread Judgment. At the hour of God’s fearsome visitation, when our homes shall be consumed by fire or we shall be frightened by the lightning-strikes of thunder, be thou manifest to us in thy merciful defense and sovereign assistance; that being saved by thine all-powerful prayers to the Lord, we can

escape God's temporal condemnation here and take pasture there in the eternal blessedness of Paradise; and with all the Saints we shall sing of the most precious and majestic Name of the Worshipful Trinity: of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and of thy great kind-heartedness for us; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

ICON OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS – THE VIRGIN OF THE “UNBURNT” BUSH

Feast Day – 4 September

Troparion, Tone No. 4

He That of old was beheld by Moses in the fire of the unburnt bush, as a prefiguring of the mystery of His Incarnation through the incorruptible Virgin Mary, the same now as the Creator of miracles and Author of all creation hath glorified her holy Icon through many wonders; having granted it to the faithful for the healing of infirmities and a protection against consumption by fire. For which cause we cry out to the most blessed One: O Hope of Christians, preserve those who hope in thee from the demons' violence, fire and lightning; and save our souls, for thou art kind-hearted!

Kontakion, Tone No. 8

For the cleansing of the senses of our souls and bodies let us behold the divine mystery which appeared of old to Moses, the great among the Prophets, in the form of a bush burning with fire and yet not consumed; in which, thy giving birth without seed, O Theotokos, we witness as being foretold and we reverently bow down before thee and our Savior born of thee; as we fearfully cry out: “Rejoice, O Lady, the protection, defense and salvation of our souls!”