



Akathist Service to Our Lady of Sitka

The Sitka Icon of the Mother of God

Located at the Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel in Sitka, Alaska is one of the most revered Icons in North America: the Sitka Mother of God.

This Icon has been attributed to a famous Iconographer, Vladimir Lukich Borovikovsky (1758-1826), a protégé of the Empress Catherine II who was instructed at the Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg, Russia. In addition to being a great portrait painter, Borovikovsky also painted many of the Icons for the Cathedral of the Kazan Icon in Saint Petersburg.

Painted in the style of the Kazan Mother of God Icon, on canvas, the Sitka Mother of God Icon is 36 x 17-1/2 inches in size. An exceptionally beautiful and detailed riza of silver covers the Icon of the Theotokos and Christ child, and the Image of God the Father blessing from above.

The Cathedral received the Icon as a gift from the laborers of the Russian American Company in 1850, two years after the Cathedral was completed. Even with their meager wages, these men generously made their contribution to the Church.

Miracles have been attributed to the Sitka Mother of God Icon over the years. It is believed that the gaze of the eyes of the Theotokos have led to the restored health of those who prayed before the Icon.

Because of the peaceful gaze of the Theotokos, the Icon has been described as a “pearl of Russian ecclesiastical art of ineffable gentleness, purity and harmony...” And “...the most beautiful face of the Mother of God with the Divine Child in her arms is so delicately and artistically done that the more one looks at it the more difficult it is to tear one’s gaze away.”

Originally part of the main Iconostasis at the Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel in Sitka, Alaska, the Icon is now permanently located on the far left side of the Iconostasis in a special place of honor.

Akathist to Our Lady of Sitka

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. Glory to Thee O God. Glory to Thee.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere and fills all things. Treasury of blessings and giver of life, come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity. And, save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty , Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (3).

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy (3).

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

Our Father, Who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Priest: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and

unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

KONTAKION I

Choir/Faithful: O Mother of God, chosen from all generations / to be the protectress of the Christian **people**; / we offer you songs of thanksgiving for your wonderworking **Icon** / that has come to **Alaska**. / You are a fountain of mercy and help all who seek **refuge** in you. / Defend us in all afflictions, necessities and tribulations / that we may **cry** to you: // Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

IKOS I

Priest: An Archangel was sent to greet the Holy Virgin: Rejoice, for God the Word shall be made flesh in your womb. And we sinners give glory to the wonderworking icon of the holy Virgin and the divine Infant, our Savior, Jesus Christ. And we cry to her, who is full of grace, from the depths of our hearts:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, divinely chosen Maiden of God, Mother of our **Savior**.

Rejoice, you who are honored by the angels and hymned by the **seraphim**.

Rejoice, bright fulfillment of **prophecy**.

Rejoice, boast of the **Apostles**.

Rejoice, crown of the **Martyrs**.

Rejoice, glory of all **Monastics**.

Rejoice, joy of the **Righteous**.

Rejoice, hope of **sinners**.

Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKION II

Priest: We recognize you as the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, the

only true God. Your all pure face looks down from your holy icon on the glorious town of Sitka; and worshipping your Son with love and joy, we sing to God: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS II

Priest: Burdened by many afflictions and sins, we have no other help or hope but you, O Lady. Therefore falling before your holy icon with hearts full of love we sing:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, perfection of praise to God through the mouths of **children**.

Rejoice, revealer of the mysteries of Divine **grace** to the meek.

Rejoice, conversion of un**believers**.

Rejoice, you, who, by the glory of your miracles, illumine the minds of the **faithful**.

Rejoice, rebuker of those fallen into **heresy**.

Rejoice, confirmation of the **Christian Faith**.

Rejoice, changer of our sorrow **into** joy.

Rejoice, for you make us joyful with un**failing** hope.

Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKION III

Priest: When the stormy seas engulf us and the rough waters fill our souls with fear, then does our holy Father Herman call from heaven upon your all powerful intercession, O Lady, and a deep calm envelops us all. Therefore, as we now gaze at your holy icon, we cry to God: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS III

Priest: With compassionate forethought for your Alaskan people, you

have sent forth from your icon in the Cathedral of Sitka a stream of wonders enlightening the minds and souls of those lying in ignorance of God. Granting a safe haven and good fishing to those on the seas you protect all on their paths, and for this, in love we cry to you:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, illumination of all men with the shining rays of your **wonders**.

Rejoice, **sight** of the blind.

Rejoice, glory of Alaska.

Rejoice, calm haven of those seeking **salvation**.

Rejoice, pure Theotokos.

Rejoice, shelter and defender of **children**.

Rejoice, queller of the ocean's **fierce** waves.

Rejoice, joy of all the poor and the **afflicted**.

Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKION IV

Priest: A storm of passions and sins rages against us and we know not where to turn. It is then that the holy Mother of God gives us her peace; and gazing at the icon she has sent us, we cry with thanksgiving to God: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS IV

Priest: Beset by hardships in this far northern land, we are lifted up by the faith our Father Herman instilled in us, and by the prayers of Our Lady of Sitka we take upon ourselves, with hope and fortitude, the Cross our Lord has given to each one of us and sing to her:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, mother of the **Most** High God.

Rejoice, queen of **heaven** and earth.

Rejoice, intercessor to your Son Jesus Christ for **all** of us.

Rejoice, protectress of those who **run** to you.

Rejoice, giver of what is needful to all who pray before your wonderworking **icon**.

Rejoice, for you are **swift** to help.

Rejoice, for you pour upon us unfailing **mercy**.

Rejoice, deliverer from peril on **land** and sea.

Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKION V

Priest: Your icon shines in our Cathedral like a bright star enlightening the whole land with its radiance. It guides all the Orthodox in America gone astray on the sea of life and overwhelmed by the waves of sorrow, tribulations and sickness, giving them peace and happiness as they take refuge in you and sing to God: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS V

Priest: Dark are the winters, and cold are the winds; but cheered by the beauty of your face, we find warmth of soul and body as we raise our prayers to you, singing:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, abode of **Christ** our God.

Rejoice, dwelling place of His ineffable **glory**.

Rejoice, joy of towns and **harbors**.

Rejoice, guardian and bulwark of Christians in **affliction**.

Rejoice, treasure of the **Orthodox Church**.

Rejoice, helper of those who **fight** for Christ.

Rejoice, for you drive away the **enemy**.

Rejoice, visitation of all men with your **mercies**.

Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKION VI

Priest: Standing before your all pure icon the assembly of bishops, priests and faithful people proclaims your great mercy, O Mother of

God, for you protect our cities and lands against floods and storms, and we truly know you to be our helper. We offer you our love and tears, begging you to stretch out your hand to your Son asking Him to deliver us from all evil that we may thankfully sing to God: Alleluia

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS VI

Priest: Who can worthily praise you and thank you for sending us your wonderworking icon? Our tongues fail before this miracle and we beg you to help us sing to you:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, unfailing source of holiness.
Rejoice, river of divine grace flowing in many streams.
Rejoice, reconciler of sinners with God.
Rejoice, teacher of piety.
Rejoice, helper and confirmation in good works.
Rejoice, receiver of pious vows.
Rejoice, destroyer of evil intents.
Rejoice, you who tear to pieces the snares of the enemy.
Rejoice, zealous defender of the Orthodox faithful in America.

KONTAKION VII

Priest: Your icon has come to us as dew upon the fleece confirming the power given to you by God. As we praise Him for His boundless mercies, we cry: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS VII

Priest: To your icon we Orthodox run when about to embark on a new enterprise or to set out on a journey by sea, land or air, offering you a prayer of thanksgiving and asking for your blessing and your help and our deliverance from tribulation and assault; for we know you to be a

strong protectress and defender, and we therefore sing to you:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, protectress of **Alaska**.

Rejoice, confirmation and guardian of Orthodoxy **in** our land.

Rejoice, breastplate that **cannot** be pierced.

Rejoice, reprover of dish**onesty**.

Rejoice, destroyer of the **serpent**.

Rejoice, corrector of those who have **gone** astray.

Rejoice, **com**forter of the old.

Rejoice, bestower of knowledge **good** for the soul.

Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**

KONTAKION VIII

Priest: Doubters and unbelievers are amazed to hear that streams of divine grace flow through your icon, while we know that this is so with this icon of Sitka and that God's grace will abide with it forever. Therefore, standing reverently before it, we kiss it and venerate it as we would your very self; for the honor paid to icons passes to their prototype, and God's grace acts through this icon in wonders and signs for those who run to you with faith and cry to God: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS VIII

Priest: We praise you O burning bush, unhewn mountain, royal throne, daughter of the King, and unwedded bride who has given us God's grace through your icon in Sitka, and raising our voices in songs and hymns, we cry to you:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, vessel of Him who **cannot** be contained.

Rejoice, bearer of the **living** God.

Rejoice, earthly branch who brought forth the **heavenly** Fruit.

Rejoice, for your prayer before your Son and God is of great **benefit**.

Rejoice, for from the time of the Crucifixion you have adopted us all

as your **children**.

Rejoice, you who show motherly **love** towards us.

Rejoice, cause of eternal **blessings**.

Rejoice, giver of blessings in this **temporal** life.

Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKION IX

Priest: You have shown yourself above every angelic rank, O Virgin, for you have conceived in the flesh Him Who cannot be circumscribed. And you have carried in your arms Him Who holds the whole world in the palm of His hand. Therefore, as you are greater in honor than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim we glorify you and sing to God on your account: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS IX

Priest: O Mother of God, we see most eloquent orators silenced before you, for every tongue is at a loss to praise you worthily. Our minds have not the strength to extol you. Therefore, O you who are gracious, accept from us the salutation of the Archangel as we cry to you:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, you who are full of grace and blessed among **women**.

Rejoice, for you have found **favor** with God.

Rejoice, for you have brought forth the **Savior** of the world.

Rejoice, mother of the **Son** of God.

Rejoice, for you have given birth to the **Eternal** King.

Rejoice, for you were overshadowed by the power of the **Most** High.

Rejoice, true hand**maiden** of the Lord.

Rejoice, for all generations shall call you **blessed**.

Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKION X

Priest: Wishing to save many from the evils, afflictions and sicknesses which afflict mortal men, you have given Sitka this holy icon before which we pray that the drowning be saved, those possessed of the devil be freed, our boats be filled with fish and our hunting be blessed and our villages and homes be protected from flood, fire and earthquake. Therefore, glorifying God, Who has bestowed on us such mercy, we cry to Him: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS X

Priest: You are the wall of protection guarding the land of Alaska. You are the glory and joy of Sitka and strengthen the Orthodox to withstand their enemies. Therefore in thanksgiving we cry to you:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, glorifier of those who **glorify** you.
Rejoice, confounder of those who fail to **honor** you.
Rejoice, glory of the **Orthodox**.
Rejoice, strength of soldiers on the field of **battle**.
Rejoice, life-giving guardian gladdening the hearts of the **faithful**.
Rejoice, defender before whom devils quake and **tremble**.
Rejoice, unction who soothes the sinful wounds of **those** who repent.
Rejoice, our **fervent** hope.
Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKION XI

Priest: Choirs of young maidens offer you, O Lady, hymns of praise and thanksgiving. Leading a pure life under your protection and setting all their hope on you they cry to your Son: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS XI

Priest: O all holy Lady, as a candlestick that has received the Light, we look upon your holy icon, for having taken the spiritual fire of your grace it kindles new lamps in its likeness, and they also participate in this same grace and shine bright with wonders, guiding upon the path of salvation all those who cry to you:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, unwedded bride.
Rejoice, chosen Maiden, Mother and **Virgin**.
Rejoice, boast of **women**.
Rejoice, defender of widows, protectress of **orphans**.
Rejoice, **nourisher** of the poor.
Rejoice, clother of the **naked**.
Rejoice, comforter of those in **sorrow**.
Rejoice, joy of the **afflicted**.
Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKIOIN XII

Priest: Wishing to give your grace to those venerating you with love, you, O Mother of God, have left in your holy icons the power of your grace. For this same divine grace remaining with these holy icons ever bring about signs and wonders, and by your unceasing supplications to God you give healing of body and soul to those who approach you with faith and love and who sing to Him: Alleluia

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

IKOS XII

Priest: Singing the praises of your wonders both past and present, we laud you as a life-bearing fount of grace, as an unfailing river of miracles, as a fountain of mercy and compassion. Setting all our hope on you after God in both this and in the world to come, we sing to you:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, unconfounded hope of **Christians**.
Rejoice, refuge of the **faithful**.

Rejoice, hope of the hopeless, salvation of **those** in despair.
Rejoice, fountain washing the **conscience** clean.
Rejoice, unmercenary physician for your **children**.
Rejoice, speedy deliverance from all **afflictions**.
Rejoice, comforter in every **tribulation**.
Rejoice, intercessor in the **hour** of our death.
Rejoice, zealous **defender** of the Orthodox faithful in **America**.

KONTAKION XIII

O Most pure Lady, in whom all creation rejoices, and Mother of the Word holier than all the saints, accept now this supplication of your faithful servants. And for the sake of your great goodness and the depth of your mercy bring not to mind the multitude of our sins, but fulfill our prayers, giving health to our bodies and salvation to our souls. Deliver us from all sorrow and necessity, and make heirs of the heavenly Kingdom all those who faithfully sing to God: Alleluia.

Choir/Faithful: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

This kontakion is recited thrice; whereupon Ikos I and Kontakion I are repeated.

IKOS I

Priest: An Archangel was sent to greet the Holy Virgin: Rejoice, for God the Word shall be made flesh in your womb. And we sinners give glory to the wonderworking icon of the holy Virgin and the divine Infant, our Savior, Jesus Christ. And we cry to her, who is full of grace, from the depths of our hearts:

Choir/Faithful: Rejoice, divinely chosen Maiden of God, Mother of our **Savior**.

Rejoice, you who are honored by the angels and hymned by the **seraphim**.

Rejoice, bright fulfillment of **prophecy**.

Rejoice, boast of the **A**postles.

Rejoice, crown of the **M**artyrs.

Rejoice, glory of all **M**onastics.

Rejoice, joy of the **R**ighteous.

Rejoice, hope of **s**inners.

Rejoice, zealous **d**efender of the Orthodox faithful in **A**merica.

KONTAKION I

Choir/Faithful: O Mother of God, chosen from all generations / to be the protectress of the Christian **p**eople; / we offer you songs of thanksgiving for your wonderworking **I**con / that has come to **A**laska. / You are a fountain of mercy and help all who seek **r**efuge in you. / Defend us in all afflictions, necessities and tribulations / that we may **c**ry to you: // Rejoice, zealous **d**efender of the Orthodox faithful in **A**merica.

Priest: Again and again on bended knees let us pray to the Most Holy Theotokos.

Choir/Faithful: Most Holy Theotokos **S**ave us.

Prayer to the Most Holy Theotokos

Priest: O Lady, Mother of God Most High, look down upon your faithful servants praying before your holy icon and serving your Son. Receive our humble prayer and visit us in our unworthiness. Help us to keep pure the Orthodox Faith and to walk in the ways of our Savior, Jesus Christ. By your intercessions entreat Him to grant us health of soul and body and the forgiveness of our sins in this life, and in the world to come, life everlasting.

Choir/Faithful: Amen.

The Litany

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great goodness, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Choir/Faithful: Lord have mercy (3)

Priest: Again we pray for His Beatitude, Metropolitan _____, His (*Grace/Eminence*), (*Arch*) Bishop _____, for priests, deacons, and all other clergy; and for all our brethren in Christ.

Choir/Faithful: Lord have mercy (3)

Priest: Again we pray for the president of our country, for all civil authorities and for our armed forces everywhere.

Choir/Faithful: Lord have mercy (3)

Priest: Again we pray for mercy, life peace, health, salvation and visitation for the servants of God _____, and for the pardon and remission of their sins.

Choir/Faithful: Lord have mercy (3)

Priest: Furthermore, we pray for the people here present, awaiting from Thee great and bountiful mercies for all the brethren and for all Christians.

Choir/Faithful: Lord have mercy (3)

Priest: For Thou art a merciful God, and loves mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Choir/Faithful: Amen.

Priest: Wisdom! Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

Choir/Faithful: More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim! Without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos we magnify you.

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to Thee !

Choir/Faithful: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.
Lord have mercy (3). Father bless.

Priest: [pronounces the dismissal and faithful venerate the Cross]

Most Holy Theotokos save us!

Glory Be To God For All Things!