

The Joy of the Salutations (Fr. Andreas Agathokleous)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



The mourning atmosphere of Great Lent is unquestionably lightened by the service of the Salutations. These ‘Hails’ which we address to the ‘Birth-Giver and Mother of the Light’, in gratitude for her great loving-kindness towards us, are returned to us by her. In a mystical way, she responds to our greeting.

It seems that there’s something very special and necessary happening in our life, when the churches are full every Friday evening in Lent.



Of course, there's the honour we pay to her, who became the bridge who brought God to dwell among us, but she's also our own bridge, raising 'those on earth to the heavens'. This is a personal relationship, full of gratitude and generous love for her presence in the everyday problems and difficulties of our life. That 'My Lady' which we learned to say from when we were children when something unexpected and dangerous happened, is the cry of a child to its mother.

The Salutations which we address to Our Most Holy Lady conceal the mystical joy which we absolutely need in order to survive. This is a different joy, which has nothing to do with earthly successes nor with the absence of difficulties. It's 'joy through the cross', which stems from humility and the acceptance of things which aren't going to change.

Every era has its own beauty and pain. Our own has conveniences and facilities, communication and transport which have made the planet a single neighbourhood. We have knowledge and information for everyone who wishes to learn about the world, other people, and even outer space. But we lack joy. There's been an increase in melancholy, loneliness and depression. Psychological afflictions have multiplied and the world is now full of people with serious problems.

Where to turn?... Who to look to? Apart from those people who may stand by you and make sacrifices to share your path, there's Our Lady the Mother of God, 'the pure Virgin Mary, the joy of those in sadness', whose hushed, active presence is our support, our hope. Young and old, we all have recourse to her as our 'intercessor' to her Son and God, our only protection and helper in our sorrows.

'We fall down before you, Mother of our God,
in gratitude for that which you have given us.
Enter into our pain and difficulties,
our wrongdoings and thoughtless actions
and transform our sorrow into joy,
our weakness into strength,
our denial and indifference into fervour and love for Christ.
Shelter us from the guileful attacks of the evil one
'which are craftily aimed at us'
and grant that your world
may know in depth the beauty
of the eternal kingdom of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen'.