

## ~ The Angelic Salutation to the Theotokos ~

Known in Western Christianity (Roman Catholic, Anglicans, Lutherans) as the **Hail Mary** or as the **Ave Maria** (from the first words in Latin), the archangel Gabriel's greeting or salutation to the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation is a traditional Christian prayer asking for the intercession of the Virgin Mary or Theotokos (in Greek, **Θεοτοκος**, means "**God-bearer**" or "**Birth-giver to God**"), the mother of Jesus Christ. This prayer is also used by Orthodox Christians (Eastern Orthodox, Eastern Catholics) and the Oriental Orthodox. **In the Byzantine tradition, it is typically sung three times at the end of Great Vespers during an All-Night Vigil, as well as occurring many times in the course of daily prayer.**

### ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

Most of the text of the prayer can be found within the Gospel according to Saint Luke. The **first part of the prayer** is taken directly from the greeting of the **Archangel Gabriel** to the Virgin found in Luke 1:28: «*And having come in, the angel said to her, 'Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!'*» The **second part** is taken from Luke 1:42, where **Saint Elizabeth**, while being filled with the Holy Spirit, greets the Theotokos: «*Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"*»



From the Biblical texts the prayer adds the **opening invocation** «*Theotokos Virgin*» and the **concluding** «*for you have borne the Savior of our souls.*» These parts were added to the prayer in order to acknowledge the Theotokos as the mother of God (thereby also acknowledging the divine nature of Jesus Christ as one person of the Holy Trinity), her state of holiness, and that salvation comes through Jesus Christ of which we all hope and prayer for. (The conclusion to the Western version of the prayer «*Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death*» was added around the time of the Council of Trent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.)

Mary is blessed and holy because she accepted God's word and gave birth to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and because she kept herself in a state of sinless love for God throughout her whole life.

### Greek Text

The Hail Mary prayer of the Orthodox Christian Church and Eastern Catholic Churches is in the following form:

Θεοτόκε Παρθένε, χαῖρε, κεχαριτωμένη Μαρία, ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ. εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξί, καὶ εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου, ὅτι Σωτήρα ἔτεκες τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν.

*Theotokos Virgin, rejoice, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you have borne the Savior of our souls.*

**There exist, however, two versions in the Slav tradition.**

**Below is the first and older Slavonic text. It remains in use by the Old Believers as well as those who follow the Ruthenian recension – among them the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Ruthenian Catholic Church.**

Cyrillic	Romanization	English
Богородице дѣво радуйса вбрадованнаѧ Маріе Господь съ тобою благословена ты въ женахъ, и благословенъ плодь чрева твоегѡ, Якѡ родила еси Христа Спаса, Избавителя доушамъ нашимъ.	Bogoroditse Djevo, raduisya, Obradovannaya Marie, Gospodh s' toboyu. Blagoslovena tyh v' zhenach, y blagosloven plod chreva Tvoego, Yako rodila esi Christa Spasa, Izbavitelya dusham nashim.	<i>Theotokos Virgin, rejoice, (or: Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos) Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you have borne Christ the Saviour, the Deliverer of our souls.</i>

The **second Slavonic version** below corresponds more closely to the Greek, and appeared in 1656 under the liturgical reforms of Patriarch Nikon of Moscow. It is used by the Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches.

Богородице дѣво, радуйса, Благодатнаѧ Маріе, Господь съ тобою: благословена Ты въ женахъ, и благословенъ плодь чрева Твоегѡ; якѡ Спаса родила еси доушъ нашихъ.	Bogoroditse Djevo, raduisya, Blagodatnaya Marie, Gospod s' toboyu: Blagoslovyena tyh v' zhenakh, y blagoslovyen plod chreva Tvoyego, yako Spasa rodila yesi dush nashikh.	<i>Theotokos Virgin, rejoice, (or: Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos) Mary full of grace, The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you have borne the Saviour of our souls.</i>
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