



ALOFT

"...not just singers; worshippers who sing"

Volume 3, Issue 3

♪ Notes from the Director ♪

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:4

My Friends,

St. Paul, in his 1st Letter to the Corinthians, made the above remark about spiritual gifts. St. Paul lists nine gifts of the spirit in the above referenced quote. There are others listed elsewhere in 1st Corinthians, and in St. Paul's Letters to the Romans and Ephesians.

I wonder if the "talent" of singing (chanting) in the Orthodox Church could be called such a "gift?"

The scripture as I read it does not specifically mention liturgical chanting or singing as one of the gifts of the Spirit. If you read between these lines, then maybe...

An article by Bishop Basil in 1996 states that, "There are few ministries of the Church that require the devotion and the dedication that church singing does. You who lead the singing as well as you who follow the leader are precious gifts to your parishes. You are as important to the parish as is the holy table itself. As there can be no liturgy without the holy table, there can be no liturgy without you. This is not to compliment you or increase your pride, but rather to put a little fear and awe in you, so you know what your responsibilities are."

Before this modern era, the singers in Church were an

ecclesiastical office. Canon 15, from the Council of Nicea, specifies that only canonical singers should be "set apart" for this particular ministry. We do not follow the canon today in its specific intent to "tonsure" choir members; we are trying to follow the spirit of the canon in that all choir singers understand the gravity of their responsibilities in providing this ministry.

I sometimes question whether or not I have led you truly and well; whether I have conveyed to you the great importance of what you do? If I had correctly explained to you the weighty regard that you should have toward choir responsibilities, how is it that I accept lateness and absences without comment? God will surely hold me accountable for my laxness.

In the Gospel of Matthew, 19:16-26, there is a parable which deals with being able to live up to God's expectations; being perfect. In the end, Christ's disciples ask, "Who then can be saved?" And Christ answers them, "...with God all things are possible."

I throw myself on the Mercy of the Almighty One.

You can improve my chances for His Mercy by attending all choir opportunities without fail!

Robert Paul



REV. STEVEN TSICHLIS
Pastor

REV. STEPHEN KARCHER
Assistant Pastor

ROBERT A. HENNING
Choir Director

ROLAND JENSTER
Organist

CHOIR OFFICERS

GEORGE PETERS
President

MARIA ELENA KONUGRES
Vice President

ANASTASIA GENTRY
Secretary

NANETTE BOWMAN
Treasurer

Mission Statement

"To Provide a Music Ministry worthy of the Worship of the One, True God, our Lord Jesus Christ and Support the Goals and Mission of St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church in the Community and Abroad to the best of our abilities"

September 5th	2nd Plagel Tone Apol. Kont.	Ἀγγελικάι δυνάμεις: When the angelic powers... Ἱερωσύνης στολισμὸν: Zacharias (Psaltai) Ἰωακείμ καὶ Ἄννα: Your birth delivered...
September 12th	3rd Plagel Tone Trop. Kont. Megaly. Koin.	Κατέλυσας τῷ Στάυρῳ: O Lord by Your sacred Cross... Ἰγέννησίς σου Θεοτόκε: Your birth, O Theotokos... Ἰωακείμ καὶ Ἄννα: Your birth delivered... Ἀλλότριον τῶν Μητέρων: Virginity is... Ποτήριον σωτηρίου: The Cup of Salvation...

(9/14) Universal Celebration of the Elevation of the Sacred and Life-Giving Cross

September 19th	4th Plagel Tone Apol. Kont.	Ἐξ ὕψους κατήλθες: From on high did You... Σώσον, Κύριε: Save O Lord, Your people... Ὁ ὑψωθεῖς: Bestow Your mercies...
September 26th	1st Tone Apol. Koin.	Του λίθου σφράγισθέντος: The stone that had been... Ἀπόστολε, Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ: St. John the Theologian (Psaltai) Εἰς πᾶσαν τήν γῆν: Their proclamation has gone out...

National Church Music Sunday

October 3rd	2nd Tone Apol.	Ὅτε κατήλθες: When You descended to the realm of death... Χρηστότητα ἐκδιδῶχθεις: Dionysios (Psaltai)
October 10th	3rd Tone Apol.	Εὐφραινέσθω τὰ οὐράνια: Let all things above in heaven rejoice... Οἱ μάρτυρές Σου, Κύριε: Your martyrs, Lord...
October 17th	4th Tone Apol.	Το φαῖδρον: When the tidings of the resurrection from the angel... Υπέρδεδάσμενος εἰ, Χριστέ: Unending glory be Yours, O Christ...
October 24th	1st Plagel Tone Apol.	Τον συνάρχον Λόγον: Eternal with the Father... Τὰς ἀληθόνας: Greatmartyr Arethas (Psaltai)
October 31st	2nd Plagel Tone	Ἀγγελικάι δυνάμεις: When the angelic powers...
November 7th	3rd Plagel Tone Apol.	Κατέλυσας τῷ Στάυρῳ: O Lord by Your sacred Cross... Ταῖς ἐπαγρύπνοις προσευχαῖς: Lazarus (Psaltai)
November 14th	4th Plagel Tone Apol. Kont.	Ἐξ ὕψους κατήλθες: From on high did You... Ἀπόστολε ἄγιε Φίλιππε: O holy apostle Philip... Ὁ καθαρῶτατος Ναός: Behold the temple of the Savior

Presentation of the All Holy Theotokos in the Temple

November 22nd	1st Tone Apol. Kont. Megaly. Koin.	Του λίθου σφράγισθέντος: The stone that had been... Σήμερον τῆς εὐδοκίας: Today is the prelude of God's generosity... Ὁ καθαρῶτατος Ναός: Behold the temple of the Savior... Ἄγγελοι τὴν εἴσοδον: Ποτήριον σωτηρίου: The Cup of Salvation...
November 28th	2nd Tone Apol. Kont.	Ὅτε κατήλθες: When You descended to the realm of death... Ἀσκητικῶς προογυμνασθεῖς: Stephen (Psaltai) Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον: Today the Virgin...



Hymnographer Series

St. Cosmas of Maiuma

October 12th

(d 773 or 794)

“It is truly right to bless thee, O Theotokos, ever blessed, and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim. Without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify thee.”

St. Cosmas is credited with composing the second half of this familiar hymn, beginning with the words, “More honorable than the cherubim...”

St. Cosmas (Κοσμάς) was probably born in Damascus but was orphaned at a young age. He was adopted by Sergius, the father of St. John of Damascus and was John's foster-brother. John and Cosmas went together to Jerusalem, where they both became monks in the lavra (monastery) of St. Sabbas the Sanctified. Together they defended the Church against the heresy of iconoclasm. Cosmas left the monastery in 743 when he was appointed Bishop of Maiuma, the port of ancient Gaza on the southern coast of Palestine. He outlived St. John by many years and died in great old age. As a learned prose-author, Cosmas wrote commentaries, or scholia, on the poems of St. Gregory of Nazianzus. He was regarded with great admiration as a poet. St. Cosmas and St. John of Damascus are considered to be the best representatives of the later Greek classical hymnography, the most characteristic examples of which are known as “canons”. They worked together on the development of the Octoechos, the eight-tone cycle providing for texts to be chanted for every day.

Vocal Wisdom

Maxims of Giovanni Battista Lamperti

“The technical development of the voice is brought out by the double functioning of the lungs, which consists of: first, inhaling the breath noiselessly; and secondly, making use of the diaphragm to control the breath as economically as one pleases, in order to leave the vocal apparatus completely independent.”

(Lamperti, (1839-1910) has been described as “the last master of the old Italian manner of singing.” He was a teacher of the Bel Canto style of singing. We will be examining his maxims, from time to time, to apply them when possible to our choral singing.)

Excerpts from an article by Fr. Anthony Cook, in the Epistle, October 2007, a publication of Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, St. Clair Shores, Michigan. Fr. Cook advocates a return to Byzantine chant in the Greek Orthodox Church in America and the setting aside of polyphonic musical settings of our hymns.

“Both Byzantine chant and Gregorian Chant [of the Western Church] share the system of eight tones. However, as time passed in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance approached, the musical art was extensively refined and eventually developed, from these humble roots, into a complex and magnificent art form [in the West]. But in the course of that process, then emphasis on the text was left behind.

Anyone familiar with Western vocal music knows that, in most instances, the beauty of any piece resides in the music, not the words. The words are never central—people attend concerts for the aesthetic beauty of the music.

And this ultimately brings us back to the question of Church music, iconography and the essential and fundamental truths to which both have faithfully borne witness.

For it has become a truism among those who study religion in America that what people desire is not ultimately more programs, more glitz and glamour, or more artistic quality. What people desire, what people need, is the truth of Christ’s love and salvation, the truth that the Orthodox Church has preserved for two millennia.

It is for this reason that we must honor choir here at Assumption, for they are leaps and bounds ahead of the pack already in the effort to return our worship to the simplicity and elegance of our tradition. It is a hard path for them, for it means abandoning the beautiful experiment of the past 70 years in our churches, setting aside the magnificent choral music, the lush and full chords of polyphonic music. It means learning a tradition that is not easy to embrace, and perhaps hardest of all acting as advocates of a change which it is very difficult for many of us to accept.

But it is vitally important that we learn the lesson which is easily seen in the far-advanced decay of the Western churches.”

(For complete text refer to: <http://www.newbyz.org/franthyarticle.pdf>)

President’s Corner

I often heard my Father talk about a Preacher by the name of Billy Sunday. Rev. Sunday was active in the ministry in the early 19th century. Below are some of his thoughts, that I wanted to share with you. True nearly 100 years later!

- God likes a little humor, as evidence by the fact that He made the monkey, the parrot—and some of you people.
- Faith is the beginning of something of which you can’t see the end but in which you believe.
- Going to church doesn’t make a man a Christian, any more than going to a garage makes him an automobile.

George A. Peters

Rehearsal Schedule



Tuesday, September 7th 7:30 PM

Tuesday, September 21st 7:30 PM

Tuesday, September 28th 7:30 PM

Tuesday, October 5th 7:30 PM

Tuesday, October 25th 7:30 PM

Tuesday, November 2nd 7:30 PM

Tuesday, November 9th 7:30 PM

Tuesday, November 16th 7:30 PM

Tuesday, November 30th 7:30 PM



Choir Annual Picture Day

The Choir’s Annual Picture will be taken on October 3rd...the day that we celebrate this year the contribution of choirs to the Greek Orthodox Church. Please make sure that you are in attendance for this event. The picture will be used in the update of our church’s website and church directory when possible.



New Members

The truth is that many people wait to be asked to help or join in a group. A select few will offer their services unbidden, but they are the exception. We need new choir members to continually grow musically and enhance our sound and repertoire. Chances are good that the only way these new members will come into our ranks is if you ask them! If you know of someone who has singing ability and a willingness to give time to choir, then please, by all means, ask them to come to a rehearsal and give it a try!



**Choir of St. Paul's Greek
Orthodox Church**
4949 Alton Parkway
Irvine, CA 92604-8606



METROPOLIS OF
SAN FRANCISCO