



# ALOFT

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

Volume 3, Issue 1

## ♪ Notes from the Director ♪

My Friends,

Thoughts on Choir Recruitment.

*"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." I COR 1:10*

Recruitment of new choir members, it seems to me, is not so much a 'bringing-into' the choir of new singers; it is more like joining together and, in turn, our joining as one body with Christ.

A common mantra for the choir concerning recruitment is, "ask for participation" by approaching a targeted individual. There are certainly persons in the congregation who would never join a choir unless they were first asked to join.

Asking for participation is never a bad idea, but in reality a person chooses to join, and may be in fact *chosen* to sing by our Lord. It is a ministry of the church and not unlike other ministries, a person selects the ministry

My reflection on this issue began when another choir director approached me about our "recruitment" efforts since the church at which the director served was having problems attracting new members and retaining established ones. (We've been fortunate lately in that our choir membership has been on an up-swing curve.)

I want to make absolutely clear that sitting around passively while we wait for potential choir members to receive a "call" from a higher authority to serve is not what I am

advocating. Of course, we should make an effort at out-reach!

We usually make such a recruitment effort on the first Sunday in October which has been set aside by Archdiocese of America as National Church Music Sunday. On that Sunday, we even distribute business card-sized "invitations" to join us in the choir loft. We take annual photographs and find other ways to bring our mission to the notice of the congregation.

Perhaps more importantly, a more persuasive recruitment tool is to sing and chant with great beauty and expressiveness. More than any other thing that we do, people will be moved and motivated by what they hear. So it becomes important to us to sing the best that we can; we want our praises to be acceptable to God foremost. That our praises to God are inspiring to the congregation is definitely a worthy goal. The old adage, "you attract more bees with honey than with vinegar" seems appropriate, doesn't it?

How we appear to others can be a benefit to us. We wear robes to "equalize" our status before men; neither rich nor poor are excluded from God's service. The robe is our "vestment" and a symbol of our service to God. Should we remove them prematurely, do we deprive ourselves of our group identity and our being "*perfectly joined together in the same mind?*"

It's worth some thought...

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"



## Vocal Wisdom

Maxims of Giovanni Battista Lamperti

“Do not form permanent habits of singing until voice and breath are fused together, and all energies are coordinated. The difference between speaking and singing is continuity of vibration and energy. In speaking, momentum is constantly arrested; in singing, never.”

(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.)

## Byzantine Musician Series: Authentic Signature

The topic of Byzantine church music is complex; so much so that many treatises have been written on its nearly innumerable facets. The below quote is interesting in a very contemporary way:

*“Most early Byzantine composers were content to practice their craft anonymously in the service of the Church. Their names are unknown, and in their musical techniques a similar impersonality prevails. The early chants tend to be built out of little twists and turns of melody that everyone had heard and used for generations. The word composing actually means putting things together, and that was essentially what the Byzantine composers did. They arranged, adjusted and stylized from a fund of age-old melodic bits and phrases that were active in the communal memory. Therefore, when a “new” melody was created, it was often not entirely fresh and original. More frequently it was a refinement of some existing strains. It is for this reason I said earlier that impersonality prevails not only in anonymity but also in musical techniques.”* Excepted from A Brief Survey of the History of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Chant by Dimitri E. Conomos—Oxford University

Simply put, modern Greek Orthodox musicians still employ the same technique of “authentic signature” when arranging hymns for liturgical use; the same basic tones (or melodic segments) are re-used, albeit with “new” embellishments. Many composers also add polyphonic, or choral, elements to the essential melody as did Desby, Zes, Anastasiou, and Regos, among others, further transforming the original Byzantine intent for the chant. Polyphony in Byzantine Chant has been more or less common for over sixty years in America. There are those who would like to return to the older chant formulae; it is not clear to what degree. We watch the back-to-basics movement with much interest!



### Palm Sunday Luncheon

This year, as always, the choir will be hosting the Palm Sunday Luncheon. The choir officers are working hard to get several bids from different caterers to obtain the best price for the tastiest fish luncheon around! We will need all choir members as helpers, servers, and set-up/clean-up crew. Please offer your assistance enthusiastically and with love.



### Choir Officer Elections Held

We would like to sincerely thank the outgoing Choir Officers for their diligent stewardship of the choir's business during the past few years. God bless them all! We wish our new officers much success!



### Rehearsal Schedule



Tuesday, March 2nd 7:30pm

Tuesday, March 9th 7:30pm

Tuesday, March 16th 7:30pm

Tuesday, March 23rd 7:30pm

**(Sunday, April 4th, Great and Holy Pascha)**



Wednesday, April 13th 7:30pm

Tuesday, May 4th 7:30pm

Tuesday, May 18th 7:30pm

Tuesday, June 1st 7:30pm

Tuesday, June 8th 7:30pm

### 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

## New Music

We try to introduce new music into our repertoire to keep the musical experience at the Divine Liturgy fresh. In the near future, we plan to add a new **"Ton Evlogounta"** at the dismissal in the Liturgy. This hymn asks God's blessing on the celebrants of our Liturgy (the priests) requesting "many years" for them in the performance of their duties. We also are working on, and will add to the Liturgy soon, a new arrangement of **"Eis Agios."** This arrangement, by Frank Desby, is actually more than 50 years old, and not new in that sense, but new to us in the sense that we are going to use this beautiful music. It will be sung on occasion in Greek; most often in English.

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



METROPOLIS OF  
SAN FRANCISCO