



# ALOFT

“...not just singers; worshippers who sing”

Volume 4, Issue 4

## ♪ Notes from the Director ♪

*My Friends, through the kind permission of Fr. Steve, I am excerpting the below information on the Divine Liturgy.*

The solemn singing of the *Trisagion*, the thrice-holy hymn praising the Most Holy Trinity, is one of the most important and oldest of our Orthodox hymns. The story told about the origin of this hymn connects it to an earthquake that shook Constantinople sometime in 450AD. The earthquake proved catastrophic and people gathered in the streets and began praying, asking God to have mercy on them, singing *Kyrie Eleison* or Lord have mercy. During this tragedy a small boy came forward and said that, in a vision he had heard the hymn of the angels gathered around the throne of God, singing what we today call the *Trisagion*: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. The people took up this chant and the aftershocks ceased. Clearly based on the song of the angelic Seraphim heard by the Prophet Isaiah (6:5), by the end of the 6th century, the *Trisagion* had been incorporated into the text of the Liturgy. Today, the *Trisagion* constitutes the last part of the Great Doxology at Matins and should also be a part of every Orthodox Christian's morning and evening prayers. It is even sung in Greek and Latin on Holy Friday at St. Peter's Basilica in the Roman Catholic Church.

In the Orthodox tradition the *Trisagion* is primarily understood as a hymn to the Most Holy Trinity. St. John of Damascus (676-749AD) wrote a whole book explaining the meaning of this hymn! This teaching is best summed up in a hymn written by the Emperor Leo the Wise (866-912AD) for the feast of Pentecost,

which we still sing at Vespers on that day. “Come, peoples of all nations, and let us worship God in three persons: the Son in the Father, with the Holy Spirit. For the Father, before time began, begot the Son, co-eternal and co-reigning with Him; and the Holy Spirit was in the Father, and glorified with the Son; one power, one essence, one God, whom we all worship as we sing: Holy God, who created all things through the Son, with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit! Holy Mighty, through whom we have come to know the Father, and through whom the Holy Spirit came into the world! Holy Immortal, the Comforting Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son! Holy Trinity, glory to you!”

What does it mean for us to sing this ancient hymn and call God thrice holy? *First*, it signifies that the God whom we worship is completely, totally and utterly transcendent. *Second*, because the *Trisagion* is based on the hymn of the angels, St. Nicholas Cabasilas (c.1319-1391) comments that in singing the hymn during the Liturgy “human beings and angels form one Church and one choir.” *Third*, to call God thrice-holy implies His absolute purity.

The holiness of God demands repentance: the cleansing and purification of one's life in love to Him.

Since the Choir's main responsibility is to assist with the praises at the Divine Liturgy, I thought the afore-quoted information from Fr. Steve's new booklet, “The Divine Liturgy,” would be helpful to you.

Robert Paul



REV. STEVEN TSICHLIS  
Pastor

REV. THEOPHANIS DEGAITAS  
Assistant Pastor

ROBERT A. HENNING  
Choir Director

ROLAND JENSTER  
Organist

### CHOIR OFFICERS

GEORGE PETERS  
President

MARIA ELENA KONUGRES  
Vice President

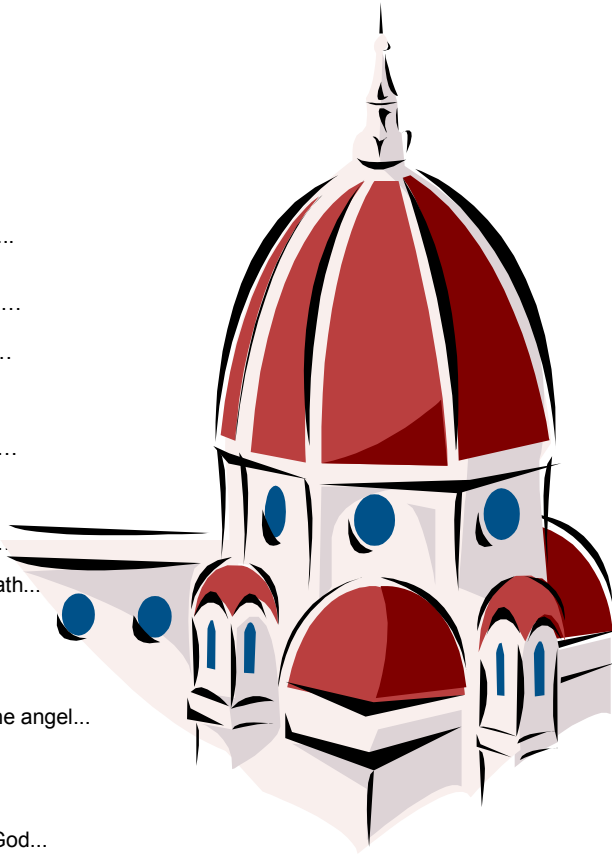
ANASTASIA GENTRY  
Secretary

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”

January 1st	4th Tone Apol. Apol. Kont. Megaly.	Το φαιδρόν: When the tidings of the resurrection from the angel... Μορφήν ἀναλλοιώτως: You took on human form... Εἰς πασαν τήν γην: Your proclamation has gone out... Ὁ των ὄλων Κύριος: Now the Lord of all... Ἐπί σοί χαίρει: All creation rejoices....
January 8th	1st Plagel Tone Apol. Kont.	Τον συνάρχον Λόγον: Eternal with the Father... Ἐν Ἰορδάνῃ: In the Jordan... Ἐπεφάνης σήμερον You have revealed Yourself...
January 15th	2nd Plagel Tone Apol. Kont.	Ἀγγελικάι δυνάμεις: When the angelic powers... Ἐκ βρέφους τόν Κύριον: Since your early youth... Ὁ μήτραν παρθενικήν: For our salvation You took flesh...
January 22nd	3rd Plagel Tone Apol. Apol. Kont.	Κατέλυσας τώ Στάυρῳ: Ο Lord by Your sacred Cross... Χρηστότητα ἐκδιδαχθεῖς: Since you had been instructed... Ὁ Μάρτυς σου: Your martyrs, Lord... Ὁ μήτραν παρθενικήν For our salvation You took flesh...
January 29th	4th Plagel Tone Apol. Kont.	Εξ ὕψους κατήλθες: From on high did You... Καί τρόπων μέτοχος: (Ignatius) Ὁ μήτραν παρθενικήν: For our salvation You took flesh...
February 5th	1st Tone Apol. Kont.	Του λίθου σφράγισθέντος: The stone that had been... Χαίρε, κεχαριτωμένη: Rejoice, O woman full of grace... Ὁ μήτραν παρθενικήν: For our salvation You took flesh...
February 12th	2nd Tone Kont.	Οτε κατήλθες: When You descended to the realm of death... Τῆς πατρῶας δόξης σου: From my father's glory...
February 19th	3rd Tone Kont.	Εὐφρανέσθω τά οὐράνια: Let all things above... Ὅταν ἔλθῃς ὁ Θεός: When You come to the earth...
February 26th	4th Tone Kont.	Το φαιδρόν: When the tidings of the resurrection from the angel... Της σοφίας ὀδηγέ: Ο You Who are the source...
		<b>Sunday of Orthodoxy-First Sunday of Great Lent</b>
March 4th	1st Plagel Tone Apol. Kont. Megal.	Τον συνάρχον Λόγον: Eternal with the Father... Τήν ἀχραντον Εἰκόνα Σου: Your sacred Icon Christ our God... Τῆ ὑπερμάχῳ: To you as champion... Ἐπί σοί χαίρει: All creation rejoices...



## HYMNOGRAPHER SERIES OCTOBER 11TH

### Idiomela on Friday of Cheese-Sunday (Excerpt-by St. Theophanes)

By what skill of mortal tongue  
Shall your wondrous acts by sung?  
All the conflicts of the soul,  
All you struggles towards the goal;  
And you virtues' prize immense,  
And you victories over sense,  
How perpetual watch you kept  
Over passion, prayed and wept:

Yea, every angels came,  
Visible in earthly frame,  
And the Satan girt for fight,  
Utterly overthrew his might.  
Famed for signs and wonders rare,  
Join to ours, Great Saints, your prayers:  
Ask that we, you ever blest,  
May attain the Land of Rest!

Our father among the saints Theophanes the Confessor (also called Theophanes the Branded) was Bishop of Nicea. He was the younger brother of St. Theodore the Branded (Dec. 27th), who is also known for being a hymnographer. With his brother, St. Theophanes was famed as an advocate of icon veneration. Along with his brother he boldly fulfilled the mission entrusted of them by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and went to Constantinople to denounce the iconoclast emperor Leo the Armenian. The saints had to endure imprisonment, hunger, and even torture. The emperor Theophilus gave orders to inscribe a phrase insulting to the glorious confessors upon their faces with red-hot needles and they were thereafter called "the branded". St. Theodore died in prison, but St. Theophanes was sent into exile. With the restoration of icon veneration, St. Theophanes was returned from exile and consecrated Bishop of Nicea. The saint wrote about 150 canons, among which is a beautiful canon in defense of holy icons. He died peacefully around the year 850.

## Vocal Wisdom

Maxims of Giovanni Battista Lamperti

“The throat feels ‘open’ only when diction controls vibration, resonance and breath-energy as a unit. Good diction alone excites the pneumatic action in the throat, causing it to feel ‘free’ at the same time it commandeers the energies throughout the whole body and mind. Then singing is easy, and a pleasure to both artist and audience.”

(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.)

## President’s Corner

When we started our church in South Orange County with 57 families the Archdiocesan Council granted our charter in November 1977. Increasing our membership was very important. As a Parish Council member I greeted worshippers each Sunday, many of whom became members. One such couple who became dedicated worshippers and workers was a “young” Jim and Anne Mantras. They also have been “core” members of St. Paul’s Choir. God Bless Them!

George A. Peters

**Choir Executive Board elections are scheduled for Jan. 8th. Please be there to vote for your favorite candidate!**

### Rehearsal Schedule



Tuesday, January 10th 7:30pm

Tuesday, January 24th 7:30pm

Tuesday, January 31st 7:30pm

Tuesday, February 7th 7:30pm

Tuesday, February 21st 7:30pm



Tuesday, March 6th 7:30pm

Tuesday, March 13th 7:30pm

Tuesday, March 20th 7:30pm

Tuesday, March 27th 7:30pm

Tuesday, April 3rd 7:30pm

## Annual Choir Party

The Annual Choir Party is tentatively scheduled for Jan. 12th at the Newport Rib Co. in Costa Mesa. Please watch for further info at future rehearsals, email, and on Sunday mornings.

## Liturgical Symbolism

(The below excerpt is from the article “The Pentheke Synod of 691-692AD and Liturgical Reform” by Fr. Alkiviades Calivas published in the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*)

Liturgical actions generally beg for an explanation. “Why do we say this or do that...? Lacking sufficient information, the tendency is to invent and supply the action with one or more arbitrary symbolic interpretations, which may well defy both the structural laws of liturgy and the historical evidence. Such poor interpretations tend to be “survivors” because they are often enveloped in an aura of inauthentic “mysticism” even though they cannot express adequately what they are supposed to signify. One such action is the waving of the “aer” over the Eucharistic elements. The custom of raising and waving the aer over the Eucharistic elements as the creed is being recited first appeared in the 15th century. The practice of holding it over the head of the presiding bishop at an Episcopal liturgy appeared later, around the 17th century. The custom, however, has a long history and may have first appeared as early as the 6th century in Syria. Initially, the practice may have served the same function as the liturgical fans, which were waved over the Eucharistic gifts in order to keep insects away. Today, the most often quoted symbolic interpretation of the waving of the aer has to do with the resurrection of Christ. The aer is said to represent the great stone that covered the Tomb and was rolled away at the time of the Resurrection. However, such an interpretation is unrelated to the text of the Divine Liturgy.

**Join Now!**

### 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!



Coffee

## Choir Coffee Hour

Choir Coffee Hour comes around on the first Sunday of every month. It is especially important for all of us to help with this effort so that the burden is not borne by the few. Please mark your calendars!

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METROPOLIS OF  
SAN FRANCISCO