PRAXIS

πραξις

Music in the Church

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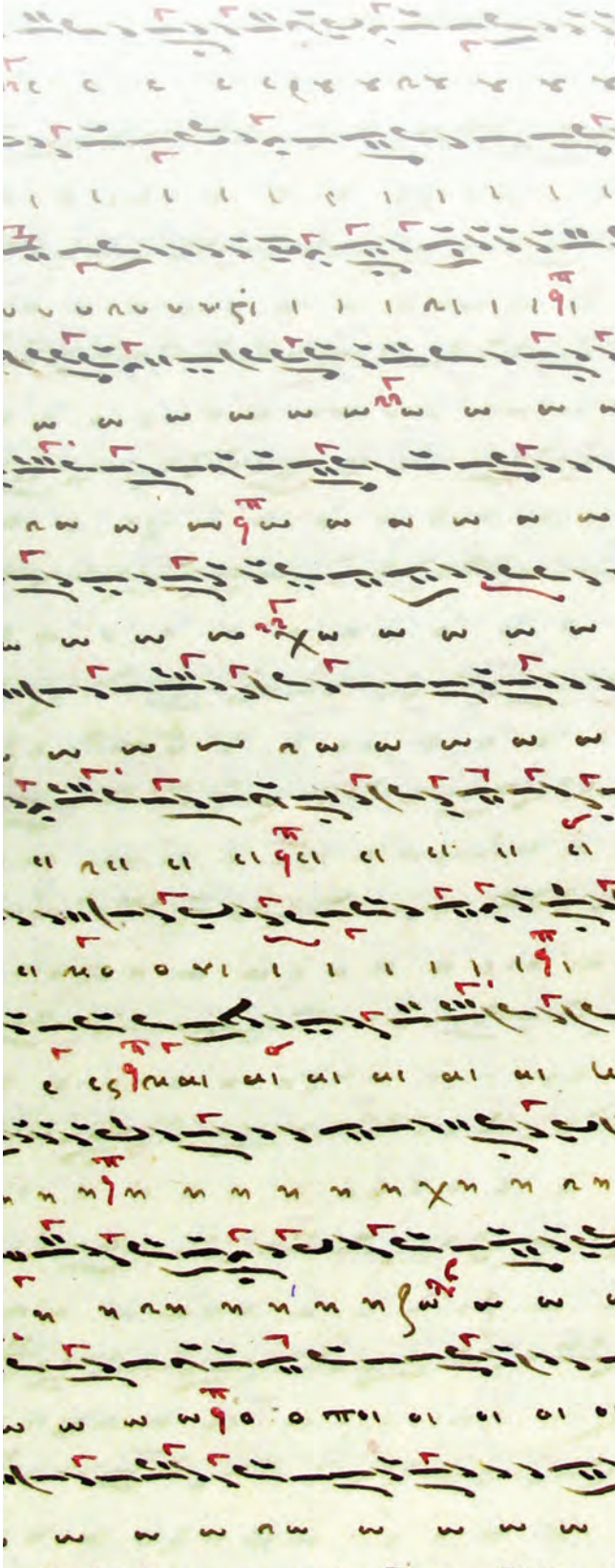
This image depicts the famous dream of St. Romanos the Melodist. Around 518 AD, Romanos was a singer in a church in Constantinople. His fellow singers often made fun of his lack of musical knowledge and theological education. On Christmas Eve, Romanos was assigned the task of leading the singing for the vigil that evening. He prayed to the Theotokos for help. She appeared to him in a dream, holding a scroll. "Here, eat this," she said. That night at the service, Romanos sang the hymn that we now know as the Kontakion of the Nativity, "Today the Virgin" (*I Parthenos simeron*). The entire congregation, including the emperor and the patriarch, marveled at the theology being expressed and the quality of his voice. His fellow singers begged for his forgiveness. Romanos went on to become one of the most prolific writers of hymns, writing perhaps as many as 1,000 of them.

Wisdom, Ancient And modern



Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

– Psalm 95:1

My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, and my soul, which You have redeemed.

– Psalm 71:23

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

– Colossians 3:16

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!"

– Revelation 15:3

...Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

– Ephesians 5:18–19

Singing belongs to one who loves.

– St. Augustine, Sermon 336

We should offer up doxologies to God with fear and a contrite heart, in order that they may be accepted like fragrant incense.

– St. John Chrysostom, On Psalm 140

Nothing so arouses the soul, gives it wing, sets it free from the earth, releases it from the prison of the body, teaches it to love wisdom and to despise all the things of this life, as concordant melody and sacred song composed in rhythm.

– St. John Chrysostom, On Psalm 41

Psalmody, bringing about choral singing, a bond, as it were, toward unity, and joining people into a harmonious union of one choir, produces also the greatest of blessings: love.

– St. Basil the Great, Exegetic Homily 10

Pray gently and calmly, sing with understanding and rhythm; then you will soar like a young eagle high in the heavens. Psalmody calms the passions and curbs the uncontrolled impulses in the body.

– Evagrios the Solitary, On Prayer

† DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Χριστός Ἀνέστη!

During this joyous Paschal season our celebration is filled with hymns of praise, adoration and thanksgiving as we are embraced by the presence and love of our Risen Lord, and we offer a witness to the world of the true life that comes through Him. This joy and witness of Pascha and of our Orthodox faith are also shared throughout the entire year and the liturgical cycle through our worship, and, in relation to the topic of this issue of *PRAXIS,* through Church music.

Music is such a vital part of our worship and our witness because it combines revelation and inspiration with the beauty of human expression and ability. In our communion with God and our engagement with truth and meaning, music engages more of our physical and spiritual senses and helps us move beyond only words to a deeper expression and experience of the divine. Through the power of the Holy Sprit, our sacred music inspires and strengthens all of our being—soul, heart, mind and body—in the grace of God.

Music in our Orthodox worship and faith significantly enhances the educational ministry of the parish in several important ways. First, our worship and music guide us in our communion with God, our Source of life and faith, and, for us as religious educators, of all that we are called to teach and do. The music of the Church opens hearts and minds to the revelation of God's love and will. Most importantly, our music is an essential part of our response to God, our calling as His people to offer Him worship and praise as our Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer.

The spiritual nature of music in the Church is important to religious education for a second reason. In contrast to much of the secular music in our world today, our sacred music helps us to recognize and teach to others the differences and influences of the holy and the profane, of what affirms the good and potential in our humanity and what demeans it, of what leads us to life and what leads to destruction. As religious educators, we can guide others to maturity in the faith and to greater levels of discernment by emphasizing the importance and power of sacred music and by using it as a resource in our teaching.

Third, the use of church music in religious education is essential because we find in this beautiful tradition of our Church an abundant treasure of theology and witness. Available to us are hymns for every day of the year, hymns that explain the truth of faith and life in connection with our feasts and observances, and hymns that show us through the lives of saints how to live in communion with God and to offer a witness of His grace and power through our commitment and service.

Finally, this relationship of church music and religious education is also significant for the life of the parish because it is not limited to the Sunday school classroom. The opportunity to teach our faith can also be found in our choir programs and certainly in our divine services. Although much time and attention may be given to practice and performance in our adult, youth and children's choirs, attention should also be given to the message and meaning of what is being sung. Before and following our divine services, parents and teachers should use the opportunity to explain what our hymns are saying and how they communicate the truth that God has revealed to us. Certainly, this guidance can even continue in the home, where sacred music can be sung, heard and discussed in family worship and prayer.

As you read this issue of *PRAXIS,* I encourage you to consider the important role of sacred music in our Orthodox faith and how you are using it in your work as religious educators. Our sacred music guides and enhances our understanding and experience of God and our life in communion with Him. This is also your responsibility as teachers, as you use all of the resources of our faith to help others grow into maturity in Christ.

With paternal love in Christ,

† DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America

† Iakovos
Metropolitan of Chicago

My Beloved in the Lord,

> Together we make up a single choir in perfect equality...whereby earth imitates heaven. Such is the noble character of the Church.
> – *St. John Chrysostom (Homily 5 on the Psalms)*

The worship of the Church is a living icon of the worship of Heaven; better yet, our worship is joined to the worship of those gathered before the Throne of God, which has included music from the beginning. The Church was born singing, and it has never ceased to sing!

If the focus of the Church's music is in the form of song, this is because, for the Orthodox, liturgical music is "performed" only on the most perfect instrument of God's creation: the human voice. While instruments are mentioned in the Bible (as in the Psalms), nowhere in the New Testament is human worship described as anything but sung.

This is not to suggest that musicians cannot glorify God with their instruments and compositions, or produce inspiring works that raise our spirits. Yet *worship* "in spirit and in truth" is not a matter of individual or group performance for the entertainment or inspiration of others; it is a common activity by which we, as St. Ignatios of Antioch describes,

> ...person by person, become a choir, that being harmonious in love, and taking up the song of God in unison, you all may, with one voice, sing to the Father through Jesus Christ, so that He may both hear you and perceive by your works that you are indeed the members of His Son. *(To the Ephesians)*

The richness of our Orthodox liturgical music is astounding, and the inheritance of Byzantine chant truly a great gift—increasingly appreciated by those outside the Orthodox Church. Yet our music is not simply about sweet sounds and melodies, but also the rich content of our hymns, the *words* we use to praise and glorify the Word of God. Much of our hymnography, such as that found in the *Octoechos* described in this issue of *PRAXIS,* is both source and expression of our theology.

We are grateful that this issue focuses on the central action of our sacred worship, so that as the Church grows in the twenty-first century, we will delve deeper into our sacred tradition and, by incorporating it into our lives, we may emerge better equipped to worship "in spirit and truth," building on these foundations with new compositions consistent with an Orthodox vision and ethos, and realizing that, again in the words of St. Ignatios, in our "agreement and harmonious love, Jesus Christ is sung."

With love in Christ our Savior,

† Iakovos
Metropolitan of Chicago

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions should be 1,000–2,000 words in length and directly discuss education in the theology and tradition of the Orthodox Christian churches. Lesson aids or graphic enhancements may accompany the articles submitted. We also encourage the submission of photographs relevant to parish life (praxis). Please also provide a biographical sketch of the author not exceeding fifty words.

PRAXIS Magazine is seeking submissions of lesson plans based on articles from previous or current issues of PRAXIS. Submissions should use the article as the text/background of the lesson plan. Lesson plans are welcome for any or several age groups. Please send submissions in a Word document with a length of 1,000–2,000 words to tvrame@goarch.org.

Material previously published or under consideration for publication elsewhere will not be considered without prior consent of the editor. We reserve the right to edit for usage and style; all accepted manuscripts are subject to editorial modification. Articles sent by mail should be accompanied by an electronic version on CD-ROM in Microsoft Word for Windows or for Macintosh. Articles in Microsoft Word may also be e-mailed as an attachment to tvrame@goarch.org.

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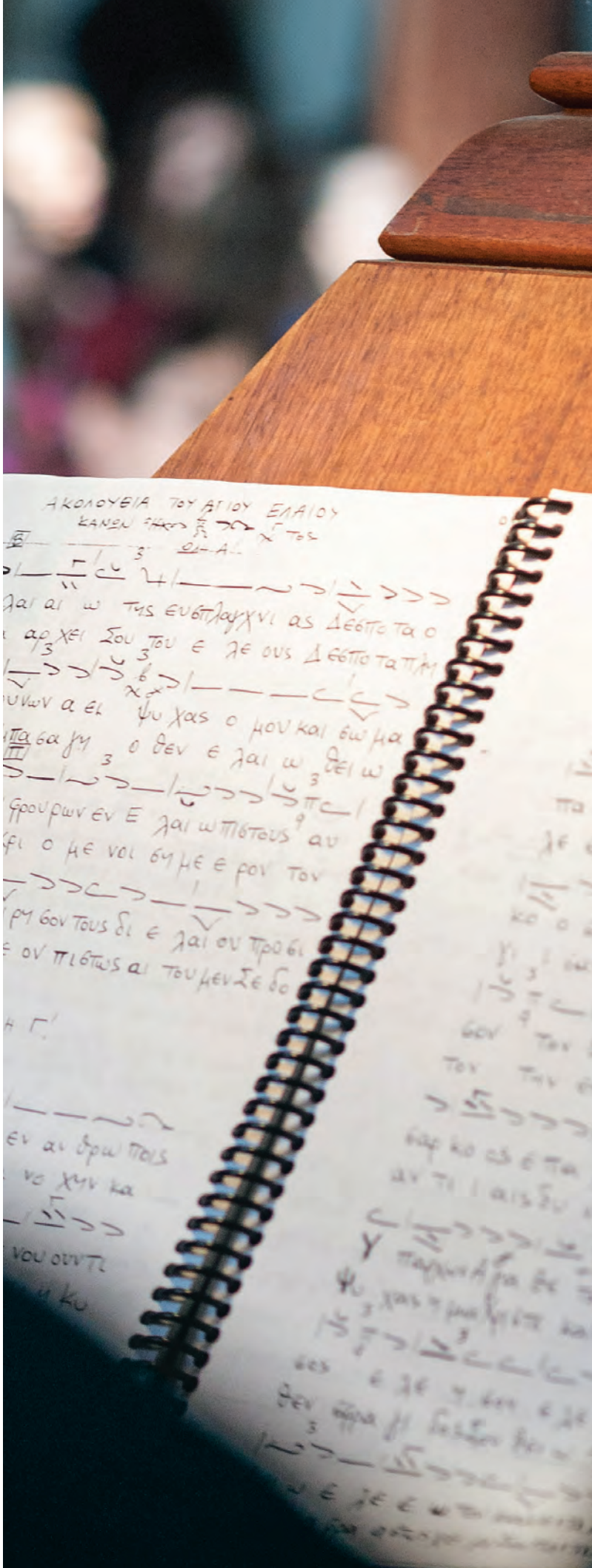

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SERIES & ARTICLES

BYZANTINE MUSIC

The Fabric of Greek Orthodox Liturgy

JOHN MICHAEL BOYER

Byzantine music is what is known as a "living tradition," meaning that it has an unbroken lineage, both written and oral, from its inception and to this day. This is not to say that the music has not changed, but that in its history of at least 1,400 years, it has developed naturally—one could even say organically—as successive generations of saints, hymnographers, melodists, theorists, cantors and clergy have contributed to its repertoire. If there is any single musical form that can be called "the traditional music of the Orthodox Church," this is it; virtually all other music in Orthodoxy worldwide has its roots in some form of the Byzantine tradition.

Unfortunately, we in the United States seem to have problems of perception and preconception when it comes to Byzantine music. Although we often hear of the beauty of our musical tradition, one also may hear it called oriental, mysterious, dissonant, nasal, virtuosic, improvisatory and other impressive descriptors that may be meant to call into question its appropriateness for Orthodox worship in America. In an attempt to raise the level of discourse regarding our Orthodox musical heritage, this article will provide some general information about Byzantine music, specifically regarding how it fits into Orthodox liturgy.

Melody and Mode

Byzantine music is an exclusively melodic tradition consisting of a system of eight distinct musical modes. The beauty of this musical form therefore lies in the expression of melodies ranging from very simple and syllabic to highly complex and melismatic. The melodies in a given musical mode are composed of a finite set of melodic formulas—that is, patterns or phrases—called *theseis*. In linguistic terms, one can think of theseis as the melodic "words" of the Byzantine musical language. Just as with prose or poetry, it is not in the invention of new words that creative expression usually takes place, but with the arrangement of already existing words in a particular order. Similarly, in Byzantine music, it is not in the innovation of completely new tunes, but the careful and creative arrangement of traditional theseis within a given musical mode that creates melodic masterpieces.

This process is closely tied to liturgical text; in fact, it is the text itself—its structure, syntax, rhetoric, content and liturgical function—that most determines how it will be set to melody. This is true whether it is a psalm or canticle from Scripture, a prayer or response in liturgical dialogue, or one of the more than 55,000 hymns of various genres that comprise the vast treasury of Byzantine hymnography today.

Tied To liTurgy

Byzantine music is an extremely sophisticated, highly developed liturgical art form with a vast and complex history. It continues to flourish and grow. New works in the received tradition are composed virtually every day. This is not only because of its great beauty and sophistication, but also out of ecclesiastical necessity: Byzantine music is inseparable from Orthodox liturgy, and vice versa.

The "vice versa" may be surprising, but it is true. The fact of the matter is that every liturgical service in the Orthodox Church is written, designed and developed with Byzantine music in mind. Each sung text is assigned a musical mode, and in every case, that assignment is according to the Byzantine modal system. In some cases, the rubrics of the Church even call for a specific musical setting for a text, often with the direction *argos kai meta melos,* that is, "slowly and with [substantial] melody," indicating that the liturgical moment in question be expanded musically. All things considered, our services, our rubrics and our liturgical books *assume* that Byzantine music is the music of the Church.

For all Seasons

Many clergy and congregations seem to be crying out for a change in musical and liturgical formats here in the United States. At any given parish, one can hear comments such as, "The musical tradition of the Church has always been..." or "It would be better if we had..." or "We're really supposed to have..." These truisms almost invariably end in one of three ways: "...congregational singing!" (most common); "...a well-trained choir!" (almost as common); or "...a really good solo chanter!" (perhaps less common). The truth, however, may be surprising: all three are correct, simultaneously.

A danger of living as Orthodox Christians in the Western world is succumbing to that tendency of the Western worldview that sees issues in terms of extremes: things are either all one way or all another. As Orthodox, we must remember that there is only one absolute: God Himself. The rest of the time, reality usually has more than one layer, more than one perspective, more than one solution.

In the case of Orthodox liturgy, the truth is that each of these three approaches to music—congregational singing, a well-trained choir and a virtuosic solo cantor—is correct, sanctified and liturgically appropriate in the Orthodox Church, *depending on the liturgical moment*. This is borne out not only in our liturgical and musical history, but also in the Church's financial records. At Hagia Sophia, the Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople, records

indicate that the liturgical music program employed two full choir sides, each side including the following positions:

- **A choir director and soloists.** For the right choir, the soloist was called the *domestikos,* loosely translated as "house cantor," and later called the *protopsaltis,* "first cantor." For the left choir, the soloist was the *lampadarios,* "lamp-bearer."
- **A designated soloist,** called the *monofonarios,* "soloist."
- **A choir of twelve paid *psaltes,*** "cantors," on each side.
- **The "choir of readers,"** numbering up to 120 per side.

The choir director's and soloists' jobs are straightforward. The choir of psaltes was a group of *well-trained, educated singers* whose job it was to sing the more difficult, sophisticated musical forms used in liturgy. The choir of readers was responsible for *leading the congregation* in singing responses and refrains. Thus, in the liturgical, musical and financial manuscripts of this ancient church, we see that not only are congregational singing, a well-trained choir and a virtuosic solo cantor *not* mutually exclusive, they are *complementary.* For a single well-executed liturgy, "The musical tradition of the Church has always been..." and "It would be better if we had..." and "We're really supposed to have..." *All three* textures are part and parcel of the Byzantine musical tradition.

One of the beautiful things about Byzantine music is its flexibility. With its many modes, genres, textures and forms, it is the perfect fit for any given liturgical moment, whether that moment calls for congregational singing, a trained choir or a virtuosic solo chanter. During a single Divine Liturgy, for example, every response by the people in dialogue with the priest or deacon—"Amen," "Lord, have mercy," "Grant this, O Lord" and "To you, O Lord"—is *meant* to be sung congregationally. Thus, they are traditionally simple enough for everyone to sing along, and melodic enough to be interesting to the average person.

At the *Antiphons (Tes presvies* and *Soson imas)*, the psalm verses that precede each refrain are designed for a solo cantor; the refrains are designed for the whole congregation to respond, led by the choir. In fact, these were originally marches, with the whole community singing the refrains while in procession on the way to liturgy.

The *Trisagion* is designed to be sung congregationally, led by the choirs. The *Dynamis* of the Trisagion, however, as an extension of the liturgical moment and musical meditation on the text, is a more elaborate and virtuosic version of the hymn. It is designed for the trained choirs to sing, often with a cantorial solo at its climax, *Agios Athanatos,* "Holy Immortal." Thus this one liturgical element, the Trisagion, shows the wonderful synergy possible with Byzantine music, incorporating clergy, congregation, choir and soloist in various textures through the melodic execution of a single hymn.

The rest of the Divine Liturgy is similarly varied in texture: the dialogue of the *Anaphora* (the Holy Oblation), is traditionally set very simply, in a recitative style, perfect for the whole congregation to participate in as with one voice. On the other hand, the long, melismatic meditations of the Cherubic Hymn and communion hymn are designed for trained choirs and soloists, showing a glimpse of that angelic liturgy in heaven as the congregation prepares to receive the Eucharist. After communion, the hymns are again meant for the whole congregation, led by the choir, to express its thanksgiving at having received the body and blood of Christ, ending with the communal "Amen," expressing with one voice the agreement of the whole Church.

As the Greek Orthodox Church in the United States continues to grow and develop, our musical forms are due serious consideration. In weaving the tapestry of the liturgy, we must remember that the best tapestries are those with many colors and textures, woven from material that is both strong and flexible. For the Greek Orthodox Church, that is traditionally and most practically Byzantine music. Regardless of the chosen musical form, however, a well-woven liturgy requires great investment in liturgical music resources as well as education for cantors, choirs, congregations and clergy alike. If achieved, the result could very well inspire visitors to exclaim, "Surely God dwells there among humans...for we cannot forget that beauty."

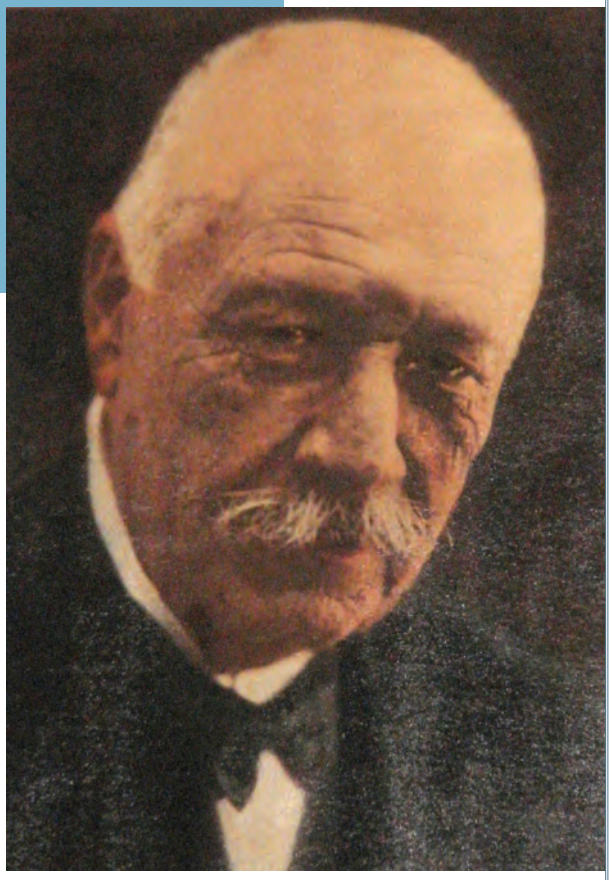
John Michael Boyer is Protopsaltis of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco and director of the St. John Koukouzelis Institute for Liturgical Arts. He is a seminarian earning his MDiv at Holy Cross, as well as a graduate of the music department at University of California, Berkeley, and a member of the vocal ensemble Cappella Romana.

THE CALIFORNIA COMPOSERS

LITURGICAL MUSIC IN THE UNITED STATES

NICK TARLSON

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Greek Orthodox Church music took a turn that still generates heated debate among musicians. According to Steven Karidoyanes, John Sakellarides (c. 1853–1938), a musician writing in Greece, published his versions of the Divine Liturgy and other hymns, transcribing the Byzantine notation into Western notation, adding harmony that many would call "Western." The debate centers on the effects of Sakellarides's work: Was it a natural or a horrible development in Greek Orthodox Church music? Was it flawed, and if so, on what basis? Although the debate continues to this day, Sakellarides's work nevertheless became a major source for Church musicians, especially in the United States, influencing the musical ears of Greek Orthodox Christians for a century.



John S Akell Aride S

In the 1930s and 1940s, George Anastasiou, Nicholas Roubanis and Christos Vrionides, some of the first composers working the United States, took Sakellarides's work and expanded upon it. These composers' works were based on a variety of traditional approaches to harmonization, such as the

use of parallel thirds to harmonize to the melody, sung by the sopranos, and the use of a bass and/or tenor drone or pedal point—an adaptation of the *ison*—for the men's voices. Their works are still in popular use in many of our parishes.

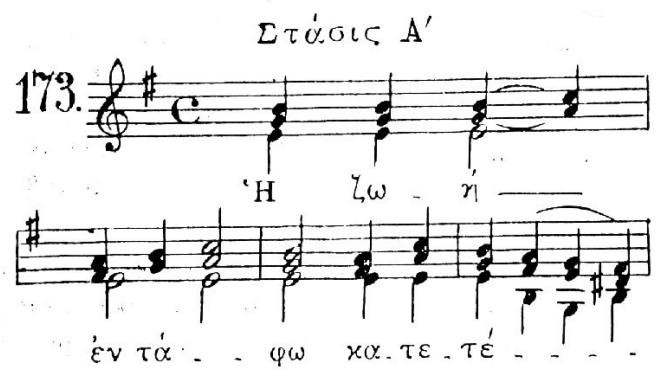
In the 1950s, a new generation of composers, based largely in California, began producing choral music with additional developments. Their compositions included extensive use of complex modal harmony and counterpoint, distinguishing them significantly from the earlier works. They also professed a closer loyalty to the Neo-Byzantine modal system than their predecessors did. Not only did they know Western music, they also knew the Byzantine manuscripts and its tradition as well. The earliest of these to publish a complete setting of the Divine Liturgy was Hollywood's Frank Desby, who described his work in rather colorful terms:

"Early attempts at choral settings resulted in the effacing of the very modal quality that the chant melody was required to express. Simply stated, the authors of early harmonizations had limited, if any, knowledge of the technique of modal harmony and counterpoint, so that their music had the major–minor tonality of ordinary Western music. It is no wonder, then, that these harmonizations evoked severe criticism and rejection. With the destruction of modality went also the ethos and therefore the value of this worship music...[The new music] preserves the modality and ethos of the various hymns and responses without changing the traditional melodic line of the original chant."

Desby may have overstated his case. One cannot deny that the earlier composers inspired and supported liturgical worship for millions of faithful Orthodox in America; however, his strong words may help explain how the new composers viewed their contribution to the musical literature. Some principal composers of this period include Desby (1922–1992), Tikey Zes (b. 1927 and still active in Church music), Theodore Bogdanos (b. 1932), Peter Michaelides (b. 1930), and Steven Cardiasmenos (b. 1958 and still directing the choir in Belmont, CA). These composers used a unique approach to adapting Byzantine melodies for use in the Greek Orthodox Church in the United States, resulting in a unique "sound" for the contemporary Greek Orthodox liturgy. A variety of controversies associated with these innovations arose along the way, but these were overcome by contributions of these lay musicians. In a way this had a significant impact on the development and evolution of Greek Orthodox liturgical music in the United States from the middle of the twentieth century to the present day.

Frank Desby

Frank Desby "broke the ice" with his use of modal harmony and counterpoint. He refocused Greek Orthodox Church musicians on the Byzantine ethos, adding Western techniques that had not been used widely before his time. He also reintroduced Byzantine performance techniques—such as responsorial singing—that had been neglected or abandoned by his predecessors in the early twentieth-century Greek Orthodox music choral literature. Desby's work opened the way for dozens of composers throughout the United States to apply modal harmony and polyphonic techniques to enrich and embellish Greek Orthodox Church music. Although not entirely without controversy himself, Desby wrote about the general climate that he worked under: "All of the Archbishops of these [post-war] periods, despite their traditional upbringing, encouraged the adaptation of choral music and inclusion of an accompanying instrument."



Holy Friday Lamentations, First stasis, arranged by John sakellarides

Tikey Zes added parts for the organ and developed English arrangements. He worked both sides of the Desby spectrum, with his first Divine Liturgy marking the more difficult side of the repertoire and his later liturgies tailored to choirs of lesser ability, or with limited rehearsal time. He compensated for simplifications of the choral parts by adding independent organ accompaniment and applying a variety of contrapuntal techniques to enrich the texture of the music. He also used responsorial techniques, even more than Desby had, to add interest for the listeners and reduce fatigue of the singers.

Theodore Bogdanos and Steve Cardiasmenos added to the Sakellarides repertoire by contributing new melodies as well as new arrangements of existing material. Bogdanos provided essential tools for the Church musician to follow the appointed liturgical music throughout the year. Cardiasmenos broke new ground in composing music in English and music for youth choirs. Commenting on Cardiasmenos's work, the late Metropolitan Anthony (Gergiannakis) of San Francisco wrote, "The modern composer of liturgical music is...confronted with a far from simple task: to write for contemporary tastes and needs, but always with respect for that precious legacy, above all to compose in a mode that can only be defined by the untranslatable Greek word *semnotis,* that serves the Divine Liturgy and does not call attention to itself..."

Peter Michaelides's 1960 manuscript for the Divine Liturgy was found and recorded by Cappella Romana, under the direction of Alexander Lingas. This English liturgy is California all the way. It could be seen as a forerunner of what John Tavener would later do with Orthodox liturgical music. But at the time it was considered "unorthodox" and was never performed or used in a Church setting.

Over time, Greek Orthodox faithful became accustomed to a new sound, one that was loyal to the ethos of the traditional Byzantine chant, but with more use of polyphony and organ accompaniment, and with English text. Such innovation in the ancient Orthodox Church in a mere half-century was destined to create controversy. But it seems clear that this new musical repertoire meets the test of time and has become accepted in the American Greek Orthodox Church.

Nick Tarlson is Music Director at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in San Francisco. He received his MA in Theology from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley through the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute. He presented a paper incorporating similar themes at the American Society of Byzantine Music and Hymnology in Peania, Greece, in November 2011.

Leading Musical Figures in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

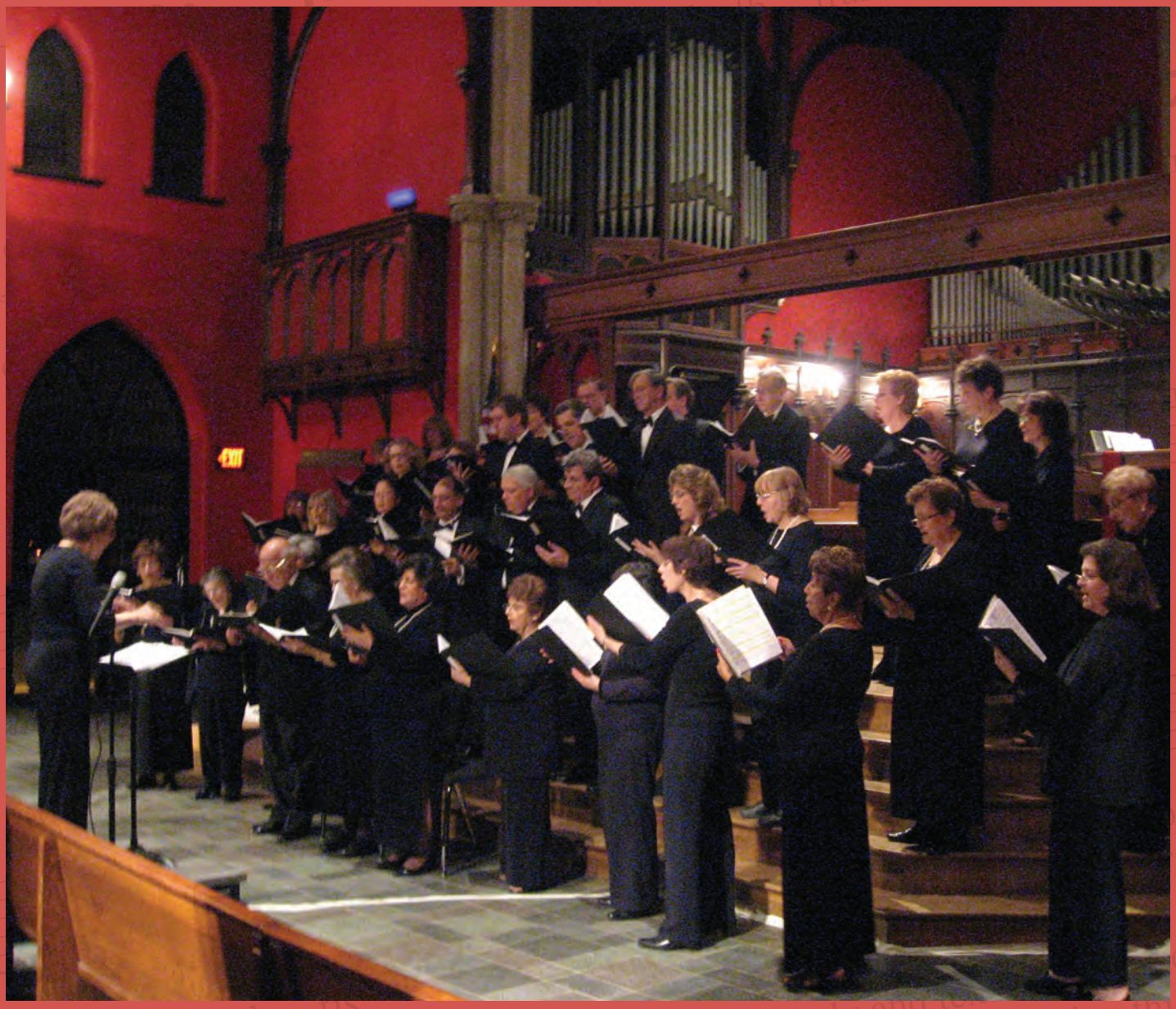
In a chapter entitled "Growth of Liturgical Music in the Iakovian Era" (from the book *The History of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Iakovian Era,* edited by the Rev. Fr. Miltiades Efthimiou and George Christopoulos), Frank Desby chronicles the growth of choral liturgical music in our Archdiocese. Under the influen e of John Sakellarides of Athens, choral music was introduced in the New World in the early 1920s. Among those early contributors in the United States were Christos Vrionides, Nicholas Roubanis, George Anastasios, Athan Theodorides, Angelo Delfi , James Aliferis, Thomas Rigas, the Rev. Fr. Demetrios Lolakis and the Rev. Fr. E. Chrysoloras.

At the end of World War II, Desby reports that there were only "a mere handful of composers–arrangers of choral literature. At present, the roster has grown to more than two dozen, producing printed music as well as recordings. . . First and foremost of the post-war contributors was Presvytera Anna Gallos, whose background as a thoroughly trained musician and conductor was influen ed by a family involved in the Church. Above all, Mrs. Gallos's interest in fostering the music of her colleagues is unmatched in this country. Her output is considerable, and her untiring efforts in establishing choral organizations, schools and events have pushed our music forward."

In the early 1950s, Frank Desby premiered his choral liturgical works in California, followed by Tikey Zes, Demetrios Pappas and Theodore Bogdanos. Desby notes that the efforts of these "modal pioneers" must be remembered because "without their assistance, any signifi ant changes would never have become known." Later, a new wave of composers came to the fore, with Desby particularly noting the works of Ernest Villas, Michael Petrovich, Nicolas Maragos and Steven Cardiasmenos. Following them, Desby noted, "A roster of fully trained musicians now supplies our Church with first- ate choral music."

At Hellenic College – Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Constantine Limberakis has served as Director of Music since 1993. Known for his support and training of seminarians, he has also produced a choral setting for the Divine Liturgy and other compositions. He is Archon Primikos of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

About the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians



For the past thirty-five years, the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians has been at the forefront of providing Church music resources to the parishes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Chartered in 1976 by His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos, the National Forum is the official auxiliary of the Archdiocese responsible for the development, recognition and support of liturgical music endeavors. Its rich history of accomplishments has brought attention to Church music issues at the parish, metropolis and Archdiocesan levels.

The National Forum serves as the gathering place for Church musicians to discuss issues related to liturgical music and to formulate needed responses, publications, materials and programs. We have four major areas of focus:

- Support for choirs, providing resources and activities to improve the quality of choirs and the availability of choral music in the Church
- Support for chanters and the preservation of Byzantine chant
- Support for youth Church music programs, including hymnology and junior choirs
- Support for clergy as they develop their parish's music ministries

The National Forum is part of an extensive network. Church music is administered beginning at the local parish level, with each parish developing its program of Church music. This includes choirs, chanters, junior choirs and youth music hymnology programs, which are administered by Sunday Church schools and Greek schools. Stewardship in the National Forum is open to all Church musicians, clergy, music and religious education leaders, and others interested in Orthodox Christian liturgical music.

At the next level, the metropolises have established Church music federations to assist the parishes, conduct training programs and explore music repertoire. Each federation hosts annual Church music conferences, and some even host youth music conferences.

At the Archdiocesan level, these metropolis federations form the foundation of the National Forum. Each federation elects five representatives to serve on the National Coordinating Committee, which is the governing body of the Forum.

Activities of the Forum are carried out during the year by the National Chairman, the Coordinating Committee, the Council of Church Music Federation Presidents and various other committees. The Forum meets annually to review progress of current projects, identify new areas of need and discuss issues of concern.

National Forum members have created numerous publications and materials for clergy, Church musicians, chanters, religious education teachers and youth directors. These include arrangements of hymns, music selection, proper liturgical protocols, the development of various parish music programs, congregational singing and so on.

Through co-sponsorship and funding from Leadership 100, the National Forum provides $5,000 to each metropolis's Church music federation for the purpose of providing in-depth training and instruction for Church musicians, clergy and others via metropolis-level Church music institutes. Examples of past topics include learning to chant, vocal and directing techniques, directing youth music programs, the theology of hymns and the structures of various services. The Forum also sponsors national Church music institutes, such as the Symposium on the Future of Church Music and the National Church Music Institute on Youth Music. Anticipated in the near future is a National Church Music Institute for Choir Directors.

For a full list of resources, visit www.churchmusic.goarch.org

Aware of the growing desire to sing our hymns in English, the National Forum embarked on its "Oloi Mazi" project to create proper settings of our hymns in English so that congregations throughout the Archdiocese can join in the hymns sung most frequently during the Divine Liturgy and on feast days. The National Forum is field-testing these hymns in vari-

ous parishes across the country. They will then be submitted to the Holy Eparchial Synod of our Archdiocese for approval as standardized translations. This past year, the Synod approved an English text and musical arrangement of the Paschal Resurrection hymn, "Christ is Risen," which will be uniformly implemented throughout the Archdiocese. The National Forum will assist in its dissemination and use. We hope that additional standardized translations of hymns will follow.

Over the last twenty years, the National Forum has been spearheading a Church Music Sunday, held in all parishes across the country. Donations collected on this day go toward an endowment fund at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. In 1996, the Forum donated $100,000 from this fund to Holy Cross for the creation of the Liturgical Music Room in the Archbishop Iakovos Library. After completing

this fundraising goal, the Forum contributed $350,000 to Holy Cross to fund a Visiting Scholar of Choral and Byzantine Music Program. Rather than obtaining large donations from a few individuals to reach these goals, these funds grew from small, individual donations collected over the twenty-year period. Today, the National Forum solicits donations from parishes, choirs, Philoptochos chapters and individuals during the month of October to support its own work on targeted projects. This fundraising is done in conjunction with National Church Music Sunday, established by each of our past three archbishops to recognize the work of Church musicians. In thanks, the National Forum sends each parish a complimentary, custom-designed poster of a saint who is a hymnologist, as well as other resources related to Church music.

The National Forum helps to promote recognition of Church musicians in other ways as well. It acknowledges outstanding national leadership by awarding the St. Romanos the Melodist Medallion to those who have made significant national contributions to Church music. It has also established the Patriarch Athenagoras Distinguished Metropolis Service Award, presented to those individuals identified through the metropolis Church music federations. The Forum also assists Archbishop Demetrios in presenting the service awards, honoring directors who have served twenty-five years or more. Each year, the Forum presents a $1,000 honorarium and an Honorary Life Membership to a graduating seminarian from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology who has distinguished himself in Church music. Finally, the Forum awards grants for projects proposed by various organizations and individuals. For example, it approved funds for the Axion Estin Foundation and Cappella Romana to further the Church music work of these two outstanding organizations.

Along with focusing on the needs of parishes and Church musicians, the National Forum serves as a resource to our Archdiocese and our hierarchs. Ever since the 1978 Clergy–Laity Congress, it has been an ally to Archdiocesan planners in arranging for the choirs and chanters for the Congress's Divine Liturgy. National Forum members run workshops at many Clergy–Laity Congresses, with topics ranging from youth music, to the use of English in our liturgical hymns, to implementing congregational singing. Another example of assistance to the Archdiocese has been the ongoing project to catalog and preserve of the music library of Dr. Spyros Spathis of Paris, France, a benefactor of our Archdiocese.

Not long ago, representatives from the National Forum met with the Eparchial Synod of our Archdiocese to begin a dialogue on Church music and how we, the Church musicians, can offer assistance to parishes in providing a more spiritually uplifting worship experience. The National Forum is addressing the suggestions and comments offered by our Synod, and we look forward to a continued dialogue with the leaders of our Archdiocese on this and other matters.

Through collaboration with the various departments of our Archdiocese, the Forum provides materials and resources to them. For example, we are working with the Department of Religious Education to develop a hymnology handbook to supplement the Department's instructional materials.

We are always open to suggestions for ways we can better serve our musicians, our clergy and our faith. Please offer any comments or suggestions to Maria Keritsis, National Chairman, at mfk9@comcast.net

Involving Youth in the Music of the Church:

A Practical Approach

Whoever attunes himself and studies the meaning of sacred songs from beginning to end will find himself approaching God.

– St. Gregory Palamas

JOANNE H. KAMBOURIS

As our beloved Greek Orthodox Church in America moves into the future, many questions will be asked. What will our Divine Liturgy sound like 100 years from now? Who will be in the choirs and at the chanters' stand? How much English will we be using? Will we have new hymns? Regardless of the answers to these questions, one concept stands true: for American Orthodoxy to continue successfully into the future, we must hand on the liturgical traditions, musical understanding and passion for our Faith to our children, just as our forefathers handed it to *us*.

As evidenced by the words of St. Gregory Palamas above, the heart of the Orthodox Church lies within its hymnology. The great teachings of our Faith can be found within the songs of praise that we have sung for centuries. What better way to guide our children into living Christ-centered lives than through singing the hymns of the Church?

This article presents some ideas for hymnology education that may be tailored to a parish's specific needs and parameters. It is hoped that they will serve to spark new ideas that will inspire our youth as the torchbearers for our Faith throughout the twenty-first century and beyond.

Hymnology instruction can be implemented within already established youth ministries of a parish. Structured Church school hymnology programs, youth choirs, multigenerational singing combining adults and children, Byzantine chant schools, Vacation Church School and camp programs are all "formal," organized ways that children are being taught how to be involved in our Faith through its music. We will examine each of these approaches, with the hope that youth workers will embrace the possibility of replicating them in their own parishes.

Integrate Hymns Into Established Ministries

The task of creating a youth music education program for a parish may seem daunting at first. But rather than reinventing the wheel or beginning a broad plan that may not take hold right away, begin simply. At the start of the new ecclesiastical year, approach your priest, Sunday Church school teachers, youth advisors, dance directors and other youth ministers with a simple request: that they include hymns with the formal prayers that precede all ministry activities. The fellowship, deliberations and work of the Church almost always begin with prayer. So why not make the prayer one that is *sung?* Sunday Church school classes could begin with a "hymn of the month," taught by the teacher or another musically knowledgeable adult or older student. Other possibilities include opening HOPE/JOY events or a GOYA meeting with a short hymn, perhaps led by the parish priest. Hellenic dance instruction, a vibrant and enthusiastically attended activity, could establish a tradition of singing a simple hymn at the start of rehearsal—remember that many dance troupes now *regularly* sing Greek folks songs as an accompaniment to their dances, and singing is not an unusual activity at dance practice.

Create a Formal Hymnology Program within the Sunday Church School

Making music an integral part of Sunday Church school education is one of the most important ways that we can enhance the liturgical participation of our children, both now and in the future. Their exposure to as many hymns as possible, whether through formal instruction or during regular attendance at liturgy and other services, is the best way for them to appreciate their Greek Orthodox musical heritage.

A number of parishes in our Archdiocese have thriving hymnology programs that are integrated into the Church school curriculum. Parishes wishing to duplicate or create customized programs that fit their unique needs have only to look at and draw ideas from these successful programs. For further information about using hymnology instruction within the Church school curriculum, contact the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians. Our resources include teaching suggestions as well as information about scheduling, procedures and resources, and many other practical ideas for parishes.

organize a youth Choir Program

This option for inspiring our children to sing in our parishes requires persistence, dedication, patience and a passion for youth music instruction. Although it is helpful for a teacher to have music teaching experience, a degree in music is not necessary. Teachers may be drawn from the parish population, the adult choir, or perhaps from college students who enjoy working with children. Convincing children and their parents of the value of choir singing when there are many distractions that *pull them away* from the Church is no easy task, but it's important to communicate that this is a priority.

As with all aspects of youth education, parent cooperation and buy-in is critical. Although children can sing enthusiastically, they can only do so when their parents bring them to rehearsals. Also necessary is the priest's spiritual guidance for growing the youth choir program. He can instruct students about the meaning of hymns within liturgical context, and he can help the director choose appropriate hymns for services, special events and Christmas concerts.

Excellence is paramount to success. A good youth choir program is its own best advertisement and promoter. Children, teens and parents recognize what is worthy of their time and effort in this fast-paced world, and they will *choose* to participate in that which will offer them the most benefit.

The National Forum has published a helpful resource with practical suggestions, *Starting a Youth Music Program in Your Parish*. It was distributed to all parishes in the Archdiocese within the past few years, and it is available for purchase from the National Forum (www.churchmusic.goarch.org) or Orthodox Marketplace (www.orthodoxmarketplace.com).

Promote multigenerational singing with Adults and Children

Most people over the age of fifty have fond memories of being trained as youngsters in the choir, alongside their parents or grandparents. In past, there were relatively few parishes that offered a youth choir or formal hymnology program in the Sunday Church school. These new concepts of parish life that cater specifically to youth have been developed fairly recently in an effort to create a welcoming, child-centered approach to teaching our Faith.

However, many parishes still use an all-inclusive model—a choir for people of all ages. This method is an acceptable way

to pass our music on to our children, provided that *all* members of the choir, the choir director, the priest and the students themselves support it. A loving, Christ-centered environment where children feel safe, accepted and welcome will result in the development of dedicated choir members with fond memories that will last into their own adulthoods. Alternately, negative feelings or territorial attitudes sometimes expressed by adults toward their younger counterparts over seating, musicality or behavior should be avoided. *Patience and love* are the premier qualities of a multigenerational choir.

Support a Byzantine Chant School

Another important method of conveying the Faith to our young people through music involves specialized programs that require careful planning, usually through the efforts of a group of qualified adults. Byzantine chant schools have been active in Orthodoxy for centuries, but only recently have we seen them being developed in the United States. The renewed interest in the study of our unique and ancient form of liturgical music has been made possible widely through advances in technology and the Internet. The easy access to chant audio files and digital manuscripts, the development of Byzantine notation fonts, the creation of quality multilingual recordings, together with the excellent work of Byzantine scholars around the world who have transcribed ancient manuscripts into Western notation, have created an up-swell of young people who are interested in learning more about this beautiful and complex form of liturgical music.

There are Byzantine chant centers around the country in which students can pursue regular training, but they are limited in number. Many more musicians are learning and sharing their knowledge through the Internet, while hopefully participating in conferences and workshops offered periodically by the larger schools. The National Forum has been actively engaged in the promotion and financial support of opportunities to learn Byzantine chant.

encourage attendance at Summer Camp and Vacation Church School

Metropolis-sponsored summer camp programs are perhaps the easiest and most effective way for children to actively learn about Orthodoxy through music in informal, relaxed settings. Most Metropolis camp programs have a similar structure for the day, which allows for multiple opportunities to sing both liturgical and non-liturgical music.

During the course of one week at camp, Church services always include at least one liturgy, morning orthros, evening vespers and perhaps a paraklesis or other special service. Campers have the opportunity to learn hymns for all of these services through daily music classes, and they often return to camp every year remembering what they had learned from years past. By the end of the week, they are familiar enough with the daily services to sing them by heart. Other musical opportunities include singing hymns before meals and around the campfire in the evening.

Vacation Church School is often geared toward younger children, but is an equally effective venue for teaching simple hymns and fun songs.

host a youth music conference or Work Shop

Yearly Church music conferences have a long-standing history in the metropolises of our Archdiocese. Recently, some of the metropolis Church music federations have established youth choir conferences. These conferences generate enthusiasm and camaraderie among the young participants, while fostering an understanding and enjoyment of the music of the Church. Having a separate conference for youth creates a child-centered event with programs, workshops and meals geared toward their needs and interests. Also, a youth-specific Church music conference allows them to be responsible for singing the entire Divine Liturgy themselves, rather than a small portion of it. Organizers of these conferences have discovered that children will work hard to meet the high expectations proposed by the adults in charge. When given the important responsibility of learning the music, they rise to the occasion and sing the Divine Liturgy at the conclusion of a fun-filled weekend.

An alternative for parishes unable to host a full-fledged weekend conference is a single-day workshop for local parishes. These simpler workshops focus on learning music and subject matter that may or may not culminate in a formal "performance," but rather preparation for a performance at a later date.

With dedicated adults at the helm who are willing to offer their talents, energies and innovative ideas, the youth of our Archdiocese have a bright musical future within our beloved Orthodox Faith.

This article was excerpted from the July 12, 2012, issue of *MUSICA,* a publication of the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians. The author, Joanne H. Kambouris, serves as director of the Holy Trinity Choir of Clearwater, FL, and the Orthodox Youth Choir of Tampa Bay.

Church Music Resources Available from the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians

BARBARA MINTON

One of the ways the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians fulfills its Archdiocesan ministry is creating, publishing and disseminating Church music materials specifically designed to address four areas of emphasis: assistance to choirs, assistance to chanters, development of youth music programs, and assistance to clergy and their parish Church music programs.

The Notation, Transcription, and Rendition of Post-Byzantine Chant: A Training Manual for the Eastern Orthodox Chanter

The National Forum's newest publication was written by the late Dr. Frank Desby and posthumously edited by Dr. George Stefanidakis of Houston. This 345-page training manual is a comprehensive guide that takes the learner through the basics of the notational, rhythmic and interval signs of post-Byzantine ecclesiastical music, including tonality and signs of expression and nuance. The learner also receives detailed information and examples of melodic formulas for each of the modes and how these vary for different hymn types. The text is written in English, and the examples use Greek texts with accompanying phonetics. Both Byzantine and Western notation are presented in all examples. Dr. Stefanidakis also created an instructional CD of the entire manual with embedded music file .

Guide to the Transcription of Post-Byzantine Chant

Another publication for chanters as well as composers is this outline of recommended guidelines and procedures for transcribing hymns from Byzantine neumes to Western notation.

Resources for the Divine Liturgy

The National Forum publishes three extremely valuable guides for clergy, chanters and choir directors as they prepare for chanting and singing the Divine Liturgy:

- The annual **Liturgical Guidebook** identifies the Sunday and feast day hymn changes for the ecclesiastical year.
- The **Verses to the Antiphons** is a compilation of the verses for the three antiphons for Ordinary Sundays and feast days, special Sundays of the Fixed Season, special Sundays of the Triodion and Pentecostarion, and Ordinary weekdays.
- The **Liturgical Guidebook Companion** contains the order for special services, verses for the antiphons, guidelines for hierarchical visits and other informative material.

Resources for Youth

For individuals and parishes who wish to teach children about the hymns of our Faith, the National Forum offers a variety of materials:

- The **Hymns of the Orthodox Church** is an instructional package containing one booklet for each of twelve hymns of the Divine Liturgy. Each booklet includes music for the Greek and English texts, information about the hymn, scriptural references, an associated icon and teaching suggestions for classes and families. An accompanying CD features the voices of Eikona singing the hymns in both languages, with short descriptions of the hymns also added.
- **Starting a Youth Music Program in Your Parish** is a handbook filled with ideas for working with young people, practical suggestions for starting and maintaining youth music programs and junior choirs.
- **A Holy Friday Retreat: A Parish Handbook for Planning and Conducting a Lenten Retreat** is a how-to guide for conducting a retreat for young people. It emphasizes the integration of Orthodox theology, hymnology, iconography and symbolism, and it provides parishes with everything needed to host a successful program: schedules, activities, lessons, promotional materials, teaching outlines and additional theme ideas for presentation in multiple years.

Our Web Site

The National Forum also maintains churchmusic.goarch.org, which is filled with many more Greek Orthodox music–related resources for clergy, church musicians, chanters, Sunday Church school and Greek school teachers, and others interested in Church music. Among other resources on the page, there is a bibliography of the various settings of music for the Divine Liturgy and other services of the Church. Many of the Forum's publications can also be ordered from Orthodox Marketplace (www.orthodoxmarketplace.com) or the Department of Religious Education.

Barbara Minton is a member of St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Southgate, MI. She is Head of the Publications Offi e for the National Forum and is one of the representatives of the Mid-Eastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians (Detroit and Pittsburgh Metropolises) at the annual meetings of the National Forum.

Maria Keritsis, Chairman of the National Forum, also contributed to this article. For more information, please her at mfk9@comcast.net

Parent TO Parent

Finding Faith in Your Child's Illness

ANESTIS JORDANOGLOU

I write this article with a keen awareness that so many parents have children with chronic illnesses that would eclipse anything my family has experienced in my son's battle with eosinophilic esophagitis (EE) and extreme allergies. During the three years of constant visits to Children's Hospital for multiple medical diagnoses, procedures, and therapies, we'd see children who were clearly dying or were so physically debilitated that we knew those children and their parents would suffer and struggle throughout their lives. I think it's at those moments we'd pray the most and ask God for mercy on them and forgiveness on us.

There's nothing glamorous in having a really sick child. It's not a situation that anyone wants to be in. Like all parents, our love for our children makes us suffer more than they could possibly imagine. Our son's sickness blindsided us. He was perfectly healthy until he was nine months old. It was such an idyllic time for us, with all of the firsts that go into the first nine months of your life together with your baby. It was a relaxed time, one of gratitude with an easy faith. We went from that to the stress of a newly diagnosed illness that was barely understood and whose treatments were primarily experimental—on our ten-month-old.

Eosinophilic esophagitis is an allergic reaction that occurs inside the esophagus—it can't be seen. It leads to a closing and scarring of the esophagus, failure to thrive and, more often than not, a feeding tube. The hope is that through a series of food allergy tests, a food could be found that the patient can eat. The tests are imperfect and results can change over time. Testing is followed up by endoscopies, for good measure. During the first nine months of testing, we found only one food that my son could eat: potatoes mashed with water. We had to mix it with a rancid-tasting hypoallergenic powder called Neocate, which is similar to infant formula. Environmental allergies can also trigger EE, so we anxiously tracked the rising pollen counts that spring. During this time, my son's weight went from the 60th percentile to the 2nd. It was panic time. Our easy faith began to fade.

We were also afraid of the related severe allergies that most people are familiar with. We were afraid that we'd encounter something in the air that would cause him to have an anaphylactic reaction. The milk boiling for a pudding in a friend's kitchen, fumes from seafood in a restaurant, the aroma of peanut butter at school, flour dust from a Thanksgiving pie crust—all could trigger a reaction and the use of our ever-ready EpiPen.

> "It was panic time.
> Our easy faith began to fade."

This led to an incredible fraying of our nerves, along with a certain level of paranoia as we tried to figure out where we could safely go, worrying about things most people wouldn't think about. These worries kept us up at night. It kept us inside most of the time. It's also what kept us forgotten to a greater or lesser degree by others. Out of sight, out of mind, it seemed.

It's easy to lose faith during times like this. Much of it was compromised by the rigors of each day; the four hours a day it took to spoon-feed our son his potato–Neocate mush, while taking care of our newborn baby girl, and the dozens of trips to doctors.

Other times we succumbed to a casual jealousy. We'd think about how nice it'd be to visit Boston for something other than appointments at Children's Hospital. In the absurdity of it all, we'd sometimes ask, "What kind of God would allow a family to be held hostage to their child's illness?" and "What did we do wrong?" This was a universal question, related not only to our child but also to the many others we saw at Children's who were in much direr straits. There didn't seem to be any answers.

After a time, though, we started wondering whether we were asking the right questions or whether we should ask them at all. Two years into my son's illness, we questioned God less and questioned ourselves more. We started to reflect on what had happened to us as people. We started asking for help more often, too.

First of all, we realized that the world was, somehow, for the most part, truly good. The effort and the love of our children's doctors, of all those medical professionals who do so much and work so hard for those kids, totally overwhelmed us. It takes more than financial incentives to become a healer.

We discovered that our life wasn't an illness; illness was just part of it. Whatever we'd have to face, we'd face. You can still joke around in a car while you're on the way to a hospital for tests.

We discovered the amount of empathy that exists in our extended family and some of our close friends. I became more cognizant and grateful for the patience of my boss and coworkers, who handled more of my tasks and moodiness than they should have had to.

We discovered hope, believing that somehow this would pass as best as it could and that God would be there regardless. He'd always been there, waiting to see if we'd turn around and notice. This grew a sort of resolve in us, and, in some strange way, thankfulness—not for what had happened but rather for things that hadn't.

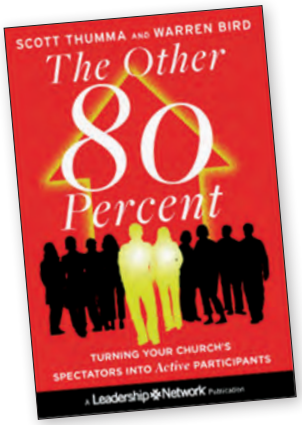
Most of all, we discovered the resilience that my son and his younger sister share. There's nothing more reassuring and graceful than hearing your son say, "Don't worry, Mom, I'm going to be OK" on his way into an endoscopy, seeing him be stalwart during a blood draw so his dad doesn't stress out. It's beautiful to see your daughter look into her brother's eyes and say, "I love you, Harrison" as he's being wheeled away on a gurney for a procedure, and then seeing her kiss him when he gets back, still asleep from anesthesia. These moments are redemptive and faith-filling. You learn what love means.

My son is six now, and he's doing much better. His illness is in control. Some new therapies have been discovered. He can eat many more foods. Many of the allergies have faded away into a bad memory. Like all parents, though, we remain vigilant because we really don't know what life will bring.

Before we go to bed, we pray together. We sing "Lord of the Powers" and other hymns. We pray for kids and parents in hospitals and everywhere, and for medical professionals. We ask God to help us give more to them, hopefully someday more than they've ever helped us. We hold each other tight in a big group hug. We talk about what we were most grateful for during the day. I think it's then that we're the most faithful.

Anestis Jordanoglou is Managing Editor of *PRAXIS* Magazine. He teaches the teen Sunday Church school class at Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Webster, MA. Anestis and his wife, Evis, have two children, Harrison and Maria.

The Other 80 Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators into Active Participants



Scott Thumma and Warren Bird

I heard it said once that the challenge for religion in America is not "un-churched" people but the ones who are "de-churched," that is, those who have moved away or distanced themselves, for various reasons, from their church. Pastors and parish leaders looking for insights and strategies for growing their parish must read this book carefully and commit to acting on what they learn. This is also preventive work, for, as the authors point out, it is far easier to encourage a marginalized person to return to the church than it is to reactivate someone who has left.

The authors are two of the best researchers on American religion today. Scott Thumma is a professor at Hartford Seminary and is well known for his work in "congregation studies." Warren Bird is a director at the Leadership Network, which was created to work with innovative churches. They bring their considerable expertise to this readable book.

Thumma and Bird begin by introducing the "Pareto Principle," described the fairly consistent 80/20 relationships between various elements of a society. For example, 80 percent of the funds for a project tend to be given by 20 percent of the donors. Thumma and Bird argue that a parish works on a similar principle: "A handful of members typically account for most of the effort in the congregation" (page xxii). The rest of the book is about how to reach the less committed members: the 80 percent of the typical parish.

The book is organized into three parts. In Part One, "Listening," the authors present a research method that any parish can implement. The method involves a small group of people talking to the 20 percent of the parishioners that are already committed members. Another group interviews members of the other 80 percent—the less-committed parishioners. (Sample survey questions are provided in an appendix.) The key is face-to-face interviews. Part Two, "Learning," first summarizes the status of religion in the United States today. And then the parish listening groups share what they have learned and then reflect on the findings from the 20 and the 80 percent and the greater sociological information. For example, if the 80 percent includes a sizeable group of senior citizens who do not participate in the church because they no longer drive, then the parish will explore how to address their needs. Part Three, "Leading," offers strategies for outreach.

Almost all of the lessons that Thumma and Bird have gathered can be applied in an Orthodox setting. For example, a big challenge is finding people to volunteer for parish ministries. The results of the Listening and Learning work should help a parish understand why it may be experiencing this. But what did they learn?

> Any church that wants to strengthen its volunteer efforts should engage in regular training sessions and mentoring, rotate its leadership of groups, reflect its member diversity in committees, and offer public acknowledgement, reward and recognition of volunteers. These efforts greatly reduce the challenge of finding people to serve. (page 87)

Another idea I particularly liked is creating a parish "buddy system," pairing up parishioners to ensure that every member has "at least one person watching out for them, caring about them, and being aware of them" (pages 156–57).

The temptation will be to read only the last chapters of the book, thinking that they somehow possess all the necessary techniques. The work is really done during Listening and Learning to uncover what's really going on and what techniques may work with your specific congregation. Ultimately, making a parish grow and reaching the 80 percent is not about techniques. The process is to be infused with prayer and study of one's faith. The book draws on Scripture almost as often as it cites studies from the social sciences. The goal is to discern where God wants a parish to go. The authors emphasize that the goal is not just the growth of a parish in numbers or income, but the spiritual growth and maturity of all of its members.

Anton C. Vrame, PhD, is Director of the Department of Religious Education.

℘ Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, *The Other 80 Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators into Active Participants* (Jossey-Bass, 2011), 256 pages.

Postmodernism: Its Opportunities, Pitfalls, and Our Response

PETER BOUTENEFF

I recently came across a useful defin - tion of postmodernism: "The Post-Modern age is a time of incessant choosing. It's an era when no orthodoxy can be adopted without self-consciousness and irony, because all traditions seem to have some validity."[1]

This author, the architect and critic Charles Jencks, sees postmodernism as the unavoidable reality of our time: owing largely to the explosion of information that is now available to us through all media, the playing field has been leveled. No scripture or doctrine has authority over any other one. No text—whether the Bible, the Vedas or the Koran—nor artwork—whether Picasso's *Guernica,* Da Vinci's *Last Supper,* or Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*—nor philosophy, whether Platonism, atheism, or pantheism, can claim a privileged place over any other in the hierarchy-free world of ideas.

Let's explore Jencks's definition a bit. Postmodernism, he says, is "a time of incessant choosing." That could be either exciting, holding a limitless potential for discovery, or it could be unbelievably tedious. It could also be dangerous.

If you take the idea on its own, "incessant choosing" can sound like a good thing. The principles of democracy, for example, are based on the freedom to elect our leaders and shape our laws. Freedom of choice is at the basis of a potentially healthy economy that encourages competition and a constant striving for excellence. And freedom of expression, as well as the liberty to choose which expressions to listen to, can be the foundation of a flou ishing culture. Go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and find the beautiful and inspiring expressions of creativity from across all recorded time and a diversity of cultures.

So if we are talking about an open-minded receptivity to the limitless possibilities of goodness, creativity and holiness, both within and outside of our particular context, then that is a good thing. Part of the image of God is a mind that can receive, exult in and learn from "*whatever* is true, *whatever* is honorable," just, pure, lovely, gracious, excellent and worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8).

Going a bit further, the "choosing" fostered by postmodernism entails the commitment to interrogate and evaluate what you are looking at, whether it is a text, a rite or other expression. That process can lead to real conclusions, and maybe even good ones. Prince Vladimir's storied emissaries examined many faith traditions with no prejudice—a very postmodern process, despite its tenth-century provenance. But the point is that they chose one. They didn't disappear into a limitless spiral of interrogation.

But Jencks's definition uses an important qualifie : "incessant." Even this can be positive, where it characterizes the heart that will never rest until it finds the ultimate good and truth, in God. But endless choice can easily become tedious, or worse, paralyzing. If every option, every path is in principle a possible one, then there can be no movement forward. You end up either aimless or motionless.

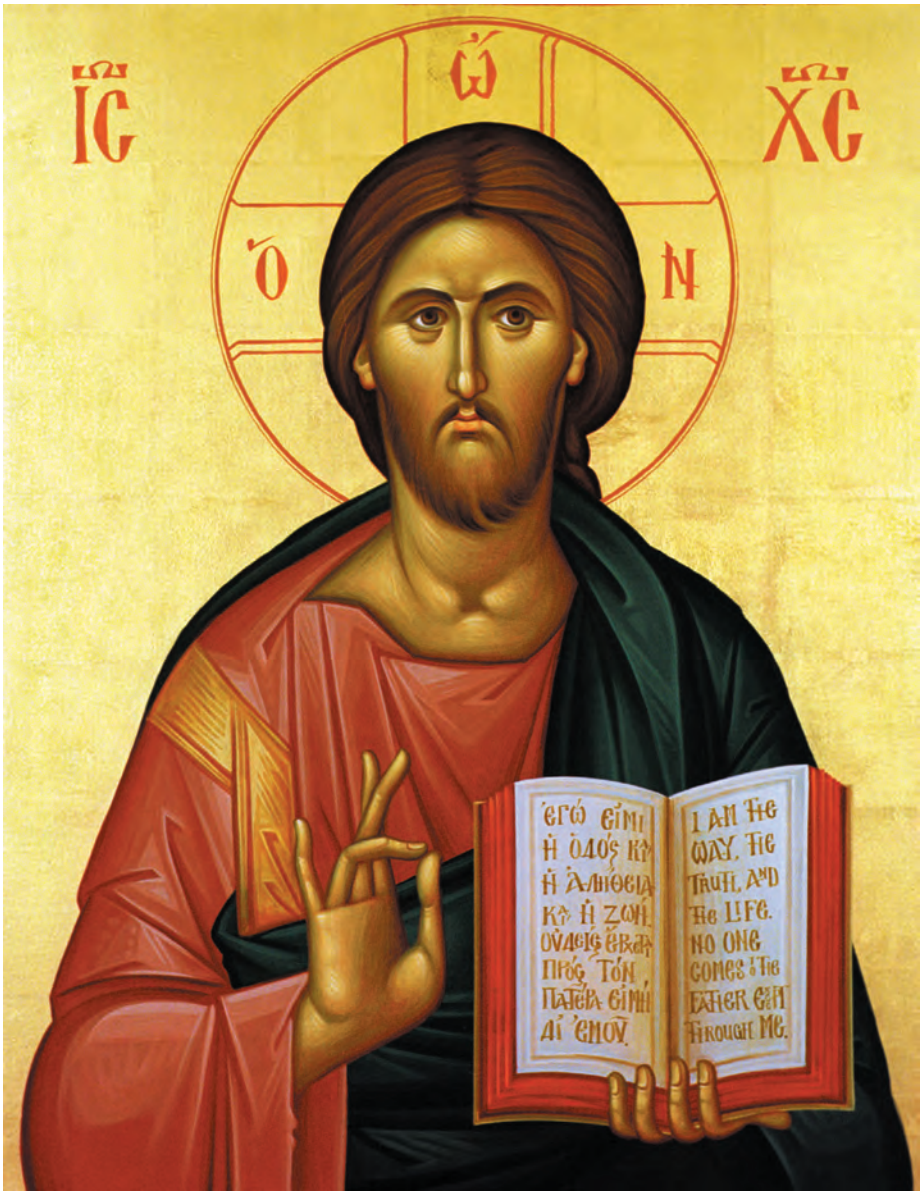
Incessant choosing can finally be dangerous. It's not for nothing that St. Paul speaks on the one hand of maturity in the fullness of Christ, and on the other hand of a childish state of being "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming" (Ephesians 4:14). That's what happens when the choice process lacks any orientation, any agreed compass. Inquisitiveness is one thing; shapelessness is another. In one case, you have a healthy open mind. In the other case, you are rudderless and open to manipulation by anyone. And no one can pretend that the world of choices is an entirely innocent, well-meaning one.

Orthodox Christian religious educators from around the country gathered at Antiochian Village for Orthodox Institute 2012: "Culture. Morality. Spirituality." Peter Bouteneff was the Keynote Speaker, and Vigen Guroian was a featured presenter at the conference, which was sponsored by the OCEC, the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese, the Orthodox Church in America, and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Mark your calendar now for Orthodox Institute 2013: "Blessed is the Kingdom: Acts 2:42 and Today," to be held October 31–November 3 at Antiochian Village. His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh is this year's Keynote Speaker.

1. Charles Jencks, "What is Post-Modernism?" in W. T. Anderson, ed., *The Truth about Truth: De-confusing and Re-constructing the Postmodern World* (Penguin, 1995), p. 27.

Jencks also says that in the postmodern age, "no orthodoxy can be adopted without self-consciousness and irony." The word "orthodoxy" obviously has a particular resonance with us Orthodox Christians. Orthodoxy—whether with a big "O" or a small "o"—cannot endure within the postmodern context, and that is because, as Jencks says, "all traditions seem to have some validity." Postmodernism doesn't eliminate Orthodoxy—we are free to believe it, thank you very much—but our claims to its *universality* are baseless and, frankly, ridiculous. You cannot believe that any doctrine is true for everyone, because none can be proved. There's no claim to universality because so many traditions carry an evident wisdom, and nearly all of them have ardent believers who see their traditions as carrying the truth for all people. Silly people! They are not enlightened enough, they never got the memo, that truth is above and beyond their traditions. Or so says the dyed-in-the-wool postmodernist relativist.



Jencks is realistic when he continues his appraisal of the postmodern pursuit:

> The resultant creation, if successful, will be a striking synthesis of traditions; if unsuccessful, a smorgasbord. Between inventive combination and confused parody, the Post-Modernist sails, often getting lost and coming to grief, but occasionally realizing the great promise of a plural culture with its many freedoms.

So postmodernism is not an entirely corrupt state of affair . It is full of possibilities that can be taken up by a mind that is both open and grounded, both free and oriented. It is the second part of the equation—the grounding, the orientation, where postmodernism is perilously lacking. And this is where serious Christians have a responsibility to fulfil . I am talking about both a missionary responsibility—to a world situated in postmodernist relativism—and also an internal responsibility, to ourselves, to grow into a greater depth and integrity of our faith.

What must we do? Allow me to sketch out a possible outline.

1. Demonstrate that Orthodox Christianity is not the closing of the mind.
We are saturated with information of all kinds, good and bad, sometimes radical and scary. And we see what happens to some people who are deeply threatened by this pluralism: they become religious fundamentalists, demonizing other faiths or ideas, sometimes unto violence and war. That is the image that many people have of "religion" or of people who believe their faith to be universally true.

Our first duty within this context might be to reclaim the right to speak, to show that it is possible to believe fi mly in the truth of our faith without becoming fanatical. Part of that entails the responsibility to maintain a genuinely open mind and a willingness to learn, even as we

are grounded in a belief in God and His Christ and His Spirit.

2. Demonstrate that criteria are necessary.

David Jencks has helped us to see that postmodernism is not total depravity—in fact, it can result in configu ations that are both new and true. But he also says that it is at least as likely to produce nothing more than a smorgasbord. So it's important to show the need for an orientation, one that doesn't hijack creativity, but directs it. The same St. Paul who directed us to think on *whatever* is true, honorable and just also wrote a two-sentence corrective to the postmodern era:

> "All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficia . "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. (1 Corinthians 10:23)

It's all out there, but not all of it is any good. And you need criteria to discern what is and what is not. Not only within the wider world, but even within the Bible. The Ethiopian eunuch in the book of Acts knew instinctively that he would be unable to understand the scriptures without someone's guidance (Acts 8:31). Today's students of truth are well enough aware of "the hermeneutic problem," i.e., that everything is subject to interpretation. What we have to do is to demonstrate that there can be reliable guides, and that we need them in order to discern truth and meaning.

3. Demonstrate that the criteria we establish have a logic—whether you agree with them or not.

Once you've gotten this far, it's time to show that the criteria of the Church—for how to read the Scriptures, and how to read culture—make a kind of sense. Obviously, other people have other criteria. But here's how ours work. Here is the logic of our matrix, our tradition, our "hermeneutic community," the Church. And it makes sense.

4. Demonstrate our awareness of the problems of a universal claim.

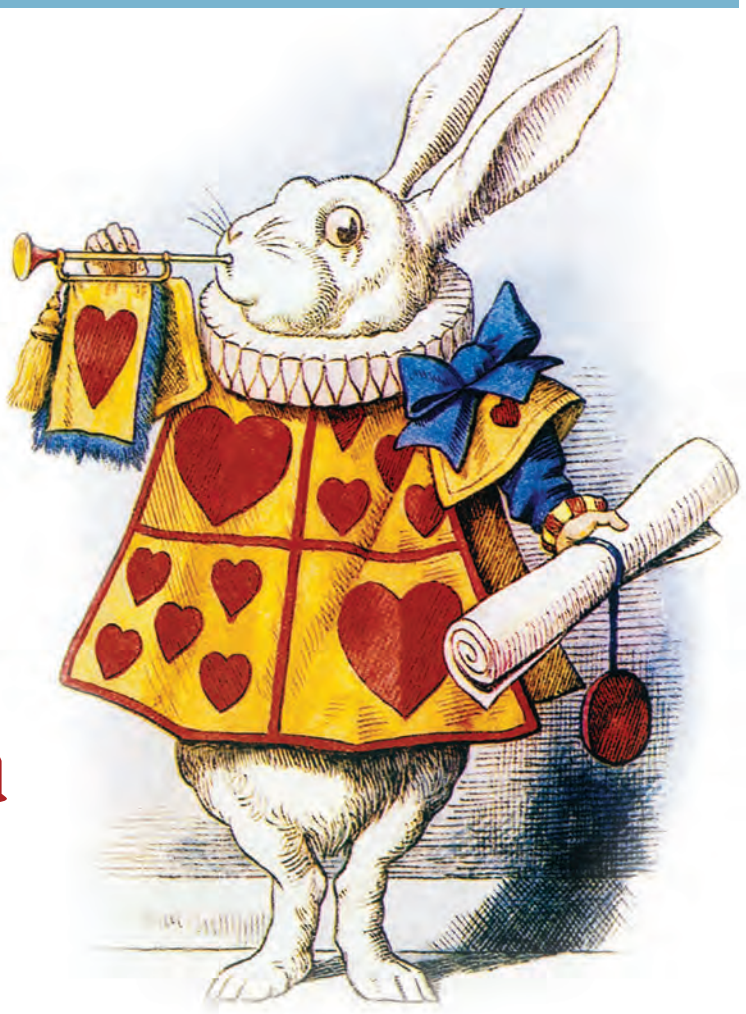
We also have to show that we are not blind to the problems of universal truth claims. We get the "irony" of the claim that Orthodoxy is the absolute truth. An intelligent outside observer can't be blamed for thinking that the only reason we think our tradition is The True One is that it is, well, *ours.* Furthermore, we need to acknowledge that there is no incontrovertible, external proof for the existence of God, nor is there proof for our interpretation of the Scriptures, and the Christ we see in them. None. If we talk to people as if it's the most obvious thing in the world, and that their inability to "get it" must result from their stubbornness, spiritual blindness or their being "prisoners of this age," they will run away, and probably for good reason. But there is also a reasonableness to saying that, well, either Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, or He is not. And the belief that He isn't has to be defended as much as the belief that He is.

5. Demonstrate that claims to universality are not just exclusive; they are welcoming, too.

And finall , once we've shown that Christian universality isn't necessarily fanatical or violent, we have to demonstrate its inclusivity. It welcomes truth wherever it is found. Because if Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, if He is indeed the ground of all truth, of all beauty, of all justice, of all love, then Christ is to be found in *whatever* is true, beautiful and just. Christ is the orientation, the compass and the rudder that can make today's "incessant choosing" into an inquisitive but grounded quest for the good.

Peter Bouteneff, D.Phil., is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary, where he teaches courses in ancient and modern theology and spirituality. You can find his podcast, "Sweeter than Honey," on Ancient Faith Radio.

The Importance of Fairy Tales for the Lives of Our Children



VIGEN GUROIAN

These are troubling times for our children. The range of dangers that exist, both physical and spiritual, cannot be understated. Our children are in jeopardy. We are measuring a precipitous decline of morality among our youth and we have seen them commit chilling acts of violence. We also constantly hear of the abuse of young children at the hands of adult predators.

In *Tending the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child's Moral Imagination* (Oxford University Press, 2002), I endeavored to show parents and teachers how they might begin in order to launch our children on the path of a life well-lived, to live a godly life in a world that often scorns what that represents and to equip them with the virtues to better discern good from evil.

In these times, we as Christian parents and teachers must find the means to address the whole question of character and virtue, despite the chatter of modern sophists who seek to persuade us that we wrong our children by instilling our own values in them. Christians, however, believe that we live in a moral universe governed by a gracious God. We believe that the Father who loves us and sent His only Son to redeem us from sin and death also holds us accountable as parents for how we raise our children and what kind of persons they grow up to be. What kind of boat in which we cast off our children onto the sea of life makes a difference as to whether they sink into the abyss or reach the shores of Paradise.

G. K. Chesterton wisely and boldly observed: "The truth of our human tradition and handing it on with a voice of authority, an unshaken voice. That is the one eternal education; to be sure enough that something is true that you dare to tell it to a child." Again, we mustn't hesitate to address the whole question of virtue, what are its sources and how we might embody virtue in the lives of children, through the offices we hold in our communities, especially the offices of parent and teacher. The virtues are like gems, each solid with its permanent color and shape. We can throw a gem into a pond and let it lie at

the bottom for a long time among other stones. But if we should return to that pond years later and look for it, that gem will be the same and there will be no mistaking it for a common stone. This is how the virtues are. They are among the permanent things of human nature and they are of great value.

The virtues define character. They constitute character. They are precedent to the choices we make. They give direction to the will so that our actions serve what is good and right. They become our habits. One does not choose to be honest or courageous any more than ones chooses to be false and cowardly. Either someone is courageous or he is cowardly. There is no in between. When we say a person is courageous, we mean that the virtue of courage belongs to the very essence of who that person is.

How do virtues come to be in a person? They come to be through example and exercise, so that they grow into habits. Moral character is a habitual orientation of the self toward the world that disposes a person to act from a sense of what is right and to do the good in every instance. Think of the virtues as the powers of habit that enable us to avoid evil and to do the good.

In *Tending the Heart of Virtue,* I have argued that in fairy tales and the great children's stories, children are invited to meet compelling role models. Children are introduced to characters with which they may identify in their own personal struggle to exercise freedom imaginatively and responsibly in relation to family and friends and the rest of their growing world. One of the points I make in the book about the moral imagination is that the moral imagination has to be formed early, and experience counts. We can give our children an important kind of experience through the stories we read to them. Stories bestow images to memory that become metaphors through which the child may precieve correspondences in his life and make judgments and evaluations.

We must show our children how to live in a world of metaphors and symbols, accessories of the moral imagination. That magnifi ent Victorian George MacDonald once wrote that if we wish to develop the imagination in the young person, "no doubt, the best beginning…is an acquaintance with nature," by which the young person may be encouraged "to observe vital phenomena, to put things together, to speculate from what he sees to what he does not see." MacDonald continues, drawing from Carlyle, "[Even] the coldest word was once a glowing new metaphor and bold questionable originality. Thy very 'attention,' does it not mean an *attentio,* a 'stretching to'?... Take any word expressive of emotion—take the word *emotion* itself—and you will find that its primary meaning is of the outer world." The imagination works at the very heart of human knowing and speech, and it transforms them.

The moral imagination is that distinctively human capacity to conceive of men and women as moral beings, as persons and not as things, in other words, to recognize that the human face is itself a window into spirit, spirit which may otherwise be hidden from us. Fairy tales have a special power to cultivate this power to perceive spirit in the world, and thus to recognize and affirm truth itself. G. K. Chesterton once wrote about what he called the "test" of fairyland. This is "the test of imagination" and this test of imagination concerns moral truth. Moral truth is different from mathematical logic. "You cannot *imagine* two and one not making three," Chesterton explains. "But you can easily imagine trees not growing fruit" and growing rock candy instead. The lesson of fairyland, however, is not that tomorrow morning I should expect to find growing in my backyard a tree whose limbs are weighted down with rock candy. The "magic" of fairyland is not physical or biological science. A fairy tale may tell of an evil witch who possesses the mysterious power to turn a good prince into a stone and a fairy Godmother with the equally mysterious power to turn that stone prince right back into his true self. The veracity, however, of the moral truths represented by these two inhabitants of fairyland, the witch and the fairy Godmother, does not belong to an explanation of their powers. If we look for such an explanation in the

fairy tale, we are bound to come up empty-handed and disappointed.

The moral authority of the fairy tale lies in its peculiar power to enable us to see that we are ourselves capable of committing both the evil of the wicked witch and the good of the fairy Godmother. Fairy tales test us and challenge us to examine ourselves and determine whether we are like the wicked witch or like the fairy godmother. The great fairy tales invite us to test within our imaginations how we would respond to a circumstance in which good and evil are in the balance. They invite us to make correlations between the imaginary characters and the world they depict and the world in which we live. In this fashion, fairy tales exercise and build up the moral imagination, they add vision to our lives.

The moral imagination is a way of seeing. I have compared it to the light that enters the eyes and enables vision. Moral vision is the capacity to tell goodness from evil and respond imaginatively in each circumstance to bring goodness about rather than evil. The moral imagination engenders in us a conscience and a sense of responsibility. It fuels our capacity to use our talents in creative and not destructive ways, to seek the good of others and not just seek selfish gain, to act with honesty and decency and respect toward others at all times.

Moral rules and principles are not enough. Their application depends upon the character of the agent and the spiritual light of the moral imagination that illumines the landscape of our lives. If moral rules and principles are merely memorized and not supported by a moral imagination, they may even be used for all the wrong purposes.

Likewise, law is not the heart and soul of morality, either. The old legalism that thinks it can cover every contingency of life with rules and sanctions is just as fl wed as the reformist doctrine which prescribes that all one need do is teach children to think for themselves and they will find a moral compass. Quite simply, "A child wants to know the fi ed things, not the shifting ones. He enjoys the sea, not the tides…He cannot decently be expected to learn to respect humanity (which is often a hard thing to do) and at the same moment to learn to improve it," writes G. K. Chesterton. But Chesterton also believed that these "fi ed" or permanent things of the moral life are taught and learned through stories. Of fairy tales, he opined, they are the best instructors in morality.

Plato argued that conversion to that which is moral, that which is just, that which is right and good is like an awakening—like remembering something long forgotten. Symbols, allegories, fables, myths and good stories have a special capacity to bring back to life the starved or atrophied moral imagination. Through dramatic depictions of the struggle between good and evil and the presentation of characters that embody and enact the possibilities therein, moral vision clears. Light comes into our eyes—an illumination of our darkened intellects and a warming of our frozen hearts. Fairy tales are not scientific hypotheses, nor are they practical guides to living. They do something even better, however. They resonate with the deepest qualities of our humanity. They possess the power to draw us into the mystery of morality and virtue. They enable us to envision a world in which there are norms and limits, and in which freedom respects the moral law or pays an especially high price. Fairy tales show us that there is a difference between what is logically possible and what is morally felicitous, between what is rationally doable and what is morally permissible. In fairy tales the character of real law belongs to neither natural necessity nor rational determinism. Rather, real law is a comprehensible sign of a primal, unfathomable freedom and of a numinous reality and will. Real law, the realest law, can be obeyed or broken, and in either case for the very same reason—because the creature is both subject of and participant in this primal freedom. Fairy-tale heroes are called to be free and responsible, thus virtuous and respectful of the moral law.

After a child has read Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen,* the Grimm's version of *Cinderella,* John Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River,* or *Pinocchio,* her moral imagination is certain to have been stimulated and sharpened. These stories offer powerful images of good and evil and show a child how to love through the examples of the characters she herself has come to love and admire. Such memories become the analogues that the moral imagination uses to make real life decisions, and these memories become constitutive elements of a child's self-identity and character. Such stories enrich the moral imagination and help children and adults to move about in the world with moral intent and ultimately with faith, hope and charity.

Vigen Guroian, PhD, is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. He is the author of many articles and books, including *Tending the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child's Moral Imagination* (Oxford University Press, 1999) and, most recently, *The Melody of Faith: Theology in an Orthodox Key* (Eerdmans, 2010).

Our Musical Life: A Sign of Dynamism

Dear Readers,

When I was a child growing up in a Greek Orthodox Church, chanters and choirs did all the singing. Of course, at the time, services were celebrated all in Greek, too. About the time I was in junior high, little by little services began to use English and people were being encouraged to participate in the services, including singing along to the hymns and receiving Holy Communion more often. It was shocking at the time! But now, a few decades later, we hear all three—chanters, choirs and congregations—singing traditional Byzantine hymns, adaptations in "Western notation," music from other Orthodox traditions, such as Russian arrangements (Cherubic hymns from Russian composers have been particular favorites), as well as original musical compositions (to ancient texts), and in Greek, English and occasionally other languages. Our musical life as a Church has expanded dramatically. This is to me a sign of a dynamic tradition, with deep roots in the past and fruitful new growth.

The Orthodox Tradition is a musical tradition. So many of our doctrines and theological ideas are communicated in hymns that to be well versed in those texts is to be well versed in our theology. How often have you found yourself using the words of a hymn to express a theological concept? The e is a theological richness in those texts that is readily available. Th words of the Fathers of the Church are the Church's hymnal; there is no need to purchase a library of patristic texts. You already possess one in your liturgy books. To adapt the famous phrase of Evagrius of Pontus about prayer: "To sing in church is to be a theologian; a theologian is one who sings in church."

Don't underestimate the power of music in our lives. How often have people been moved by a song or an anthem? Recall in the days after 9/11 the powerful singing of "God Bless America" or likewise after the recent Boston Marathon bombings. Social movements have used music to unify people, such as "We Shall Overcome" in the Civil Rights movement. Th Church, too, is moved and unified when it sings. Think of the collective joy of singing "Christ is risen" at Pascha that very first time each year. Even our liturgical texts invite us to sing together as a Church, to worship God with one heart, mind and voice.

In our educational practice, this issue of *PRAXIS* should point to three conclusions and actions. First, the musical tradition of our Church must be taught so that the members can participate in the liturgical life of the Church. We all know "Christ is risen," but how many of us know the hymn for Dormition or even Christmas well enough to sing along? Finding the right "music educator" may be a challenge, but every parish has someone musical enough to teach. The e are plenty of musical recordings available, and with just a computer, a world of downloadable Church music is open for use in a classroom. Second, because the hymns of the Church communicate theology, explaining the terms and ideas in them should also be part of that education. Knowing what a hymn means is just as important (if not more so) as learning the melody. Just the basics may be enough: Who wrote the hymn, what ideas does it convey, how does it use Scripture, and where does it fall in the worship service? All of these can only add to the understanding and even enjoyment of the hymn. Thi d, Church leaders, musicians, liturgical experts and theologians, parish priests and others should be nurturing our musical dynamism. A new generation of chanters, choir members, music educators and composers will not spring up spontaneously. These traditions will continue when children and adults are taught and encouraged to use their musical gifts and talents for the Church.

Anton C. Vrame, PhD
Director

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Got a question about the Orthodox Faith or the Church? Ask PRAXIS!

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