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The Sanctification of TIME

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The liturgical structure of the Byzantine tradition of the Orthodox Church integrates, summarizes, and represents the whole experience of the Church's faith. The real core of the Orthodox liturgical ethos is to provide a thorough and complete integration of the Church's vision and experience through its liturgical life. There are two primary themes in the Church's liturgical experience: the sanctification of *time* and the sanctification of *life*. The first is seen in the liturgical structures of the daily cycle, the festal cycle, and all the cycles connected with them. The sanctification of life is revealed in the sacramental cycle—at its core, in baptism and chrismation (which is the mystery of holy illumination), and of course in the Eucharist. There are also the particular mysteries of the sanctification of life: marriage, monastic profession, ordination, and the funeral.

Contents

The Sanctification of Time	1	Working with Amateurs	6	"O Lord, Open My Lips"	13
Board Notes	5	Music	11	Calendar	back page

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The sanctification of time does not simply occur by doing the services. It comes from taking the whole vision, the whole experience of the Kingdom of God, and using time as the medium to enter into it through prayer, by the sung sacred word and ritual. Thus, time itself becomes sanctified and sacramental; it becomes a symbol, a type, and a means of entering into the experience of the Kingdom of God. This is one of the things that is often not understood when we think about the sanctification of time, whereas it is very easy to see in the Eucharist (the sanctification of the bread and the wine), in chrismation (the anointing with holy oil), and in the blessing of holy water. These material elements become the means of our sanctification, in relationship to the daily cycles of prayer. Besides these material things, the sung sacred text transforms time itself into a sacramental mystery of the Kingdom of God. One has to spend time going to the services in order to experience their transforming power.

The services of the Church, especially the daily cycle, are transformative. They are a process that transforms our minds and our hearts. They have a specific objective meaning, but that meaning is not simply on the rational level. They lift us up into the Kingdom of God and connect us to the sacred events of the past and of the *eschaton* (the end of all things in God). The cycles of celebrations, presented in the sacred texts of the cycles of commemorations, become part of the process through which the whole community is transformed and actualizes itself as the Body of Christ.

These two cycles of the sanctification of time and the sanctification of life come together particularly in the Eucharist. The Eucharist itself does not belong to the daily cycle. We know from the liturgical structure of the services that it does not necessarily have a fixed time. In our experience of the Church, the Eucharist is predominant over the daily cycle. Because of this, and especially when, as often occurs, church services are reduced to the celebration of the Eucharist alone, the whole aspect of the sanctification of time itself, of time becoming a means of our sanctification, transformation, and deification, becomes lost. Moreover, the connection with the cycles of the feasts and fasts and all their specific textual material becomes lost—there is not a great deal of difference between the Liturgies of different feasts at any time. The elements that vary—the antiphons, verses on the Beatitudes, when they are done, the troparia and

kontakia—constitute a relatively small part of the service.

In celebrating only the Liturgy, what is there of that festal cycle? The daily services of Matins and Vespers convey the real content of the cycles of worship in the Church. The transformative aspect is found in going through the normal progression of these services. The teaching found there is not only an objective teaching *about* the life of Christ, but rather, the services are anagogical. Each feast is an *antitype* that enables us to enter into the very particular events of the life of Christ, their historical types and eschatological fulfillment. So both are extremely important—the Eucharist as well as the daily services through which time is sanctified.

Symbol, Type, and Image

Central to the understanding of sacrament or *mysterion*, and essential to the understanding of all the feasts (and almost everything else in the Orthodox Church), are three concepts: *symbol*, *type*, and *image* or *icon*. In the ancient Church, symbol meant something very different than it does now. The Fathers used the word *symboli*, which means “to throw together.” A symbol is that which is in the form of one reality, but is also the manifestation of another. The symbol holds both realities together. For our contemporary culture, the definition of *symbol* has gone through many changes through the course of the centuries. *Symbol*, to us, means simply something that stands for the other; it does not necessarily connect the two realities. In other words, it is a nominal concept, and it has only a rational connection with, rather than a participation in, the two realities. The essence of the concept of symbol in the ancient usage is that through a symbol, we participate in the reality itself.

A *type* is a similar concept. A type is a historical event in the past, with a relationship drawn between it, other historical events, and an eschatological or ultimate event in the future. That middle event (the *antitype*) is a sacramental ritual. A scriptural example of this is seen in St. Peter’s First Epistle (3:21), in which he says that baptism “is an antitype which now saves us.” He draws a connection between Noah and the ark—Noah being saved through the water—and baptism. In the baptismal service there is a connection to Noah, and then Moses being picked up out of the water, and then Moses leading Israel through the Red Sea, as well as several other water analogies. Then a later typological association is drawn with Christ’s Baptism, and

our own baptism, and also with Christ's death. These things can become very complicated. The services hold together all of these complex typological sets of analogies. That is why we have so many troparia, so many hymns, and so many verses in all of the services. Each one may examine a different aspect of the typological relationships with some event in the Old Covenant, and then with some event in the *eschaton*—in the eschatological fulfillment of all things—as well as in the present sacramental reality being celebrated.

This brings another aspect to the idea of the sanctification of time, because the service itself becomes both a type and a symbol of the event. It becomes a participation *in* that event. “*Today* Christ is born,” “*Today* Christ is baptized,” “*Today* Christ is carried in the arms of Symeon.” It's a participation here and now in the past reality, which is also an anticipation of that ultimate eschatological reality, in which even the past events are understood as a typological participation, a kind of foreshadowing.

The third concept we need to understand is *image*. We all know how important icons are in our worship. The icon is not simply the painted image. Christ is the Image—the Icon—of the invisible God. He is the Wisdom, Word, and Power of God. For our culture, the concept of image is also a very nominalist thing—it is separated from the reality of what it portrays. A picture of somebody is not that person, yet every one of us knows that if the person has died, the picture makes present the reality of that person. The relationship with that person continues through the image. This brings us back to that original sense of what the icon is all about. It is a manifestation of the presence of the person or event portrayed in the icon. The manifestation of presence is in a different form and in a different essence, yet the person is personally (hypostatically) present in the icon. The veneration of the icon is an actual connection with that person, an expression of our love for that person, our relationship with him or her. As Orthodox Christians we ultimately reject the nominalist categories into which our culture has placed these concepts of symbol, image, and type. We assert that the symbol, the image, and the type are a participation in the reality portrayed and celebrated.

The ultimate participation in the event celebrated is not given simply by the object (the icon), the ritual actions, or even by the words themselves, but ultimately by the grace of the Holy Spirit. He

unites us with the persons, actions, and events of sacred history which are now made present through the services and sacramental actions. The sacred texts of the services reveal and manifest the Presence of Christ and the saints, and thus are themselves sacramental, consecrating the medium of time.

That is why, for example, we have the blessing of water on Theophany. It's a symbol. The priest immerses the holy Cross while we sing, “When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan. . . .” Obviously, the icon—a piece of metal with an image stamped or cast on it—is not Jesus. Nevertheless, when we say, “When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest,” we enter into the event of Christ's Baptism through the liturgical symbol, through the liturgical image, and we are present. The event is made present. This blessing ties together the sacred history, which is celebrated in the feasts of the Church and in all its commemorative cycles, with the whole sacramental vision of the Church.

Participating in the Kingdom of God

The sacramental vision of the deification of matter is the absolute key to Orthodoxy. It is the fundamental key to our understanding of Christology and of salvation, as well as to the understanding of the sacraments. Somehow in the development of Western philosophy, there came to be what I like to call an “ontology gap.” If God is *up there*, the creation is *down here*, and God doesn't really enter into its life. He came down as Jesus and then went back up. Then He sent the Holy Spirit to inspire people. One is either *in* God's favor or *out* of God's favor, which is grace or not grace, and one will either go to heaven or go to hell. This sort of thinking creates a great gap with no bridge between the two. It's very dualistic.

Our Orthodox understanding is non-dualistic. God is present in the creation through His activity, through His energies. He completely permeates and interpenetrates the entire creation, vivifies and enlivens it with His presence and His energy. This is ultimately manifested in the Incarnation: the personal Incarnation of the Logos as Jesus Christ. The deification of humanity was revealed in Him and by Him, in that He became by nature what we are, in order to make us what He is by grace. The sanctification of human nature in Jesus accomplished

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The reality of the Kingdom of God began at the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Church is the presence of that Kingdom in this world until the Second Coming, when all of creation will be permeated and filled with the grace of God, becoming radiant, transfigured, and resurrected. In this interval between Jesus' Resurrection and that ultimate fulfillment of the Second Coming, the services and the sacramental life of the Church become participation in that eternal Kingdom of God, through the sanctification of time and of material things (bread, wine, oil, water). We ourselves as Christians have been sanctified and are participants in that reality of the deified creation.

Ultimately, this is what the sacramental elements are—what they are revealed to be by the services. The Liturgy of St. Basil makes this clear: "that thou wilt bless, hallow, and show this bread to be . . ." *Show*—that is to reveal this bread to be the Body of Christ, and to *show* this cup to be the Blood of Christ. This is also the case in the prayers of Theophany at the blessing of the water. It is to *show* that this water is the water of the new creation, to reveal it. Our experience as Christians who have been illumined by the grace of Christ is a continual opening of our mind, our eyes and heart to the reality of this new creation, which, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, He makes manifest through the sacramental life of the Church—through the services of the Church. In other words, the services reveal to us this new reality which exists in Christ, and the eschatological reality of the Kingdom of God breaking through here and now. We are still awaiting the ultimate fulfillment, but we participate in that fulfillment here and now through these common actions.

To be able to truly enter into the liturgical prayer of the Church, we need to be able to enter into *noetic* prayer. We can only truly perceive, truly experience this spiritual reality through the spiritual vision of our heart, and not simply on the rational, intellectual plane of our head. There is plenty of material for our rational mind to grasp. But it is a means, not the end. The deeper we can enter into that spiritual vision through the awareness of the heart, the more profoundly the liturgy and the whole cycle of liturgical prayer (including the sanctification of time) will affect us, and transform us. If we're trying to analyze it constantly, all we're doing is keeping it in our head. It may be intellectually interesting, it may be aesthetically pleasing (or it may not)—but we need to go beyond those surface perceptions into a deeper level of awareness, a deeper level of consciousness.

Abiding in this awareness, the liturgical and sacramental prayer of the Church becomes authentically transforming and an act of communion. The point of both the sacraments of the Church and the liturgical prayers of the Church is that they become a means for us to enter into that living experience of communion, linking us through the liturgical types and symbols and images with the things that they are trying to connect us with. The liturgy links the remembrance of these events with the time of day in which they occurred, sanctifying the time of day and making it an opportunity to enter once again into the experience of the Kingdom at that time, in connection with those events. It also brings us to an awareness of this reality, which is a fundamental part of our salvation. ✚

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PSALM Notes

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The articles and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors. While the editors assume

Strategic Planning Retreat: A Landmark Event for PSALM

A group of PSALM Board members, Advisory Council members, and volunteers met for the first of several strategic planning sessions on February 28 and March 1, 2003, in Santa Rosa, California. PSALM was graciously hosted by St. Seraphim Orthodox Church (OCA), pastored by Fr. Lawrence Margitich (PSALM Advisory Council member) for the two-day retreat. The Very Rev. Fr. John Reeves (Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, OCA, State College, PA) served as facilitator for the retreat and led the group through a series of exercises, which resulted in a clarified mission statement, a list of core values, a greater sense of focus, and a timeline of goals for the next three years. The strategic planning process will continue over the next six months, as the Board prioritizes goals for the next three years and develops detailed action plans to ensure success in implementing those goals. Be watching PSALM Notes and the PSALM Web site for updates!

Some priorities that emerged from the planning retreat are:

Short-term:

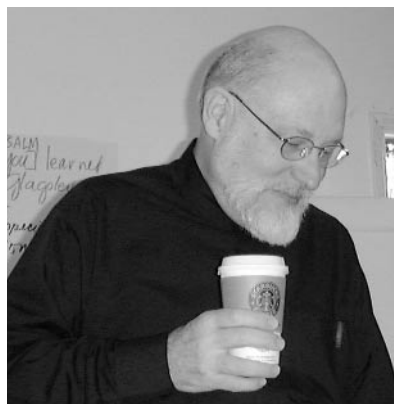
- ✦ Continued Web site and database development
- ✦ Development and restructuring of Board of Directors
- ✦ Administrative restructuring
- ✦ Filling of key volunteer positions
- ✦ Intensified marketing and fundraising
- ✦ Increased interaction with and involvement of clergy

Long-term:

- ✦ Regional membership chairpersons
- ✦ Regional conferences and workshops
- ✦ PSALM Notes published quarterly
- ✦ Scholarship fund for Orthodox musicians
- ✦ Outreach to young Orthodox musicians (high school, college, recent graduates)
- ✦ National membership conference
- ✦ Continued development of educational resources



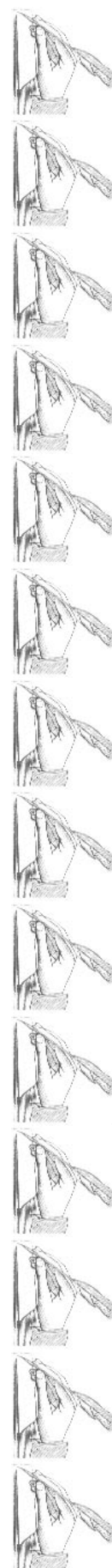
Taking a Starbucks break. Left to right: Hank Andruss (seated), Carol Wetmore, Katherine Hyde, Betsy Tumbas, Anne Schoepp, Vlad Morosan, Mark Bailey (seated), Valerie Yova Sheets, Helen Levenetz. Mark looks particularly happy.



Our wonderful facilitator, Fr. John Reeves.



Working on the timeline: Helen, Anne, Mark, Katherine, and Fr. Stephan Meholick.



BOARD NOTES

Working with Amateurs

Parish Music Ministry Today

By Helen Breslich Erickson

In the course of its existence the Orthodox Church has witnessed many changes in the way liturgical services are performed. From simple and improvisatory beginnings, the liturgy developed into an enormous resource of communal prayer which some say is the greatest treasure of our Church. Over the years, as congregations grew from small to enormous, as monasteries were founded, as cathedrals came to be built, the role of church singers grew in importance.

Along with the great and wealthy churches, there always existed smaller communities of practicing Christians. At times a trained or more-or-less trained cantor provided musical services in these communities; at times the entire congregation sang the services together. American parishes have inherited both of these traditions. Above all, Orthodox churches in America are typically served by volunteer choirs. It is the role and culture of the amateur choir, led by an amateur choir director, that I would like to consider here. Both theoretical and practical issues are involved—both a vision and a plan.

The Challenge

Very few of our parishes today are able to afford a full-time choir director or leader of church music, let alone a professional choir. Often parishes are unable even to compensate a musical director in the smallest way, relying simply on the commitment and vocation of individuals with musical training. Often our leaders of church music are teachers; occasionally they are professional performers. Sometimes they find themselves leading the music in a parish because they happen to have the most musical knowledge in their congregation—even though they may never have formally studied music except in a recreational way. Very, very few have had the opportunity for any formal training in church music or liturgy.

Throughout the years of my own involvement in church music, I have been impressed year in and year out by the many dedicated and capable musicians in our churches. They are obviously committed to a ministry that is much more difficult than it appears to be at first glance, and most do this without any specialized training and with a minimal support network. Although so often taken for granted, the choir director undertakes an important ministry within the parish—he is not just someone who “helps out” with the music. In fact, the choir director’s role is one of the most challenging in the Church.

To serve the Church effectively, our choir directors must aspire to follow both Mary and Martha. They must continually seek a true vision of the Church—through study of theology, of liturgy and of the Christian life—and, at the same time, they must also be willing and able to carry out the mundane tasks upon which a successful music program is built.

Like Mary, the choir director must align her vision with the vision of the Church, and with the priest’s vision for the parish. Having sought the wisdom of the Church, the choir director must strive to present a model of the Christian life in all that she does—in all interactions with choir members, with clergy, with other members of the parish. Only this will point her ministry in the right direction. Only a practicing, worshipping Christian will have the essential, secure foundation upon which to build a true church music program, for a choir director must provide inspirational and pastoral leadership for a significant part of the congregation.

In addition, like Martha, the choir director must have strong practical skills. He must have excellent musical and conducting skills. He must provide musical materials for his choir; he must research repertory, and, if none is available, must arrange or compose suitable alternatives. He must train his

singers to produce the best possible sound and to sing in the most musical manner. He must learn how to teach effectively and to run an efficient and inspiring rehearsal.

We cannot separate the roles and goals of the choir director from those of the choir, for they are essentially two parts of a functioning whole. So let us begin by briefly considering the other half of the equation—our amateur choirs, the real choirs of our lives: choirs without tenors, choirs with sopranos who always sing flat and basses who can't sing a note below low A or above middle C, choirs who do not read music and, in some cases, who find reading English a hardship, small choirs of four to five people, larger choirs of twelve to twenty-five singers. In short, let us begin at the beginning.

Molding the Choir Culture

It is important to realize that every choir has a culture. If a director is in an established parish, she will have inherited the better part of this culture. If she is helping to establish a new parish, she will have the opportunity to determine the fundamental principles of this culture (although, of course, she will find that many choir members will bring their own past experiences with them).

When I speak of the culture of a choir, I mean every aspect of the group's dynamics: how choir members interact with each other, how they interact with their director, what they perceive to be the interface between the choir and the rest of the parish, what attitude they hold towards their own role and ministry in the Church. I also mean their attitude towards the service they offer. For example, are they more likely to say "we get by," or "we are getting better all the time"?

If his choir is typical, it will have a wide range of people with different interests, ages, abilities, training, and schedules. As choir director, it is his job to meld these diverse elements into a unified whole, as musicians, as persons, as Orthodox Christians. In order to succeed in this, the first thing he will need is time to rehearse. If singers feel that they "know it all" or feel imposed on or are just plain overcommitted in other areas of their lives, this can be a major challenge. A choir that shows up only for services and leaves immediately afterwards will never have the chance to grow musically or spiritually—and they will never develop a unified vision of their service to the Church.

Many directors find themselves in charge of a choir whose tradition does not include rehearsals.

It's likely, if the choir does not now rehearse, that they feel things are going just fine as they are. If this is the situation, it might be well to begin with a "one-shot" weekend choir retreat, inviting an accomplished colleague from another parish or from a seminary to rehearse the choir for a Vespers service, which will take place at the conclusion of the workshop. A lecture explaining some aspect of the liturgical services or a meditation on specific liturgical hymns or the historical role of singers in the Church might be an important component of such a program, along with time for relaxed discussion and less formal interactions between choir members. If singers come to realize that working together is a pleasure, it will be easier to persuade them to attend rehearsals on a more regular basis.

When initially scheduling a choir rehearsal, it is essential to consider the time of the rehearsal carefully. In some parishes, where people commute from great distances, a rehearsal immediately after the coffee hour on Sunday may be ideal; in other parishes, a weeknight at a convenient hour may be best. For some singers, it may be easier to rehearse immediately after work and before dinner; for others, particularly those with families, a later rehearsal may be better. In the end, what is most important is to establish a pattern of regular rehearsals. Without this time to teach, to learn, to work as a group, a choir will never move forward.

Planning Rehearsals

Once a director has won the time she needs to work with her choir, she must plan each rehearsal with care. Getting together and running through hymns is not enough—in fact, it is only marginally better than having no rehearsal at all.

In planning a rehearsal, the director must first decide what specific hymns will be rehearsed. The director must prepare his own score carefully, learning each voice part, and marking such things as breathing and possibly difficult passages. Establishing an order in which the hymns will be rehearsed is essential—moving from slow to fast pieces, difficult to easy, keeps things moving during the rehearsal. If a hymn setting is particularly challenging, consider rehearsing sections from the end first rather than beginning at the beginning, because the sense of achievement is greater when the beginning is finally learned. A rehearsal longer than one-and-a-half hours should include a break. This interval gives the director an invaluable opportunity to touch base with his singers on an

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Taking time to explain the role of singers within the church can be valuable. If singers see themselves working within the structures and framework of our tradition, they will be far more likely to feel themselves a part of the process, and the level of their achievement will rise accordingly.

individual basis and to smooth over any problems that may have arisen during the first part of the rehearsal. It also provides a very necessary release from tension, should the rehearsal be intense.

All music should be legible and in a large enough format so that it can easily be seen. (And the light in the rehearsal room should be sufficient to read it!) Materials for the choir must be organized—collected in notebooks or chosen from bound volumes. The choir's copies of the music should be ready—on the music stands if possible—when the choir members arrive. Having a pencil on each stand is a very good idea: teaching singers to mark music during rehearsals will give them an additional incentive to pay attention to what the director tells them, as well as serving as a reminder of performance details during the service.

A wise director will do everything she can to make her singers independent and responsible. Pencils to mark the music, service outlines with page numbers, books in good order, information on what is done when and why, a calendar of rehearsals, arrival times, service times, approximate lengths of services—all these things offer a sense of control and ownership to the choir singer.

A director should be able to give some brief (truly *brief*) information about the liturgical text of the hymns being rehearsed. He must always keep an eagle eye on how much time he spends talking during rehearsal and how much time is wasted in those intervals when the group is not singing. I have noticed that the most common problem of the novice is the tendency to overexplain or fail to correct a problem with the absolute minimum of spoken words. One way to keep a rehearsal moving is to ask all sections to join in singing a difficult bass part, for example. In general, it's a bad idea to rehearse one section alone for more than a few minutes without bringing the full group back into performing.

The director must always keep an eye on the interactions of the singers, both with each other and with her. A group that can laugh together and treat each other with respect and tolerance will function in a healthy way. We all know that singers have greater and lesser skills; in a church setting everyone deserves to be accepted for what they are—always assuming that they accept the musical and liturgical goals set for them. Those who cause friction may need extra attention—another challenge to the tact and interpersonal skill of the director.

Taking time to explain the role of singers within the church can be valuable. Liturgical service will require dedication and maximum effort from each one of them. If singers see themselves working within the structures and framework of our tradition, they will be far more likely to feel themselves a part of the process, and the level of their achievement will rise accordingly.

Warming Up and Music Reading

To function at their best, singers must:

- ✦ be able to **sing on pitch**;
- ✦ be able to produce a **good vocal sound**;
- ✦ be able to **blend with others** in their sections;
- ✦ **pronounce the text** in such a way that it can be comprehended by the members of the congregation;
- ✦ be able to **hear, analyze, and repeat** musical patterns; and
- ✦ eventually develop at least rudimentary **music-reading skills**.

The warm-up is an excellent tool for beginning to achieve these goals.

At the beginning of the rehearsal, a warm-up is essential for getting voices moving and minds focused on the task ahead. A wise choir director remembers that singers come from various other activities, and that they may be thinking about how they will manage to attend the soccer game *and* buy food for dinner tomorrow, or about the project at work that should have been completed and hasn't been. Beginning softly is better for both of these goals—to sing softly requires more focus and concentration than singing loudly. Varying the pattern of exercises so that each rehearsal begins with a new melodic warm-up is a remarkably effective way to establish attentiveness and focus. Always starting with the same tired warm-up is guaranteed to encourage wandering attention on the part of the singers.

Most choir directors have learned through years in other choral ensembles to use a warm-up to deal with vocal sound, blend, and pitch. But often choir directors completely neglect musicianship skills such as listening, analyzing and repeating musical patterns, or the development of music-reading skills. Why? It may be because it appears to be an enormous undertaking—one that would eat up so much time that it would be impossible to learn all those essential hymns for Holy Week. And what about choirs composed of singers with a wide range of musical skills? And what if there are some readers

and some nonreaders in the group? And what if you have a conservatory-trained musician who believes there is only one way to sight-read, and that way is more applicable to instrumentalists than singers? It may take some strong interpersonal skills to deal with these issues, but the matter is well worth the effort. (Imagine how quickly rehearsals will fly if everyone in the choir begins to read music!)

In fact, learning to read music does not have to be an enormously time-consuming endeavor. Just as a director would probably not spend an entire rehearsal on tone production, it would be extremely profligate to spend an entire rehearsal on musicianship skills. The introduction and practice of music reading should not take more than three to four minutes of your rehearsal time (perhaps a few more moments when you initially explain the reading system).

Movable “do” solfege is an ideal vehicle for teaching the sort of music reading Orthodox church singers need to do. It easily accommodates both major and minor modes (“do” keys and “la” keys), and provides the tools to shift back and forth from major to minor, as happens in so many of our hymns. If you are unfamiliar with this reading system, be reassured. It is extremely simple to learn, and there are a multitude of books available to help you.

When beginning to teach music reading, it is best to start from sound. A truism of contemporary music education is that to start from notation and progress to sound is to teach backwards—as though we had learned to read before we learned to hear and speak. Introducing a short, simple musical pattern of only two or three pitches (sung on “oo” or “ah”) is a good way to begin. This phrase can be sung on multiple pitches as a warm-up exercise. After the choir has learned the pattern by ear, it can be repeated with relative solfege syllables—a brief repeated warm-up exercise that will help to establish the pattern of the syllables. Gradually changing the area of the scale encompassed by the exercises and increasing the number of different pitches involved will lead to a basic knowledge of the relationship between pitches in a very short time. Now the director needs to find ways to use the syllables to reinforce fragments of the hymns being rehearsed. For example, should the sopranos sing the scale pattern 3-2-1 with incorrect rhythm, you can ask them to sing it correctly using the syllables mi-re-do.

After a few sessions where the director tells the solfege syllables of a pattern to the singers, asking

them to repeat them, the director may begin to ask the singers to analyze the pattern and supply the syllables on their own. This is a very subtle form of melodic dictation which will, in the long run, give singers the tools to analyze what they are hearing.

Once a choir has achieved some basic familiarity with the solfege system, it is possible to create simple examples for them to practice reading. Example 1 on page 12 can be used in this way. If used as a first introduction to sight reading in voice parts, it may be a good plan to have the entire choir read each line. Don’t worry if they need a lot of assistance initially—just by attaching syllables to the notes they are learning a great deal. Later the director can ask the choir to sight read two, three, or four parts simultaneously, not necessarily assigning the “correct” voice part to a section. (Note, however, that the bass part of Example 1 focuses on jumps from 1 to 5 and from 1 to 4, intervals commonly found in the bass line of our hymns.) In time choirs begin to look forward to this kind of exercise. Just be sure not to move ahead too quickly; the idea is to make the challenge fit the choir’s level at each step of the way.

A really effective use of this kind of introduction to the rehearsal is to create the warm-up from a phrase that is likely to cause problems when it is first met in rehearsal. An example is melodic material in modal minor, where the lowered leading tone may present a challenge. If a warm-up exercise is created in minor mode (see Figure 1 below), it can then be applied to correct a mistakenly raised leading tone during the rehearsal itself.

Eventually it will be possible to introduce your

Figure #1

Figure #1 is a musical exercise in modal minor. The vocal line consists of the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). The syllables are: la do ti la si la sol la mi fa sol la. The bass line consists of the following notes: G3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), Bb3 (quarter), C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), Bb3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter).

Figure #2 - Mini-round

Figure #2 - Mini-round is a musical exercise in modal minor. The vocal line consists of the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter). The syllables are: do mi re fa mi sol fa la sol mi fa re do. The bass line consists of the following notes: G3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), Bb3 (quarter), C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), Bb3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter).

We all know that anything that doesn't grow and develop will die—and so it is with amateur choirs. If their director is blessed with the vision and understanding of Mary and the practicality and skills of Martha, the choir will continue to grow spiritually and liturgically.

singers to written warm-up exercises. While they will never have to learn letter names, they will have to learn to find “do” (and from “do” to find “la” as needed). This is, fortunately, very easy. The sharp farthest to the right is always “ti”; the flat farthest to the right is always “fa.” One quick exercise in finding “do” usually takes care of things. Now begin reading with simple two- or three-pitch warm-ups, with lots of practice and time to reflect on the relationship between the notes and the syllables. Eventually mini-cansons can provide lots of fun (see Figure 2 on page 9).

One word of advice: Don't try to move ahead too quickly. In teaching music reading, less learned well is much more valuable than more learned more-or-less. The initial foundation must be very strong, but, after it has been created, progress will be amazingly rapid.

Diction

Diction is another area that rarely gets the attention it deserves. Many directors are uncomfortable with it, or feel that it's not worth the effort. Because words are the fundamental element of our liturgical music, however, nothing could be farther from the truth. And for any native English-speaker, it's simply not that difficult. Even if a director has never had a course in English diction, it is possible to learn a great deal just by listening to a recording of rehearsals or services. At worst, diction problems may make it impossible to decipher the words the choir is singing. In other cases, they may merely disrupt the flow of vocal sound or become an irritating distraction to prayer.

Perhaps the most common diction problem is the American tendency to spread a closed “rrr” from ear to ear. The simple solution is to drop the “r” altogether. If this is pointed out to a choir a number of times, retooling the “r” sound becomes a habit. A second common problem is the distortion of terminal consonants such as “p” and “t,” which are often sounded as “b” or “d.” (I recall a group of carolers singing “lay down His Swede head” as a line of “Away in a Manger.”) A third common problem is dropping or reworking some of the consonants in a consonant cluster. This may occasionally obscure the meaning of the text—as in “He went to the jusansed” rather than “He went to the Jews and said.”

Placement of consonants is also an issue. The best rule of thumb for this is that all initial consonants should fall before the beat, and all terminal consonants should be linked to the beginning of the next

word. Taking breaths at random times is a root cause of a lot of these misplaced consonants, because singers don't understand that when you stagger breathing you should not pronounce a terminal consonant with the breath, particularly when the consonant is an “s”. Diphthongs like “light,” “say,” etc., can also be difficult if singers move to the second vowel too soon (“lah-eet,” “say-ee”). Reminding them to put the second vowel on the cut-off or the next downbeat can be very helpful.

Beyond the mechanics of diction, there is another very important way in which words must be respected in rehearsal and performance. This involves the phrasing of text. Our language, in fact, makes sense only when it is spoken in shaped phrases. This is even more true when language is combined with melody—especially when the melody you have inherited conflicts with the accentuation of the text in some way. (Until our composers have another hundred years or so to take care of this problem for us, I suspect we musicians will have to do our best to soften the misaccentuations present in much of our music.) A great deal of teaching—both of accent and of rhythm—can be done by asking a choir to repeat phrases spoken with correct emphasis. Eventually singers come to understand the concept of a textual-musical phrase and will instinctively perform them correctly. Such singers are able to sing with understanding, and those who hear them will also be able to understand.

Mary and Martha

The great majority of our church singers serve out of love of God, out of love for our Church. At times their “gift” is seen as a static entity—being present and singing is sufficient. But we all know that anything that doesn't grow and develop will die—and so it is with amateur choirs. If their director is blessed with the vision and understanding of Mary and the practicality and skills of Martha, the choir will continue to grow spiritually and liturgically, for the culture of a choir is both spiritual and material. Without the spiritual vision of Mary, the work of Martha would have been to no purpose. But without the practical, material work of Martha, the spiritual vision of Mary could not have been realized. †

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Sample Sightsinging Warm-ups

using movable "do"

Created by Helen Erickson

Major scale

do re mi fa sol la ti do ti la sol fa mi re do

do mi re fa mi sol fa la sol ti la do ti re do

Minor scale (showing difference between raised and lowered 7th)

la ti do re mi fa mi la si la sol fa mi re do ti la

Minor keys run from "la" to "la". If the 7th degree of the minor scale is raised, it is sung as "si" rather than "sol". It is rare to find a raised 6th degree in traditional music of the Slavic traditions; should it occur, it is sung as "fi" rather than "fa". Occasionally, the harmonic patterns of chant shift into a minor key based on "re", the 2nd degree of the major scale. In this case a raised 7th degree is sung as "di" instead of "do".

Finding "do"

In sharp keys (#) the sharp furthest to the right is always "ti". The pitch immediately above is "do".
In flat keys (b) the flat furthest to the right is "fa"; the second to the last flat is always "do".

ti do ti do ti do fa do fa do fa do

Example 1

do re do re mi re do do ti do ti la ti do

do sol do sol do sol do

do sol do fa do sol do

Detailed description: This musical score for Example 1 consists of three systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The first system contains the lyrics 'do re do re mi re do do ti do ti la ti do' and 'do sol do sol do sol do'. The second system contains the lyrics 'do sol do fa do sol do'. The music is written in a simple, stepwise fashion, typical of vocal warm-ups or choral preparation exercises.

Example 2

Choral Preparation of the Ledkovsky, "A mercy of peace."

do ti do re do ti do mi re mi sol mi re mi

sol sol sol ti sol sol sol do sol sol sol sol sol do

A mer - cy of peace, a sac - ri - fice of praise.

Ledkovsky

8

Detailed description: This musical score for Example 2 consists of three systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The first system contains the lyrics 'do ti do re do ti do mi re mi sol mi re mi'. The second system contains the lyrics 'sol sol sol ti sol sol sol do sol sol sol sol sol do'. The third system contains the lyrics 'A mer - cy of peace, a sac - ri - fice of praise.' and is marked with 'Ledkovsky' in the upper right and a large number '8' in the lower right. The music is written in a simple, stepwise fashion, typical of vocal warm-ups or choral preparation exercises.

“O Lord, Open My Lips”

Singing in Church During Great Lent

by Father Lawrence Margitich

This article is adapted from a talk given by Fr. Lawrence at the Liturgical Singing Seminar in Santa Rosa, California, in February, 2002.

Preparing and singing the services of Great Lent is a prospect that inspires trepidation in even the bravest of choir directors and singers. In fact, when I was preparing this talk, I e-mailed a musicologist/church musician friend to ask for his advice about speaking on the ministry of singing in church during Lent. His one-word reply was, “Don’t.”

Well, I couldn’t get out of giving this talk, and we cannot get out of singing during Lent, if we are to be faithful to the task God has given us. The Lord has given us at least the “one talent” He spoke about in the Gospel, and we have a chance to do His will and increase the talent. How marvelous that we can increase the talent by doing something as lovely as singing! This ministry, by which we serve Him and our fellow churchgoers, is even more essential than usual during the spiritually and liturgically intense season of Lent.

So, given the fact that we are indeed going to sing in the choir during Great Lent, we need to prepare for this task. There are three basic areas of preparation I want to address: preparing the heart and soul, preparing the voice, and preparing the materials we use in the Divine Services. First, though, let me say a few words about choir singing in general, by way of review.

Preparing for the Ministry of Choir Singing

The choir and the chanters give voice to the liturgical texts. We sing and chant words which are divinely inspired (whether they be Psalms, Gospel quotes, or composed hymns), and are fruits of Holy Tradition. We singers give voice to the prayer of the

gathered faithful, and we lead them in singing, so that they too can sing. The choir, then, fulfills a liturgical ministry. The singers at the kleros are “clergy” of a type—those set aside and blessed to do a sacred and public act of the Church.

We sing, and through this act the holy words can be heard, pronounced, prayed, and absorbed by all, as they choose to participate. Singing, being a profound mode of human expressiveness, is more natural to the event of the Divine Liturgy than speaking. Apart from the tediousness and sheer ugliness of communal speaking, the rhythm of song—even when it is a comparatively free rhythm—keeps all the voices together and allows for intelligibility. Also, the melody of song helps people to remember the words.

If we are going to be blessed to do this work, we have to be ready for it, to prepare ourselves. The singers, led by their director—who leads by example, not by command—prepare for their ministry of church singing in numerous ways, two of which are the following:

1 Living a traditional Orthodox life. Here there is an emphasis on ascetical-sacramental practices—personal prayer, confession/repentance, the Eucharist, love of neighbor, and so forth. Of course, this implies asceticism, “which is the call for self-denial, self-dissatisfaction; and the constant yearning for improvement through hard work and energetic application” (Dimitri Conomos). This concept is familiar to athletes, secular musicians, ambitious businesspeople—but we Orthodox musicians sometimes forget it. We sometimes think that our faith is not supposed



The singer prepares himself for his ministry—for which he has a blessing—through “action and contemplation,” to use the words of St. Andrew of Crete. This means prayerful rehearsal of the music and texts, and study of the order of services; and it means being led to prayer and repentance by this practice.

to demand, but to give—to give us comfort, solace, hope. We tend to forget that those things come only after struggle and work.

Dimitri Conomos, an Orthodox musicologist living in Britain, writes:

Throughout the year, but particularly during Great Lent, the Church impresses upon us the great blessings that are ours through increased prayer, prostrations, fasting, and charitable works. The church singer has a sacred profession, and this sanctity requires a determination of character, a strong faith, great modesty, and a high sense of integrity. To be a church singer in an Orthodox Church is to respond to a calling, to a vocation—it demands purity, sureness of faith and conviction. How hypocritical it is for a singer, who transmits in melody the dogmas of the Church, to feel that he deserves congratulations and gratitude for performing before a captive audience: as if he were doing the congregation a favour.¹

2 Rehearsal as a choir, refining personal technique. The blessing to sing in the kleros and to lead Divine Services is given to those who have already been blessed by God with musical talent and the desire to use this talent for His glory. The singer prepares himself for his ministry—for which he has a blessing—through “action and contemplation,” to use the words of St. Andrew of Crete. This means prayerful rehearsal of the music and texts, and study of the order of services; and it means being led to prayer and repentance by this practice. Without these elements, one cannot “chant with understanding” (Ps. 46:9), nor can one lead oneself and others to praise God. And without the balance of “action and contemplation,” self-will, pride, carelessness, and frustration will predominate, especially during Lent. “Cursed is the man that does the work of the Lord carelessly” (Jer. 48:10). The curse that will come upon us is of our own making: frustration, anger, disappointment, burnout.

Singing in the kleros and leading a group of chanters, doing it well and with integrity, are indeed difficult tasks, as is any liturgical art. Liturgical art, whether it be iconography or chant, requires constant *ascesis* (i.e. a workout), a serious prayer life, thoughtfulness about the tasks at hand, love for the Tradition, and a personal “rule” of practicing technique and developing skills. Again, one must keep in mind “action and contemplation.”

What do I mean here, in the context of choir work, by the word “action”? Without understanding the rubrics, without proficiency in the music

itself, one will become terribly frustrated and unable to pray during the service; worse, one may lead others to the same frustration.

What do I mean by “contemplation”? Without the “prayer in secret” to the Father, liturgical prayer—especially for the choir director—will be unfulfilling, frustrating, a stumbling block, and/or disconnected from the life of the Church and her Tradition. Church leaders who do not pray become merely church “professionals,” which are the bane of the Church. (As church musicians, we want to approach our work professionally, but we must never forget that it is a spiritual ministry, not just a “job.”) And of course, more than anything else, one needs a sense of thanksgiving to God for the talent and gifts He has given us, and for blessing us to have choir directing and singing as our particular form of *ascesis* in which to grow spiritually—the particular form of “work” given to us by God as our “liturgy” in the parish.

The True Nature of Repentance

Let’s examine for a few moments the attitude and culture that we want to cultivate as choir members during Lent. How do we enter into it in the right spirit? If we enter in the right spirit, we will not see the season as a complete break with the rest of our year, but as a beginning to what comes later.

The word “repentance,” coming as we all know from the Greek word *metanoia*, means “a change of mind.” Frederica Mathewes-Green pointed out in a very informative article² that *metanoia* is a compound word: *meta* is a preposition that here indicates transformation (for example, *metamorphosis* means a change of shape). *Metanoia* is a change of the *nous*, the heart or the spiritual faculty, the energy and the eye of the soul. “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind [*nous*],” St. Paul wrote (Rom. 12:2). Repentance is not blubbery and self-loathing, guilt trips and self-flagellation. It is *insight*. The insight is about our true condition, which is an alienation from God, an exile from communion with God, His joy, His life—an alienation brought about by sin.

One Orthodox writer says that the Gospel does not divide people according to their virtues or vices (although certainly we are encouraged to be virtuous—see Galatians 5, on the gifts of the Spirit). The Gospel divides persons according to their disposition either to repent or to persist in sin. The writer George Manzarides says this:

Christ did not call man to become more virtuous or less sinful, but to repent and to accept the grace which he offers them. In so far as men do not repent, they are far from the true source of their life and are slaves of decay and death. There are no exceptions in this matter: "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Only the consciousness of this reality gives man the measure of his real morality and of his relationship with God.³

Being alienated from the true source of life is what really constitutes sin. That state of existence is exactly what the Gospel would call not *life*, but just a biological existence. If God is not the Lord and Master of my life, wrote Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, then I am my own master and Lord, and everything in my life is to serve *me*—including other people. "And yet," Fr. Alexander writes, "the 'old' life, that of sin and pettiness is not easily overcome."

Lent, then, is the time to re-enter the real world, to get a "reality check" and see where things are going wrong, sometimes very wrong, in our lives. Repentance is right, good, and necessary. But it is only the step towards God, the door towards new life—if there is no joy and thanksgiving to the Lord, then certainly there has been no repentance. And if there is joy and thanksgiving, then there is going to be worship too!

Why We Worship

To state the obvious, it is the choir's work to be involved, completely and in many respects, with the public worship of God. Worship assumes at least two basic facts:

- 1 We have been given new life, salvation; we've been saved from death, from our own sins and sinfulness, from the evil one and his corruption, and from our passions, which would kill us without baptism, chrismation, and the sacramental life of the Church.
- 2 We worship God because our repentance and the gift of new life in Christ have led us to have a real experience of this new life, salvation, hope, and victory over sin and death. This is what prayer and the liturgical services are all about—Pascha and victory over death.

God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:4–6)

Sin [alienation from God, lack of communion with Him] kills man. And since all are born in sin and live in it, they are condemned to death. God, then, in His great love gives life to people condemned to death, and lifts them up to the throne of His glory as glorified members of the Body of Christ, as His glorified children.⁴

It sometimes worries me to see people explaining away sin by saying that God, since He is Love and Good, will not really be too judgmental at the judgment seat. We want that to be so, and of course, it is much easier to secularize things, and make the criterion of life good morals and ethics. We also don't want to be offensive to people outside the Church.

Yet this approach defangs sin and death. "O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?"—we might ask in a backwards sense. When alienation from God is not deadly, when death is explained as natural, then we must wonder, what is actually so special about what Jesus Christ has done? The truth is, everyone needs this Gift of life with God. If what He has done is true and valid, it's valid and true for everyone.

When we do remember the revolutionary message of salvation and immortal life, and live in the light of that, then we have thanksgiving, worship in spirit and truth, and also the bright sadness of repentance—both during the Great Sea of the Fast, as Great Lent is called, and after Lent is over.

Preparing the Soul for Lent

Here is a season that many of us stumble into: yes, we are looking forward to it, but at the same time we are worrying about its demands—fasting, services, extra rehearsals, and for choir directors, the rubrical changes and extra music. Some might even dread coming to the shores of the Great Sea of the Fast, not having passed over it very successfully in the past, but having been knocked overboard into it one too many times.

Even with all the special liturgical and ascetical labors of Great Lent, we can profit by learning to see that this season is not a radical break, but is actually in continuity with every other church season. We can avoid thinking to ourselves: "Let's get the fun things done now, before Great Lent starts, since then we have to be serious, we have to fast, we have more services." During Lent we repent. During Lent we are reminded to pick up *our* cross and follow Christ. Then come Holy Week and Pascha and Bright Week. And perhaps the Paschal joy departs from us all too soon after the glory of the

Repen-
tance is not
blubbing and
self-loathing,
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self-flagellation.
It is insight.
The insight is
about our true
condition, which
is an alienation
from God, an
exile from
communion
with God, His
joy, His life—
an alienation
brought about
by sin.

**Great
Lent is not a
liturgical
aberration; it is
the condition
and school of
Christianity.
And we may
use what is
discovered
during Lent
every day.**

Resurrection. Maybe this means that we've placed our own cross, during the rest of the year, in a place out of view and out of mind.

Most of us have read Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's book, *Great Lent*. We know, as he tells us, that Pascha presupposes Great Lent, and that the cycle of services, the rhythm of fasting and reading the Psalter, the Presanctified Liturgies, the Canon of St. Andrew, and so on, help us to recover the vision and taste of the "new life" of the resurrection, of the Kingdom of God. The season serves as the doorway to Pascha, and therefore to the entire Church Year with its cycle of feasts and fasts.

We know all that, but it's easy to forget this too—usually sometime around the middle of the third week of the Great Fast. Great Lent is not a liturgical aberration; it is the condition and school of Christianity. And we may use what is discovered during Lent every day.

But, being human, we need something to help us through the difficult sea of the Fast—a reliable means of transportation to get us to Pascha; a set of guideposts and rest stops along the way. We church singers have the very means always available to us: "Can any joy be greater than that of delighting ourselves with psalms and nourishing ourselves with prayer and feeding ourselves with the lessons that are read in between?" Nicetas of Remesiana, a fifth-century bishop, reminds us that "like guests at table enjoying a variety of dishes, our souls feast on the rich banquet of lessons and hymns." And he goes on to instruct us further:

Only, brethren, let us please God by singing with attention and a mind wide awake, undistracted by idle talk . . . that is, we must sing with our intelligences; not only with the spirit (in the sense of the sound of our voice), but also with our mind. We must think about what we are singing, lest we lose the fruit of our effort by distracting talk and extraneous thoughts. The sound and melody of our singing must be suitably religious. It must not be melodramatic, but a revelation of the true Christianity within. It must have nothing theatrical about it, but should move us to sorrow for our sins [that is, move us to a clear understanding of our condition].⁵

Now, as we enter into the pre-Lenten season, we should ask ourselves a few questions about our personal preparedness for singing, not just in Lent but at all times.

- ✚ Do we make time for personal prayer: do we have a rule of prayer? If not, then we will not have the necessary spiritual nourishment and

inspiration which comes from praying, from drawing close to God and struggling to be near Him.

- ✚ Do we make time for preparation for Communion? The pre-Communion prayers may be the most beautiful in the collection. They express such yearning and trust in God. Living with these prayers will soften our hearts. Use them.
- ✚ Do we make time for preparation for confession: is it last-minute? Is any time being devoted to this act of self-examination, discovery, and correction?
- ✚ What are the personality dynamics between the choir members? Here we must not be quick to judge others, but must be ready to admit and correct our own faults. Just look at Colossians 3:12–16, and use those words as a guide:

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 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.

There are demons that sneak into the choir during difficult times. Pay them no mind, but do everything within yourself to follow the advice of St. Paul.

Everything else follows from repentance, including our second area of preparation, which is preparing your voice.

Preparing Your Voice

This implies rehearsing on a regular basis, not accepting any excuses not to rehearse. Rehearsals should be meticulously and carefully plotted. Choir directors must not neglect their own preparation of materials for the services and for the rehearsals. Plan in some moment of singing that you know is going to be beautiful and inspiring and that will keep the singers coming back for more. Here at St. Seraphim's, the choir gets together one-half-hour before the Sunday Liturgy and any other main services to warm up and review.

continued on page 19

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PSALM Notes Newsletter 2 issues/year	1 subscription	1 subscription	1 subscription	1 subscription	15 copies	8 copies	6 copies
New PSALM Music Journal	1 copy	1 copy	1 copy	1 copy	1 copy	1 copy	1 copy
PSALM Music Press (PMP) Packet #3	1 copy and 20% discount on additional licenses	1 copy and 20% discount on additional licenses			3 copies and 20% discount on additional licenses	2 copies and 20% discount on additional licenses	1 copy and 20% discount on additional licenses
PSALM Music Press Special Publications	20% discount on new Glagolev <i>Selected Choral Works</i>	20% discount on new Glagolev <i>Selected Choral Works</i>			20% discount on new Glagolev <i>Selected Choral Works</i>	20% discount on new Glagolev <i>Selected Choral Works</i>	20% discount on new Glagolev <i>Selected Choral Works</i>
New Directory of Resources & Church Musicians	Listing and 1 copy	Listing and 1 copy	Listing and 1 copy	Listing and 1 copy	Listing and 1 copy	Listing and 1 copy	Listing and 1 copy

PSALM memberships run from September through August, based on the Church year.

Friends of PSALM: Donors of \$15 or more (tax-deductible) will be listed in the PSALM Directory and will receive a complimentary copy of the Directory.

Student Membership: A student is anyone who is enrolled full-time in elementary or secondary school, or in an academic degree program.

Family Membership: For two or more people in the same family who would each like to be full members and supporters of PSALM but do not wish to receive double benefits.

Additional copies of PSALM Notes Newsletter may be added to any membership for \$3/person per year.

Music Database Update

Plans are currently underway to make sheet music available for downloading through the PSALM website. Music will be available in the following liturgical categories:

Daily Cycle (Horologion)	Lenten Triodion
Weekly Cycle	Pentecostarion
General Menaion	Festal Menaion
Octoechos	Special Needs

If you have computerized music files that you would like to submit for consideration, please contact Vladimir Morosan at PMP@musicarussica.com for a set of submission guidelines. Or call 203-421-3132 for more information.

Download subscription packages will be available to PSALM members. Watch *PSALM Notes* and the Web site (www.orthodoxpsalm.org) for updated information.

We sing more during Lent, so we need to practice in the right way so that our voices are maintained. (For more on this subject, see “Vocal-Ease” and “The Ten Commandments of Vocal Health” in *PSALM Notes* Vol. 6 No. 2.)

Lenten rehearsals should include a regular weekly rehearsal, at a time that is convenient for your choir, and at least one additional, longer rehearsal, perhaps on a Saturday morning in the second half of Lent. This will give you an opportunity to prepare for Holy Week and Pascha, including any new material.

It is important that choir directors plan everything in advance. Ideally, all services and rehearsals should be carefully mapped out before Lent begins. Be sure you know all the services the choir will sing and all the hymns that will need to be prepared.

Preparing the Books

Finally, we come to the last area of preparation. We must take care to prepare and maintain our choir books, special music packets, and the like. In times past—and in places today too—Orthodox liturgical books were treated with reverence, being rare, finely bound, beautifully done, and containing inspired words. These were not just photocopies, but *Menaia*, *Triodia*, *Psalters*, and so forth. Here are some hints that may be helpful:

- ✦ Make sure your materials, including Holy Week and Pascha books, are ready well ahead of time. Don't leave this task until you need to rehearse the material; that will make it impossible to plan and prepare rehearsals ahead of time. Don't set yourself up for last-minute rush jobs on the choir books; this is frustrating for all, especially the one in charge of the choir, and is an avoidable cause of distraction and sin.
- ✦ Do not ransack your existing choir books; make fresh copies of material when needed.
- ✦ Refile. After a service is over, put your materials away. Keep your bookshelves neat. It is the church after all, and deserves our utmost attention. Maintain the integrity of the filing system; you'll be glad next year.
- ✦ Don't pass out loose sheets of paper to your choir. Not only will the paper not find its way back to a file, but we must recognize that when there are materials flying around the choir, this

is a cause for distraction and sin too. And distraction of this kind, in church, is very bad indeed. Have packets of materials in notebooks, or insert the materials into your books *ahead of time*, before rehearsal, before the service, before anyone shows up at all. Better yet, devise a system that minimizes the constant insertion and removal of materials. The time that we have our singers is short and therefore very precious. We need the time to be profitable. Choirs need their materials ready; don't waste precious rehearsal time, or the choir's attention span.

All of this miscellaneous advice has to do with the love of God and worshipping Him. Great Lent teaches us how to worship, because it teaches us how to repent. There is no other way to get ready for the joy and message of Pascha. “Joy-producing sorrow”—a sorrow for sins that produces joy.

“Initially we fear looking squarely at our sins, lest we get overwhelmed. But the reverse turns out to be true. The more we see the depth of our sin,” wrote Frederica Mathewes-Green, “the more we realize the height of God's love. The constant companion of repentance is gratitude. Like the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, we are forgiven much and discover endless love.”⁶

Let this motivate us and fuel our work in the choir. When we approach this work, we must say to God: “And count us worthy, O Master, that with boldness, and without condemnation, we may dare to call upon Thee, the Heavenly God, as Father, and to say: Our Father.” Such is the awesomeness of entering into that eternal song to join the ever-resounding praise of the angels and the saints at the throne of God. It is time to enter into the real world. ✦

Fr. Lawrence Margitich is rector of St. Seraphim Orthodox Church in Santa Rosa, California, and a member of the PSALM Advisory Council.

- 1 From a talk given in Finland, published in *Syndesmos Magazine*.
- 2 “Whatever Happened to Repentance?” *Christianity Today*, Feb. 4, 2002.
- 3 *Orthodox Spiritual Life*, Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Press, 1994; p. 37.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- 5 For the complete text of this discourse, see *PSALM Notes* Vol. 4, No. 2 and Vol. 5, No. 1.
- 6 Mathewes-Green, *op. cit.*

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PSALM Web Site:
www.orthodoxpsalm.org

CALENDAR



June 18–22, 2003

Tradition in Service to Mission:

Russian Orthodox Chant in the English Language

All Saints of North America Russian Orthodox Church, Middlebrook, Virginia. Third Annual English Spring Conference, sponsored by All Saints of North America, Holy Apostles Orthodox Church, The St. Romanos the Melodist Society, and The Russian Orthodox Church Musicians' (ROCM) Fund. For further information contact: Matushka Alexandra Moses, 540-887-8280 / e-mail mosesj@ntelos.net, or Fr. George and Deborah Johnson, 301-754-3741 / e-mail saintromanos@aol.com

June 22–27, 2003

SVS Liturgical Institute of Music and Pastoral

Practice: Living Tradition

St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, New York. For more information, go to www.svots.org/Events

June 26–29, 2003

AOCA West Coast Sacred Music Institute

La Casa de Maria, Santa Barbara, CA. For more information, contact: Sacred Music Institute, c/o St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, PO Box 35, Goleta, CA. 93116; tel. 805-969-5031.

June 29–July 12, 2003

Summer School of Liturgical Music

Holy Trinity Seminary, Jordanville, New York. For more information, contact: Rev. Andre Papkov, 54 Fourth St., Ilion, NY 13357; tel. 315-894-6274; musicschool@hts.edu

July 30–August 3, 2003

AOCA East Coast Sacred Music Institute

Antiochian Village, Ligonier, PA. For more information, contact: Sacred Music Institute, Antiochian Village, RD#1, PO Box 307, Bolivar, PA 15923; tel. 724-238-3677.