



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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Music in the Worship of the Church

By David Drillock

There is not a single liturgical service in the Orthodox Church which does not use chanting and singing extensively. Why is the Church's worship expressed in song? The Orthodox Liturgy begins with the exclamation: "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit ..." With these words we are invited to "come and see," to enter into and experience the foretaste of a heavenly reality, the Kingdom of heaven on earth, which manifests itself in the Church's liturgy. In this reality there is already expressed a transformation of our present world and of us who dwell in it. We are not simply inhabitants living in a particular spot on the planet, but we are "standing in the temple of Your glory, and we think that we are in heaven". Not only is our life being transformed, but all aspects of the world participate in this transformation. A simple table becomes the throne of the Lord, bread and wine are transformed into the very life of Christ, and the syllables that make up our language of communication become words filled with the Holy Spirit. The words that are uttered from our lips are words of the Holy Spirit, words that are spoken of and by God. The Kingdom of God, experienced in the Liturgy, is thus an expression of the divine beauty: singing, hymnography, iconography, ritual, solemnity are all part of what is experienced by the faithful as the epiphany or manifestation of "heaven on earth."

A good example of this manifestation of beauty as the expression and experience of the Kingdom of God can be found in the report of the emissaries of Prince Vladimir upon their return to Kiev after witnessing the Byzantine Liturgy at the cathedral of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. In describing their experience of the Liturgy, they wrote: "The Byzantines led us to the edifice where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men". What is most significant in this report is not just that the Russian emissaries witnessed a Byzantine worship service that they perceived to be "beautiful," but that in this beauty they experienced the presence of God.

All worship in the Orthodox Church is regulated by the *ordo*, which not only establishes the structure of each service celebrated during the day, but determines both the prayers and hymns that are to be chanted and regulates, as well, the actions that accompany the prayer: e.g. censing, processions and entrances, light and darkness, standing, sitting, kneeling, and prostrating. Church singing is also regulated: regulated not only by the text which it serves, but by the

liturgical function it accompanies. Thus, the selection of the music which we use in worship should be based upon liturgical considerations and nurture appropriate attitudes of prayer.

A structural analysis of our liturgical services would distinguish the following forms of prayer which call for the use of song: dialogue, psalmody, and hymnography.

Dialogue: The Participation of All the People

A basic form of corporate Christian prayer is dialogue. Dialogue has occupied a central place in liturgical worship from the very beginning. Dialogue is basic to Christian prayer. In fact, the whole relationship of God with his people, from the time of the creation of man to the preaching of John the Baptist, and the life, death, and resurrection of Christ to the present day and hour can be described as a great dialogue between God and man. This dialogue has been initiated by God and one of the ways we respond to Him is in liturgical prayer -- prayer in the form of thanksgiving, praise, and supplication.

An example of dialogue in liturgical prayer is the *litany*. The word litany comes from the Greek word *lite* which means intercession. In the liturgical services, there are a number of litanies: the Great Litany or Litany of Peace, the Augmented Litany, the Litany of Fervent Supplication, the Evening Litany and the Morning Litany, all of which include invocations or petitions by the celebrant and a response by the people, i.e. a dialogue. In the *Great Litany*, the celebrant addresses the faithful and establishes an acceptable order of prayer. First he asks "let us pray to the Lord in peace," the peace that is only possible because of the mediation of Christ, for it is in Him and through Him that we are able to pray with the certitude that our prayers will be heard and answered. The celebrant continues: "let us pray for the salvation of our souls, for the peace of the whole world, for the union of all." At the conclusion of each petition, the people respond, "Lord have mercy." i.e., Lord, be gracious to us and receive our prayers. In the *Augmented Litany* the petitions are addressed to God Himself: "Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your great goodness, we pray to You, hear us and have mercy." Here the petitions provide for specific requests for the immediate needs of the congregation and its individual members.

The *Anaphora* is another example of the dialogue form. The Eucharistic Offering begins with a dialogue between the celebrant and the people. After summoning the people to stand with attentiveness and with fear, the priest blesses the people with the words: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with *all of you*," to which the people respond: "And with your spirit." The priest continues: "Let us lift up our hearts," and the people respond: "We lift them up unto the Lord." "Let us give thanks unto the Lord," exclaims the celebrant, and the people give their agreement: "It is meet and right..."

The celebrant, presiding over the gathered community, then offers to God the prayer of thanksgiving of the faithful. This prayer expresses our total gratitude to God for all that He has done for us in creating, saving, and glorifying the world and endowing us with the Kingdom which is to come. The faithful join with the angels who stand next to God, singing "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of Your glory! Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." The singing of the angelic hymn is followed by the prayer of remembrance that includes the words of Jesus to his disciples, "Take, eat, this is my body... drink of it, *all of you*, this is my blood..." to which the faithful

signify their acceptance and agreement with the "Amen." Then the celebrant offers the eucharistic gifts of the bread and wine to God, "Your own of Your own..." and the prayer of offering concludes with the singing of "we praise You, we bless You, we give thanks to You, and we pray to You, O our God."

What is most evident from the texts of the Litany and the Anaphora is that both call for a most elementary form of communal participation -- the prayer of the whole gathering. "Let us lift up our hearts." "We lift them up unto the Lord." "In peace let us pray to the Lord." "We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks to Thee... and we pray to Thee." The main reason that we come together is to become one people in God and to make our common offering of thanksgiving to Him. As Paul Meyendorff has pointed out, the use of the first person plural is always used in liturgical prayer in order to emphasize that *liturgical prayer is the prayer of the entire community*. Indeed, this Greek word for worship -- *leiturgia* -- means a common or corporate action which everyone takes an active part.

Psalmody

While biblical and liturgical scholars debate just how significant and extensive was the use of psalmody in the earliest Christian gatherings, it is well-established that by the year 375, according to the testimony of St. Basil the Great, the chanting of psalms was prevalent throughout all the churches of the Christian East. St. Basil, in his answer to the criticism of the Neocaesarean clergy against the psalmody practiced by his monks at vigils, describes the two different methods of chanting Psalms that were used in his monastery. He writes:

they (the monks) divide themselves into two groups, and sing psalms in alternation with each other ... and then they entrust the lead of the chant to one person, while the rest sing the response.

The first method mentioned by St. Basil is commonly referred to as *alternating psalmody*. Those present in the church are divided in two groups and sing psalms to each other, alternating psalm by psalm or verse by verse. The *kathisma* (a division or grouping of psalms) at our services today ("Blessed is the man," for example) are often chanted in this manner.

Beginning with the fourth century, *antiphonal psalmody* began to gain popularity, first in Jerusalem, then spreading to all parts of the Eastern Empire. Distinguished from responsorial psalmody, the antiphonal form called for the division of the people into two choirs, each of which responded alternately with a short, common refrain to psalm verses chanted by one (or two) soloist chanters. These short refrains were either a selected psalm verse, an Alleluia, a short non-Scriptural phrase (such as "Glory to Thee, O Lord," "Have mercy on us, O Lord, etc.) or an independent sacred strophic hymn called a *troparion*. At the conclusion of the psalm verses, the Little Doxology ("Glory to the Father...") was chanted, followed by a terminating troparion.

An example is the antiphonal chanting at the Paschal service. The service begins with the clergy chanting the Paschal Troparion, "*Christ is risen*" three times. The people respond likewise. Then selected verses of Psalm 68 ("*Let God arise ...*") are chanted by the clergy, alternating with the singing of the Paschal Troparion by the people. At the conclusion of the Psalm verses, the clergy chant the "Glory to the Father..." followed by the singing of the first half of the Paschal Troparion. The second half is then sung by the people, thus concluding the

antiphon. This antiphonal format is used at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy (in the Greek tradition) and at liturgies on Feast-days of the Lord (in the Slavic tradition). Examples of troparia inserted between the psalm verses include: "Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us," "O Son of God, (who rose from the dead), (who was born of the Virgin), (who was baptized in the Jordan), (who ascended in glory), save us who sing to Thee," in addition to the troparion of the particular Feast on major feast days.

It is important that we understand the function that the antiphon serves in our liturgical worship. St. Germanus writes in his commentary on the Liturgy that "the antiphons of the Liturgy are the prophecies of the prophets, foretelling the coming of the Son of God". The words of the Psalms were used many times by Christ Himself to foretell his suffering, death, and resurrection. The texts of the Psalms are understood in the light of Christ -- they "point" to Christ. The insertion of newly-composed troparia, serving as refrains between the verses of a psalm, functions as the Church's interpretation of the psalm, e.g., "*Let God arise ...*" (Ps 68, v.1) points to the words of the Paschal Troparion, "*Christ is risen from the dead ...*"

Clearly, in both form and function, the use of liturgical dialogue (Litany and the Anaphora as examples) and responsorial and antiphonal psalmody (Prokeimena, Communion Hymn, Antiphons) implies the active participation of the people. These forms not only add variety to the liturgical service but they stress the corporate nature of our church rites, and provide, even for the least learned and musically talented person, the possibility to join in this corporate action. All that is required is the desire of the mind and the arousal of the soul to join in with the rest of the faithful. In this context, then, singing is an indispensable part of Orthodox worship in which all the people present participate.

Call for the Restoration of Liturgical Singing

The question of "church singing with the participation of all the people" was one of the issues raised by the bishops of the Russian Church in 1905 when they were asked to submit reports in preparation for a Great Council of the Russian Church. In his report, Bishop Constantine of Samara writes:

We must restore singing to that state which it should and formerly did have. It is necessary to renew in the minds of the people the notion that congregational singing is the norm, and that choral singing is only a substitution for this.

Bishop Evlogii of Kholm, who from 1922 to 1946 was Metropolitan of Western Europe, writing in support of congregational singing, suggested that this be "gradually introduced, beginning with the litanies and short hymns and then eventually include all the hymns of the Liturgy and the All-Night Vigil."

The restoration of congregational singing was not simply a desire to institute reform in order to comply with a canonical standard or a historical precedent, but it was seen as a measure which would assist in giving to liturgy the life, the joy, and the power which is inherent in its purpose, content, form, and message. This is what the Deanery Report of the Shenkursk Province (Archangel Diocese) emphasized:

Generally, one can no longer overlook the concern for lifting up the grandeur and majesty of the Church services to the necessary and rightfully sacred heights, so that each believing Christian could, in fact, find joy and consolation in the Church, and not feel bored and fatigued. Choral, or even better, congregational singing and comprehensible chanting will play an important role in developing this.

The question of congregational participation and the availability of suitable music are issues that are being raised in our churches today by both clergy and lay people. With a few isolated exceptions, however, every little thought and even less direction has been given to these issues. As mentioned above, some ninety years ago bishops in Russia raised, discussed, and even offered suggestions for the implementation of a program to restore congregational singing to the church singing. They viewed this a necessity in order to bring life and vitality to the liturgical worship at that time. And it is not surprising that today the Orthodox Church in Russia is again reviewing this issue.

In America today so many of our churches, including both the traditional, "well-established" parishes with strong ethnic ties and the newer, multi-cultural, "pan-Orthodox" missions, comprised of numbers of Orthodox with little or no ties to ethnic traditions, are striving to maintain a spiritual and good liturgical life. More and more the leaders of these parishes are recognizing that in order to do this, the music which is used in worship must be singable, liturgically appropriate, and aesthetically pleasing.

One of the great fears felt by many choir directors, composers, and serious singers of church music is that in our haste to solve these problems, and especially that of the participation of the faithful in liturgical singing, the use of greatly inferior music in Orthodox worship will be the ultimate result. An adequate approach cannot be reduced solely to the question of "participation" or to the question of "musical style", but rather must be grounded in a true understanding of the purpose, content, and expression of the Liturgy itself -- the manifestation of the beauty and joy of God's Kingdom. This indeed represents a challenge, not only to our church composers, but to our translators and poets, our liturgists, our pastors, and to all those who sing.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **ST. HELENA'S GUILD MEETING – SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1, following the Liturgy**
- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON – SATURDAY NOVEMBER 7 - 9AM**
- **INREACH/OUTREACH MEETING – SUNDAY NOVEMBER 15, after the Liturgy**
- **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – MONDAY NOVEMBER 16 at 7 PM.**
Representatives from all parish organizations are asked to attend for help in planning future events.

FR. JOHN will take a final vacation Sunday on November 8. Fr. Gregory Winsky from St. Michael's Russian Orthodox Church in Philadelphia will serve.

ST. HELENA'S GUILD: *FALL BAZAAR* will place **Saturday, November 14th.**
A stuffed cabbage session is scheduled for November 6th & 7th.

A REMINDER FOR EVERYONE (not just guild members) YOUR DONATION TO THE SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE HOUR 'JAR' HELPS OFFSET THE COST OF CUPS,

SPOONS, KNIVES, FORKS, NAPKINS, COFFEE ETC. PLEASE DON'T JUST WALK BY FOR YOUR SNACK WITHOUT A DONATION.

If you are not currently hosting a coffee hour, please make a commitment to do just one coffee hour a year. Call Diane Vozdovic (609-288-6833) or Carol Ann Curry (856-985-4649) to add your name to the list. Also please consider joining St. Helena's Guild. Your help and input will undoubtedly be appreciated!

SUPPORT TEAM A LA CURE: On **Sunday November 15**, the *Damon Runyon Foundation* will sponsor a 5K Benefit Run/Walk at Yankees Stadium in NYC. 100% of all donations raised in support of this event will go to cutting-edge cancer research by today's most brilliant and promising scientists, funded by the **Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation**. For 63 years this cancer charity has selected and supported the rising stars of science - cancer researchers who have great potential to achieve breakthroughs in how we diagnose, treat and prevent cancer. So far, the Foundation has funded more than 3,200 scientists, including 11 Nobel Laureates.

Team A La Cure is the particular team sponsored by the friends and family of Alla Wheeler (daughter of Alla Jillions – get it – Team “A La” Cure!). Alla and Deacon Eric Wheeler's daughter, Alexandra - also known as Azure - works for the Foundation.

Barbara Shimchick and the Shimchick children will go up to NYC and participate in the Benefit. You can support them with either cash or checks made out to the: *Damon Runyon Foundation*

For more information on the Foundation, go to: <http://www.damonrunyon.org/>

COLLECTIONS DURING NOVEMBER:

- **EMERGENCY SERVICES** – We will be taking financial donations at the end of the liturgies this month and also are looking for the following items:
- Cereal, canned soups & stews, rice, pasta, beans, tomato sauce, macaroni & cheese, peanut butter and jelly, tuna & canned chicken
Toiletries, toilet paper, tooth paste, tissues, shampoo, feminine products, diapers, deodorant, and paper towels
- SEMINARIAN FAMILY – DN. CHRISTOPHER & GRETCHEN MACIOLEK AND THEIR CHILDREN – BASIL (6), MARIA (4), ANASTASIA (1.5), & NIKOLIA

We have cared for Dn. Christopher and his family over the past two years. Here is a note:

Glory to God! We don't have many specific material needs at the moment; however, we do have quite a few financial needs. We could use and would appreciate gift cards for such things as groceries (Wegmans), gas, and other household items (Target). We had a new baby this fall and, while I will be paid during maternity leave, I will not make as much as I normally do. We are anticipating a big hospital/doctor bill for the birth of Nikoliam, and we also know that we'll need to replace the brakes for our only vehicle in the coming months.

There will be a tree in the basement with item tags beginning on November 8, collections will continue on November 15 & 22. Please bring gift items labeled and unwrapped. For monetary gifts, use special-use envelopes and put them into the regular collection. If you have any additional questions, please talk to the coordinators – Maureen Sapnar, Ann Plescia, & Lynn Siry.

UPCOMING SERVICES: The **Annual Medford-area Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service** will take place on **Sunday November 22** at St. Mary of the Lakes Church at 7 PM.

Our **Advent Vespers** will be served on **Sunday December 6** at 7 PM. **Dr. George Parsenios**, Associate Professor of New Testament at Princeton Seminary, will speak.

DONATIONS TO THE CHURCH: Please note that donations, particularly of liturgical items (icons, etc) for use in our church, should be reviewed in advance with Fr. John before being brought to the church for placement.

WEEKDAY BIBLE STUDY: A Scripture study will be held at the home of Kim and Tim Rommen in Barrington **will continue on Monday evenings until November 16th**. This six week program, led by **David Brook**, will focus on the *Letter to the Ephesians* (conveniently having six chapters). Those interested will gather at **7 PM**. Each session will end at 8:30, followed by Compline and a brief period of fellowship. This would be a wonderful way to tune one's heart and mind in advance of the Christmas Fast and the rush of the preparations for the holidays.

OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS: We know that our college students face educational, emotional, and spiritual challenges in their studies and times at school. It's important that they know we are praying for them, especially in their efforts to make the faith we have tried to share and implant within them – their own. Please let Fr. John know if any names are missing:

Alexander (Abdallah),/ **Anastasia** (Shimchick), **Andrew** (Abdallah), **Antonio** (Chong), **Bryan** (Thompson), **Christine** (Lane), **Christopher** (Abdallah), **Christopher** (Shimchick), **Danielle** (Giovanni), **Matthew** (Brook), **Ethan** (Detwiler), **Gianluca** (Keeler), **Jacquelyn** (Chong), **John** (Pierman), **Joshua** (Dowiak), **Julia** (Skuby), **Katherine** (Lane), **Kristin** (Little), **Martha** (Skuby), **Michael** (Shimchick), **Nikolas** (Tranchik), **Peter** (Abdallah), **Rachel** (Tranchik), **Stefan** (Keeler)

RESPONSIBILITIES for November, 2009

COFFEE HOUR:

November 1: Caroline Graham
8: Phyllis Pritchard

15: Diana Pasca
22: Linda Wagar
29: Barbara Shimchick
December 6: Rebecca Nugent

READERS

(Epistle Readers are expected also to read the “3rd Hour” which precedes the liturgy, starting around 9:50, after the adult class)

November 1: Gary Mosser
8: Leslie Lane
15: Mark Skuby
22: Natalka Weismantel
29: Don D’Ercole

ALTAR SERVERS

November 1: Stephen Shimchick & Leo Weismantel
8: David Hamaty & Brendan Detwiler
15: Anatoly Lane & Eli Nugent
22: Andrew Abdallah & Paul Clifton
29: Paul Abdallah & Paul Giovanni
December 6: Stephen Shimchick & Leo Weismantel

COMMUNION USHERS

November 1: Alexandra & Magdalena Plachuta
8: Kristina Zanghi & Faye Nugent
15: Natalia Rommen & Elisabeth Graham
22: Sierra & Miranda McCleery
29: Alexandra & Magdalena Plachuta
December 6: Kristina Zanghi & Faye Nugent

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross – November, 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>St. Helena's Guild Meeting</i> Divine Liturgy – 10:00	2	3 Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm	4 <i>Burlington Nursing Home</i> 1:30	5	6 <i>Stuffed Cabbage Session</i> 9:00 -	7 <i>Community Lunch 9:00</i> <i>Stuffed Cabbage Session</i> NO <i>Great Vespers</i>
8 Divine Liturgy – 10:00	9	10 Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm	11	12	13	14 FALL BAZAAR <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
15 <i>Church School & Adult Ed</i> 9:15 Divine Liturgy 10:00 <i>Inreach Meeting</i>	16 Parish Council Meeting – 7 PM	17 Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm	18	19	20 Vesperal Liturgy for the Presentation of the Theotokos 7 PM	21 <i>Baptism of Rachel Pratt - 3:00</i> <i>Great Vespers:5</i>
22 <i>Church School & Adult Ed</i> 9:15 Divine Liturgy 10:00 Medford Thanksgiving Service – St. Mary's, 7:00	23	24 Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm	25	26	27	28 <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
29 <i>Church School & Adult Ed</i> 9:15 Divine Liturgy 10:00	30	1 DECEMBER Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm	2 9	3	4	5 <i>Great Vesper: 5</i>