



NATIONAL FORUM OF GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSICIANS

*The musical arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
that strengthens and perpetuates its liturgical music*

Annual Report of the National Chairman



July 4 – 7, 2016

Nashville, TN

Dear Members of the National Forum,

The National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians was chartered in 1976 by +Archbishop Iakovos as the “*official umbrella organization on all matters regarding ecclesiastical music for all Greek Orthodox parishes within our Archdiocese*”. This year we commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the National Forum. Serving as its National Chairman is an honor and humbling experience. Advancing the mission of the National Forum involves many dedicated individuals from throughout our entire Archdiocese who offer their God given talents to continue the advancement of this important ministry within our Archdiocese. With the guidance and blessings of our spiritual leaders, we have had a very busy and productive year. I especially want to acknowledge and thank our Archbishop Demetrios Geron of America, the Metropolitans, the Bishops, priests and our Spiritual Advisor, Father Nicholas Bacalis, for providing the guidance, prayer and leadership that is so essential to our work.

Each year Church Music Sunday is celebrated on the day closest to the name day of St. Romanos, our patron saint. This is an opportunity for parishes to acknowledge and thank their church musicians for their dedicated service to the music ministry of our faith. Mailings announcing Church Music Sunday are sent to the clergy, Philoptochos Chapters, choir directors and Parish Councils throughout our Archdiocese. The poster this year was that of King David who wrote the Psalms that are an integral part of the worship services in our Holy Orthodox Church. The poster was designed and prepared by the very talented George Theodossiou. The generous financial support of many parishes and organizations assist us in developing materials and programs for the parishes and church musicians in the Archdiocese. Twenty percent of the Church Music Sunday collection is returned to each Metropolis federation to support their work,

In conjunction with the celebration of Church Music Sunday, the Years of Service pin and a letter from our Archbishop are awarded to choir directors who have served for 25 years or more. Three choir directors were honored for their service this year. Discussions have been ongoing regarding the presentation of Years of Service awards for organists and chanters.

In October I attended the Archdiocesan Council meeting in New York. I participated in the Religious Education Committee meetings and also the Council meeting. While in New York attending the meetings, I had the opportunity to again discuss National Forum projects with our hierarchs and church leaders.

This year our Liturgical Guidebook was sold through the Department of Religious

Education. Once the website for the new Orthodox Marketplace is available, the Guidebook will be sold through the new Marketplace. Thank you Father John Maheras, Nick Maragos, Peter Vaturas and Vicki Pappas for your work in preparing this valuable tool which our priests, choir directors, psalti, choir members, organists and office staff have come to rely upon.

We encourage the use of the many resources available through the National Forum such as publications, lists of chant schools, leaders for Church Music Institutes, announcements and other news. These can be found on our website at <http://churchmusic.goarch.org/>

The Oloi Mazi team met several times this year. The team met in New York in November to continue its work and complete the sections of the Divine Liturgy that had not yet been finished. Our since appreciation is extended to Maria Andriotis of the Archdiocese for arranging the meeting for the team. During this meeting we were honored by having an audience with His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios to apprise him of the progress of the work of the committee and to ask his blessings upon our work. Later that afternoon, His Grace Bishop Sebastian met with the team and updated us on the progress of the translations of other services of the church. The team met again in Boston in March to continue its work. Our appreciation is extended to His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios for his support and hospitality. His Eminence attended the meetings of the team and worked with us in developing the melodies for the text. Dr. Anton Vrame also attended and provided valuable guidance. Thank you to Dean Limberakis for serving as our Boston Liaison and making the arrangements for the meetings.

In April, Father Chrysostomos Gilbert and I were asked to present the musical arrangements of the Divine Liturgy and other hymns to the Holy Eparchial Synod in New York. The Holy Synod listened to a recording of the liturgy and hymns and at the conclusion, were very complimentary of the work of the committee in preserving the traditional melodies and setting the text so that it is easily understood. We are blessed to have the approval of our Holy Eparchial Synod for the work of the committee. Kevin Lawrence, a member of the Oloi Mazi team, arranged the recording for the meeting of the Holy Synod. Thank you Kevin.

Once the Holy Synod approved the musical arrangements in both Greek and English, we met once again in Boston in May to review one final time the work of the committee for the Divine Liturgy and the other often sung hymns. For this meeting, the team was given the official English translation of the Doxology and the team began working on the musical setting for the Doxology. Our next steps are to provide several arrangements of the Doxology and begin work on the Apolytikia, Kontakia, and Kinonika. His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios joined our committee meetings and worked with us to complete the music for the Divine Liturgy. Dr. Anton Vrame also attended the meeting and assisted in the completion of the work and offered suggestions for next steps and the publication of the new pew hymnal which is scheduled to be published this fall. Dean Limberakis made the arrangements for the meeting. Thank you Dean.

His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios, our liaison to the Holy Synod and Chairman of the Translations Committee, has been incredible in providing leadership, support and guidance to the Oloi Mazi team as it works to complete the music for the approved text in the Greek and new English translations of the Divine Liturgy. Thank you your Eminence and thank

you to team members, Vicki Pappas, chair, Kevin Lawrence, Dr. Nick Maragos, Father Chrysostomos Gilbert, Nancy Takis, Tikey Zes and Stan Takis who serves as our Scribe. We also appreciate the work of Dr. Grammenos Karanos and Dr. Anton Vrame for serving as consultants and guiding our work.

A new pew hymnal to replace the "Green" book is expected to be published this fall. In addition, the Hymn Series will be updated for use with the curriculum of the Department of Religious Education which will cross reference the lessons to the hymns. The revised Hymn Series will offer an explanation of the hymns, the melodies that all youth should learn and relates directly to the lesson. Dr. Anton Vrame is working with us to incorporate the hymns in new publications of the Department of Religious Education. Tony, we appreciate the work that you do and the opportunity to work with you and your department.

A camp hymnal was also developed using the newly arranged hymns and responses for the Divine Liturgy for use by the Metropolis of Boston Camp this year. We are hoping that this camp hymnal will be available for use by all Metropolis camps in the near future. A special thank you to Stan Takis, the scribe for the Oloi Mazi team, for his work in preparing the layout and formatting the camp hymnal.

Leadership 100, has provided generous financial support to the Forum for its work in developing the musical arrangements for the Divine Liturgy and other services within our church, update our website, continue to develop the hymnology program in conjunction with the Department of Religious Education, develop the camp hymnal and expand our Youth Initiative to engage our youth with their faith. A newly published "*Guide to Congregational Singing*" was printed and is being sent to every parish in our Archdiocese. There are still several projects that are ongoing such as the development of the National Choir Directors Academy and the Hymn Series among others.

George Theodossiou continues to serve as our webmaster and keeps the information current. There are still many areas that need to be addressed and we are working to continue to update the information provided. Our sincere appreciation goes to George Theodossiou for offering his time and talents by serving as our webmaster.

In March, the annual Council of Presidents meeting was held in Richmond, VA. The presidents reviewed the progress made this year, set the agenda for this Annual Meeting which is being held during the Clergy-Laity Congress, selected the Romanos recipients and shared information with each other which strengthens each Metropolis Federation. We had several new representatives at the Council of Presidents meeting this year. Thank you presidents for making the effort to get to Richmond; Father Nicholas Bacalis and the Parish of St. Constantine & Helen for hosting; my local choir family for extending their hospitality and feeding us so well!

The Archdiocesan Council meeting was held in May in Pittsburgh. I again attended as the representative of the National Forum and participated in the Religious Education Committee meeting and the Council meeting.

In addition to the above activities, I attended the Federation Conferences in St. Petersburg, FL in July, Minneapolis, MN in October, and New York and Boston in November. Again as your representative, I have the opportunity to discuss the progress of

the Forum with those attending the Federation conferences, our Hierarchs and to learn from them the direction and projects that they would like for the Forum to consider in its deliberations and plans for the future. These discussions also give our Hierarchs an understanding of the projects which the Forum is already addressing. In each part of our Archdiocese a common thread of more congregational participation is being emphasized. This will be the topic of our workshop at this year's Clergy-Laity Congress as well as a brief introduction to the new musical arrangements of the Divine Liturgy.

I also appreciate the work of Jerry Dimitriou, Executive Director, Maria Andriotis, and Marissa Costidis of our Archdiocese for their assistance in preparing for the Annual Meeting of the National Forum and to those of you who attend. The National Forum representatives participate in the Divine Liturgy for the Clergy-Laity Congress, sing for the Official Opening of the Congress, host a reception and offer a workshop for the Congress delegates. This is all in addition to our meetings. We also look forward to our Metropolitans, Bishops, priests and church leaders visiting our meetings and working with us to develop goals.

There are so many that work with dedication to our faith and music ministry and I wish to acknowledge our new Publications Office Chair Lucy Pappadakes for taking on this responsibility; Barbara Minton who transitioned from Publications to Stewardship Chairman; to Hope Demitry our Treasurer for keeping our finances and updating our reporting system; and to Susan Karcanes for serving as our Secretary and keeping such meticulous minutes of our meetings. A special note of appreciation is also extended to past National Chairman, Vicki Pappas, for her guidance, support and friendship. Vicki is always available to answer questions and to share the wisdom of her experience as past chairman. Thank you Vicki.

As you can see, this has been an extremely busy year and we have accomplished many of our goals but there is much more work ahead. There is so much that goes on behind the scenes that make these projects and events happen. To each of you who work so tirelessly to promote the music ministry of our Holy Archdiocese I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your leadership within our federations and in the work of the National Forum demonstrates the dedication, spiritual motivation and commitment to our church music ministry. God bless you for this. . Each of you is also a treasured and valued friend, responding to my requests, offering advice, assuming responsibilities to make our team such an effective one. God bless you for all that you do. I greatly appreciate and acknowledge your trust, friendship and guidance.

With God's help and yours we will continue to work to promote the goals of the National Forum. I look forward to another exciting year and want you to know that I am available and willing to assist wherever needed.

Submitted with sincere appreciation and respect,

Maria

Maria Keritsis

National Chairman