



NATIONAL FORUM  
OF GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSICIANS

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



**Position Statement Regarding**

**DESIGNATION OF HYMNS IN ENGLISH**

As we increase the use of English in Greek Orthodox services, questions arise as to how to title hymns in English. With Greek texts, our standard practice has been to use the first several words because chanters, priests, and choir members recognize the hymns in this manner. When there are not standardized English texts for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, continuing this practice for hymns with English texts is problematic and less than satisfactory.

However, in \_\_\_\_\_ of 2015, the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Archdiocese of America promulgated the official standard translation of the Divine Liturgy into English, with the approval of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Thus, the first several words of their English translations should be used in titling and referring to those hymns.

In hymns where we have not yet received an official standard translation, the first few words of a hymn set to English can vary by different translators and/or composers – for instance, are we to title *Ti Ipermaho* in English as “O Victorious Leader,” “Champion General,” “Victorious Lady,” or “To You, Our Champion?” Each of these is found at the beginning of various English settings of this kontakion.

Therefore, for hymns that have not yet approved standard translations by our Synod the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians recommends use of the following practice:

***Hymns with English texts should be titled and named by their function in the Divine Liturgy, Vespers, Matins, or other service; e.g., as Kontakion, Apolytikion, Communion Hymn, Magnificat, etc.***

Thus, *Ti Ipermaho* would be the “Kontakion of the Annunciation.” Similarly, *Soma Christou* would be “Communion Hymn for Pascha and the Paschal Season,” and *I Gennisis Sou*, the “Apolytikion of the Nativity of Our Lord.”

This practice not only solves the contemporary problem of multiple translations, it also ties us to the tradition of our church and its sacred singers. Further, it educates us to the categories of hymns and the cycle of Feast Days in the Orthodox faith.

The National Forum of Church Musicians urges composers and arrangers to follow these practices when preparing and publishing their works. Church musicians are encouraged to refer to the hymns in these ways; they will see this practice used in the Liturgical Guidebook.

*(Adopted July 2004, Reviewed and updated July 2015)*