

Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Liturgical Music Commission
Report to the Diocesan Assembly July 19, 2011

2011 / 2011 Workshops

In November, 2010, the Diocesan Music Committee presented a workshop entitled "Heaven and Earth" with Prof. David Drillock as speaker and approximately 25 attendees. In February, 2011, with the blessing, enthusiastic support and personal participation of His Grace, Bishop Michael, and the efforts of co-chairs Doreen Bartholomew and Carol Wetmore, more than 75 participants gathered at Holy Resurrection Church in Wayne, NJ, for a day-long liturgical music workshop. After an address by His Grace, which stressed the need to involve more youth in Diocesan music programs and the need for the Diocese to provide ongoing choir director preparation and training, the morning session was devoted to a panel discussion led by Fr. John Shimchick, William Kraftician and Tanya Jelenevsky Tjoa.

The ensuing discussions among the attendees touched upon subjects including rubric consistency within the Diocese and the availability of music suitable for choirs of various size and musical competence. The afternoon presentation, led by Basil Kozak, centered on working with children's choirs, with the audience participating in demonstrations of melodic music suitable for youth choirs. Attendees responded favorably to the day's programs both in comments as well as in their enthusiastic participation. Bishop Michael concluded the workshop with a promise of commitment to ongoing and additional programs to reinforce the critical importance and quality of liturgical music within the Diocese.

Plans for the Future

.... Work continues on a comprehensive and detailed outline for the rubrics of a complete Hierarchical Liturgy, prepared under the leadership of Alexei Shipovalnikov, including sheet music for special hymns and appendices for special circumstances such as ordinations, etc. A draft has been completed and is in the process of final editing.

.... With the assistance of Diocesan Communications Coordinator, Fr. Ken James Stavrevsky, plans have to include a section of the Diocesan website dedicated to Liturgical Music. It is hoped that this program might be in place by mid-2012.

..... The Commission has enthusiastically endorsed the proposal of David Drillock for the establishment of an extensive program using on-line and other resources for the training of choir directors. While this program is meant to encompass the entirety of the OCA, our Diocesan Commission has volunteered to participate in a "test-run" and to provide competent directors within our three deaneries to serve as individual mentors, assisting in hands-on activities which cannot be taught/supervised on the computer.

.... The Commission has endorsed (and Bishop Michael has approved) the establishment of a Diocesan Choir Appreciation Day. The proposed date of this yearly event will be the Sunday closest to October 1st, the commemoration of St. Romanus the Sweet-Singer, venerated Orthodox Hymnographer. It is hoped that special certificates acknowledging the good work of choir directors and especially faithful singers will be prepared and distributed in all parishes of the Diocese.

..... Liturgical Music Workshops will continue. The Commission plans to sponsor one Workshop in the New York State Deanery and another in New Jersey in the late fall. Ideally, they will include break-out sessions for both veteran choir directors as well as those just starting in the vocation. As the SVS summer

programs no longer include the Music Institute, we are exploring the possibility of appending Diocesan music workshops to the SVS summer program for participant convenience

.... A Diocesan Liturgical Music questionnaire has been promulgated in both hard copy and Internet format. Initial responses were received from about 40% of diocesan parishes, with some interesting results. Efforts are being made to secure responses from the other parishes.

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. Daniel Skvir, Doreen Bartholomew, and Carol Wetmore, Co-Chairs