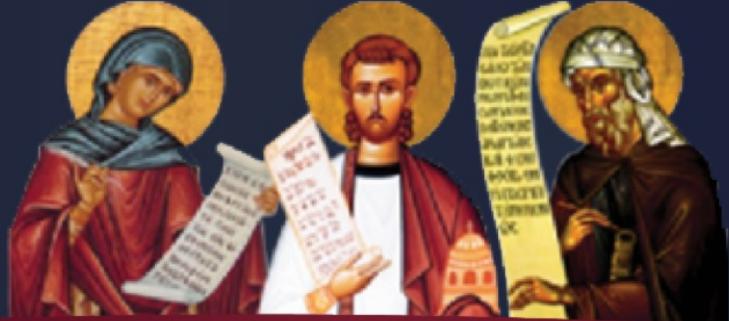


December 2022

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO
CHURCH MUSIC FEDERATION MINISTRY



METROPOLIS OF
SAN FRANCISCO



THE *Grace* NOTE
YOUR MID-MONTHLY DIGEST OF CHURCH MUSIC NEWS



PROVIDING THE BEST RESOURCES TO OUR PARISHES

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWS AND UPDATES



*A Joyous Nativity
and Theophany to all!*

Sing to the Lord, all the earth, for He is Glorified!



In Our Prayers ...

May God grant our beloved Metropolitan Gerasimos a strong and complete recovery from his recent heart surgery.



Our Ministry Wish List

We know you are inundated with requests for funding from many worthy ministries and charities at this time of year, but to be honest, ***all we really want for Christmas is YOU!***

As we come to the end of calendar year, we are so grateful for the many blessings God has bestowed upon our work. As we look ahead, we prayerfully ask the Lord to supply us with our needs. The long-term health of our ministry relies upon discovering the needs of our parishes, and building our teams, which prepare our church musicians for future leadership.

Thank you for considering giving of yourself, your talents, and a little of your time to fill the needs our teams for input, support, and collaboration.

Communications and Outreach Team

We ask that clergy and parish music leaders please keep their contact information up to date, encourage all your church musicians to join our mailing list, and share our monthly Grace Notes with those who do not have e-mail.

Ways and Means Team

Do you have basic bookkeeping skills and a good knowledge of Quick Books? We would love your help with this important and necessary aspect of our ministry. The good news is that it requires only a small amount of time -- an average of 2-3 hours each month.

Church Music Development Team

Reach out to our team with your music needs and ideas! Tell us what you are interested in learning and exploring. We offer a number of ways to assist you, from bringing a local workshop to meet a specific need of your parish to offering our on-line complimentary Zoom consultation, *Be; Do; Have: Creating a Unified Music Vision for your Parish.*

Events Team

Consider hosting a regional workshop at your parish. We do all the organization and registration work, and the parish offers space, light refreshments, and lunch for one day events. Be part of building the community of church musicians across the Metropolis. Watch for upcoming workshop topics!

Records and Archives Team

Do you have a heart to preserve the heritage of the Federation and keep our archive current? A few hours of your time each month will help us to create and maintain the records of leadership, conferences, workshops, awards, and scholarships.



Those of us who like music often enjoy this period of the year as we hear all sorts of wonderful Christmas melodies played from radios, in stores, and in restaurants. One of the most beloved songs of this period is itself opportunity for deeper reflection on church music ministry. We should pay attention to it: *Hark! The herald angels sing*. But what in the world does it mean for someone to say *Hark*? This is the call to pay attention, to look, to listen and to take heed -- ἰδοὺ! Specifically, this beloved Christmas carol calls us to pay attention to the angels singing.

Too often we forget the holy angels. As those who sing and chant, the angels are the most excellent models to have in our ministry and to call upon for assistance in times of temptation. The angels are bodiless, immaterial, and pure intellects. They are spotless mirrors that reflect the triple light of God as far as they are able. They are organized as the model of the beautiful order that we are called to cultivate in the Church. They are ever-ready, guarded, and attentive to act according to God's will. In their celestial ranks, they praise the Creator of All and they model our own praise.

When we are hymning God, we are working alongside the angels. God has handed down to us the hymns of the Seraphim so that we may join them in their song. It is a great honor for humanity to offer the same praise as the angels themselves. We must not forget though, that like all sacrifices, whatever we offer must be done worthily. In the prayers of the Divine Liturgy, we ask that God *accept* our hymn. As much as we offer our hymnody with care, desiring to participate in the Mystery, our hymns will be found worthy to be accepted. This is an incredible opportunity: the hymns that we offer from earth can be joined together with those of the angels to form a cosmic praise of God.

Hark! Let us take care that we offer our voices with purity of heart, contrition, and love.

As we reflect on this majestic idea, that our praise may be joined together with the angels, we call to mind that our superessential God out of love for us took on our form, the form of a slave. Without being in any way separated from the Godhead, the Logos took flesh. There is an amazing wisdom we see in God's plan. The cave is heaven, the manger holds the One whom nothing can contain, and Panagia is the throne of Cherubim.

The hymns of angelic ranks circling the throne are replaced by our Panagia's sweet lullabies. The lone, mellifluous, voice of Panagia is the unceasing praise of tens of thousands of angels. And how that blessed Mother must have sung! With what tenderness, affection, and all-consuming love must she have addressed Him! Could there be any more beautiful hymn from human lips than the one offered by Panagia as she looked into the eyes of her newborn son and her God?

Hark! Let us take care that we offer our voices with an all-consuming love for God and not a love of self.

This Christmas season we may be easily distracted by shopping, cooking, and obligations. Here are some specific ideas to help us pay more attention. These are ways that we can prepare to offer our voices to be worthily accepted with the angelic praises:

- Pray throughout the day, especially through the *Jesus Prayer*. At home, read one of the many services we have inherited as Orthodox Christians: the Salutations, the Canon to the Guardian Angel, or Small Compline.
- Ask for forgiveness and forgive those who have wronged us. Participate in the mystery of confession frequently. Do not wait for the hour of death to make peace with God and neighbor for this preparation is not always possible.
- Fast from food and drink according to the calendar of Orthodox Church as your health allows. But at all times, abstain from the unseemly content, hatred, and vulgarity assaulting us from every screen in our lives.
- Give generously to those in need of physical and spiritual sustenance. If you cannot share financial assistance, offer a warm smile and go out of your way to speak with someone who looks lonely.

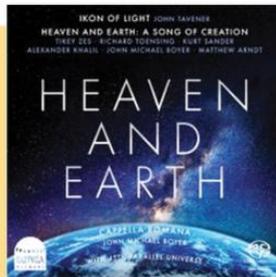
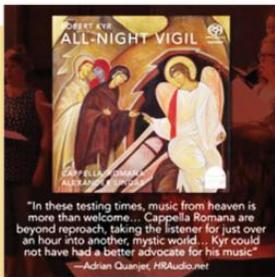
May the sacred hymns that we offer in our parishes this year be worthy to be accepted with the angels; may they be full of purity and humility like the lullabies of our Panagia; and may our Lord be born within the cave of our heart this Christmas so that we can become bearers of His peace and love.

Hark! Let us join the herald angels and sing: "Glory to the new-born King!"

Father Nicholas Metrakos
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, San Francisco

A Wonderful
LAST MINUTE
GIFT

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and Family*



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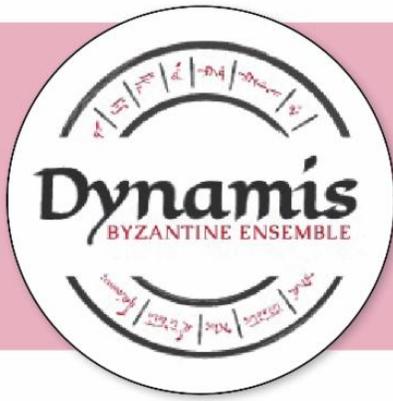
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Family favorites

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Dynamis Byzantine Ensemble

New compositions and compilations

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No news is ... *no news!*

We would love to share stories and photos from your parish. Items sent by the last week of the month will be featured in the next month's issue of our Grace Note. Can't wait to see and hear what's been happening with you.

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco
Church Music Federation Ministry

[Contact Us](#)



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