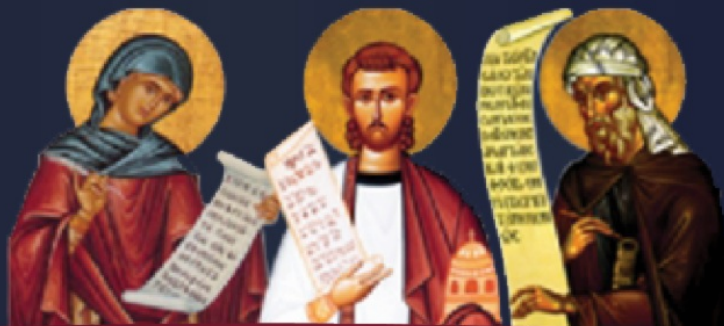


April 2024

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



KEEPING WATCH:
The Revival of
Vigils in Parishes

Father Nicholas Metrakos
Ministry Spiritual Advisor

Across the Metropolis, a quiet revival is taking place in parishes: the practice of holding vigils for the celebration of major feasts or special saints. These vigils are liturgical ways that we literally stay awake, praying, and watching for Christ - the Bridegroom who is

coming in the middle of the night. These vigils have gained traction as a means of deepening spiritual engagement. They also provide a way for church musicians from surrounding parishes to gather together to complete the long journey of chanting a full vigil.

Vigils offer the perfect opportunity to deepen our connection with the feast or saint that are being celebrated. In this context, a “vigil” constitutes the celebration of Vespers, Orthros, and Divine Liturgy as one continuous liturgical experience. Typically, these include longer versions of hymns, hymns that are omitted, and additional readings of psalms or patristic texts. During a vigil, worshippers, musicians, and celebrants are literally immersed in the “subject” of the vigil. By listening to some of the hymns we do not normally hear in our parishes (e.g., canons, the lity, etc.) the feast or the saint really comes to life!



The significance of vigilance in spiritual practice finds its roots in the very teachings of Christ Himself. In Holy Week, before His crucifixion, we will hear Jesus implore His disciples in the garden of Gethsemane to "stay awake and pray" to avoid temptation. This call to vigilance, to be ever alert and attentive to the presence of our Lord, resonates deeply within the Christian

journey.

Parishioners participating in vigils find themselves immersed in an atmosphere of prayer, contemplation, and reflection. Much like the disciples in the garden, they commit to keeping watch, allowing themselves to be drawn closer to the mysteries of the Faith. Through extended periods of communal prayer, they seek to emulate Christ's example of vigilance.

In addition to fostering spiritual growth and community bonding, these vigils serve as a reminder of the transformative power of faith. Beyond mere acts of devotion, the Christian journey beckons believers to enter into a deeper communion with God. One of the mini-miracles that many people experience during a vigil is the experience of "liturgical time". Vigils typically last 7 or more hours. After the end, with the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, many people remark "Wow! I can't believe that went by so fast!" Truly, it is a mystery how these seemingly long journeys go by so quickly.

As the trend of vigils continues to gain momentum, it revitalizes parish life and invigorates the Orthodox Christian experience. In the stillness of the night, amidst flickering candlelight and hymns, the faithful find comfort, inspiration, and renewal on their path towards the Kingdom of Heaven. If you have not hosted a vigil in your community and are interested in doing so, please reach out to the Church Music Development team who can help you organize one in the future!

(Photos above are from vigils for the feast of St. Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia on December 2, 2023 and The Presentation of the Lord on February 2, 2024)



Congratulations
TO THIS
WONDERFUL YOUTH CHOIR
and their conductor!

The Aloha Youth Choir of Saints Constantine & Helen of Honolulu again won this years' highest prize at the FDF held in Anaheim, Ca, The Sweepstakes Award, in Division 1, and their conductor Stelio Scordilis won the Choral Conductor's Award, also in Division 1.



[Hear their award winning presentation on YouTube](#)



Still Simmering...

Be sure to keep **October 24-27** on your calendar for our All-Metropolis Church Music Retreat at St. Nicholas Ranch!

We're still cooking up an interesting selection of topics and top-notch presenters to create a memorable weekend of music and learning.

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.

[Email Us](#)

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco
Church Music Federation Ministry

[Contact Us](#)



Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco Church Music Federation Ministry | 245 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

[Unsubscribe sfchurchmusic@sanfran.goarch.org](mailto:sfchurchmusic@sanfran.goarch.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent bysfchurchmusic@sanfran.goarch.orgpowered by



Try email marketing for free today!