



Notable Notes

The Electronic Newsletter of the Southeastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Choirs and Musicians — February 2010

click on <http://www.sfgocm.org/news>

Looking forward to 2010 Conference in New Orleans

I booked my airline ticket yesterday!!!

Got a good deal from Miami, non-stop. We'll be having rehearsals after Easter here in South Florida.

AND YOU???

A message from Father Stanley Harakas

Forward: Father Stanley is well known for his column "Ask Father" which ran for years in the Orthodox Observer and for his service at Holy Cross Seminary in Brookline, Massachusetts as Provost. Generations of priests were guided by his strong hand. I was one of the fortunate people to have had Father Stanley as the first parish priest of whom I was cognizant in my home church, St. Vasilios, in Peabody, Massachusetts and who has, even in recent years, provided me personally with guidance.

He has graciously provided an article for Notable Notes.

Singing the Church's Way

As a member of a church choir, you offer a special service to the Church. From the earliest period of the Church's history, chanting and singing the responses and hymns was approved and encouraged.

The Old Testament speaks frequently of singing to the Lord. Here are just a few examples: "Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wonderful works!" and "Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day" (1Chronicles 16:9, 23). In the Psalms we read, "Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!" (Psalm 47:6)

So also we read the words of St. Paul directed to the faithful, in Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God." In his first letter to the Christians in Corinth, he declares, "What am I to do? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also" (1 Corinthians 14:15).

These passages point not only to the appropriateness of singing in church, but also to the spirit and manner in which singing should take place. Singing in the choirs of our churches has many aspects. There is the truth that being a member of the church choir is a Stewardship of Time and Talent; it is a dedication of God's gift of musical talent to His

service. There is also the reality that in singing the hymns of the Holy Services, including the Divine Liturgy, we are proclaiming and praising the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. There is also found in these passages something about how singing should take place in the church. The singing of hymns should be a conscious conveying of praise to God for His marvelous works of salvation. We need to look at the words we sing and sing them with full understanding of what we are saying. We need to sing them not just as notes and musical harmonies, but with "thankfulness in our hearts." With St. Paul what we sing should be sung "with the spirit . . . and the mind." It means our singing should be prayerful, with reverence and pious devotion.

That this doesn't always happen requires us to embark on self-examination. Though membership in the choir has its fellowship and social dimensions, an its technical musical requirements, it falls short of these goals when the way we sing loses its primary focus, the expression of thanks, worship and proclamation of the salvation of the Lord. When the singing takes place without reverence, piety and spiritual understanding, singing then becomes a show that seeks to bring attention to the singer(s) and not to God.

Unfortunately, it is an old bad habit. As long ago as the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 692 A.D. it was necessary to admonish those who sang in church to do so with proper reverence and decorum. In one of the Canons the Council decreed by the bishops we are told: "We will that those whose office it is to sing in the churches do not use undisciplined vociferations, nor force nature to shouting, nor adopt any of those modes which are incongruous and unsuitable for the church; but that they offer the psalmody to God, who is the observer of secrets, with great attention and piety."

So it is not only that we sing, but that we should sing with a reverent attitude, understanding that we are conveying to God and the congregation the prayerful acknowledgement of the saving work of God and our response it. On Holy Saturday, we sing from the Prayer of Azarias these instructions: "Bless the Lord, you who are holy and humble in heart, sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever."



Notable Notes



**Metropolis of Atlanta
Southeastern Federation of Greek Orthodox
Choirs and Musicians
Patriarch Athenagoras I Award**

Winter, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The time has come once again to consider who among your choir members should be recognized for their dedication to the Music Ministry of our Church. The Patriarch Athenagoras I Award was initiated by the National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians and established in 1996 as a means of giving national recognition to meritorious individuals whose contributions to the Music Ministry of the Church are worthy of distinction. The award is given as a national recognition to meritorious individuals in each metropolis whose contributions on a local, as well as a metropolis level, to the Music Ministry of the Church, are worthy of distinction. Normally this would involve being an active participant in the choir federation as an officer, committee member, conduct area music workshops, etc.

Each year at the conclusion of our choir conferences three individuals are recognized for their meritorious service. Each recipient shall have significantly contributed talents and/ or service to the development and perpetuation of the Greek Orthodox Church Choirs and Musicians of the Atlanta Metropolis.

The **deadline** for 2008 nominations is **April 30, 2010**. The nomination form and biographical data cover sheet are available in this issue of *Keynotes* and on the Federation web site: www.sfgocm.org. Guidelines are available on the Federation website or by request. A letter with the nomination form and biographical data cover sheet should be mailed to:

Stanley Evdemon
Athenagoras Award
9216 Estate Cove Circle
Riverview, Florida 33578
stan.evde@verizon.net

Nominations for this prestigious award should be received by our Athenagoras Award Committee no later than the deadline date in order to be considered as an eligible candidate. Late nominations will be placed on file and reviewed by the committee in 2011 for next year.

We look forward to receiving your nomination and seeing you in New Orleans, Louisiana!

Yours in His Service,

Stanley Evdemon

Stanley Evdemon
Chairman, Athenagoras Award

Metropolis of Atlanta
Southeastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Choirs and Musicians
Patriarch Athenagoras I Award
NOMINATION FORM

In order to send committee members copies of the nominations to review, all nominations must
be post-marked
NO LATER THAN APRIL 30, 2010

The nomination form must be signed by the director of the local OR the parish priest.

<hr/> Nominee	<hr/> Category
<hr/> Parish of Nominating Choir	<hr/> Phone
<hr/> City/State	<hr/> Zip Code
<hr/> Name of Contact Person submitting Nomination	<hr/> Phone
<hr/> Address	<hr/> FAX number
<hr/> City/State	<hr/> Zip Code
<hr/> Choir <u>Director</u> or Parish Priest Signature	

Send completed material including Biographical Data Cover Sheet

1. Regional Contributions
2. Local Contributions
3. Federation Activities
4. Special Achievements/ Awards /Contributions

To: Stanley Evdemon
Athenagoras Award
9216 Estate Cove Circle
Riverview, Florida 33578

**Metropolis of Atlanta
Southeastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Choirs and Musicians
Patriarch Athenagoras I Award
Stanley Evdemon, Chairman**

Southeastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Choirs and Musicians
and the
National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians

**PATRIARCH ATHENAGORAS MEDAL
FOR METROPOLITAN SERVICE**

**Metropolis of Atlanta
Southeastern Federation of Greek Orthodox Choirs and Musicians
Patriarch Athenagoras I Award**

NOMINEE'S BIOGRAPHICAL DATA COVER SHEET

Nominee

Category

Address

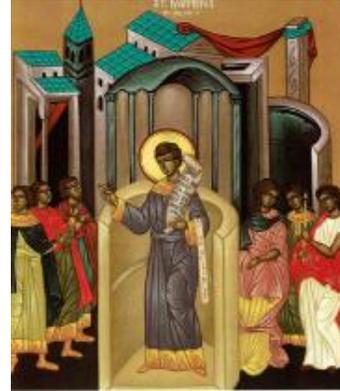
Phone

City/State

Zip Code

Parish

City/State



St. Romanos the Melodist

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Membership renewal time for the Southeast Federation of Greek Orthodox Choirs and Musicians (SFGOCM) is here again. Your membership helps support our annual Federation choir conference and other events that enhance the spiritual journey of your choir members.

Annual dues for 2010 are **\$100 for choirs** and a **minimum of \$10 for individuals**. If your choir is an active member of the SFGOCM, you do not need an individual membership. Individual memberships are for those who do not belong to a member choir, but wish to be involved and updated on Federation happenings.

This year our annual conference will be held in **New Orleans, LA** on **June 25-27, 2010**. Your executive board will be meeting soon to finalize plans. Guest conductors will be announced in Keynotes. Be sure to mark your calendar and make plans to attend this exciting conference. In order to participate in the annual conference, you or your choir must have paid the current dues.

In order to better serve you, the federation board has compiled the enclosed survey. Please submit your completed survey and dues with a **check payable to SFGOCM** by December 31, 2009, and mail to me at:

Suzy Balasis
SFGOCM Vice President
PO Box 47755
St. Petersburg, FL 33743

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

In His Service,

Suzy Balasis

cc: Executive Board