



Fire & Light

St. Symeon Orthodox Church

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Visit stsymeon.com

✠ **November 4, 2012** ✠

St. Joannicius the Great of Bithynia (846)

St. Sylvia, mother of St. Gregory Dialogos of Rome (6th C)

St. Mercurius the Faster of the Kiev Caves (14th C)

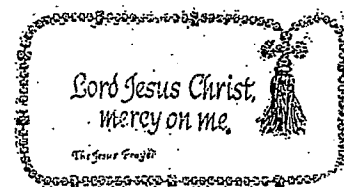
St. Paul, Metropolitan of Tobolsk (1768)



✠ **Sat. Nov. 10 3:00pm ~ Holy Baptism:**

Sarah, Theodore, Hope & Samuel Reese, and Jeremiah Burton

⇒ **New Inquirer's Class – Begins Tuesday, November 27 – 6:30pm**



Missionary Advice from St. John Chrysostom:

✠ "St. John Chrysostom advises each of us how to help those outside of the Church:

'If you cannot work miracles and so convert him, then by the means which are in thy power, convert him: by showing brotherly love, by offering him shelter, by being gentle with him, by dealing kindly with him, and by all other means.' In other words, we need to reach out to those heterodox Christians outside the Church with that hospitality and love so characteristic of Orthodoxy...At the same time, however, we must proclaim the 'hard saying' of the Truth, even if it is painful. The truth that the Orthodox Church is the 'One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church' as well as the unique Ark of Salvation is 'our chief cornerstone, elect and precious,' and that has always been and will always be 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.' ~ Fr. Alexis Trader

To Accept and Understand Tradition

To accept and understand Tradition we must live within the Church, we must be conscious of the Grace-giving presence of the Lord in it; we must feel the breath of the Holy Spirit in it. We may truly say that when we accept Tradition, we accept, through faith, our Lord, Who abides in the midst of the faithful; for the Church is His Body, which cannot be separated from Him.

The Holy Tradition is identical with that knowledge of the Truth which is granted to the redeemed portion of mankind. The Incarnate Lord has transformed and purified the human race. Christians have the mind of Christ. Tradition is the awareness of the unbroken bond of faith and love enjoyed by those who fully participate in the life of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

~ **Nicholas Zernov (20th Century theologian)**

His Handiwork

"God, Who is by nature good and dispassionate, loves all men equally as His handiwork. But He glorifies the virtuous man because in his will he is united to God. At the same time, in His goodness he is merciful to the sinner and by chastising him in this life brings him back to the path of virtue. Similarly, a man of good and dispassionate judgment also loves all men equally. He loves the virtuous man because of his nature and the probity of his intention; and he loves the sinner, too, because of his nature and because in his compassion he pities him for foolishly stumbling in darkness."

St. Maximos the Confessor (7th C)

✠ With all your might strive to retain the Prayer of Jesus - it is all of our life, all beauty, all consolation; that it is difficult in the beginning is known to everyone, but after that, it is priceless, all-joyous, all-loving.

~ **St. Anatoly of Optina (1891)**

The Wisdom of St. Mark the Ascetic, Disciple of St. John Chrysostom **As featured in the daily E-mails of Fr. Demetrios Carellas:**

"Many ... are the afflictions that befall us. On the one hand, we suffer afflictions through men who envy us, malign us, discredit us, slander us, flatter us, lead us astray, despoil us, scandalize us, despise us, hate us, fight against us, strike us, maltreat us, persecute us, and whatever else men do to their fellowmen. Or we suffer from our own body, when it swells with lust, fights against our spirit, demands rest, and falls into various diseases. Or we are bitten by dogs, venomous serpents, or man-eating beasts. And on top of all this, we - at times - have to contend with famines, earthquakes, icy cold, burning heat, old age, poverty, loneliness, and so forth."

"When you have done something virtuous, remember Him Who said: 'For without me ye can do nothing' [John 15:5]. God is the source of every virtuous deed, just as the sun is the source of daylight. Wishing to show that the fulfillment of every commandment is an obligation, whereas adoption into sonship is a gift bestowed upon men through His own Blood, the Lord says: 'When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded of you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do' [Luke 17:10]. Thus, the Kingdom of Heaven is not a reward for deeds, but a gift of Grace from the Master that is prepared for His faithful servants. A slave does not demand freedom as a reward for his labor, but satisfies his master as a debtor; and awaits freedom as gift."

"He who knows the will of God and does not do it to the best of his ability, will escape the great torments of Hell by enduring small tribulations in the present life. Do not suppose that every affliction befalls men on account of sin; for there are those who please God, and yet suffer tribulations. As Scripture says, ... 'All those who wish to live piously in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted.' [II Timothy 3:12]."

"He who honors the Master, does what He commands; when he sins or disobeys, he patiently endures the consequences as his just punishment. If you are a lover of learning, become a lover of spiritual labor [That is, devote yourself to acquiring the virtues, fulfilling God's commandments, and living the ascetic life.]. For mere knowledge puffs up a man [I Corinthians 8:1]. Tribulations that happen to us unexpectedly, teach us - by Divine Providence - to be lovers of spiritual labor; and lead us to repentance, even against our will."

"The mercy of God is wondrously concealed in involuntary sufferings, drawing to repentance him who patiently endures them; and delivering him from eternal chastisement. If it is not easy to find someone who has been pleasing to God without tribulations, then we should thank God for all that happens to us. If Peter had not failed to catch fish by night, he would not have succeeded in catching fish by day [Luke 5:5]. If Paul had not been physically blinded, he would not subsequently have gained his spiritual vision [Acts 9:8]. And if Stephen had not been slandered as a blasphemer [Acts 6:13], he would not have beheld God when the Heavens were open to him [Acts 7:56]."

For it belongs to God alone to know what kind of testing is suitable for each person [See I Cor. 10:13] the urgency of that which cannot be postponed, and the contribution of all of nature to this end. We, for our part, ought to believe in the justice of God; and to know that everything that happens to us involuntarily, does so either on account of love or on account of malice. And, for this reason, we must endure it and not avert it, lest we add sins to our sins."

The Early Christian Attitude toward Government

The early Christian attitude towards government and politics was very much like that of the Old Testament Prophets who sought to remind the people of Israel that God is their true King Who will take care of all their essential needs. The refusal to accept this came with a price, as we read in 1 Samuel 8:

“Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel ... Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, “Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.” ... But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them ... Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them.”

Samuel goes on to warn the people of Israel what it will be like to have a King like the other nations, and in the day they seek the Lord's help He will not hear them because they have placed their hopes elsewhere. Despite the warning, the people insisted on a King.

Jesus also, in the tradition of the Prophets, wanted His followers to remember that God is the King who will provide for their essential needs as long as we seek to acquire His uncreated glory. He spoke in His Sermon on the Mount:

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the reign of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:31-33).

Continuing along these lines, the early Church, knowing that Christians were called to learn from the mistakes of God's chosen people in the past and not repeat their errors, also held to the belief that the proper Christian attitude to this world was to be in it and above it at the same time, but not of it.

St. Justin Martyr emphasized that the Kingdom the Christians are seeking is not a human one, but rather, the reign of God both in this life and in the life to come. The anonymous *Letter to Diognetus* portrays the Christian Church as its own political society disseminated throughout other political societies. The Church is depicted as the “soul” of society. St. Theophilus of Antioch, in his *To Autolycus*, Book 1, depicts Christians as loyal citizens of the Empire who are to honor the Emperor “not by worshipping him but by praying for him”.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons describes the divine nature of earthly rule, which has been “appointed by God for the benefit of the nations”. He goes on to say that the devil lied when he said that civil power was delivered to him, for in truth, all power belongs to God, who distributes it according to His will.

Three kinds of rulers exercise civil authority: (i) mild, educative rulers; (ii) tyrannical, arbitrary rulers; and (iii) harsh, but not unjust rulers. Little was said by these however about a Christian's involvement in politics and government public service. Below are a few samples of the attitude some Christians had on this in the early Church:

Origen wrote:

Celsus also urges us to "take office in the government of the country, if that is required for the maintenance of the laws and the support of religion." But we recognize in each state the existence of another national organization founded by the Word of God, and we exhort those who are mighty in word and of blameless life to rule over *Churches*. Those who are ambitious of ruling we reject; but we constrain those who, through excess of modesty, are not easily induced to take a public charge in the Church of God. And those who rule over us well are under the constraining influence of the great King, whom we believe to be the Son of God, God the Word. And if those who govern in the Church, and are called rulers of the divine nation—that is, the Church—rule well, they rule in accordance with the divine commands, and never suffer themselves to be led astray by worldly policy. And it is not for the purpose of escaping public duties that Christians decline public offices, but that they may reserve themselves for a diviner and more necessary service in the Church of God—for the salvation of men. And this service is at once necessary and right. They take charge of all—of those that are within, that they may day by day lead better lives, and of those that are without, that they may come to abound in holy words and in deeds of piety; and that, while thus worshipping God truly, and training up as many as they can in the same way, they may be filled with the word of God and the law of God, and thus be united with the Supreme God through His Son the Word, Wisdom, Truth, and Righteousness, who unites to God all who are resolved to conform their lives in all things to the law of God.

Tertullian wrote:

In us, all ardor in the pursuit of glory and honor is dead. So we have no pressing inducement to take part in your public meetings. Nor is there anything more entirely foreign to us than affairs of state.

Elsewhere Tertullian said:

I owe no duty to forum, campaign, or senate. I stay awake for no public function. I make no effort to occupy a platform. I am no office seeker. I have no desire to smell out political corruption. I shun the voter's booth, the juryman's bench. I break no laws and push no lawsuits; I will not serve as a magistrate or judge. I refuse to do military service. I desire to rule over no one – I have withdrawn from worldly politics! Now my only politics is spiritual – how that I might be anxious for nothing except to root out all worldly anxieties and care.

Lactantius warns:

God might have bestowed upon his people both riches and kingdoms, as he had given previously to the Jews, whose successors and posterity we are. However, he would have Christians live under the power and government of others, lest they should become corrupted by the happiness and prosperity, slide into luxury, and eventually despise the commandments of God. For this is what our ancestors did.

Eventually Christian governments arose, as was inevitable, but the Church Fathers of later centuries always kept focus on the fact that as long as a government calls itself Christian, it must work for the greater glory of God and support the Church in its mission to reach and sanctify the world. Above all, it was to be always maintained that Christ was the King of kings and Lord of lords and that "all good things come from above". This is how the Christians of the Roman Empire came to see their role.

With the rise of secular and multi-cultural societies, Christians must more and more heed the warnings of the early Church and not rely on government to fulfill the mission of the Church, but to transform the world as a united Church that is truly in the world yet not of the world.

SACRED MUSIC: ITS NATURE AND FUNCTION

All sorts of theories have been advanced to explain the origin of music in human culture. One thing is certain: throughout recorded history until only recently, music was not an independent art form but connected to some other activity: religious ceremony, military and court functions, drama, dancing, courting and wedding rights, and even work. The word "music" derives from the Greek *mousike*, the art of the muse, which in ancient Greece referred to a combination of poetry, acting, dancing, and musical sounds. Apparently music throughout most of history was an associate art, yet in that association it was an essential ingredient for heightening or intensifying the activity.

Ultimately music did not originate with man; it has always been inherent in nature. Since man is a part of nature, then, theories concerning its origin are rather pointless. It is enough to say that what we call music, the sequential expressions of pitched sounds in rhythmic patterns, is a part of human nature because it is found in the nature of the cosmos in general. Thus its origin is in the creative wisdom of God.

St. Gregory of Sinai, speaking of music in the Church, said: "Psalmody has been given to us that we may rise from the sensory to the intellectual and true." Sacred music is uplifting, and there is a decided transforming power in it. It is grounded in matter — since all sounds proceed from vibrations of something material — yet the effect is uplifting beyond the sensory to a higher plane. And because music always requires the element of time, it is by nature an event. It is dynamic rather than fixed, a flowing movement rather than a "still life." More than any other art, then, it carries the possibility of change, of transformation. In the case of genuinely spiritual music, it can elevate from the sensory to the sublime. As usual, St. John Chrysostom expressed it best: "Nothing uplifts the soul so much and gives it wings and liberates it from the earth and releases it from the fetters of the body and makes it aspire after wisdom and deride all

the cares of this life as the melody of unison and rhythm-possessing sacred songs."

Music, then, by its very nature has power to uplift and transform the human heart. It is most natural to employ song when one desires to refresh and "recreate" the soul. And this recreation occurs most certainly and most deeply when one's sole aim in singing is to glorify God.

Now, obviously all music does not have as its end the glory of God and the recreation of the human soul. In fact, today most music is unmistakably "secular" — music for entertainment, for dancing, for "background" during work or driving or shopping — for any number of activities unrelated to God. There is even a large (and lucrative) segment of contemporary music which is consciously against God and which seeks to glorify the lowest instincts and appetites of man. And most distressing, the extreme secularity of the present age has resulted in the introduction of profane, worldly styles of music in many churches.

It is sad to notice that the vast bulk of "music" produced day after day in our own time and broadcast ad nauseam over the electronic media neither glorifies God nor elevates man. It does not even seek these aims. It at once reflects and feeds the overtly profane and secular culture in which we live. Just as a human who is overcome by sin and remains unrepentant is not fulfilling his own nature, so profane music does not fulfill its own nature. Perhaps one might, therefore, more appropriately term it "anti-music."

For those who still accept the traditional Christian revelation concerning the nature of man and his role as king and priest within creation, there can be no joy or satisfaction in any art which ignores or denies or is divorced from God; music least of all, because of its natural potentiality for lifting up the mind and heart. Music can reflect the harmony of heaven;

it can provide us on earth with a foretaste of the splendor of the Age to Come.

Sacred music, then, is true music, reflecting as it does the deepest truths of God and man: that the universe is not self-created or self-sustaining, but created by God and filled with His Presence.

The Christian practice of worship included sacred music from the very beginning. At the Lord's Supper when Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Mystery of His precious Body and Blood, He and His disciples sang a hymn before they departed to the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). And St. Paul, writing to the "faithful saints" in Ephesus, advised: "Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart." (Ephesians 5:18-19).

The early Christians simply continued the Judaic heritage of chanting Psalms, adding gradually new hymns which were specifically Christian in content. The notion that sacred music developed only after the age of the early Church persecutions is quite erroneous. In fact, it was through Psalms and hymns that the intense band of the faithful expressed their strength and joy in the Risen Lord during those long years of persecution. When the Church finally did emerge from that difficult era, its music continued and flourished as before.

During the age of the Seven Ecumenical Councils (4th-8th Centuries), music in the Church received its definitive structure and character. Some of the more clever heretics in that era knew well the power of music to capture human hearts. They shrewdly expressed their false doctrines in lively, catchy melodies which spread quickly among the people. But the character of the tunes, consonant with the falsity of their content, echoed the music of the theater and circus. In opposition to the heretics, the Church Fathers formulated guidelines for the music to be used in Orthodox worship.

The main features of Orthodox sacred music defined during the Great Councils are still the canonical norms for Church music today. They are outlined as follows:

First and most obviously, the music is purely

vocal. No accompanying organ or other instruments are used. The human voice alone glorifies God. There are a number of reasons for this. During the formative years of the Church, the organ along with other musical instruments were associated with the theater and circus; they evoked the whole atmosphere of pagan frivolity and licentiousness for the Christian. Even in the Western Church until the 15th Century instruments were not permitted. As late as the 16th Century in the West, the organ was hardly more than tolerated, the music being still mainly *a cappella*.

The deeper objection to instruments was that their use was considered not consonant with the spiritual nature of Christian worship. In the past Jewish worship had included them, but only as an accommodation to human weakness, to the spiritual imperfection of the man under the old Law. St. John Chrysostom said in this regard: "David formerly sang in psalms, we today also sing with him; he had a lyre with lifeless strings, the Church has a lyre with living strings. Our tongues are the strings of the lyre, with a different tone, indeed, but with a more accordant piety."

Christian worship is higher and more perfect by virtue of the perfect revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Musical instruments are of the imperfect realm of "this world"; they are lifeless, mechanical and ostentatious; they introduce into the character of the services a contrived, sensuous, theatrical element. The lyre of "living strings," the pure human voice because of its flexibility, its warmth and the deep feeling it can express, is the sole worthy instrument in the more perfect worship of the "New Israel." Jesus Christ has inaugurated a new age, the New Creation where the faithful now worship in "spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24).

The second main characteristic is that the music, being wholly vocal, is completely wed to the text. The text, in fact, is paramount, the words and their meaning suggesting the very contour and rhythm of the music. Since the Orthodox Church knows of no sacred music without words, it is from the text and for the text that the melody proceeds. The music is a holy chant, not measured by any regular or contrived meter.

There are, therefore, in Orthodox musical history, no hymnwriters who were simply professional musicians; they were rather liturgical poets whose basic task was neither music nor poetry, but prayer. They were without exception ascetical, mystical fathers. And the content of their hymnology is never subjective, but rather objective declarations of Orthodox doctrine. Each verse, each troparion, each "stikhera" is a marvelous poetic statement of the Faith. The services, especially Vespers and Matins, are replete with these hymns strung together with Glorias and verses from the Psalms like pearls on a string. Even in the more rare cases where the personal pronoun "I" appears (as more often in the Lenten Triodion), the hymns maintain their basic objectivity.

Just as there is no liturgical music without words, so too there are during worship no words without music. Besides the formal hymnology itself, everything else is chanted "psalmodically" — all psalms, all readings, all prayers, the Creed, everything. The phenomena in American churches of reading in an unpitched monotone or in a dramatic voice, or of congregational recitation of portions of the Services are influences from protestant worship, having no basis or precedent in the whole history of Orthodox corporate worship. This unfortunate development may be seen as a move towards the secularization of the Orthodox liturgical tradition.

Two aspects of Orthodox sacred music which have all but fallen out of use in American parishes must also be mentioned. The first is: singing antiphonically. The practice of two choirs singing alternately is a tradition which became firmly established in the early Church. It has both practical and spiritual advantages. Practically it enables the chanters to sing a long time without fatigue since they alternately sing and rest throughout the services. And spiritually this practice brightens and enlivens the services, keeping the congregation, as Constantine Cavaros points out, "in a state of inner wakefulness."

Secondly, though much of the liturgical music in use in Orthodox Churches today is harmonized, the traditional Byzantine and early Slavic chants were monophonic with the addition

at times of the drone or holding note. Polyphony appeared in Russia in the late 16th Century as a natural development of the Russian musical "soul" and paralleled the pattern of the multi-voiced folk singing. Later the harmonies became more sophisticated as professionally-trained composers harmonized chants and wrote original music of a high degree of esthetic beauty. The process, however, became more and more dominated by "western" influence and opened the door to music-for-music's sake. Those who continue to argue for strict monophonic chant assert that harmony destroys the purity, holiness, and power of the simple chant. Those who prefer harmonized music insist that there is the possibility of simple part-singing which is not ostentatious and which has, moreover, the effect of highlighting and beautifying the chant and its text. Each side argues that its method has greater transforming power in the hearts of worshippers. The controversy cannot be settled here. Perhaps the solution is in keeping both traditions, depending on the character of each individual chant. Harmonized or not, all sides agree that Church music is most effective when it is uncomplicated and directly expressive of both the text and the liturgical moment.

Throughout the unbroken history of the Orthodox Church, whether or not these basic features of sacred music have been fulfilled totally in every local church, the ideals stand as a guide for all to follow. No individual, no local community has the right to abridge or ignore these canonical standards. Each generation must embrace anew the wisdom of the musical tradition, so that church singing may continue to fulfill (or return to) its proper and sacred role in public worship. Such a fulfillment, as this essay has attempted to show, is a fulfillment of the very nature of music. And it is the nature of music to draw mortals to the immortal Throne of God where all harmony and beauty have their beginning and end.

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OCA Dept. of Liturgical Music (1977):
Archbishop JOHN of Chicago, Chairman, Archpriest Igor Soroka, Vice Chairman Mr. John Sutko, Archpriest Daniel Hubiak, Chancellor, ex officio, Archpriest Sergei Glagolev, Archpriest Dimitri Ermakov, Priest Theodore Heckman, Mr. David Drillock

Communism – the Worst

Walter E. Williams, August 8, 2012

“What goes untaught – and possibly is covered up – is that socialist and communist ideas have produced the greatest evil in mankind's history.”

In Europe, especially in Germany, hoisting a swastika-emblazoned Nazi flag is a crime. For decades after World War II, people have hunted down and sought punishment for Nazi murderers, who were responsible for the deaths of more than 20 million people.

Here's my question: Why are the horrors of Nazism so well-known and widely condemned but not those of socialism and communism? What goes untaught – and possibly is covered up – is that socialist and communist ideas have produced the greatest evil in mankind's history. You say, "Williams, what in the world are you talking about? Socialists, communists and their fellow travelers, such as the Wall Street occupiers supported by our president, care about the little guy in his struggle for a fair shake! They're trying to promote social justice." Let's look at some of the history of socialism and communism.

What's not appreciated is that Nazism is a form of socialism. In fact, the term Nazi stands for the National Socialist German Workers' Party. The unspeakable acts of Adolf Hitler's Nazis pale in comparison with the horrors committed by the communists in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the People's Republic of China. Between 1917 and 1987, Vladimir Lenin, Josef Stalin and their successors murdered and were otherwise responsible for the deaths of 62 million of their own people. Between 1949 and 1987, China's communists, led by Mao Tse-tung and his successors, murdered and were otherwise responsible for the deaths of 76 million Chinese. The most authoritative tally of history's most murderous regimes is documented on University of Hawaii Professor Rudolph J. Rummel's website, and in his book Death by Government.

How much hunting down and punishment have there been for these communist murderers? To the contrary, it's acceptable both in Europe and in the U.S. to hoist and march under the former USSR's red flag emblazoned with a hammer and sickle. Mao Zedong has been long admired by academics and leftists across our country, as they often marched around singing the praises of Mao and waving his little red book, "Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung."

Whether it's the academic community, the media elite, stalwarts of the Democratic Party or organizations such as the NAACP, the National Council of La Raza, Green for All, the Sierra Club and the Children's Defense Fund, there is a great tolerance for the ideas of socialism – a system that has caused more deaths and human misery than all other systems combined.

Today's leftists, socialists and progressives would bristle at the suggestion that their agenda differs little from those of Nazi, Soviet and Maoist mass murderers. One does not have to be in favor of death camps or wars of conquest to be a tyrant. The only requirement is that one has to believe in the primacy of the state over individual rights.

The unspeakable horrors of Nazism didn't happen overnight. They were simply the end result of a long evolution of ideas leading to consolidation of power in central government in the quest for "social justice." It was decent but misguided earlier generations of Germans – who would have cringed at the thought of genocide – who created the Trojan horse for Hitler's ascendancy. Today's Americans are similarly accepting the massive consolidation of power in Washington in the name of social justice.

If you don't believe it, just ask yourself: Which way are we headed tiny steps at a time – toward greater liberty or toward more government control over our lives?

Perhaps we think that we are better human beings than the German people who created the conditions that brought Hitler to power. I say, don't count on it.