

Isaiah, Ch 6:1-4

In the year King Uzziah died (734 BC), I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up. The house was full of His glory. Around Him stood seraphim; each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. **And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”**

Anaphora – St Basil the Great

“... Thou art praised by angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities, powers, and many-eyed Cherubim. Round about Thee stand the Seraphim, one with six-wings and the other with six wings; with two they cover their faces, with two their feet, and with two they fly crying one to another with unceasing voices and ever-resounding praises; **singing the triumphant hymn, shouting, proclaiming, and saying:**

Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!

Anaphora – St John Chrysostom

“... and we thank Thee for this Liturgy which Thou hast found worthy to accept at our hands, though there stand by Thee thousands of archangels and hosts of angels, the Cherubim and the Seraphim, six-winged many-eyed, who soar aloft, borne on their pinions **singing the triumphant hymn, shouting, proclaiming and saying:**

Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!

Divine Liturgy – Celebrant’s Prayer at the Little Entrance

“O Master, Lord our God, Who hast appointed in heaven orders and hosts of angels and archangels for the service of Thy glory: **Grant that with our entrance there may be an entrance of holy angels, serving with us** and glorifying thy goodness. For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit ... “

St John Chrysostom (347-407 AD):

Above, the hosts of angels sing praise; below, men form choirs in the churches and imitate them by singing the same doxology. Above, the seraphim cry out in the thrice-holy hymn; below, the human throng sends up the same cry. The inhabitants of heaven and earth are brought together in a common assembly; there is one thanksgiving, one shout of delight, one joyful chorus.

St Ignatius of Antioch (early 2nd century)

Therefore by your concord and harmonious love Jesus Christ is being sung. Now all of you together become a choir so that being harmoniously in concord and receiving the key note from God in unison you may sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father.

Eusebius (4th century)

Throughout the world – in cities, in villages, and in the country – in all the churches of God the people of Christ, who have been chosen out of all the nations, send up, not to the native gods nor to demons but to the one God spoken of by the prophets, hymns and psalmody with a loud voice so that the sound of those singing can be heard by those standing outside.

St John Chrysostom

As soon as the singing of the psalm begins, it regroups the dispersed voices in unity, it gathers them all together in a harmonious song. Young and old, rich and poor, women and men, slaves and free, we all sing a single melody. The musician plucks the difference strings of his lyre, but he plays a single melody. How surprising that the power of the psalm and of the inspired song produces the same result ! . . . The prophet speaks, we all respond, Together we form a single choir. Here there is neither slave nor free, neither rich nor poor, neither master nor servant. The inequality that exists in the world is laid aside, all form a single choir, all voices are of equal worth, earth imitates heaven. Such is the noble quality of the Church.

Archbishop Kallistos Ware

To pray and to worship is to perceive the spiritual beauty of the heavenly Kingdom; to express that beauty alike through words, through poetry and music, through art and symbolic acts, and through our whole lives; and in this way to extend the divine beauty in the world around us, transforming and transfiguring the fallen creation.

Russian Primary Chronicle

The Byzantines led us to the edifice where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. **We know only that God dwells there among men**, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty.

Professor Ivan Alekseevich Gardner

It is self-evident that it would be a grave mistake to expect or demand from liturgical singing the same forms and genres that are found in secular music or even in religious music that is separated from worship. The intermingling of these two realms can lead, on the one hand, to misunderstandings concerning liturgical singing, expecting from it that which it is not meant to contain, and, on the other hand, to the introduction of foreign elements into the liturgy that can subtly and gradually distort both the forms of liturgical singing and the very essence of the liturgy, resulting, once again, in an erroneous appraisal of its forms and aesthetic principles.

Slavonic Typikon of the 17th century (49th Chapter)

... When the deacon says: “Let us all say.” The phrase means nothing other than this very thing – for all to pray together, not only the choir, but all those found in the church. The deacon further says: “with our whole soul, and with our whole mind, let us say.” And what is it that we say? Nothing other than this common prayer: “Lord have mercy.” The holy Chrysostom writes to the Corinthians about this sacred prayer in the 18th instruction:

“For in the penitential services there are prayers common to the priest and to the people; and everyone pronounces one and the same prayer, filled with mercy, and that is “Lord, have mercy!”

For this reason it is written in the Sluzhebnyki (euchologies) that “the people” pronounce this, or other [prayers] written in the [appropriate] places. Now in the Holy Eastern Church things are

done not otherwise but as it is written. So where it is written that “the people say . . .,” it follows that everyone together, all those found in the church, say: either “Lord have mercy! Grant this, O Lord! Or “And with your spirit” or “Our Father.” Even if this is not done in our churches, still, it should be done. Because, as was stated above, when the deacon says “In peace let us pray to the Lord! or “Let us all say” then it is all who should reply: “Lord, have mercy!” If it were the choir alone that was being told to reply, it would not have been written that “the people say.” Thus the holy and sacred Chrysostom says further in the same instruction:

“During the very awesome mysteries, the priest greets the people, “Peace be with you.” And the people, in their turn, greet the priest, saying: “And with your spirit.” This means nothing other than the following: that the thanksgiving is common, and it is not he alone who is giving thanks, but all the people as well. First he accepts their voice, and then, after they have agreed that “it is meet and just [right], he begins the thanksgiving. And why are you surprised that at some moments the people are pronouncing together with the priests, when these holy hymns are being raised up together with the very cherubim and the powers above?”

All these things have been said so that everyone would reflect upon the following instruction: that we should come to understand that we are all one body, differing from one another as one body part from another, and so that we do not place all matters upon the priests, but rather all be concerned about the Church, as about one common body.

St John Chrysostom

Do not chant the refrains out of habit, but take them up like a staff for the journey. Each verse is able to teach us much wisdom...

Even if you are poor, even if you are too poor to buy books, even if you have books, but have no time to read, at least remember the psalm refrains that you have sung, not once, twice, or three times, but so often, and you will gain consolation from them. See what the immense treasure the psalm refrains open to us!

I exhort you not to leave here with empty hands, but to gather up the refrains as though gathering pearls, to keep them always with you. And if anxiety invades your soul, if cupidity, anger, or any other passion troubles your soul, sing them assiduously. Thus we shall rejoice in great peace in this life, and we shall obtain eternal rewards in the next, through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

St Theophan the Recluse (1815-1894)

All of our liturgical hymns are edifying, profound, and sublime. They contain all our theological science, and all Christian moral teaching, all consolation and warning. He who pays attention to them can do without all other Christian doctrinal books.

Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev

The liturgical texts of the Orthodox Church penetrated my mind and heart so deeply that they became, along with the Gospel and the writings of the church Fathers, the main criteria of theological truth, an inexhaustible source of knowledge about God, the world, the Church, and salvation.

St Niceta of Remesiana

Thus, beloved, let us sing with alert senses and a wakeful mind, as the psalmist exhorts: 'Because God is king of all the earth', he says, sing ye wisely' (Ps 46:8), so that a psalm is sung not only with the spirit, that is, the sound of the voice, but with the mind also (I Cor. 14:15), and so that we think of what we sing rather than allow our mind, seized by extraneous thoughts as is often the case, to lose the fruit of our labor. One must sing with a manner and melody befitting holiness; it must not proclaim theatrical distress but rather exhibit Christian simplicity in its very musical movement; it must not remind one of anything theatrical, but rather create compunction in the listeners. Further, our voice ought not be dissonant but consonant. One ought not to drag out the singing while another cuts it short, and one ought not to sing too low while another raises his voice. Rather each should strive to integrate his voice within the sound of the harmonious chorus and not project it outwardly in the manner of a cithara as if to make an immodest display . . . And for him who is not able to blend and fit himself in with the others, it is better to sing in a subdued voice than to make a great noise, for thus he performs both his liturgical action and avoids disturbing the singing brotherhood [faithful].

Canon 15 of the Council of Laodicea, 364 AD

No longer are persons permitted to chant in church other than those who are canonical (ordained) psalti ascending the pulpit (ambo) and chanting from parchments.

Bishop John of Poltava (20th cent)

In regard to worship, both singing and reading have the same essential meaning and both should be understandable and prayerful. However, this prayerful liturgical character now is frequently disturbed by the musical rendition of the hymnography which was created on a basis alien to the spirit of our Church. There are musical arrangements which are completely foreign to this humble and reverently prayerful character, such as "Our Father" ascribed to Mozart, "Open to Me the Doors of Repentance" by Vedel and others which are unfit for worship. There are such arrangements which, because of their artistic execution, draw the attention of listeners more to their aesthetical than prayerful side, as seen, for example in Grechaninov's recent composition of "The Creed" for solo voice and most of the "concert" pieces. Such compositions are unsuitable for use in church. They offer truly beautiful harmonizations, but undermine the spirit of man which is turned to God. Instead of the spiritual movement toward the One who is everywhere, as appears in the intense elevation of our minds and hearts toward God, we get musical enjoyment instead. The result turns out to be a religious concert, but it is not prayer. Probably everyone who examines his own prayer life during the singing of this type will find that what has been said is correct.