



October 4, 2026

To the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My beloved children in the Lord,

“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” (Col. 3:16).

In these words, the holy Apostle Paul makes an important connection between the word of Christ, the teaching of the faith, and the singing of sacred music. This should not surprise us. From generation to generation, Christians have learned the faith not only by hearing it preached or reading it in books, but by singing it.

The hymns of the Church give special voice to her theology. They proclaim Christ’s incarnation, death, and resurrection; they teach us how to speak of the most holy Theotokos and the saints; they teach us the meaning of the feasts and fasts; they give us words of repentance, thanksgiving, supplication, and praise. Often, words first encountered in worship remain with us long afterward, deep impressed into our memory, because they have been joined to melody and repeated in prayer.

For this reason, the ministry of our church musicians is also a ministry of teaching. Choir directors, singers, chanters, readers, composers, arrangers, translators, hymnographers, and all those who labor in the musical life of the Church do more than beautify our services. Through their work, they help the word of Christ to dwell richly among us.

This responsibility is especially important as we hand on the Orthodox faith to others. A child learning to sing the responses, a new singer finding his or her place in the choir, or someone entering an Orthodox church for the first time may know little of our musical traditions. Patient instruction, good examples, and the welcoming of new voices are therefore not merely musical concerns. They are part of the work of transmitting the life and tradition of the Church.

Our pursuit of beauty and excellence in worship should never become a barrier to participation. Rather, those who have received musical gifts, knowledge, and experience should generously share them with others. I encourage our parishes and missions to teach their people to sing, to give children

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opportunities to learn the hymns of the Church, to welcome and form new choristers, and to support those musicians who devote themselves to preserving and handing on this part of our liturgical inheritance.

On this Church Musician Sunday, I offer my heartfelt gratitude to all those who give their voices, their skill, their time, and their prayer to the musical service of the Church. Through your efforts, words proclaimed by prophets, apostles, fathers, and saints continue to be placed upon the lips and within the hearts of the faithful.

May the Lord strengthen you in this ministry, and may he grant that, through our common song, his word may dwell ever more richly within us.

With my primatial prayers and blessing,

+Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada