

**Part I. Committed to Christ through the Liturgy**

1. Chanting/ Singing/ Reading is a position which has a service for its ordination
  - a. Chanters were numbered with the clergy in the history of canons for the Ecumenical Council
  - b. The prayer before singing – adapted from Abba Theaisia
  - c. The need for our commitment in order to find fulfillment
  - d. God will help teach us everything needed through the tradition and His providence if we have this kind of commitment.
  
2. Disposition
  - a. Is not so much **what** we do (which is nevertheless important) but **how** we do what we do
  - b. Fr. Sophrony of Essex : "Don't sacrifice the Spirit for musicality. Don't be too much of a musician."
  
3. Posture
  - a. It must be a place of attention for a general improvement for us, no matter what we are doing
  - b. Shoulders out and back
  - c. Head back and rotated into proper position (usually slightly down)
  - d. Sternum (chest) higher
  - e. Shoulders wider apart
  - f. Release/relax abdominal muscles
  
4. Breathing – we must be able to consistently and easily perform deep breathing
  - a. Utilizing the muscles around and above the belt, we must push out and down every time we breath : "belly-breathing" (as if your belt buckle and knees had a mouth on them from which you breath)
  - b. Need for a consistent amount of pressure in the abdomen at the belt (instead of tension & constriction elsewhere – feels like a cough)
  
5. The need to always warm-up (and not sing on a cold voice) is imperative
  - a. Always start at mid-range and work down then up

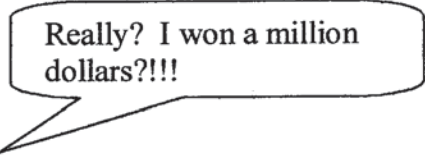
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Staccato breathing</li><li>2. Hummm</li><li>3. Lip trills</li><li>4. La on a 5 note pattern</li></ol> |
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- b. Mouth position -- A need for a good space in the mouth at all times -- drop the jaw; articulate with the lips

- c. Consistently need to open the back of the throat (soft palate) while singing. (feels like a yawn)
  - d. **The higher the notes**, the **more support** we will need and **the more pressure** at the belt and the **more the throat** will need to be open.
6. Singing needs to be a whole-body experience
- a. The necessity of utilizing a **rounded mouth position**, vertical sound (not horizontal) – this will necessitate a greater usage of the lips
  - b. Focus on forward placement of sound, resonating more in the head and face than in the throat --
7. We must look ahead and plan accordingly (physically and mentally): bigger intervals = more air and mental preparation
- a. Major thirds are one of the primary culprits of flat singing – we must aim at the top of the note – shooting above and down
  - b. There is a need for constant attentiveness on our part in order to maintain pitch and blend = proactive singing 100% of the time (not passive singing)
  - c. When good technique is in place, singing is really a matter of the mind (pitch) and heart (adjustment and anticipation)
8. Choral singing in small groups: Three imperative principles to develop:
- a. Listening is a skill that develops over a long period of time – Listening/anticipation is the primary skill of good choir numbers
  - b. Listening precludes an awareness and sensitivity to others
  - c. We actually must listen to others more than we do to ourselves → we cannot make the proper changes quickly enough if we use ourselves as a guidepost
  - d. Singers in choirs, are generally too loud – singing constant 9 or 10 in volume, when in reality choral singing necessitates an 8 or 8 ½ in placing ones potential volume
  - e. Learning our notes only in reference to other sections

*Awareness of all of these principles is imperative for the growth which begins but never ends.*

9. Whatever we sing, whether slow, fast, loud, soft – must always be **full of life, vitality and energy!**



Really? I won a million dollars?!!!

- a. The million dollar sound:
  - b. If its not alive, its probably dead
  - c. Communication of text and living the text (meaning what you sing) is an essential part of energetic, alive singing – (It is truly meet...")
  - d. We must always seek to convey the message of what we sing
  - e. We must utilize a lot of energy with our lips, mouth and face in order to convey life! (more than conversationally speech)
  
10. The proper focal point
  - a. The choir should be invisible and blend in with the icons, altar, Gospel and priest
  - b. The priest is actually part of the choir – needs to try to be on the pitch of F and have a sense of some "musicality"
  - c. Our goal is not for people to say "nice choir today" – but rather "O how prayerful the service was today"
  - d. We should never try to draw attention to ourselves through boisterous or uncontrolled singing – (we can also draw attention to ourselves and the choir by not doing our job with attention, energy & effort!)
  - e. Focus in your mind on singing to one elderly person in the congregation
  
11. Realize the power!
  - a. Our words can have power to heal, transform and enliven people spiritually and physically.
  - b. The Church's Hymnography are icons if done with restraint, care and proper execution.
  
12. Diction
  - a. The heart of diction mechanics is consistent pure vowels and quick and clear consonants.
  - b. Slight crescendo and decrescendo is normal in communication. (more important word given a stronger accent) It should equally be applied to our singing
  - c. Litanies should ideally be quick, clean, clear and quiet – sing the phrases, not individual words
  - d. The first "AMEN" tells it all—  
(round "A" – crescendo volume 1 – 8 "...men" 7-6-5-4)



- e. Anticipate chord changes and jumps with more attentive energy and air in order to keep pitch (also realize the places where we will potentially go flat)
13. Znamenny Chant is the foundation of much/most of the Russian tone chant system
- a. It is unique to all other chant forms – diatonic with no accidentals – made up of various melodic fragments – uniquely different for each tone.
  - b. A neumatic chant – a combination of an organic development
  - c. Znamenny is derived in part from amalgamation of Byzantine and Russian traditional folk songs at least at first (Tone 3 Obikhod Troparion tone exhibits this still today)
14. Znamenny and Kondakarion Chant were the two main forms of chant in early Russia.  
(Kondakarion fell into disuse and was absorbed by Znamenny notation)
- a. From Znamenny we have a “Lesser Znamenny Chant” which is a distillation of memorable melodic fragments from Great Znamenny and other regional sources.
  - b. From Great Znamenny and Lesser Znamenny reduced and combined with South Western tone patterns we get Kievan ( in use by 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> c) --
  - c. From a reduction of Kievan we essentially get Obikhod codified by Aleksei Lvov 1840’s
  - d. Revival of traditional music comes from a spiritual renewal and study of Liturgical Life/ musicology (this is what happened in Russia in the 1860’s)
15. Our need for continuing education
- a. community college
  - b. other choirs
  - c. workshops/ conference
16. Through working on our own salvation, we will effect the growth of our parish church and God will bless our work in the Church
17. The Eucharist is the end and the music is a preparatory means



## Learning to Live the Liturgy

1.
  - a. Our modern world (especially busyness) will make it difficult for us to find 'the pearl of Great Price' hidden in the field of the Church's liturgical life.
    - i. Modern society and its principles are profoundly the antithesis to the basic principle of spiritual knowledge epitomized "be still and know that I am God...."
  - b. The Church's liturgy can be our primary tool for and often has been for evangelism in other Orthodox societies, especially during Communist times.
2. Our life as liturgy, an "Anphora:" a constant offering up
  - a. Church, our homes, offices, friends, cars, food, everything through consistent prayer and priestly business.
3. The Fall of Adam
  - a. The first secular consumer the world used for its own sake apart from God
  - b. Reversing the Fall in our lives: a constant reconnecting of our personal world to the Lord through a sacramental/ascetic life of prayer.
4. The Incomparable Value of the Liturgy
  - a. St. John of Kronstadt: There is nothing upon earth holier, higher, grander, more solemn, and more life-giving than the Liturgy – *My Life in Christ*, 390.
5. The heritage of Holy Tradition in the Liturgical Services is God's synergistic working with his people. Consequently, power vested in the Liturgical Services is the work of generation upon generation of those who gave completely of their time, talents and their very selves to the Lord and lived the Anaphora.
6. Serving and attending the Divine Liturgy proceeds from the commandment of the Lord "Do this in remembrance of Me...." And from the vision of Christ in glory which the saints lived and breathed. The Church's arts and music reflect and become a mirror (or window) of this inspiration given by God to the saints.
7. Music and art are a reflection of life. What kind of art and music will be produced by the authentic transfiguration of man becoming partaker of the Divine nature and the kingdom which is to come?
8. Liturgical life, art and music are: incarnational, iconic, and symbolic in the Orthodox Patristic understanding.
  - a. "Through the grace we receive through the Liturgy we enter into eternity. This grace is eternity, and through this grace we become contemporaries of those events, and (are) able to say 'today' at every feast." Father Zachariah of Essex. *The Enlargement of the Heart*. pg. 93

9. Orthodox Patristic understanding of symbolism is radically different from modern western conceptualization of the term. From the Orthodox perspective, symbols are actually an epiphany:
  - a. Joins two worlds, spiritual and material (think of the Cross).
  - b. It does not subject the infinite to the finite but renders the finite transparent and allows us to see the infinite through it.
  - c. The spiritual world is mysteriously present in the symbols of the visible world. St. Nicolai of Zicha
    - i. Syn ballon = the work of the Church which is seen as the second Paradise
    - ii. Dia bolic = the word that the devil did in the first paradise
    - iii. Service for the Feast of Theophany exemplifies this re-orientation of man and his world.
  - d. St. Maximus explains that this world is to be seen as the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
  - e. Our work is to bring the symbolic sacramental life to our personal world invoking the Holy Spirit upon everything and everyone.
  - f. Symbols in the Church, the icons, the hymns, the prayers, the vestments, the holy water, etc. "express, communicate, reveal and manifest the kingdom of heaven." (Schmemman, *For the Life of the World.*)
  - g. The great need for to gain and live with an Orthodox Liturgical Symbolic Eucharistic Consciousness.
  - h. God grants us through the Liturgy His Uncreated Grace which God Himself, and which we cannot acquire through ANY other means that the Sacraments of the Church.
  - i. An exchange in the Liturgy: our life for His and the Cross is the narrow way and our personal Cross is an imperative necessity. (one can only theologize (know and come to understand God) when they are on their own personal Cross)
  - j. Our death in Christ is a voluntary life bearing death to the lusts and passions which corrupt and kill our souls.
  - k. Life in the next world: a continuation of the Liturgical life – do we like these things? The need to consistently try to seek/make these a part of our life.
  - l. The transfiguration account is a model for our own spiritual Liturgical life.
  - m. The transfiguration was preceded by Peter's confession of Christ's divinity. We too must make this confession a part the fabric of our life in order for us to sense and see the kingdom present among us in the Church.
  - n. All of the services and everything in them and connected with them – from fasting to hymnography – is a means to till and prepare our heart for the end: receiving the Eucharist.
10. The Furnace of Temptation is the crucible which burns away the dross of the passions from our heart. We must expect it and

receive it in the right frame of mind. Temptations remind us to pray and turn our powers to the Lord – and it is through the Eucharist that we receive the grace to overcome them; for no temptation is stronger than grace.

11. The hours spent closes to Paradise are the hours spent in the Church together when we celebrate the Divine Liturgy when we sing and when we receive Holy Communion.
12. The Church reveals the Mind of Christ (I Cor 2). What in the main part of the mind if not memory? The Church remembers and tells us everything.
13. Revival within Church in other times and places has always come from an intense awareness of the invaluable treasure of Eucharist (inseparable from the whole liturgical life,) and everything that has come from it.