

OCA Chat Room – Liturgical Music – Helen Erickson – February 6, 2007

Tonight I would like to talk about some of the questions that come up over and over in classes and workshops for new choir directors. I've phrased these in the form of the questions they are. Please understand that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but only a means to begin our discussion.

Preparation

- What do you need to know to be a choir director?
- What do you need to prepare before a rehearsal? Before a service?

Rehearsals

- Can you survive without one?
- How can you schedule a rehearsal for maximum attendance?
- How do you plan a rehearsal?
- How do you "pace" a rehearsal?
- What should you expect a rehearsal to achieve?
- How do you plan what to rehearse and when to rehearse it?
- How do you select music for your own choir?

Liturgical issues

- How do you know if the music you're singing is liturgical music?
- How does a beginning choir sing vespers or a vigil?
- Why do texts and liturgical forms matter to a choir director?
- Why do we sing our services?

Musical issues

- How do you satisfy everyone when your parish comes from numerous ethnic traditions?
- When is "simple" "good" and when is it "bad"?
- What problems are you likely to encounter in an established parish? In a mission parish?
- What do you do with singers who can't sing?
 - Does teaching your choir to read matter? Is it possible?
- What is giving pitches all about?
- How do you sing four-voice music if you have only 3 or 2 singers? What do you do if you don't have a tenor?

Personnel issues

- How do you deal with dysfunctional choirs?
- How do you work in partnership with your priest most effectively?