

**The Orthodox Church in America – Department of Liturgical Music & Translations**  
Music Chatroom Transcript – January 23, 2007

Moderator: *His Grace, Benjamin, Bishop of Berkeley*  
Chat room topic: **A Guide to the Hierarchical Liturgy**

*Professor David Drillock, Chair of the OCA Department of Liturgical Music and Translations*  
It is a real pleasure and an honor having Your Grace, tonight as our guest speaker on hierarchical liturgies. His Grace has served as a choir director, an ecclesiarch, an expert in liturgics, and has a wonderful tenor voice. Perhaps you can give us a short introduction and then we can open it up to questions.

*His Grace, Bishop Benjamin*

There aren't too many of us who have seen it from both ends of the church, so to speak. I remember when I was a choir director, I could not figure out what was taking them all so long at the Cherubic Hymn. Now I know.

One of the weak points in the service seems to be the vesting. We just don't seem to have music that is appropriate for the liturgical action. It would be good to have settings that are flexible, perhaps with a refrain breaking up the various verses of the hymn.

One of the issues is there are sub-deacons of varying competence. Some vest faster than others. But it is a little tiresome to hear the same short Kovalevsky every Sunday over and over. Another example are the koinonikons.

The classic Lvov setting sort of does it with trios and such, but it is often far too difficult for the average parish choir these days.

The church provides something in particular – the first vesting prayer “My (or Thy) soul shall rejoice in the Lord...I was in one parish where the choir tried to sing them all, but it really didn't work. The structure of the Lvov setting is worth considering.

I know choir directors really dread a visit from the bishop. But, the hierarchical liturgy can be wonderful. There are some traps, though, “Come let us worship...” where you get the battle of the bands with the clergy and choir.

The SVS Liturgy Book has the correct rendering of that text. There are actually two lines: ‘Come let us worship and fall down before Christ. O Son of God Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee. Alleluia.’ The 1967 pew book is not correct.

Dave Drillock and Helen Erickson did a wonderful job putting together music for the Liturgy in the Green Book.

*Question:*

My little mission has hosted our bishop twice in the recent past and as a newbie choir director, I have difficulty figuring out when to sing Eis Polla, other than when he does a blessing. Especially since its difficult to see him all the time.

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*Answer:*

I think if you will look at the document prepared for the chat room you will see when 'Eis Polla' is to be sung. When I first started out, I put a big piece of paper with Eis Polla in my score whenever it was time. I am sure most of the bishops appreciate someone who makes an attempt to get it right. I have never been to a "perfect" hierarchical liturgy yet.

Truth be told, most choir directors do better than the priests at one of these liturgies, I think.

*Question:*

What if someone wants to have the kids sing during a hierarchical liturgy? Like antiphonal choirs – is that a possibility? What if a choir had the church school kids and adult choir sing antiphonally – is that possible to work out smoothly?

*Answer:*

I don't see why not.

*Question:*

Is it necessary to do the 'battle of the bands' during Come Let Us Worship? Is there another arrangement which is all in the same key that can be used?

*Answer:*

I have not seen one. But, I have been places where the choir stopped for the clergy (who usually can't sing) and then they pick up again when the clergy are done.

There is an Eis polla in the booklet the OCA published for children (available from OCPC via the OCA web site) and we did that at an All-American Council with the kids and the choir.

*Question:*

Where can I find music for the consecration of a new church building and for the consecration of a new altar?

*Answer:*

There is nothing I know that is published officially, but here in the Diocese of the West, we do have something prepared, you might contact Fr. Lawrence Margitich in Santa Rosa, CA. No sense in doing it all over from scratch. It looks complicated, but really isn't. There is a lot of psalmody.

*Question:*

Your Grace, I was thinking about what you said about vesting music. Would it be possible to arrange 'Your soul...' in a similar manner as the More Honorable sung at Matins?

*Answer:*

Yes, I think so. Or even something melismatic with a refrain. Another common difficulty is the Entrance Hymn, usually "It is Truly Meet..." The thing is to keep it going throughout the whole reading of the entrance prayers.

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*Comment:*

I heard a “Your Soul shall rejoice” with a refrain done while I was in Alaska, it was very nice. In that case they actually sang “The Prophets Proclaimed” before the “Your Soul Shall rejoice”

*Response:*

Yes, that is how the *Chinovnik* or *Arkhieratikon* has it. “The Prophets...” is sung as the sub-deacons are taking off the mantiya, etc. to prepare for the vesting. That way there is no silence while we watch the bishop get ready for vesting.

*Question:*

Where can I get a copy of the Alaskan one?

*Answer:*

You could write Anna Jarlson c/o St. Innocent Cathedral. She would be glad to help you. Just ask her for the Alaskan one. It is fairly simple and flexible, or visit the Diocesan web site:  
<http://dioceseofalaska.org/pdf/hdl/AlaskaVesting.pdf>

*Comment:*

I have heard all It is Truly Right, Your Soul, and The Prophets sung really choppy while sung slow.

*Response:*

Well, that is more a problem of style than the music. I have heard all the clergy follow my voice from part to part as I try to get at least two voices going. Sometimes, the clergy need a little rehearsal too.

I remember hearing about one bishop (not one of ours) who turned to the hosting priest and said: “Father, your choir sings like birds..... EAGLES!” I wish I could say every bishop serves the same, but, like priests, they all have their little differences and tastes.

*Question:*

In the hierarchical liturgy, the Deacon intones O Lord Save the Pious. But I have also heard the Deacon doing this when the bishop is not present.

*Answer:*

Actually, this is to be done at all liturgies. Somehow, people have gotten the idea it is just at the hierarchical liturgy. But the service book indicates it for all liturgies with a deacon. It has to do with the deacon and not the presence of a hierarch.

“Be Prepared” should be the motto of more than the Boy Scouts. I think we need to treat each other with kindness and patience...even in Church.

*Professor Drillock:*

Your Grace, I know that you have a very busy schedule. You have been very kind to us and we all wish to thank you very much for your kindness, your, patience, sharing your knowledge with us, and your love.

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*His Grace, Bishop Benjamin:*

You're welcome. You can email me anytime with questions. My email is: [Vikenty@msn.com](mailto:Vikenty@msn.com)

*Professor Drillock:*

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, Helen Erickson will be the guest speaker and will present conducting tips for beginning directors. We hope you can join us!

Good night.