

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

December 12, 2021

Choir and Chanter Appreciation Sunday

Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians 5:18–20

Beloved Brother Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy and Christ-Loving Faithful of our Archdiocese:

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we prepare ourselves in eager anticipation of the feast of His glorious Nativity in the flesh.

In the above quotation, St. Paul describes the Christian life itself as essentially musical. It is a life of holy joy, which naturally draws melodies of praise and thanksgiving up from the heart to the lips, so that every corner of Creation might resound with the glories of God. This musical way of life is taught us, first and foremost, by the choirs and chanters who week after week—and sometime day after day—fill our ears with the sweet hymnography of the Church. From the earliest age, these melodies sink into our hearts, so that it is not unusual to hear Orthodox Christians, from toddlers to seniors, spontaneously bursting into sacred song as they go about their daily life. These hymns are the spiritual air we breathe, and they stick with us thanks to the work of all our chanters and choirs.

While we set aside this Sunday in December each year to recognize these dedicated chanters, we strive throughout the year as an archdiocese to give them the resources and support they need, by providing the proper liturgical texts for each service, a growing online library of sacred music, and two annual Sacred Music Institutes (SMIs). This year's SMIs will be in Wichita, KS, (Feb. 17–20) and at the Antiochian Village (July 14–17). We encourage all our parishes to likewise support their choirs and chanters locally, especially by helping them attend training events such as the SMIs.

We truly want to thank the chair of our archdiocesan Department of Sacred Music, Ms. Mareena Boosamra-Ball, and all her team, as well as all our choir directors, chanters and choir members throughout our archdiocese, for their dedicated ministry. Most of you serve on a volunteer basis, and the time and talents you share, each and every week, are an inestimable blessing.

Wishing you and your families a blessed remainder of the Nativity Fast and a joyous feast, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

+JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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