With fond wishes to all of you from the Board for a joyous Christmas!

"Your Nativity O Christ our God, has dawned upon the world, the light of knowledge; for thereby those who worshipped the stars, by a star were they taught:
You to adore, the only Sun of righteousness, and you to know, as the Sunrise from on high. Lord, glory to you. (Tone 4)"

May you feel the presence of the first Christmas, hear the choirs of angels and witness the miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ this holiday season.

DESCRIPTION OF FEAST:
On December 25th, Orthodox Christians around the world celebrate the birth in flesh of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Seeing that the human race was tormented by the devil, our most benevolent God felt compassion and sending his angel Gabriel He told the Virgin Mary (Theotokos) through him: "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." And she said: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." And immediately our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son and Word of God, was conceived in her pure and virgin womb. When nine months from the conception were about to be concluded, Caesar Augustus ordered a census around the whole world. Proconsul Kyrenios was sent to Jerusalem to conduct it. That is when Joseph, the guardian of Theotokos, went to Bethlehem together with her to be registered. They were unable to find a place to stay due to the multitude of people; and since the Theotokos was about to give birth they entered a shabby cave and there she gave birth without corruption to our Lord Jesus Christ. There she swaddled the Creator of all as a baby, and she placed Him in the crib of the animals, which have no reason, because he was to free us from acting without reason. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
The Archdiocesan Choir Federation
Proudly presents
CONFERENCE 2001

ZOOODOHOS PEGHE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
March 10th and 11th, 2001

Conference & Rehearsals: 3/10
Divine Liturgy: 3/11
Conductor: Spyro Kalas, Director,
St. John's, Blue Point, NY

Federation Council Meeting ... Saturday, January 13th, 2001
9 am—11 am, at St. Paraskevi Church, Greenlawn, NY
Contact Georgia Stavros (631) 368-0238 or Pauline Kitsopoulos (631) 549-9338 if you need directions.

Newsletter Information
Volume 1 No. 2
December 2000

The Federation Focus Newsletter is published by the Archdiocesan District Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Choirs.

Editor: Angela M. Arettines
Contributor: Spyro Kalas

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2 Elspeth Lane
East Northport, NY, 11731
or contact at (631) 499-6274 or send E-Mail to anaretti@suffolk.lib.ny.us

Federation Dues Reminder
If your haven’t paid your Federation annual dues ($75 per parish choir and/or individual optional membership of $10),
please send a check Payable to The Archdiocesan Choir Federation to Kon Kontos at the following address:
Kon Kontos
109 Ruxton Road
Plainview, NY 11803
**From St. Barbara, Orange, CT**

St. Barbara's choir has increased to twenty members (on a good day!). At the same time, our singing has improved to the point where we can now sing a cappella for most of the liturgy.

In addition to participating in the Sunday service, we gave three concerts during the annual St. Barbara's Odyssey Festival on Labor Day weekend. The audience enthusiastically showed their appreciation. On Sunday November 19th 2000, our church hosted the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service for the town of Orange. Five different faiths were represented. Their choirs joined ours for a very moving and enjoyable service. Our director, Harry Pappas, gently and persuasively guided the guest choirs to sing with us our Orthodox music.

**From St. Nicholas, Flushing, NY**

On October 1, we at St. Nicholas Church of Flushing, New York celebrated National Church Music Sunday, which was the Nameday of St. Romanos.

Our Pastor, Father Paul Palesty devoted his sermon of the day by speaking of the appreciation of our parish for the devotion of so many Church Musicians in our Senior as well as Junior Choirs, Directors, Organist and Psalti. An Artoklasia was given for the continued health and welfare of all our Junior and Senior Choir Members, the Directors, Organist and Psalti, chanting each member's name. We are truly inspired and motivated by our Pastor, Father Paul, and grateful for his support.

We also had the honor of having Dr. Vicki Pappas, Chairperson of the National Forum of Church Musicians and Martha Stefanidakis, Treasurer, joining us in the choir loft that day.

On November 11th, the community of St. Nicholas honored seven of our Senior Choir members for their many years of devoted volunteer service.

Those honored this year with their years of service were as follows:

- Mary Gomilas: 45 years
- Cathie Tsea: 45 years
- Nicolaos Tsioptsias: 45 years
- Jim Mihaltes: 40 years
- Cliff Kondoleon: 39 years
- Ellen Efthimiades: 39 years
- Toula Carambelas: 30 years

This took place in the form of an Agape Feast Day Gala at the Huntington Town House.

**From St. Nicholas, W. Babylon, NY**

After the liturgy on National Church Music Sunday, all of the congregation was invited for free coffee and cake. On November 1st, our choir had a Bake Sale. On November 19th, we participated in the Thanksgiving Ecumenical service at St. Joseph Church in West Babylon. On December 16th and 17th, we will be caroling in all of the diners.

**From St. Paraskevi, Greenlawn, NY**

On October 1, 2000, Feast Day of St. Romanos the Melodian and National Church Music Sunday, the newly elected officers of the St. Paraskevi choir received their oath from our priest, Father John Heropoulos. Following the Liturgy, the choir hosted the coffee hour and also raised $350 to be sent to the National Endowment Fund for the Chrysanthos Chair of Byzantine and Choral Music at the Holy Cross Theological School in Brookline, Mass. Our choir hosted the annual federation social held at St. Paraskevi church on Oct. 14. Father John welcomed the choirs and gave the blessing for the meal. Also speaking to the guest choirs was Donnie Ferraro, President of the Parish Council, Pauline Kitsopoulos, President of St. Paraskevi choir, Jeffrey Economou, Choir Director, and Anastasia Magrini, President of the Archdiocesan Dioc. Choir Federation. Angela Aretines, Public Relations officer of the federation displayed material brought from the National Forum conference in Philadelphia last summer. Besides being very proud of our choirmember Angela for her great work in the publication Federation Focus, we are also very proud of our other two members who are officers of the Federation, Georgia Stavros, Recording Secretary, and Pauline Kitsopoulos, Corresponding Secretary. Besides the delicious dinner at the social, there was dancing, and a sing-a-long accompanied by Jeffrey Economou with Greek music provided by Leah Pappas, Choir Director at Holy Trinity in Hicksville. Through the generosity of the Zangamas family, our choir is in the process of purchasing a new organ in memory of our beloved and deceased member Steven Zangamas. We hope to have it in place shortly after the first of the new year. On December 16, the St. Paraskevi choir will again for the 28th consecutive year go caroling in a local hospital along the corridors and on the wards stopping at rooms of those who are Eastern Orthodox. Following the caroling, the choir will be hosted at the home of Jeffrey and Sally Economou.
After over a year of looking, the choir of Zoodohos Peghe has a new director, Helena Biktashева. Helena came highly recommended and has a very impressive resume: Helena won the 1994 Colorado Singers Competition and became a regional finalist of the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions. She sang Micaela in Carmen (Aspen Music Festival, 1993), the Countess in Le Nozze di Figaro (Western Opera Theater at San Francisco Opera Center, 1995), Fiordiligi in Così Fan Tutte (Israeli Vocal Arts Institute, Tel-Aviv, 1996), and Donna Anna in Don Giovanni (Jerome Hines Foundation, New Jersey). Ms. Biktashева graduated from the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, Russia as a mezzo-soprano, and toured in Russia, Hungary and Germany where she appeared as a soloist (alto) in major Bach works with the International Bach Academy in Stuttgart. She studied soprano repertoire at the University of Colorado and the Mannes College of Music. Ms. Biktashева received fellowships from the Jerome Hines Foundation in New Jersey (1996) and the International Institute of Vocal Arts in Chiari, Italy (1998) where she was heard in opera recitals as Magda (La Rondine), Gilda (Rigoletto), and Violetta (La Traviata). In 1997 she joined Young Artists Program at the Dicapo Opera where she sang Yvette in La Rondine, and The Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute. We are extremely happy to once again be able to lend our voices in singing of the Divine Liturgy. We welcome Helena and look forward to a long partnership.

More News

⇒ If you know of someone who would be interested in a position as organist for weddings taking place in St. Demetrios in Jamaica, please contact Father John Paizis at (718) 338-9036. It would entail playing at about 25 weddings per year at $100 per wedding.

⇒ Congratulations to Harry Pappas of St. Barbara, Orange, CT. Harry was honored on National Church Music Sunday, October 1, 2000, with a medal of St. Romanos the Melodist. On National Church Music Sunday, church musicians who have served for more than 25 years as choir directors receive personal recognition from His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios. These individuals are honored in their home parishes with a medal of St. Romanos the Melodist, the patron saint of church musicians. They also receive a certificate of recognition for their “outstanding musical and spiritual contributions to the Greek Orthodox Community of America.” The National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians administers the award for the Archdiocese. Harry has served as choir director for 45 years!!! Congratulations!

⇒ Congratulations to the Year 2000 Patriarch Athenagoras Diocesan Service Award recipients in our Federation, who were honored earlier in the year. The National Forum awards the Patriarch Athenagoras Medal to church musicians who have made exemplary diocesan contributions in church music. Each diocesan Choir/Church Music Federation selects its recipients. The 2000 recipients of this award are:

   * Rev. Demetrios Kehagias, Assumption, Southampton, NY
   * Michael Papantoniou, St. Paraskevi, Greenlawn, NY
   * Catherine Zarbis, St. Nicholas, Flushing, NY

⇒ Just as this issue is going to press, we have been able to resolve the technical difficulties that had delayed the release of the recording of the Millennium Christmas Concert. We are optimistic that the recordings will be shipped, if not in time for Christmas, then shortly after the New Year.
PATRIARCHAL VISIT

Jeffrey Economou, Choir Director at St. Paraskevi Church, was invited and participated in the Patriarchal Service in Detroit. As he was going to write an article on his experience, he asked that the following article sent by Denise Karras, public relations person on the National Forum, be written in the Federation Focus instead. He said the article accurately describes the events which took place.

CHURCH MUSICIANS ADD BEAUTY TO PATRIARCHAL SERVICES IN DETROIT

Many weeks of preparation went into the liturgical music for the services celebrated by His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew during his recent three-day visitation to the Detroit Diocese, November 10-12, 2000. The result was outstanding presentations of Byzantine chant and choral music as developed in the Archdiocese of America, presentations that created an atmosphere of beauty and prayerfulness to all the liturgical events of the weekend.

The massed choir was composed of Detroit-area and nearby Michigan and Ohio choir members, who over a period of nine weeks spent nearly forty hours rehearsing in preparation for the visitation. Other choir members from Indiana, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, along with guests from Arizona and California, joined them for the weekend's services. George S. Raptis of the St. John Church in Sterling Heights, MI served as guest conductor. The organist for the choir was Mrs. Viola Peponis of Sts. Constantine and Helen in Westland, MI. The renown Byzantine chant group, the Romeiko Ensemble, led by Yiorgios Bilalis of Langhome, PA, traveled to Detroit to participate in the services as well.

An outstanding 140-voice choir sang at the Patriarchal Doxology of Welcome and Thanksgiving, which occurred Saturday noon at the Annunciation Cathedral in Detroit, and also for the Divine Liturgy on Sunday. For the Doxology, His All-Holiness and other Hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios and the other hierarchs of the Archdiocese of America, hierarchs of SCOBA, diocesan clergy, ecumenical religious leaders, and civic leaders formed the procession. As they entered the Cathedral, the choir sang Demetrios Pappas's stirring choral arrangement of Axion Estin. Other hymns included arrangements of Simeron Ttis Soterias and Tt Ipermaho by George S. Raptis, and the Doxology by Frank Desby. The Romeiko Ensemble chanted the traditional Byzantine Dhoxa Patri and Tn Dhesopotin. The service ended with the brilliant sounds of the Anna Gallos arrangement of the Polychronion to Patriarch Bartholomew and the Raptis recessional, Evloghhtos Tt Hriste O Theos.

On Saturday evening, the Romeiko Ensemble chanted the Great Vesper Service at St. John Orthodox Church in Sterling Heights. Members of the ensemble traveled from the Philadelphia-New York City area, and also included chanters from Buffalo, NY and Detroit. The group unveiled their new recording, a compact disk of "Thy Cross We Adore" which includes excerpts of hymns from the Matins and Liturgy of the Exaltation of the Cross, sung in English and other languages.

Both groups sang for the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy on Sunday, held at the Compuware Arena in Plymouth, MI. The Romeiko Ensemble chanted the Orthros service, which culminated with the choir singing the Desby Doxology. The choir then continued by singing the liturgical setting of Frank Desby. Their presentations also included the Fimi of Patriarch Bartholomew, arranged by Raptis, a chant version of Aghios O Theos, Desby's lofty and ethereal version of the Cherubic Hymn, a traditional and then more elaborate version of Enite (both by Desby), and again, the Gallos Polychronion. Romeiko chanted Exomologhthete To Kyriou and other hymns as the faithful received Holy Communion.

All of the Sunday services were professionally and quality recorded by Danny Dallas of Detroit. Two commemorative packages will be produced as a project for the Detroit Diocese: a two-cassette package of the complete Orthros and the Divine Liturgy and a three-CD package of the complete Orthros, Divine Liturgy, and Great Vespers. Monies from the sales of these fine liturgical recordings will be used to support the ministries of the Diocese of Detroit. For information about the availability and cost of these recordings, contact George S. Raptis, 17516 Fairfield Street, Detroit, MI 48221-2741. Information about the Romeiko Ensemble's CD may be obtained from Yiorgios Bilalis, 38 Sandybrooke Drive, Langhome, PA 19047.
August 7, 2000

Mrs. Vicki Pappas
The National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians
1700 North Walnut Street #302
Bloomington, IN 47404

Dear Mrs. Pappas and Forum Members,

I give thanks to God always for you for the grace of God which was given to you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in Him (1 Cor. 1, 4-5).

Please accept my thanks for your strong witness of faith and outpouring of love for the Church that you demonstrated through your valued work for the 35th Biennial Clergy Laity Congress.

You, the Forum of Church Musicians, once again lifted the delegates to the heavens by your singing during the Divine Liturgy, Doxology, and other events of the Congress. As well, you served as a meaningful vehicle for instruction through your workshop. Your presence was felt and valued. You contributed in a most significant way to the atmosphere of love, faith and unity prevailing at the Congress.

You are true servants of God who in their tireless devotion to the Church and Her ministries inspire others to ever greater heights of Christian service. Thank you for your example of servanthood.

As the new millennium unveils another century of divine purpose, may your faith resound in joyful worship to the Almighty God; be transformed as far reaching acts of love; and radiate the eternal and ageless truths of Orthodoxy. This is my hope and prayer for you as you continue your sacred work in the parish, diocese and Archdiocese.

Expressing my heartfelt gratitude once again and extending my warmest wishes to you and your loved ones, I remain,

With paternal love in Christ,

Archbishop of America

‡ DEMETRIOS

Federation Focus 6
In addition to the award recipients mentioned in the previous issue, also honored were composers and long-time choir directors including our Federation’s own Demetrios Pappas, Anna Gallos, Dr. Tikey Zes and Dr. Nicholas Maragos; conductors George Raptis and Dean Limberakis, organists Georgia Tangires and Anna Kounelis, National Forum magazine editor, Peter Vatsures of Columbus, Ohio and longtime choir director and founding member of the National Forum, John Chilenas of Cleveland and Florida.

Forum members, under the direction of Dean Limberakis of Boston, sang at the Official Opening of the Congress on Monday morning. On the Fourth of July, Forum members and choir members from Philadelphia, under the direction of Dr. Chris Jelepis of Broomall, PA, sang at the historic Saint George Cathedral in Philadelphia for an Ecumenical Doxology with Archbishop Demetrios, the Metropolitans and Bishops and dignitaries from other Christian denominations.

The National Forum conducted business meetings throughout the week; many projects and issues were discussed. Also, there were many visits from hierarchs, priests and others.

On Tuesday, the National Forum held the first ever offered “Church Music Workshop: Orthodox Repertoire for English” for the Congress. The workshop featured a sampling and sing-through of Orthodox church music written for English texts. Works arranged for English by church musicians from each of the dioceses were represented. Church musicians, clergy, youth workers, Church School personnel, Philoptochos members and interested delegates were invited to attend. The workshop was a huge success — truly standing room only! Metropolitan Maximus of the Diocese of Pittsburgh visited the Forum’s meetings and told the group that he was unable to attend the workshop, but had heard that it was “tops” and that “Next time, you should have three times the room”. There was a smile on every face in the room after hearing those wonderfully encouraging words! The support from all visitors to the Forum’s meetings throughout the week was heartwarming and their input and suggestions were highly valued. Two topics in particular were brought up by many of the visiting hierarchs and clergy. The first was the expression of the need for the standardization of our Orthodox hymns. Standardization of English translations being one of the orders of business on the National Forum’s meeting agenda, a motion was passed later in the week in which the Forum offered its assistance to the Holy Synod in its work to standardize English translations by developing English text and the melodic line for the sacramental and Feast day hymns. A team consisting of theologians, musicians and poetic linguists will be brought together to accomplish this monumental and very important task.

Another subject mentioned was the need for instruction on Byzantine chant in Western notation. To that end, the National Forum is pleased to announce a new publication, “A Guide to the Transcription of Post-Byzantine Chant.” The Guide offers what the National Forum and the authors feel are acceptable rules and “best practices” for transcribers as they rewrite Byzantine music from the neumes into Western notation. Details about this
Finally for a few personal notes on my first experience at a National Forum Conference...There were Fun Moments and Touching Moments and Laughter and More Fun Moments and Fellowship and a Classic New York Moment and much more.

Fun Moments ... George Raptis throughout rehearsal on Saturday with his great sense of humor, keeping us laughing and thereby enabling us to forge ahead during the lengthy rehearsals!

Touching Moment ... During one of the meetings, someone mentioned the contributions of Dr. Tikey Zes. Suddenly, spontaneously, a few Forum members started singing Tikey's arrangement of "Soma Christou", the Communion Hymn sung during the Easter period. A moment later, the entire room was singing his beautiful arrangement. What a tribute to Tikey, who was in the room at the time. I know how moved our choir at St. Paraskevi in Greenlawn, NY, and our parish priest, Father John Heropolous, are every time we sing Tikey's arrangement during the Easter period. It was apparent from this National Forum moment how this one arrangement has moved so, so many Orthodox people throughout the country!!!

Laughter ... During a rehearsal of one of Anna Gallos' arrangements, the group was singing very loud throughout the arrangement. Someone asked if it was supposed to be that loud. Anna replied that, yes, she intended for it to be sung "screaminissimo"!

More Fun Moments ... Rehearsing on Sunday before the Reception in a corner hallway where we found a piano! True jammin' musicians!

Fellowship ... Dinner at Effie's on Wednesday evening, with delicious Greek food and sharing more laughs! Hanging out together in the lobby of the hotel after hours. Lunch as a group every day!

Classic New York Moment ... Anastasia crossing a busy Philadelphia street while everyone else stayed back at the curb enroute to dinner on Saturday evening. Everyone else was afraid to cross at that moment, but not Anastasia. She's from the Bronx! Forget About It!

If you would like more information about the National Forum or would like to become a member, please contact Vicki Pappas, National Forum Chairman, at (812) 855-8248 or E-Mail Vicki at pappas@indiana.edu. Vicki deserves a tremendous congratulations for the countless hours that she must have spent to plan this very well-organized, well-run and informative Conference, along with organizing a musical program that was spiritually uplifting to all.
ACROSS
4 Born in this
6 God so loved the ___
8 God with us
9 Another name or title for Jesus
14 John was thought to be him
15 Saw angels praising God
16 Deliverer
17 Messenger
18 Home town
23 Joseph was told to flee to this place
25 Reason we needed a Savior
26 Joseph from this tribe
27 Cousin
28 Foretold Jesus’ birth
32 The star was a ___
33 Told by God he would not die until he had seen Christ
34 One of the spices brought to Jesus
36 Jesus’ earthly father
37 Gabriel
38 Used in the sacrifice on the 8th day
39 Reason for Christmas

DOWN
1 Father
2 Shepherds were watching
3 Part of the lineage of Christ
5 Prophetess
7 Birth place
10 The mother of Jesus was to be this
11 Anointed one
12 Jesus was laid in this
13 He was visited by an angel about the birth of his son
15 He came to provide
19 Christ’s lineage goes back to him
20 Tried to kill Jesus
21 Reason for Joseph and Mary’s trip to Bethlehem
22 Only begotten
24 Came bearing gifts
25 Appeared in the sky
28 Used as sacrifice when Jesus was 8 days old
29 Wisemen came from here
30 Mother
31 Why God sent Jesus
35 Another father in the lineage of Christ

"Doctor, how long will my arm be in this cast?"
"At least six weeks."
"When you remove it, will I be able to play the violin?"
"Of course."
"That’s great! I could never play it before."
Sight Singing 101
By Spyro Kalas

For centuries, the conventional wisdom among musicians has been that vocalists can't read music. This, the “CW” continues, makes them second-class musicians and, therefore, less capable than instrumentalists. Sadly, this has been, for the most part, quite true. Some vocalists believe they don’t need to know how to read music. “Just sing or play it for me once or twice, and I’ll get it – no problem!” Well, there is a problem. What about the circumstances when no one is available to demonstrate a new piece of music, or what if there’s no time to do so?

That’s when the vocalist is called upon to “sight sing”. Sight singing is the ability to look at an unfamiliar piece of music, hear the first note (and/or the key it’s in) and sing it with a high degree of accuracy – all the notes, rhythms and lyrics coming out reasonably close to the printed page. Sight singing is a skill taught in music schools all over the country. But what of the singer who hasn’t had formal training? Well, there are some incredibly simple tricks that a vocalist can use to improve his or her sight singing ability; as with everything worthwhile, however, practice over time makes one better at it.

First, make sure you can sing the scale of the key the piece is in. We can all sing scales – “do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do”. Some of you may be thinking that already I’m asking too much of you. Nonsense! In my 25 years as a music educator, I’ve yet to meet anyone – even children as young as 7 or 8 – who can’t sing scales, even if they don’t think they can. The only trick is singing the correct scale for the piece. (That’s a subject for another column; for now, let’s assume you can.)

Next, determine which note of the scale the piece begins on - do, re, mi and so on. Keep that note in your head by singing the scale to yourself (silently) starting from the first note (“do”) and ending on the “target” note. For example, if the piece beings on the third note of the scale, silently sing “Do-re-mi,” and remember that last note. Now we’re ready to tackle the printed music.

Remember that music is written using little ovals (“noteheads”) located on a “staff” of five lines and four spaces. If the first note of the piece is a note whose notehead is “on a line” (the horizontal line goes through the middle of the notehead), and the second note is on the next space up from the line the first notehead appears on, then (in almost all cases) it’s the next note in the scale. So if the first note is “mi” (from the above example) and the notehead is on a line, and if the next note is on the space immediately above that line, then the next note is “fa”. If the second note is on the space directly below the first note, then the second note is “re”. So far, so good.

Okay, you’re thinking, but what if the second note is not on the space right above or below the first note? Then all you have to do is count how many lines and spaces the second note is from the first note. For example, if the second note is one space plus one line above the first note, then it’s two notes away and therefore (if we stick with our example), the second note is “sol”. If the second note is one space plus one line below the first note, then it’s “do”.

Keep doing that for each subsequent note, using the previous note as your starting point, and you’re bound to be at least 90% accurate to the printed music. The most common exceptions are “accidentals” (sharps and flats). They’re a bit trickier, and teaching you about them would also fill another whole column. But if you get all the non-accidentals right, you’re way ahead of the game! I understand this may appear to be a tedious, painstaking and challenging process, one note at a time. But the more you do it, the easier it becomes until you don’t even have to think about it any more. I’m sure some of you are skeptical that you can do it, but like any new habit, it takes time and patience and practice. Keep at it, and you’ll be sight singing like a pro in no time!

There are other tricks to help a vocalist sight read a new piece, involving “memory tricks” which help the singer remember the sound of the interval (distance) between any two consecutive notes. That also deserves another column. But if you master the techniques I described above, then the most important next step is learning how to sight read the rhythms of the notes you’re sight reading. Space permitting, I’ll talk about that in my next column. And remember to …

“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!”

Federation Focus 10
At a fancy garden party, the hostess obliged nobody in particular by singing “April in Paris.” Tears gushed from the eyes of one of the guests. Another guest leaned over to the weeper and asked, “Are you Parisian?”
The weeping guest said, “No, I’m a musician!”

“Now, Daddy doesn’t want to say anything to kill your incentive; however, it is 6 AM.”

**FEDERATION FUN**

**Christmas Crossword Puzzle Solution**

**ACROSS**

4. cave  
6. world  
8. Emmanuel  
9. Christ  
14. Elijah  
15. shepherds  
16. Savior  
17. Gabriel  
18. Nazareth  
23. Egypt  
25. sin  
26. Judah  
27. John  
28. prophets  
32. sign  
33. Symeon  
34. myrrh  
35. Joseph  
37. angel  
38. doves  
39. Jesus

**DOWN**

1. God  
2. flock  
3. David  
5. Anna  
7. Bethlehem  
10. virgin  
11. Messiah  
12. manger  
13. Zechariah  
15. salvation  
19. Abraham  
20. Herod  
21. census  
22. Son  
24. wisemen  
25. star  
28. pigeons  
29. East  
30. Mary  
31. love  
35. Jesse


* Federation Focus 11
The Federation Fall Social was held on October 14th at the St. Paraskevi church in Greenlawn, NY. The Social, which was hosted by the St. Paraskevi choir and chaired by Pauline Kitsopolous and Georgia Stavros, was a fun evening for all!
From Christina Kaparelitis, director of the Youth Choir at Holy Trinity, Hicksville, NY

The choir consists of approximately 50 children, spanning from the ages of 9-15. We meet for rehearsals every Friday evening for an hour between 6-7 pm. We perform 5 liturgies out of the year including an Easter service.

Choir members learn basic liturgical melodies both in unison and in two-part. The group learns proper singing technique and theoretical points in music.

In addition, this year the Hicksville Jr. Choir will help other organizations within the church such as Greek School and Sunday School to transfer their knowledge and choral experience to other children.

From Dawn Heller, director of the Youth Choir at St. Paraskevi, Greenlawn, NY

The Youth Choir at St. Paraskevi Church is in a developmental stage at this point. So far, the choir sang at last year’s Christmas Pageant, and will do so again this year. Following the pageant, the plans are to teach the central hymns of the liturgy to all the Sunday School classes throughout the year, and gradually progress into developing a Youth Choir that will rehearse separately and eventually sing some hymns during the liturgy. We look forward to this process and to all of the children becoming familiar with the beautiful hymns of the Greek Orthodox Church.

On the following page, you will find a copy of “Alleluias A&B”, arranged by Dr. Michael G. Farrow, of the Antiochian Archdiocese. These were sung at the National Forum English Repertoire Workshop last July and they were quite a hit. Version A may be of particular interest to Youth Choirs. Michael shared the following about the Communion Hymn (not included in this issue) and the Alleluias: “The Koinonikon (Communion Hymn) was harmonized by me to the Byzantine tone to which it is commonly sung in most Greek churches, Tone 8, including the arrangement of the Alleluia into a round (Version A). For those choirs that did not wish to sing the “round” version, I included the traditional melody (Version B). I chose this melody because it is short and catchy, easy to remember. I have found that one of the reasons a hymn becomes a “favorite” is that you can hum it or sing it from memory when you leave the church. This hymn certainly fell into that category. It was originally written for a small Carpathian choir in Morgantown, WV, and has been used in Carpathian Orthodox parishes for over 20 years. I noticed its popularity when I would hear the women singing it baking their pierogi and cabbage for their dinners, or singing it in the automobile while driving to a Lenten service in a neighboring town. It was introduced into our Antiochian children’s camp when I revised their camp music book, in 1993 and became an instant “hit” with the children. Even the counselors enjoyed singing the “Alleluia round”. “The children at our camp would also sing this during their daily liturgies. The Alleluia, as a round, was often sung at their campfires.”

The National Forum has recently completed a publication, “Starting a Youth Music Program in Your Parish”. A copy of the publication will be available to look through at the next Federation Council meeting on January 13th. Contact Vicki Pappas for further information.

Why Should Your Child Join a Children’s Choir?

(Reprinted with permission, from VIIIth Notes, the Newsletter of the Denver Choir Federation)

A psychologist says: “Those children who have received extensive training in children’s choirs grow up to become happy, well-adjusted adults on a higher percentage rate than do those having no choir experience.” (Dr. George Crane)

A doctor says: Singing helps to develop and strengthen the lungs and respiratory organs and helps the entire body resist disease.” (Dr. J. H. Moore)

A philosopher says: “Because music has so much to do with the molding of the character, it is necessary that we teach it to your children.” (Aristotle, 320 B.C.)

An Educator says: “We are only beginning to learn that the right kind of music and singing taught to children while they are young has the power to change the course and destiny of their lives.”

The Bible says: “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

On August 15, 1996, a USA TODAY headline read, “Music lessons may open the mind to math, science.” The article reported that “...just 15 minutes a week of private keyboard instruction, along with group singing at preschool, dramatically improve a kind of intelligence needed for high-level math and science. Music lessons appear to strengthen the links between brain neurons and build new neural bridges needed for good spatial reasoning. If parents can’t afford lessons, they should at least “…involve them (children) in musical activities.” These were the results of a study done by Frances Rauscher, University of California-Irvine. Of course, the best reason for musical involvement is to worship our Creator and Lord. Music is a wonderful tool when used to express worship, thanksgiving and exhortation.
Federation Focus

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Saint Romanos the Melodist, patron saint of church musicians