



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL
ORTHODOX BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Office of the Chairman

June 21, 2018

Dearly beloved,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as you gather together for the second Pan-Orthodox Music Symposium in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I congratulate the International Society for Orthodox Church Music for once again successfully organizing and convening a diverse group of Orthodox church musicians.

Music communicates beyond words. With mere melody and harmony, it sends the listener on an emotional journey. In this sense, music is the central component – an icon of sorts – through which you are able to move beyond any divergence and unite in one expression of Orthodox Christianity. While embracing and respecting your diverse ethnic identities, your efforts simultaneously convey the spirit of “unity in diversity” for which the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops was created. As such, the power of music cannot be underestimated and the result cannot be overlooked.

Allow me to leave you with some encouraging words of St. Ambrose of Milan:

“A religious hymn is a great blessing for everyone. It constitutes praise to the Most High, honor for His holy people, worldwide harmony, an eloquent proof of the Church's unity. It expresses the voice of the Church, its confession. It brings about a complete spiritual uplifting and absolute peace and joy in redeemed hearts, with the triumphal hymn and song of happiness. It drives away hardness of heart. It chases away disturbance. It dissolves and dissipates despondency... The voice sings the soul's joy, while the spirit delves into the mysteries of the faith” (Enarr. In Psalmum 1,9. P.L. 14,968).

Wishing you a blessed and fruitful symposium, I remain

With paternal love and esteem in Christ,

+ Archbishop Demetrios of America
Chairman