



June 21, 2018  
06/019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with great joy that I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and welcome you to the historic Saint Mary's Orthodox Cathedral for this the second Pan-Orthodox Symposium. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Archpriest Ivan Moody and the organizers of this conference for their vision to bring together a diverse group of directors, composers, singers, chanters and musicians to not only discuss Orthodox music, but to sing, participate in fellowship and most importantly to worship together.

The diversity of culture, custom and tradition represented by ISOCM and this symposium is profoundly inspirational as we continue to search for ways to effect the challenge of Patriarch Tikhon to expand the mission of Christ and His Church here in North America. Whether we are personally partial to Slavic Choral singing or Byzantine Chant, to classical or contemporary language we must be committed to an openness to all Liturgical Music traditions in order to maintain the traditions handed down to us and pave the way for the future of musical expression in the modern world.

It is my prayer that during this symposium we will be reminded of the immense evangelistic power of beautiful church music, and the unique quality it has to meet people on, as it were, neutral territory. Where words and concepts can feel threatening to many people, beautiful sacred art—and sacred music especially—forces and threatens no one. Rather, it works to soften their hearts, preparing them to receive the things of God without their even realizing it.

As I prepare to be with you this weekend I am reminded of the words of St Augustine when he remarks, "...truly, is there a time when the faithful assembled are not singing? Truly, I see nothing better, nothing more useful or more holy that they could do."

With love in the Lord,

+TIKHON  
Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada