



March 31, 2008

Protocol 08–9

The Pious Pastors, and  
The Esteemed Chanters and Choirs of  
the Holy Metropolis of Denver

Beloved in the Lord,

The theology of our holy Orthodox faith is communicated in various ways, according to our Holy Tradition. Not only is the faith taught verbally through sermons and instructional talks, but it is proclaimed and taught liturgically, iconographically and musically.

Fidelity to the truth of our Orthodox faith is of paramount importance in all of these various expressions. This is why a priest receives a theological education before a bishop allows him to preach. This is why we emphasize correct iconography and church architecture. This is why we are meticulous about liturgical translations and practice.

The accurate musical expression of our true faith is just as vital as these other categories. According to our tradition, the faithful people of God both hear the faith expressed in the words of our sacred hymnology and they also express that faith when they sing these words.

Failure to pay very close attention to the translation of the original hymns of our faith into English and other languages can cause, and has caused, serious damage to the beliefs of our faithful. I am sure that this is not the intention of any of our well-meaning and dedicated chanters, musicians, and even clergy. But we must be very careful and submit all translations to the proper theological authority.

For example, the resurrection of Christ is not merely a historical event in the secular sense, but a cosmic-changing event which is a today experience. We therefore proclaim that "Christ *IS* risen" not "Christ *was* risen." It is always a "now" or "present-day" experience, since it recreates the eternal present which was lost through Adam and Eve. This obviously means that even the tenses of verbs must be theologically correct to teach the truth about Christ and His saving mission.

In addition to translation inaccuracies, I have noted in my pastoral visits over the years that there are often numerous different versions of certain hymns and prayers used throughout the Metropolis. Consistency, especially in the most-critical hymns and prayers, is not merely desirable but essential if we are to project a unified Orthodox voice for the many people who hunger for the truth.

Accordingly, over the years I have sent out to each of you standard translations of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (1993) and of the Paschal Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom (1994). Likewise I sent out standard versions of the great Paschal Hymn, *Christos anesti* (1997), and of the Lenten Kontakion, *Ti ypermacho* (2001).

Because we continually have new clergy entering the Metropolis to serve our parishes, and also because choir directors and chanters change from time to time, I am enclosing copies of these four standard translations for your use. I ask that you ensure that only these — and no other versions — are used in your parish.

As you prepare for the most-significant services of our liturgical year, which proclaim the fundamental truth that Jesus Christ conquered death by His death, I pray that this coming Holy Week and Pascha will be the most inspiring and most edifying of all your previous experiences.

With Paternal Blessings,



✠ Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver

Enclosures