

Guidelines: Sunday Matins When a Hierarchy Presides

These guidelines are normal for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. When there is no deacon accompanying the hierarchy, the junior-most priest acts in his absence. While historically, there were right and left choirs and a particular Typikon to follow, today, most parishes in the Archdiocese have a single choir or a single chanter. Therefore, these Guidelines are written assuming one choir.

The Arrival of the Hierarchy

The hierarchy does not normally attend the beginning of Matins, but if he does, the chanter should sing *Eis pollà éti Dhéspotá*¹ when the petition for the hierarchy is said during the Great Litany. If he is not in attendance, it is not necessary to chant this acclamation. The hierarchy is usually expected 30 minutes after the beginning of Orthros to chant the Katavasies.

When the hierarchy arrives in the front of the temple, the bells are rung in a harmonious manner. He is greeted by all the clergy who have received the blessing to co-celebrate with him as well as parish council members. The chanters remain at the analogion (chanter's stand), but step down as a sign of respect.

The clergy enter the church and proceed directly to the Nave, right next to the doors that lead to the Narthex, lining up according to ecclesiastical rank and facing each other, with the most senior priest closest to the hierarchy to his right.

After the hierarchy has been vested and has received his *Mandya* and the Episcopal Staff, the chanters begin reading the Kontakion, Oikos, and Synaxarion of the Day when the deacons exit the Holy Altar. They should not chant *Eis pollà éti Dhéspotá* when the hierarchy enters the Narthex, but instead, they should finish the hymn they are singing and then begin reading the above-mentioned items.

The clergy are then invited to proceed down the center aisle and stand on either side of the Royal Gate facing one another as the hierarchy faces east.

At the conclusion of the Synaxarion, the hierarchy makes the sign of the cross three times, and then blesses towards the East, West, South (the right choir), and North (the left choir). The priests and chanters receive the blessing at this point by slightly bowing their heads. It is at this point that the chanters sing *Eis pollà éti Dhéspotá*. Once the hierarchy is on the Bishop's throne, all the chanters and the choir director are welcome to come forward to receive the blessing of the hierarchy.

Katavasiæ

The person holding the book containing the prescribed set of Katavasiæ should be stationed at the hierarchical throne, so that the hierarchy may chant the Katavasiæ. The hierarchy begins with the first Katavasia and alternates with the chanters until

¹ *Eis pollà éti Dhéspotá*, which means *Many years to you, O Master*, is proclaimed each time the Bishop raises his arm to bless. It is pronounced, Ees poh-LAH eh-tee DHESS-poh-ta, with the DH pronounced as the *th* in *That*.

the Eighth Ode. The chanter will be expected to know the proper order for chanting the *Katavasíæ*, and which Odes to finish by chanting the final words.

It is good practice to allow the hierarch to begin every set of hymns, because he is actually taking the role of First Chanter (*Protopsaltis*] at this point in the service.

The Gospel and the 50th Psalm

At the conclusion of the Gospel reading, chanters using *Stasidia* (the high-armed chanters' stands) should dismount from their position, showing respect for the Gospel as well as the hierarch.

At the conclusion of the Gospel reading, the priest simply raises the Holy Gospel and stands in the Royal Gate without blessing the Gospel Book. At the end of the Gospel, the chanters chant *Dhoxa Si Kyrie, Dhoxa Si* (Glory to You, O Lord, Glory to You).

The hierarch will read from the Throne, "*Anastasin Christou Theasamenou*" (Having seen the Resurrection). Then, Psalm 50 is chanted (antiphonally, if possible), and normally in 2nd Mode. During Great Lent, it is not uncommon to have Psalm 50 chanted in Plagal of the 4th Mode.

Once the Psalm 50 has begun, the Priest prepares himself for the reverencing of the Holy Gospel by the hierarch and the people. The Priest reverences the Holy Gospel and picks it up with both hands and stands in front of the Holy Altar facing the people. At the phrase, "*Idhou ghar alithian ighapisas*" (For behold, You have loved truth), which is chanted rather slowly, the Priest begins walking slowly towards the center of the solea with the Gospel Book raised in his arms, the Resurrection side facing the people.

At the same time, the hierarch descends the Throne and proceeds to the center of the Solea to meet the Holy Gospel, offered by the Priest. The hierarch kisses the Holy Gospel, the Priest kisses his right hand simultaneously and immediately steps to the right of the hierarch facing north so the hierarch can begin blessing the people. *Eis pollà éti Dhéspotá* is chanted when the hierarch blesses the people.

After the blessing, the hierarch re-ascends the Throne. The chanter finishes the verse and chants the next verse at the original speed, *Panti-eis me...*

Meghalynaria

The hierarch leads the singing of the prescribed set of Megalynaria by chanting the first stanza. He alternates with the chanters until the Ninth Ode Katavasia, which he sings.

Exaposteilaria

Again, the hierarch leads the singing of the Exaposteilaria by beginning the preamble (Holy is the Lord our God... *Aghios Kyrios O Theos imon*) as well as singing the first Exaposteilarion. It will be necessary here for the chanter to complete the preamble by singing the final words ...for He is holy (*oti Aghios estin*), which allows the hierarch to then sing the first Exaposteilarion.

Lauds

After all the Exaposteilara are completed, the chanter proceeds to the center of the Solea, facing the hierarch. He bows, and then proclaims the *Kélepson Dhéspotá ághie, ékhos* ____, using the formula below to indicate the *ekhos*² (mode) in which the hierarch will be chanting the Lauds.

For example, if Lauds is to be sung in Mode Plagal of the First (Mode pl. 1), the chanter would intone:

“Kélepson, Dhéspotá ághie, ekhos plághios too prótoo”

which essentially means:

“Command, holy Master, Mode Plagal of the First.”

The following are the names of the eight modes in the Greek:

Mode 1	Ἦχος πρῶτος	<i>é-khos pró-tos</i>
Mode 2	Ἦχος δεύτερος	<i>é -khos dhéf-teros</i>
Mode 3	Ἦχος τρίτος	<i>é -khos trí-tos</i>
Mode 4	Ἦχος τέταρτος	<i>é -khos té-tar-tos</i>
Mode pl. 1	Ἦχος πλάγιος του πρώτου	<i>é -khos plá-ghios too pró-too</i> ³
Mode pl. 2	Ἦχος πλάγιος του δευτέρου	<i>é -khos plá-ghios too dhéf-té-roo</i>
Mode Grave	Ἦχος βαρύς	<i>é -khos va-rEEs</i>
Mode pl. 4	Ἦχος πλάγιος του τετάρτου	<i>é -khos plá-ghios too te-tár-too</i>

The hierarch then turns to the chanters and gives them the blessing to begin the chanting of the *Pasapnoariou* (*Pasa pno-ee...Let every breath*). The chanter bows, proceeds to the hierarch, makes a prostration, kisses the hand of the hierarch, and then returns to the analoghion, walking backwards.

Kairòs

When the chanter finishes *Let every breath...*, the chanter continues through the end of *Praise Him all you...(Enite afton pandes i Angeli)* After the *Enite* is chanted, the *Ainoi* (Lauds) are not chanted. Rather, the melismatic version in the Grave Mode (*Ikhos Varys*) of *Ton Dhespotin ke Archiereá*⁴ is chanted. At the words *ke Archiereá*, the hierarch descends from his throne and is escorted by the deacon, standing on one side of him, to the center of the Solea and they face the Holy Altar. The score is long to accommodate the time it takes to complete the *Kairos*. Give the process about four minutes.

² ékhos—means Mode or Tone. Accent on the first syllable, *ee* as in *feet*, *kh* is the rough *h* sound.

³ Plághios too prótoo—pronounced PLAH-ghi-ohs; *too* is pronounced like the English *too*.

⁴ Τὸν Δεσπότην καὶ Ἀρχιερέα ἡμῶν, Κύριε φύλαττε, εἰς πολλὰ ἔτι, Δέσποτα.

Near the end of the Kairòs, the chanter should watch for the hierarch to turn and bless the congregation before entering through the Royal Gate. This does not always coincide with the *Eis pollà eti Dhéspota* part of the chant, so it is good practice for the chanters to “chime in” with a quicker *Eis pollà...* when they see the hierarch blessing.

Once the hierarch enters the Sanctuary and the Royal Gate is closed, he will begin vesting. The chanter now continues with the Lauds at the first versicle and sticheron. Because it may take a while for the hierarch to vest, it is best to sing the Lauds hymns in the slower, sticheraric style. A “runner” should be assigned to check with the Sanctuary on the progress of the vesting.

