

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

ST COSMAS THE HYMNOGRAPHER

“MAKE A JOYFUL SOUND UNTO THE LORD”

Worship in our church can be a unique musical experience. The haunting melodies of the ancient Byzantine Chant and the magnificent choral masterpieces of renowned composers provide a soul-stirring means for us to sing praises to the Lord.

Have you ever wondered about the origin of our beautiful hymnology? It may surprise you to know that some of the hymns of the church were written over a thousand years ago! On the cover of today's Church Bulletin is one of the hymnographers whose musical contributions have had a lasting effect on our moving service. ST. COSMAS.

St. Cosmas lived a full life of devotion to God and His Church. Orphaned at an early age, this 7th century saint had the good fortune of being adopted by a pious family in Damascus. Ironically, his step-brother, commonly referred to as St. John of Damascus, is perhaps the most famous melodist the church has ever had!

After receiving an excellent education in the classic liberal arts, Cosmas and his brother John both entered the historic monastery of St. Savas in Jerusalem, where they immediately exhibited a great talent for music. After John was ordained to the holy priesthood, he remained at the monastery while Cosmas, following his ordination, was assigned to serve the Church in Gaza. While composing was his first and greatest love, St. Cosmas distinguished himself in other ways in his service to the Lord. He eventually accepted the demanding position of Bishop of Anthedon. It is said that Cosmas hardly slept, writing hymns for Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and other holy days in the wee hours of the morning! St. Cosmas died in 750 A.D. but through his music, he lives on!