

Building a Worshipping Community
Part Two: Church Hymnography; Antiphonal Singing and Chanting

INTRODUCTION: IN ORTHODOX WORSHIP IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT ALL CONVERSATION IN A DIALOGUE OF PRAYER IS BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

Jesus said: (Matthew 6:7-8)

“And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans [“do not use vain repetitions” NKJV], for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

NOTE: Jesus' words are not dissuading or discouraging the practice repetition in prayers. His caution is: that the words we pray not be said “vainly” or verbalized as “babbling pagans.”

The Goal of Worship: Internalizing Prayer (“Prayer of the Heart”)

Questions:

1. What is the purpose of the Church’s use of repetition in worship?

“Repetition is the first principle of all teaching.” It promotes deep learning and remembering.

It focuses upon the student rather than the teacher [Liturgy (λειτουργία) means: “the work of the people”]; learning is reinforced by participation

- a. It provides **an ability to reflect** (Orthodox worship is contemplative)
- b. It enables **consistency and clarity of thought**
- c. It **encourages and engages participation** by a congregation

2. What does the practice of repetitive prayer achieve?

Aristotle: “It is frequent repetition that produces a natural tendency.”

Practice alone, however, does not make perfect; perfecting practice “makes perfect,” otherwise bad habits will become ingrained.

Something intentionally repeated also **strengthens memory and is supported by physical actions or movement.**

[The Semitic didactic method]

Repeated *metania*; *μετάνοια* {a penitential method of signing oneself with the cross to the full length of one’s body while bowing} is **an exerted physical effort of the body that prepares the mind for prayer from the heart**

3. What is antiphonal singing and chanting?

an·tiph·o·nal
[/,an'tifən(ə)l/; adjective]

(In Traditional Eastern and Western Liturgy) a short sentence or its musical setting that is sung, recited, or chanted alternately by two groups

Antiphonal hymnology is performed by two choirs in interaction as a dialogue, often singing a text in an alternate or repeated musical phrase or section. For example: the *stichera* (sections of service texts) repeated in the Pre-sanctified Vespereal Liturgy

Antiphonal psalmody is the singing or **the chanting** of psalm verses by alternating groups, each taking its turn. For example: the Slavic style of chanting the Lenten Psalms

Right choir: "In my distress I cry unto the Lord..."

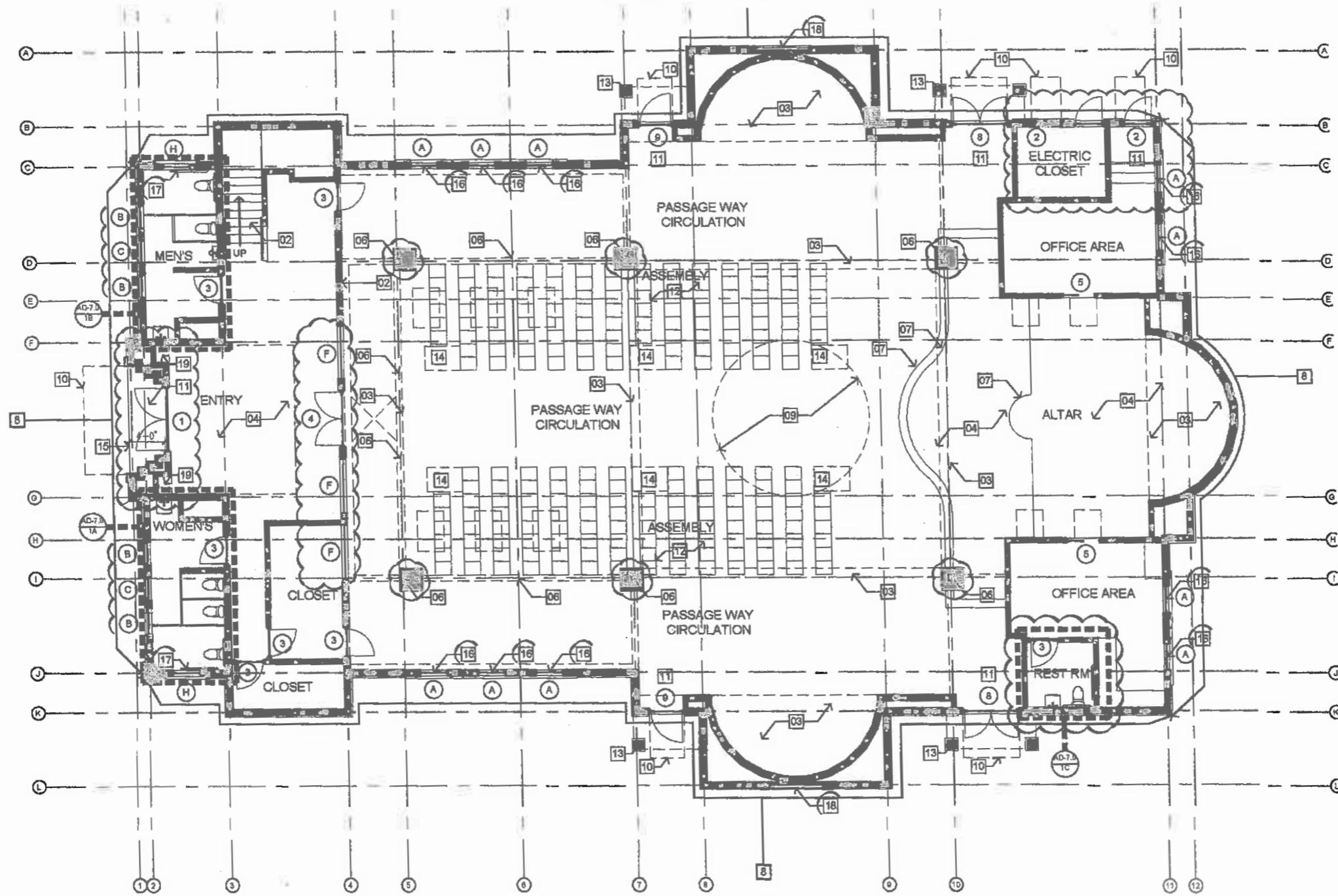
Left choir: "...that He may answer me."

Antiphonal responses include the dialogue by a priest and congregation. For example:

Priest: "Peace be to all!"

People: "And to thy spirit."

The clergy, choir(s) and chanter(s) in the section of the apses (of a cross footprint design) are designed for antiphonal hymnology and prayerful worship. The spacious aisles and doors enable proper processions.



1 1ST FLOOR NOTATION PLAN
 1/8" = 1'-0"
 NOTE: REFER TO SHEET A-2.1.1 FOR DIMENSIONS

4. What accompanies prayer in our worship and what does it involve?

The simultaneous use of our senses in a variety of ways is effectively instructive for any learning experience:

visual (seeing) images

audio (hearing) melodies and readings and responding appropriately

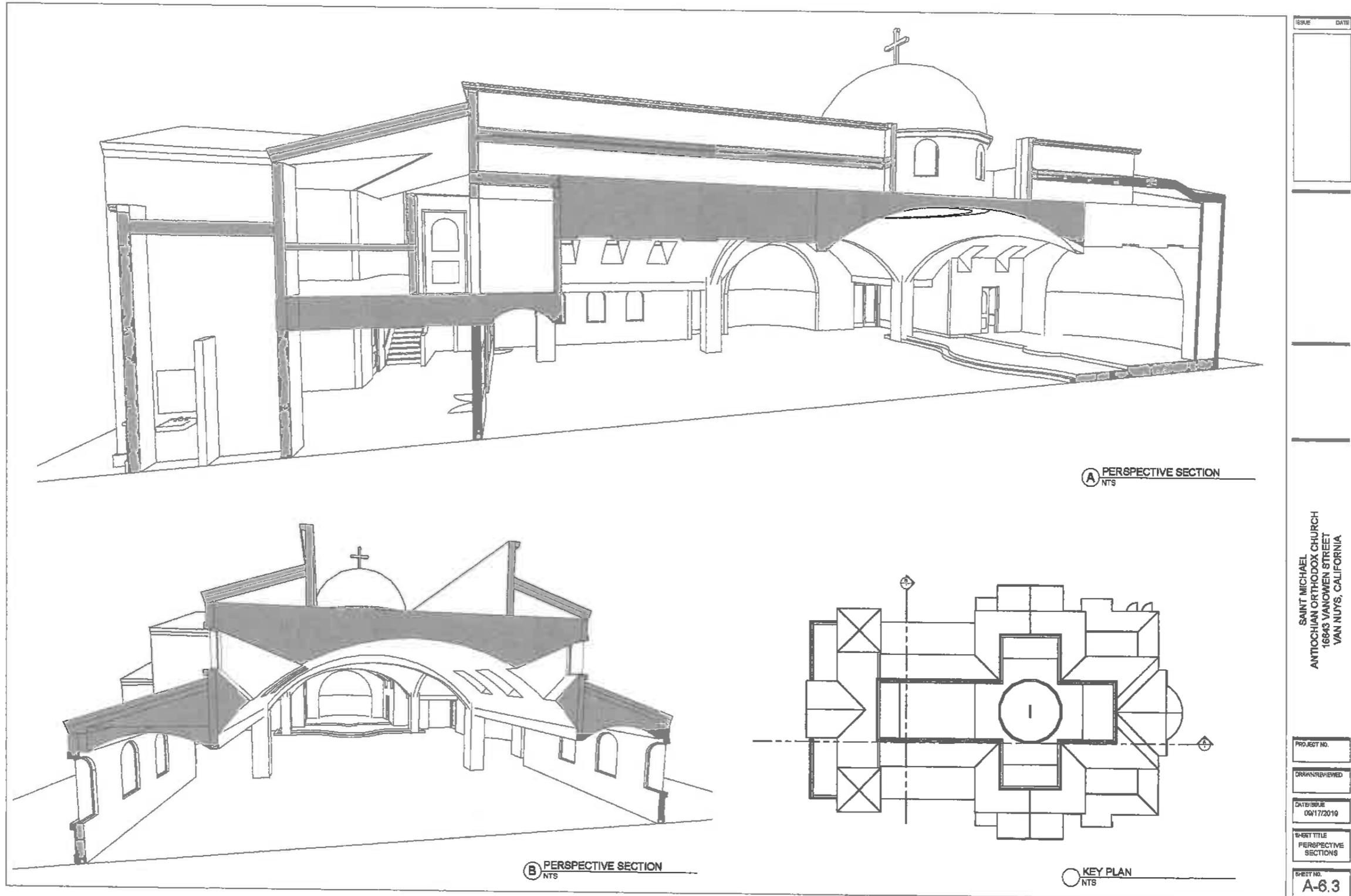
actions (kinesthetic) kneeling, crossings, bows, prostrations, participating in processions with candles, palms, icons, etc.

touching (tactile) veneration, making offerings, smelling the incense, receiving blessings, anointings, and Holy Communion

5. What are the parts of our church sanctuary design that promotes a worshipping community?

- a. **Visual focus:** the **iconographic images; the altar (holy place)** as a focal point—facing east.
- b. **Spacial repetition of hymnography:** hearing it antiphonally sung and chanted from three locations **under the apses** by the clergy, chanter(s) and choir(s)
- c. **Activity:** in movement of processions and censing **in the aisles**, personal crossings and the use of *metanias*, standing, kneeling and prostrations
- d. **Participation:** the people (laity) engaging in the “dialogue” of antiphonal responses **in the section of the nave** when appropriate

The vaulted and barreled ceilings with the central dome and apses of the Byzantine Cross footprint design, aid in the acoustics and add to the quality of natural voices of a *cappella* singing and chanting in the worship services.



What are other examples in our church's sequential and repetitive cycles of prayer texts that are simultaneously used in our Holy Orthodox Tradition?

- A. The Daily Hours (First, Third, Sixth, Ninth), Vespers, “Midnight Office,” Orthros** (each with designated readings of the Psalter sections called the *Kathisma*; *κάθισμα*) and corresponding and prescribed **Lectionary** (OT and NT) readings
- B. The Church's Four Liturgical Books of Services with Texts with Hymnology:**
1. **The Eight Weekly Tonal System** and Commemorations (The *Octoikos*; *ἡ Ὀκτώηχος*) {Sunday to Saturday}
 2. **The Monthly and Annual Twelve Great Feasts** (*Menaion*; *Μηνναῖον*)
 3. **The Triodion** (*Τριώδιον*) texts of prayers for the services of **Pre-Lent, Great Lent, and Holy Week**
 4. **The Post-Paschal Season of Pentecost** (*Pentecostarion*; *Πεντηκοστάριον*)

Hagia Sophia

- “Church of Holy Wisdom,” chief church in Constantinople
- Rebuilt by Justinian between A.D. 532-537 after Constantine’s original was burned down in a riot
- “Holy Wisdom”; Latin
- is a former Orthodox patriarchal basilica later a mosque, and now a museum in Istanbul, Turkey.
- From the date of its dedication in 360 until 1453, it served as the cathedral of Constantinople, except between 1204 and 1261, when it was converted to a Roman Catholic cathedral under the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople of the Western Crusader established Latin Empire. The building was a mosque from 29 May 1453 until 1934, when it was secularized. It was opened as a museum on 1 February 1935.



Hagia Sophia

