

NOTES ON THE CATHEDRAL CHOIR ACADEMY OF DETROIT

HISTORY

For the past six months Susan Lindquist has worked with Fr. J.J. Mech, Cathedral Rector, and Joe Balistreri, Cathedral Music Director, to realize the Archbishop's long held dream of founding an AOD "choir school" program. Their efforts have resulted in the establishment of the Cathedral Choir Academy of Detroit, which serves both urban and suburban youth of all faiths, grades 3 – 9. Invited into affiliation with the Sistine Chapel Choir, the program includes two levels of instruction; the Cathedral Descant Choir or training choir, and the Cathedral Children's Choir.

Evidence of the success of these ground breaking efforts thus far includes tripling the size of the existing Cathedral Children's Choir, singing monthly Sunday Masses at the Cathedral, and participating in the St. Joseph Youth Choir Festival. CCA also invited four AOD parish/school children's choirs into affiliation. While supporting and enhancing their programing, CCA has reached over 150 students.

MISSION/VISSION/STRUCTURE

Committed to the belief that all children can learn to sing well, CCA welcomes everyone. NO audition is required for the Descant Choir or training choir in which choristers will learn the basic skills of choir membership and ensemble singing. Membership in the Cathedral Children's Choir requires a demonstrated ability and experience therefore a audition is required.

MISSION APPLIED

The mission of the Cathedral Choir Academy of Detroit is to provide an experience in which choristers encounter Christ through sacred music, grow in faith and musical excellence, and give witness to the Word Incarnate. The program is clearly rooted in faith formation and in step with the New Evangelization. CCA conductors are acutely aware and committed to "what they will teach through sacred music." Founding director and veteran Catholic music educator, Susan Lindquist, has witnessed and passionately testifies to the inherent power of music to transmit our Catholic faith while enabling and encouraging children to take their rightful place at the most important gathering of the Church, the Holy Mass.

Cathedral Music Director Joe Balistreri continues, "in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis emphasizes the power and importance of the "via pulchritudinis," the "path to beauty." He writes, "every expression of beauty can thus be acknowledged as a path leading to an encounter with the Lord Jesus." CCA choristers, as well as the congregations they lead, will encounter Christ through the beauty of sacred music.

Lindquist noted opportunities for children to discover sacred music much less appreciate and understand its application in Catholic liturgy, are increasingly rare. CCA is poised to bridge that chasm.

Having "encountered Christ through sacred music," the mission statement continues, choristers will "grow in faith and musical excellence." Regularly singing the Word of God and leading the sung worship at Holy Mass, choristers will build on that first encounter with Christ and literally lay a foundation for their future as intentional disciples.

The mission statement concludes, "and give witness to the Word Incarnate." There is nothing more inspiring than a well trained children's choir singing for the honor and glory of God. Having become a "joyful band of missionary disciples," CCA choirs will "give witness to the Word Incarnate," at cathedral Masses, Masses with the Archbishop, the annual Catholic Schools Week Mass, and sing at various events in Detroit and the surrounding area. Resonating in the SPIRIT, these young musicians will be powerful ambassadors of the Word Incarnate, unleashing the Gospel in Southeastern Michigan and beyond. CCA choirs will provide an authentic expression of our Catholic faith as they proclaim the Gospel in song.

AFFILIATE CHOIRS

Additionally, based on the Chicago Children's Choir model, CCA is committed to building a network of affiliate urban and suburban children's choirs with the goal of supporting and enhancing their programing and affording opportunities beyond the parish level. CCA members are encouraged to continue singing in their parish/school choirs.

CONCLUSION

The Cathedral Choir Academy of Detroit is clearly a ground breaking project that is poised to lead others, both children and adults, in Detroit and throughout the AOD, into a meaningful encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY

The Cathedral Choir Academy of Detroit is a comprehensive after school choir program serving both urban and suburban youth of all faiths, grades 3-9. Invited into affiliation with the Sistine Chapel Choir, CCA strives to be inclusive and therefore fields two levels of instruction; the Cathedral Descant Choir or training choir and the Cathedral Children's Choir. Within five years the program will include a pre choir class, grades 1-2, as well as a high school choir, grades 10-12. With the goal of supporting and enhancing existing parish and school children's choir programs, CCA is establishing a network of affiliate choirs with which to partner, offering choristers experiences beyond the parish level.

In residence at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, this ground breaking project fosters the evangelization of the young church and aspires to supporting and advancing the music excellence of existing AOD parish/school children's choirs.

The mission statement clearly outlines the goals of the project which are to provide a choral music experience in which choristers encounter Christ through sacred music, grow in faith aspiring to musical excellence, and give witness to the Word Incarnate. Singing for the honor and glory of God, CCA choirs represent an authentic expression of our Catholic faith, literally "Unleashing the Gospel" in song.

With the blessing of Archbishop Allen Vigneron and the unwavering support of Fr. J.J. Mech, CCA kicks off its inaugural season on September 18th.