

# TESTIMONIALS from the 2019 Sacred Music Symposium

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## BB wrote :

The Symposium I just attended for the first time provided nourishment for directors, singers, chanters, organists, composers, arrangers, and accompanists in the form of talks, rehearsals, masses, vespers and even private lessons for conductors and composers. I personally was re-energized by my contact with Dr. Alfred Calabrese who coached me and encouraged me in my conducting skills. I was given hope and encouragement by composer Kevin Allen to continue my efforts as a fledgling composer. In my role as a schola director, Richard Clark helped me rethink my approach to chant and how to make it even more musical. Jeff Ostrowski taught me potent lessons about counterpoint and voice leading as well imparting **a wealth of knowledge and practical skills about chant that I will think about everyday I direct**. In order to restore sacred music and hence reverent and fitting worship in as many liturgies as possible, skilled practioners must prepare to execute the highest quality music possible. The organizers of these Symposia have taken the long view toward making this happen. All the activities and experiences they provided make it much more likely that I will succeed in my efforts with God's help. In addition to all this, a very healthy contingent of competent young musicians attended this Symposium. **To say they were "on fire" for good sacred music is to vastly understate their motivations and actions**. It was greatly encouraging to this (young-at-heart) musician to see the future of beautiful sacred music in the eyes and voices of these wonderful young people. {wipes tear from eye}

## JV wrote:

**Truly a wonderful, moving and blessed experience**. This is a gold standard on choir singing for Roman Catholic Mass! We feel the hymns and its singing as experienced during the symposium is what Mass choir singing is ought to be. Performing the hymns as have been learned have undoubtedly help us personally, and we believe the celebrants as well be specially closer to our Lord during an actual Holy Mass service. So glad to have joined the symposium!

## TM wrote :

**I really learned a lot from the symposium**. The conferences were great, daily Mass was wonderful, the conductors were so good and helpful, and just being with other like minded people was refreshing. [...] I really appreciate all the hard work you and others put into the symposium and I feel very blessed to have been a part of it.

## SS wrote :

I loved my week at the Symposium. As I see it, the Symposium was created for choirmasters and musicians with the idea of sending them forth to plant the seeds of rediscovery of the Catholic Church's great musical heritage. Beginning with the keynote address from Fr. James Fryar, FSSP and then with each rehearsal, and each lecture, we were shown the idea that sung liturgy is not an end, but a means to the end of offering glory to God. The beauty of the music was overwhelming—**each time we reached the fifth verse of Richard Clark's beautiful hymn (#84 in the Brebeuf hymnal) I was brought to tears**. I hope to return next year.

## CS wrote :

**I can't say enough good things about the symposium**. Everything went off like clockwork, and it was because of your monumental efforts. The intensive study of the music, as well as working with several different conductors, made it a rich experience and gave me much to bring back and incorporate into my own singing. I also enjoyed singing vespers every day and getting acquainted with these antiphons and the hymns that we learned.

## SD wrote :

**Three years ago, the Sacred Music Symposium was a vehicle of grace that changed my life**. Through a series of fortuitous events, I ended up attending instead of my mother who had signed up. I didn't know what to expect. The experience of singing with others, even those my age (very young), attending beautiful Liturgies, and making lifelong friendships and connections struck me to the heart, and I knew I wanted to serve the Lord by making it my mission to beautify His sacred Liturgy with music. Now I am entering my senior year of high school and will be applying to college to study music--carrying with me all my knowledge obtained by attending the Sacred Music Symposium for three years. For the first time, I also attended the CMAA Colloquium this year. Many people I met there mentioned that they had considered attending the Symposium, but were not sure what kind of experience it would be. In my experience, the two conferences are very different, inasmuch as the Symposium is much smaller and much more intimate an experience. You get to meet all the faculty, develop real friendships with all the attendees, and form a real sense of camaraderie. Some of my favorite Symposium memories are of impromptu get-togethers outside of the scheduled events and even a flash mob! It would be unfair of me to not encourage any and all Catholic musicians to attend the Sacred Music Symposium, given the immense blessings it has bestowed on my life. **I have met some of my most incredible friends, started a children's chant choir, and found the direction of my life, all thanks to the Sacred Music Symposium**.

## CV wrote :

**The 2019 Sacred Music Symposium exceeded my hopes and expectations** for a wonderful week focused on Our Lord and on enhancing our skills and knowledge in order to better serve Him in the liturgy. Sung Vespers every evening was a great joy. This experience has given me greater confidence and motivation in returning home to daily chant the antiphons of Vespers in the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, rather than just speak them. The musical and theological insights offered by the symposium faculty during rehearsals are still ringing in my ears. It was a great privilege to have participated in the First Mass of the newly ordained priest, Fr. Luc Poirier, FSSP. Thanks be to God for the commitment of Jeff Ostrowski and Andrea Leal in bringing the symposium about in its 4th year. We owe them a debt of gratitude and continued prayers for their work.