

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE 2017 SACRED MUSIC SYMPOSIUM

From Pennsylvania:

All I'm able to think about these days is how magnificent it was to experience such a crowd who shares the same goals as I do. The enthusiasm and love for sacred music I saw in you and many others just confirmed that I know this is what God wants me to do; to help form our children's choir here. Learning everything I did at this symposium is nothing short of a huge blessing.

What made this symposium so special is that God was the main focus in it. I have no doubt that the reason you are succeeding so well with your choir and all that you do (other than the remarkable and unique talent you have and effort you put into everything) is because you are working as a team with God. You're doing all that is pleasing to God, and He will continue to reward and provide for you.

I cannot say enough good about my experience at the symposium. My words surely fail when I attempt to express just how wonderful it was to be there, and how much I brought back with me. Thank you for everything and God reward and bless you abundantly!

From Minneapolis:

I came to this symposium for personal growth, both spiritually and musically and it did not disappoint! Not being overly familiar with Gregorian Chant, it was wonderful to immerse myself in it and then to sing the Solemn Vespers services each day. The Extraordinary form of the Mass was a beautiful experience and the music was so incredibly great! The presenters at the symposium were first rate and working the music with them was very insightful. No matter how long you have been a music minister, there is always much to learn, to discuss and to experience. I enjoyed every minute of this symposium!

From Charlottesville:

What a symposium! I had high hopes for the quality of the music and lectures, but even those expectations were exceeded. I don't even know where to begin... The lectures were incredibly packed with information and helpful for the choir director trying to navigate his music program to greatness, which is what Our Lord deserves. What I really appreciated was the wide diversity of topics, ranging from the theoretical to the practical, from the academic to the "real world" problems encountered in music ministry. The lecturers were engaging—and all brought their own unique contributions to the table—providing us with a rich feast of information to digest at the conference and beyond. My favorite topics were the children choir lectures, the music theory sections (usually with Dr. Buchholz), and the repertoire portions.

I am also grateful for the spiritual renewal it brought about. I had fallen into a slump with regards to music ministry because I lacked direction and faced some discouraging obstacles. Having tasted beauty itself in the elegant duet of silence and music at the Masses and the solemn Vespers, I left with a sense of peace and a burning desire to steer the liturgy towards contemplation once again. I rediscovered an old love thanks to all the efforts and prayers associated with the symposium. God bless you for this precious gift!

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE 2017 SACRED MUSIC SYMPOSIUM

From Virginia:

I wanted to take a minute to write you an email and profoundly thank for all the hard work you put into the Symposium. It was a transformative experience I was not quite expecting, whose spiritual implications I am only now beginning to realize. To put it simply, I was pierced by the beauty of the liturgy in a way I have never before experienced. I briefly spoke with you that while I have always had a respect for the Old Rite, but I have been sadly inexperienced in its beauty. I not only was overwhelmed by its beauty, but sensed the depth of the spirituality behind it. I wish to incorporate this spirituality into my life and that of my family. I am greatly appreciate of all the work you do, and you dedication to bringing back the beauty that I am now reassured has not been completely lost. During the Symposium, I greatly appreciated the shared experience (and the vocal workout!) with all of the wonderful people that I met—and will offer all of you to our Blessed Mother's protection. I am in a bit of an overwhelmed daze in these days following the Symposium, as I try to understand and listen to what the Holy Spirit is doing in my life through it. This has been something I will never forget.

From Arizona:

What a wonderful week! We learned and experienced such beautiful people and things. To 'rediscover' chant and its many facets at this stage has been a delight! May God continue to bless you all in His service. Amen.

From Indiana:

I just wanted to thank you so much for allowing me to attend the 2017 Symposium. I had the most amazing week! I learned so much from all the topics presented by the speakers and by the practice sessions. All the staff were stupendous, and I told our monsignor that I really need to attend every year. Thank you for all the hard work you do for the Glory of God and His Church.

From Orange County, CA:

Today's world is marked by an incessant frenetic pace, the quick, cheap and easy being the rule of the day. Sadly, even the Church's liturgy has not been immune to this spirit of the times. As one who has long abhorred this trend, what a grace it was to participate with so many like-minded Catholics in the 2017 Sacred Music Symposium. The week was packed with excellent presentations, expert advice for beautifying liturgical music, and culminated with sublime liturgies under world-class direction. Several times I kept having to remind myself: yes, this event is taking place in the 21st century; yes, we are all Catholics committed to restoring the good, the true and the beautiful; and yes, we know the great sacred treasury of the past will be the basis for a glorious future. The best part? This shared experience was a source of supernal graces and blessings. My one complaint? It all went by too fast.

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE 2017 SACRED MUSIC SYMPOSIUM

From San Antonio, TX:

The Los Angeles Sacred Music Symposium was truly a heavenly experience. Rehearsing and singing beautiful sacred polyphony with strong Catholics from around the globe was an amazing blessing, and the profound beauty in both Masses was simply celestial. I would like to thank Jeff Ostrowski, Dr. Buchholz, Dr. Calabrese, and all who participated for their unwavering commitment and devotion, and I look forward to next year's Symposium with eager anticipation.

From Arizona:

First off thank you for your boundless and infectious enthusiasm and for bringing this symposium to fruition. By week's end, we were exhausted but wonderfully fed, just not with food for the body but most importantly food for the soul. Without this sharing of knowledge and enthusiasm, we as Catholic choir directors, organists and liturgists become tired, maybe a bit jaded and definitely not always the best version of who we are called to be. This is the education that Catholic musicians need to make a difference. I will treasure the new friends made this past week. We were energized and excited to share our experiences with each other; a testament to the power of great Catholic sacred music.

Dr. Buchholz and Dr. Calabrese...both fabulous clinicians providing continuity, direction and excellent knowledge for the second year. Dr. Tappan for sharing his experience and methodology of building solid children and adult choirs. Pete's Immaculate Heart of Mary parish school choir demonstrated some of the most correct vocal techniques for children's voices, just beautiful. Singing Vespers each afternoon! What a great tradition that we as Catholic music ministers might begin to reintroduce into our parishes even if just once a month...these traditions run deep for a reason. The music chosen for masses was of course beautiful, well chosen and holy. How blessed were we to sing for the nuptial mass at the San Fernando Mission. Until we meet again hopefully next year...many blessings.

From Salt Lake City:

The symposium was fantastic. There was too much to take in in one year, so I am looking forward to next year. The music, from the ancient chants to Kevin Allen's brand new Gloria, was divine and thoroughly uplifting. Chanting Vespers was a new experience and I loved it! The rehearsals with Drs. Calabrese and Buchholz were very instructive and their dedication was inspiring.

From Detroit:

I would like to start off by thanking the staff/organizers of the symposium for putting on a great week of talks & presentations. I came with the intention to be inspired and educated and I ended up leaving meeting new friends & colleagues who share the same knowledge and love for Sacred Music in the Catholic Church. My hope is to implement what I have learned into my volunteer choirs as soon as possible—as well as to share what I've learned with my colleagues back home in Detroit. May God continue to bless Corpus Christi Watershed!! I look forward to the next Sacred Music Symposium!!

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE 2017 SACRED MUSIC SYMPOSIUM

From Las Vegas:

The 2017 Sacred Music Symposium was truly one of the best experiences of my life. The growth of my spiritual life during this week was life-changing. I immensely enjoyed attending the conferences, Vespers, and Low Mass each day. The Solemn High Mass on Thursday was truly a taste of Heaven, and the music lifted us up to God! I really enjoyed spending time with likeminded people from around the world, including my friends, who also attended the Sacred Music Symposium. A huge thank you to all who made this wonderful event possible! I will never forget this inspiring experience and can't wait until the Sacred Music Symposium 2018.

From Orange County, CA:

I am a Catholic music director at my parish in Orange County. I'm so blessed to be a part of a parish that accepts and values traditional Catholic music as part of its liturgy—but it is difficult sometimes to maintain high expectations and to plug on day after day. Well, I got a full recharge from my experience with Mr. Ostrowski and the expert faculty at the Sacred Music Symposium! Each talk was well worth its weight in gold. Their professionalism and their genuine love for Music taught volumes. I received so much confirmation and hope that what I do at home is actually very important and that my love of good liturgical music doesn't make me a "sideliner" or a fringe artist. As a composer myself, it was a delight to meet Kevin Allen and to be able to premiere several of his works. Seeing new liturgical music that is so rich in the tradition of the Catholic Church and that remains modern seems to be in short supply today, but that is not the case at all. Sometimes we need to meet others of like mind and of like heart to renew our confidence. The talk series on children's choirs given by Dr. Tappan gave me so much confidence and assurance in how to proceed with my own teen choir.

Watching how other directors lead their choir is very instructive as well! We had rehearsals each day, and I learned volumes just being "under the baton" of Drs. Buchholz and Calabrese. All the faculty were so professional, demanded good, beautiful music—but did so with kindness and patience, and also a lot of humor. It gave me an example of what a church choir should aim for: a family of dedicated artists—neither sacrificing quality for community, nor focusing on perfection to the detriment of the people involved. If I've gone on about the faculty, please don't think I didn't learn things from my co-attendees! Hearing their stories, talking shop with them, and having the speakers of the Symposium mixing and mingling was just as renewing and educational. Overall, everyone present had the same dedication and love of the Church that we would hope we could instill in our own music ministries and choirs. I know that this year, my choirs won't know what hit them! If I could just put into practice this year one of the things that I learned at this Symposium, it would be a resoundingly successful year!

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE 2017 SACRED MUSIC SYMPOSIUM

From Texas:

I wanted to take a minute to thank you for all the hard work you put into the Sacred Music Symposium. I can't imagine the time and effort that it must have taken, and it is very much appreciated. Not only was the week an opportunity to learn, but to grow closer to God, and to be reminded why we musicians do what we do.

It was absolutely wonderful to attend so many beautiful liturgies in the Extraordinary form (the mass of the ages!), and being able to help provide music for them? Truly an honor. I am SO glad we were able to do Vespers every night! What a joy! And to be able to sing such amazing music by Kevin Allen and Guerrero under the metaphorical batons of Dr. Calabrese and Dr. Buchholz was just incredible. I learned something new every time Dr. Calabrese got on the box to conduct!

We musicians at smaller churches with growing programs would not be able to do ANYTHING without your help. You have changed the way that we look at sacred music in the present day. And for that, I will be eternally grateful. I hope you will continue to put on these symposiums, and I will continue to attend and someday help in any way that I can! After such a joyful and music-filled week, I am feeling refreshed and motivated to change the world!

CCWATERSHED.ORG/SYMPOSIUM