

TESTIMONIALS from the 2018 Sacred Music Symposium

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A participant from Colorado wrote :

At the Symposium, I was incredibly heartened by the emphasis on music's role in the liturgy, both through observing the Mass and Vespers and through the discussions led by Mr Ostrowski and Fr. Popplewell. The more I grow to understand the function of the music in the liturgy, the more I find freedom, not restriction, and renewed drive towards beauty and intention. I found the discussion about hymn translations, tunes, etc. to be very helpful, and I'm looking forward to the fruits of your hymn project with Fr. Popplewell. It was great to practice Gregorian chant and to get more comfortable reading the notation. I'm realizing that I definitely need to learn more about the different modes. I enjoyed being able to talk with others not only about our struggles but about our passion and our hopes for sacred music—it was inspiring and not at all the “let's just complain” camaraderie I have found among many church musicians. The absolute best part of the entire Symposium for me, however, was the glorious Solemn Mass on the last day. The “proof” was right there—the liturgy done properly and beautifully is the ultimate catechesis for me. **The reverence of the clergy and the music and the clear emphasis on the Eucharist as “source and summit” brought me to tears many times in that Mass** (I confess, I was not able to sing the “Agnus Dei” through my tears, even though it was one of my favorite pieces!) I am now convinced that it is vital to restore sacred music and proper liturgical practice, particularly in the Ordinary Form, in which I work. I was already receiving that direction from prayer, my pastor, and my research, but now I have a new fire underneath me. I feel renewed and ready to do my part!

A participant from the Philippines wrote :

Today, I just got back from a full five-day symposium on Sacred music, inspired by conversations with fantastic and very experienced conductors and composers Jeffrey Ostrowski, Dr. Kevin Allen and Dr. Horst Bucholz, to what I can say was the most incredibly musical immersion of my life. **It was an experience that was uplifting and not condescending:** a new direction for the next steps. It was witnessing commitment, love, dedication, and hard work put in Sacred Music. It was meeting people with the same mind: that Sacred Music is serious work and not a hobby. It's volunteering for many but a diligent commitment at that. The Symposium was a fantastic experience because it trusted everyone's talent and everyone just gave their all for the glory of God's service. It was great to be around people who want to be better at serving in the Liturgy. It also shows that it is worthwhile “complicating” our lives for God. I saw the logistical magnitude of the project and I wish to volunteer to help next time around.

A participant from New Hampshire wrote :

It was the most wonderful experience I have had in a long time, for it both introduced me to knowledge which I could not otherwise easily acquire, and also connected me with the most wonderful people who brought a taste of the strength of the medieval musical school to the present day. **I will be processing it for a long time,** and hope that I will be able to retain even a fraction of the experience.

A participant from California wrote :

I'm back from an absolutely wonderful week of Sacred Music with Corpus Christi Watershed and Los Angeles FSSP. Thank you so much to Mr. Ostrowski, the organizers, Mr. Kevin Allen, Dr. Buchholz, both Fr. Fryars, Fr. Popplewell, and all the participants! It was so great to be able to learn so much ancient and new music that is part of the history of our Catholic Faith. I learned so much about music theory, chant, and technique. Even though I feel like I don't know very much, it has inspired me to learn more! **What's more, I got to meet so many amazing and wonderful young people who are dedicated to their faith!** It was a pleasure to meet them and talk about all sorts of things from Latin, to Theology, to the Mass, to school, to vocations, and even goats! God bless you all and I look forward to next year's Sacred Music Symposium!

A participant from Virginia wrote :

The Sacred Music Symposium exceeded all my expectations! Somewhere else commented on the week being like a retreat at times, and I agree. **Everything we did was relevant and will stay with me for a long time,** and where else are you going to find so many other musicians with the same goals in their minds and hearts? That unity is rare. For me the week was both glorious and a good-kind-of-painful challenge to grow, especially after my family rather suddenly left our home parish in MN that has an astounding choir family, and I'm with two more limited choirs now and a house with no piano. I'm so excited to be able to contribute better to both of those choirs now.

A participant from Nevada wrote :

Before your arrival, you were given a repertoire list of music to learn for the Solemn High Mass at the end of the week. It's hard work to learn over 14 pieces of polyphony and chant, but it is well worth the effort. Once the conference began, the week was non stop! I am so happy that we were able to begin each day attending a Low Mass and receiving our Eucharistic Jesus! Then, the rest of the day was filled with conference talks, learning workshops, and music rehearsals. **Some of my favorite courses were in counterpoint, multi-track recordings, and how to sing Solemn Vespers.** The speakers included Mr. Jeffery Ostrowski, Mr. Kevin Allen, Fr. Dominic Popplewell, and others. Each day had plenty of time to rehearse all our pieces both as a group and in male/female sections. It was so cool to hear everything come together especially at the first group rehearsal. We were lead by magnificent conductors and mentors, Mr. Allen and Dr. Horst Buchholz. Each evening we sang Solemn Vespers. They were very beautiful but my favorite part was the hymn at the end. Even though the conference maxed out at 75 participants, it was really a very personal and small group. One was able to easily ask the speakers and conductors questions who were, in turn, able to give helpful advice and answers. Even when we weren't in rehearsal or a talk, you could easily access the faculty with a question and they were so great. Because of the small atmosphere, you also got to know the other members pretty well. I will be forever grateful to Mr. Ostrowski, Mr. Allen, Dr. Buchhoz, Fr. Popplewell, and all the organizers of the Sacred Music Symposium for the knowledge, experience, and help they have given me. Thank you also to Fr. James and Fr. Ken Fryar, all the FSSP Seminarians, and the altar boys. In closing, if you enjoy singing, Catholic music and chant, conducting, or composing music, I highly suggest you attend next year's Sacred Music Symposium!! You will have an experience never to be forgotten!!!

A participant from Arizona wrote :

I have been blessed to attend the Sacred Music symposium for the past 3 years. **Listening and singing with the many young people who attend is a privilege and tells me that there is hope for retaining this precious gift of sacred music.** We can be assured that our valuable Catholic treasury of music and art will be preserved and in time brought into the Ordinary form with their expertise. These young people have been singing & learning solfège, conducting, learning to play organ, forming small choral groups and teaching others. All have amassed an incredible wealth of good solid repertoire. I applaud our sponsor FSSP and organizer Jeff Ostrowski for continuing their mission to bring sacred music to the forefront, to educate us on what is truly sacred and why. No more Buzzard wings or Little Pony masses for us! Dr Buchholz's conducting class and superb choral direction gave us good techniques to use in choir rehearsal. Kevin Allen's compositions with haunting unforgettable melodies, true reverence and beauty of line, are a delight to sing. I introduced my choir to Kevin's "Ave Sacer Christi" late last year. They love the piece and can sing it very well. I do appreciate that you scheduled less music this year which gave us the opportunity to fine tune the pieces. I remember the first year's conference and desperately trying to read the chant notation. Now I have the confidence to teach the chant modes. Its slow go but I am making progress.

A participant from Tehachapi wrote :

What an amazing and unforgettable experience the 2018 Sacred Music Symposium was! I was able to participate in singing the most beautiful sacred music with many other wonderful Catholics from around the world; a rare opportunity for me. The conferences provided many helpful tips and ideas for both choir directors and choir members. **I came home in high spirits** and motivated to continue doing my work as a voluntary choir director. I look forward to attending the next Sacred Music Symposium. It is too awesome an opportunity to miss!

Miss "I. D. T." wrote :

The Symposium was wonderful. I have attended similar programs in the past, but **what set this experience apart was that the Faith was at its center.** Being surrounded by like-minded Catholics for five days was refreshing, and singing the most beautiful music in the world—with dozens of wonderful individuals who cherish the rich body of Tradition and meaning behind it—was lovely. It was like being in virtual heaven for the length of a work week.

Mrs. "A. T." wrote :

Our family and I thoroughly enjoyed our week at the Sacred Music Symposium! I thought the event was thoughtfully organized, all the participants were dedicated in their learning, the faculty members, including Fr. Popplewell, Mr. Kevin Allen, Dr. Horst Buchholz, were very friendly and approachable! We think you're totally incredible! **You're talented, hardworking, and extremely generous!** We're very thankful for you, your family, your staff, and for CCWatershed! We're now even bigger fans of CCWatershed!