



**AMERICAN FEDERATION  
PUERI CANTORES**

The Vatican-based official student choral  
organization of the Catholic Church.



April 2024

**AFPC Newsletter**

Vol. 16, Issue 1

## **A Message from AFPC President on the 2024 Pueri Cantores Festival Season**

Dear Pueri Cantores family,

The 2024 Festival Season has come to a close and what a triumphant few months it has been! On April 20th, 340 singers from 18 different Catholic School and parish youth choirs from around MD, DC, VA, PA, VA, and NC gathered together at the majestic Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception for the final 2024 Pueri Cantores Festival.

This year, we organized a record number of 16 festivals across the country - from Orange County to Houston to Boston- which involved more than 2,400 young singers from 157 different schools and parishes. It has been an absolute thrill to hear from our Pueri Cantores singers and choir directors across the nation about their local Festivals and favorite moments.

Here are a few articles and videos I'd like to share with you from the 2024 Festival Season:

- [Archdiocese of New York's The Good Newsroom article featuring the March 2nd New York Festival at Church of the Blessed Sacrament](#)
- [Podcast featuring Dr. Dan Girardot from the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Worship Office and Lizzie Cook, Fine Arts Director & Choir Director at St. Edward Catholic School, Spring as they discuss Pueri Cantores, the regional Houston Festival, and the 44th International Congress of Pueri Cantores in Rome this past Dec/Jan](#)
- [Chicago Catholic article featuring the Feb. 24 Chicago Festival at Holy Name Cathedral](#)
- [Recorded March 9th Southern California Festival & Mass at Christ Cathedral with over 320 participating singers](#)
- [Archdiocese of Boston's The Pilot article featuring the March 9th New England Festival at Cathedral of the Holy Cross](#)
- [Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend's Today's Catholic featuring the Fort Wayne-South Bend Festival](#)

We are working diligently to schedule our 2025 Festival Season, and dates and locations will be announced as they are confirmed. Please be sure to frequently check our website ([www.pcchoirs.org](http://www.pcchoirs.org)) for posted information. We hope to see you and your choir again in 2025!

We at the American Federation of Pueri Cantores send our very best to you, along with *heartfelt gratitude* for your involvement and support of our mission, young singers, and sacred music.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul M. French". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Paul French, President  
American Federation Pueri Cantores**

*Click on the collage below to view more photos from the 2024 Pueri Cantores Festival Season.*



# 2025 Pueri Cantores Festival Season

Below are a few Festivals confirmed for the 2025 season so far. Save-the-dates will be posted as Festival dates/locations are confirmed. National Repertoires will be available in May.

## 2025 NORTHERN CALIFORNIA YOUTH CHORAL FESTIVAL & MASS

April 5, 2025

Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption, San Francisco  
Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, Celebrant



Pueri Cantores, the national student choral organization of the Catholic Church, invites all parish & school treble and mixed choirs (grades 4-12) in the region to participate in a Festival & Mass.

Singers will unite with hundreds of their peers as one combined choir to sing beautiful music from the Church's rich historical repertoire. More information will be available soon at [www.pcchoirs.org](http://www.pcchoirs.org).

## 2025 CHICAGO PUERI CANTORES YOUTH CHORAL FESTIVAL & MASS

February 22, 2025

Holy Name Cathedral



Pueri Cantores, the national student choral organization of the Catholic Church, invites all parish & school treble and mixed voice choirs (grades 4-12) in the region to participate in a Festival & Mass.

Singers will unite with hundreds of their peers as one combined choir to sing beautiful music from the Church's rich historical repertoire. More information will be available soon at [www.pcchoirs.org](http://www.pcchoirs.org).

## Festival Preparation Resources for Choir Directors

[What is Pueri Cantores, exploring the ins and outs of a Festival, and how best to prepare your choir \(video\)](#)

[Watch a recording of a 2024 Pueri Cantores Festival & Mass \(video\)](#)

[FAQ about Pueri Cantores Festivals](#)

[AFPC/NCEA archived webinars for music teachers, choir directors, and worship leaders \(videos\)](#)

[Choir organizational tips from Pueri Cantores conductor members](#)

## Meet the Singers



*Sydney H.*

*Age: 15    Years in Choir: 6*

*Saint John the Baptist, Cantamus  
Costa Mesa, CA*

*How has being in choir strengthened your faith and enriched other areas of your life?*

My singing journey has brought me so much closer to God. Using the gifts He gave me not only helps my relationship with Him become stronger, but it also lets me share it with my friends and anyone else that listens. It brings everyone together through the heart, mind, and soul.

*Why do you enjoy participating in Pueri Cantores Festivals?*

Since my first Southern California Pueri Cantores Festival in fourth grade, it has been amazing to sing with my friends in my own choir but also to unite with the other children's choirs in a gorgeous church with the purpose of making beautiful music that helps each and every one of us glorify God in song and worship.

Singing brings people together, and to sing in my own choir let alone with twenty-plus choirs together is something absolutely breathtaking. Each and every one of those voices in this past year's festival and all festivals to come are gifts from God. It's our job to make sure to use them in the way He intended them to be used.

One thing that stands out to me at the Festival is that the environment is amazing! Everyone is great and respects each other because that what everyone deserves. Although there may be some singers that have a bigger voices and project better, it doesn't mean the quieter singers are lesser than them. I also love seeing the diversity at the Festival because it shows that we are all equal. It's not said enough but, God loves each one of us equally and we all need that reminder sometimes. ❤️



*My choir and I at the 2024 Southern California Festival at Christ Cathedral, Garden Grove*



*Helen S.*

*Age: 9 Years in Choir: 1*

*Pueri Cantores Tyler  
Chapel of Sts. Peter & Paul, Tyler, TX*

*What do you love about singing and being in choir?*

I love singing in the choir because I love to sing and I really like church music. Singing in the choir has made me more confident in my singing ability. Being in the choir makes me look forward to going to church to sing for God.

*Why do you enjoy participating in Pueri Cantores Festivals?*

I attended the 2024 Pueri Cantores Houston Treble Festival & Mass. I enjoyed meeting other young people in the big combined choir, and my favorite memory was the final practice before the Mass. The singing was beautiful!



*We & my fellow singers at the 2024 Pueri Cantores Houston Festival at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart with Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo celebrating Mass.*

[Click here to sign up your child to be featured in a future AFPC newsletter.](#)

## 2024 AFPC-NCEA Webinar Series



**AMERICAN FEDERATION  
PUERI CANTORES**



### Pueri Cantores Presents: "We Sing"

*A three-part webinar series for Conductors of Catholic Student Choirs, Worship Leaders and Classroom Teachers, Elementary through High School*

#### **Part 3: "How We Sing"**

*Rehearsal Techniques with young singers that foster healthy singing, musicianship, and stylistic authenticity*

**[REGISTER HERE](#)**

**Tuesday, May 14th  
4pm ET / 3 pm CT / 1pm PT**

*"Registration is free!\*"*

*Join us for this live 45-minute presentation and 15-minute Q&A with the presenter.*

**In this webinar Carling FitzSimmons joins moderator Rudy Marcozzi to consider vocal health and development of young singers and changing voices while exploring liturgical repertory and rehearsal techniques that advance individual and ensemble musicianship and stylistic performance.**



*Presented by:*  
**Carling FitzSimmons**

Conductor, singer, and arts educator, Carling FitzSimmons is the Artistic Director of the Spirito! Singers (Treble choirs from 5th-12 grades), and has worked with the Pro Musica Youth Chorus, Chicago Public Schools, and Merit School of Music. She is also the founder and Artistic Director of La Caccina, a professional ensemble that champions and performs diverse, innovative repertoire for women's voices.



*Moderated by:*  
**Dr. Rudy Marcozzi**

An award-winning educator (Dean and

Professor Emeritus at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts), Dr. Rudy Marcozzi is also an active professional church musician with extensive parish and university experience at local, regional, and diocesan levels. He is a member of The National Association of Pastoral Musicians, The Hymn Society of the United States and Canada, The North American Academy of Liturgy, and a board member of the American Federation of Pueri Cantores. He was a regular reviews contributor to Pastoral Music, and editor and contributing author for Preparing Your Catholic Wedding (Paulist Press). He currently serves as the Coordinator of Music Ministry at the Sheil Catholic Center at Northwestern University.

### *In case you missed them...*



## Part 1: "Why We Sing"

Carrie Elko joined moderator Dr. Rudy Marcozzi to discuss the cognitive, developmental, formational, and social benefits of choral and congregational singing in schools and parishes. Together with seminar participants they will explore the ways in which the skills used and developed through singing can transfer and enhance learning and development in all other dimensions of student learning and student life.

## Part 2: "What We Sing"

In this 2nd webinar Carrie Elko joined moderator Rudy Marcozzi again to examine the ways in which a wide range of liturgical music can be used to build an age-appropriate, student-centric, and faith-based choral curriculum for school music (K-8, HS) and parish choral programs. Their discussion will consider vocal health, pedagogical objectives, effective sequencing, and helical structures that foster retention and growth.

# 2023-24 Pueri Cantores Rome Congress Reminiscence

## Singing for Pope Francis

BY CHRISTOPHER COSBEY

Last spring, I joined the Golden Gate Boys Choir and Bellringers. The singers come from parishes and schools all over the Diocese of Oakland. My brother Nicholas and I were the only students from St. Isidore School in the choir. I didn't know any of the choir members and was nervous to try something new. During Christmas break, we went to the International Pueri Cantores music festival in Rome, Italy. Thinking about traveling to Italy made me feel even more nervous!

The first day in Rome, the choirs had a private tour of the Vatican Museum. Our choir stayed in a convent hotel about 15 minutes away from the Vatican. We were the only ones staying there. Each morning, the nuns made breakfast for over 40 of us. I had three roommates and played video games a lot at night.

For our first field trip, we took our bus to Assisi because St. Francis lived there. We sang a Mass in the Crypt Chapel of St. Catherine, Basilica of St. Francis. After singing, we visited St. Francis' tomb. We also had a field trip to St. Benedict's Monastery, and we went inside the cave where he lived for three years.

The next day, we sang a Mass at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Wall with about 20 choirs from all over the United States. St. Paul's tomb is under

this altar. Later that night, the Golden Gate Boys Choir was the only choir selected from the United States to sing at a special concert, the Colors of Pueri Cantores at St. Andrew Church.

On Dec. 30, we went to Vatican City and had an audience with Pope Francis. We sang Et In Terra Pax for Pope Francis. When he went down the aisle to leave, my sister Olivia touched Pope Francis' hand. On New Year's Day, we sang for the papal Mass at St. Peter's Basilica. There were more than 3,000 kids singing with us from all over the world.

After the festival, we traveled to a small village and stayed with a host family. The best part of staying in their house was eating their homemade pasta!

Now that I'm back home, I'm glad I didn't listen to my nervousness. Joining the choir and going to Rome is one of the best memories of my life. I now have new friends from all over the Diocese of Oakland! ♦

Christopher Cosbey, 10, is a fifth-grade student at St. Isidore School in Danville.

Pictured, left to right: (1) The Golden Gate Boys Choir and Bellringers after singing mass at St. Paul Outside the Walls (Photo by Albert Agbulos) (2) My sister Olivia (right) before Pope Francis gave her a high five! (3) My brother Nicholas and I at St. Peter's Basilica after singing the Papal Mass for the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (4) My parents and sister came to Italy, too!



GOLDEN GATE  
BOYS CHOIR AND  
BELLRINGERS  
PERFORM AT  
INTERNATIONAL  
MUSIC FESTIVAL

LEARN MORE  
Singing anyone?  
Find out how to  
join the choir at  
[www.ggbc.org](http://www.ggbc.org).





Pope Francis meets 'Pueri Cantores' International Federation (Vatican Media)

POPE POPE FRANCIS MUSIC ART AUDIENCES CHILDREN

### Pope Francis: Singing can touch hearts and deepen prayer

Pope Francis meets with young singers of the Pueri Cantores Federation, and praises choral singing as a joyful accompaniment to the prayer of the Church community.



January 1 2024, Holy Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God | Pope Francis

Vatican News - English

Subscribe

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### Watch the above recorded New Year's Day Mass with Pope Francis.

*Please stay tuned for a special Rome Congress newsletter coming soon!*

# Join our Monthly Sustainers Program!



AFPC's mission is to **educate and evangelize young Catholics across the U.S through sacred music**, thereby cultivating their passion for the arts, nurturing their personal and spiritual wellbeing, and developing a relationship with God and the Church that they will carry all their lives.

AFPC's work is made possible through the support of individuals like you who see the value in this apostolate and are committed to seeing it continue. **Please prayerfully consider becoming a Monthly Sustainer** to help us enrich the lives of thousands of children and families for years to come.

Click here to become a Monthly Sustainer

[Or make a one-time donation to Pueri Cantores here](#)

# 2025 International Congress of Pueri Cantores



## CANTATE DOMINO

„vielstimmig für den Frieden“

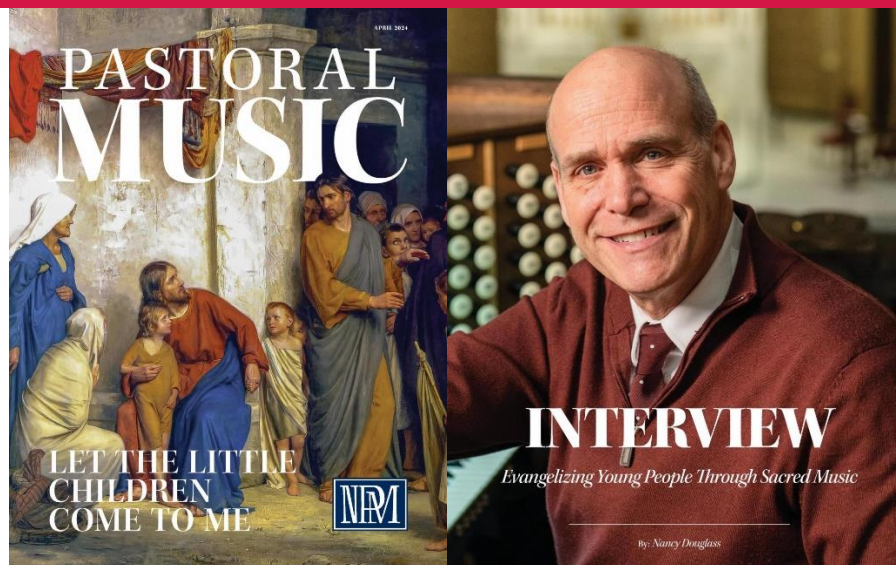
#comeandsing!

45TH INTERNATIONAL PUERI  
CANTORES CONGRESS

16 – 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2025 IN MUNICH,  
GERMANY

Click on the image above to learn more about the 2025 International Congress of Pueri Cantores in Munich, Germany.

## AFPC President Paul French named NPM's 2024 Pastoral Musician of the Year



Click on the image above to read the full interview with Paul French.



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