



Young singers gather for Pueri Cantores festival

Cristina Cabrera Jarro, Florida Catholic Media correspondent



The American Federation Pueri Cantores Miami Choral Festival pose for a photo following a Mass March 7, 2026 at St. Mary Cathedral in Miami. The occasion gathered more than 175 boys and girls from grades four through 12 from dioceses across Florida.

CRISTINA CABRERA JARRO | FC

MIAMI | The sound of more than 175 students singing “Cantate Domino” resonated throughout St. Mary Cathedral in Miami March 7, 2026. A rehearsal for the American Federation of Pueri Cantores Miami Choral Festival and Mass was underway, and girls and boys from grades four through 12 watched as guest conductor Lindsey Adams led them through the spirited, complex repertoire.

Unintentionally, the choir slowed, and one against so many, Adams made a herculean effort to keep the tempo, but eventually she stopped them.

“We need to keep our momentum. We’re not just singing strings of notes for the fun of it. It really needs to lead us somewhere. My altos, ladies, you’ve been waiting for this all day. Let’s have it,” said Adams before counting the group off to get back into the music that would be sung at the cathedral’s evening Mass that concluded the daylong festival.

As director of music and liturgy at Most Holy Eucharist Parish in Bloomington, Illinois, Adams has led choirs and trained young singers, drawing from her own career as an acclaimed mezzo-soprano and music educator. But it was her first time leading a Pueri Cantores choir. During a break, she told the group that she was “hooked” and had had “so much fun.”



Peter Mccauley, a junior from the choir of Jesuit High School of Tampa, projects his voice along with other singers during the American Federation Pueri Cantores Miami Choral Festival and Mass on March 7, 2026 held at St. Mary Cathedral in Miami. The event gathered more than 175 boys and girls from grades four through 12 from dioceses across Florida.

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“I can’t think of anything that could possibly make God happier than hearing you praise Him with those glorious voices He gave you. Remember, every word that comes out of your mouth is a prayer of thanksgiving,” Adams said.

For more than a century, the mission of Pueri Cantores, Latin for “young singers,” has remained the same: to form young people in faith, leadership, and excellence through sacred music. This year the International Federation

of Pueri Cantores marks the 75th anniversary of its Vatican approval, which includes national federations in 43 countries and represents more than 70,000 young singers.

“We give tremendous thanks for the generations of young singers, choir directors, clergy and supporters who have faithfully carried this mission forward,” wrote Paul French, president of the American Federation of Pueri Cantores, in a letter to participants.

In 2026, 18 festivals will take place across the United States. Six were held March 7, including the event in Miami, which welcomed the Florida Pueri Cantores festival for the first time since 2019. A total of 11 choirs from dioceses across Florida attended. Representing the Archdiocese of Miami were the All-Saints School Choir from Sunrise; St. Gregory the Great School Choir, from Plantation; and the Sacre Coeur Choir of Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart in Miami.

“The Archdiocese of Miami is home to a vibrant, diverse Catholic community whose rich cultural traditions strengthen the Church’s musical life,” said Kathleen Prina, program director for the American Federation of Pueri Cantores, in an email to the Florida Catholic. “Hosting the festival there highlights the unity of voices across languages and backgrounds, embodying the universality of the Church that Pueri Cantores seeks to celebrate.”

Prina also expressed that St. Mary Cathedral, as the mother church of the archdiocese, was selected as a host site for its sacred beauty, providing the ideal setting to inspire young singers in prayer and song.

“Pueri Cantores is a wonderful organization and a wonderful event. It’s a great opportunity for kids to see other kids do what they do,” said Maximilian Tenney, archdiocesan director of sacred music and organist at St. Mary Cathedral.

Tenney explained that, unlike in sports, choirs rarely have opportunities to travel and meet other choirs on a regular basis. Festivals like Pueri Cantores help them make connections and establish camaraderie while learning about the musical traditions of the universal Church together.

“During Mass, we sang hymns, we sang chants that are centuries old, and we sang all the proper parts of the Mass that are supposed to be sung. Even Father Hans Chamorro (parochial vicar at St. David Church in Davie) sang his parts,” said Tenney.

The all-boys Jesuit High School Choir from Tampa is a veteran participant in Pueri Cantores that brought richness to the ensemble with their seasoned tenors and basses.

“At Jesuit, the music is very traditional, so we do Gregorian chant, we do motets, we do polyphonic motets, hymns, and all of the rich tradition of the liturgical music,” said Adrian Quesada, choir director of Jesuit High School in Tampa.

Even so, Peter McCauley, a junior from Jesuit and a first-time Pueri Cantores participant, was surprised.

“It’s been quite the experience, especially singing with voices that I don’t usually sing with. Singing with sopranos and altos is really cool,” he said.

For Jason Casper, whose son, Dominick, plays the organ and sings with Ascencion Homeschool Choir from Melbourne, the event was a meaningful celebration and gathering for youth.

“We love Church music. It’s been beautiful and I’m very proud of him,” Casper said.

Gizel Abdallah, the choir director at All Saints School and Parish, could not be prouder of her group. Thanks to the support of their school principal, Kristen

Whiting, and parents, the group was able to participate for the first time in several years.

“I’m glad that our students got to experience this. It’s not easy, but just to be with other choirs that are going through the same things they are, learning hard songs with different voices, was beautiful for them. They loved it,” Abdallah said.

One of the best takeaways for her were the lessons and new techniques taught to her students.

“We’re going back home with a lot of new ideas. These songs that they sang, they still know them, so we can use them throughout the year in the church, and we can sing them in the parish on Sundays,” she said.

At the Mass following the Pueri Cantores Festival, her choir was also one of four groups selected to sing in a prelude performance. The 24 singers from All Saints learned “In God I Trust” by Father James Marchionda, memorized it, and sang a capella with harmonized parts.

“They sang it very well, and I’m very proud of my students,” Abdallah said.

All singers received a commemorative Pueri Cantores 75th anniversary medal as a token of gratitude for participating in the event.

Before the festival concluded, Adams thanked the singers and reminded them to thank their choir directors.

“Without their planning and hard work to teach you this music for months, and to get you all here today, without their extreme effort we would not be able to do this wonderful thing,” she said.

[Read the full article on Florida Catholic’s website here.](#)