



Catholic Schools Diocese of Palm Beach

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‘Nationally acclaimed’ choral festival held at St. Luke School



The American Federation Pueri Cantores, the nationally acclaimed student choral organization of the Catholic Church, held its 2020 Choral Festival and Mass at St. Luke Catholic Church in Palm Springs, Feb. 22. Young people from South Florida parishes and schools came together to sing one shared repertoire at the festival's subsequent Vigil Mass celebrated by Father Andrew Brierly, pastor of St. Luke Church.

Participants in this year's festival were St. Thomas Aquinas High School Chorale in Fort Lauderdale, St. Bonaventure Children's Chorale in Davie, Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Homeschool Choir from Wesley Chapel, St. Francis Catholic Academy Choir in Gainesville, Sabre Singers from Miami, St. James Cathedral Jubilate Youth Choir from Orlando, Choirs of St. Luke from Palm Springs, St. Ann Youth Choir from West Palm Beach, St. Joan of Arc Concert Choir from Boca Raton, Donahue Academy Chorus from Ave Maria and St. Romanos Choir from Palm Bay.

The American Federation Pueri Cantores (AFPC) is a nonprofit organization that promotes a "Catholic identity through music" by organizing choral festivals for Catholic parishes and school choirs all over the United States. It is a spiritual choral festival approved by every papacy since Pope Pius XII. Program administrator, Kathleen Prina, explained that "AFPC is the official youth choral organization for the Catholic Church, facilitating dozens of choral festivals every year in the U.S."

Throughout the day of the Choral Festival, the student choristers rehearsed their repertoire in the hours leading up to the Vigil Mass. Kevin Faulkner, St. Luke School music teacher and director of the Choirs of St. Luke, spoke about the hard work that was involved in putting together this event. "This was a lot of work, a lot of labor, but a lot of love went into it. It was well worth it," said Faulkner.

Claudia Vitale, from Our Lady of the Rosary Homeschool Choir in Tampa, said, "Being able to use my voice in a way to praise God is so great. In 2016, our choir went to Rome and we sang for Pope Francis."

Each student choir learned the same repertoire so as to sing the songs together as one choir. Dr. Timothy Westerhaus, the national conductor of the Choral Festival, was jubilant in seeing the different choirs working together. "Sharing the liturgy with all these different parishes and schools, singing together with such love and compassion for one another, was beautiful," shared Westerhaus.

In his homily at the Vigil Mass, Father Brierly said, "The human voice is the most complicated and, at the same time, the most beautiful musical instrument ever made because, of course, it was made by God."

Danielle, Dave and Jade Morales, members of the Choirs of St. Luke and students at St. Luke School, were delighted to be included in the AFPC festival. "The children use their time for good, singing for God," said their mother, Laura Morales.

For more information on St. Luke Catholic School, visit stlukepalmssprings.org. To learn more about the American Federation Pueri Cantores, visit pcchoirs.org.

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