



**AMERICAN FEDERATION
PUERI CANTORES**

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



July 2021

AFPC Newsletter

Vol. 13, Issue 2

2022 Pueri Cantores Festival Season

After having to cancel the majority of AFPC Festivals in 2020 and the entire 2021 Festival season due to COVID, we are excited to announce that we have been making arrangements to ensure a robust and exciting 2022 Festival season!

As eager as you surely are to get back to working with your choirs, we are equally excited to bring hundreds of choristers from around the region together again to unite in song, peace, and prayer! What a magnificent return to singing it will be!

Please see the 2022 Festival Schedule below to find a Festival near you! Detailed information for each individual Festival can be found on our website in the next month or so.

A note about the 2022 repertoires: Because the majority of Festival locations were not able to use the 2020 Festival repertoire, we will be reusing it for the 2022 Festival season. Since the Phoenix, South Florida, and Chicago Festivals took place, we will be creating a different repertoire for these Festivals. More information will be available soon.

In This Issue

[2022 Pueri Cantores Festival Season](#)

[2021 Virtual Choir Festival](#)

[Meet the Singers](#)

[Choirs in Quarantine](#)

[Choir Organizational Tip -
Re-forming Your Youth
Choirs in a Post-COVID Age](#)

[Reimagining the 21st Century
Choral Rehearsal](#)

[Free Choir Uniforms for Girls](#)

[Job Postings](#)

[Make a Gift to Pueri Cantores](#)

Be a part of this enriching and inspiring return to singing!



2022 Pueri Cantores Festival Schedule

Greater Omaha

High School (grades 9-12)
Saturday, February 5, 2022
Sacred Heart Church, Norfolk, NE
Archbishop George J. Lucas, Celebrant

South Florida Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, February 12, 2022
St. Luke Church, Palm Springs, FL

Phoenix Treble (grades 4-8)

Saturday, February 19, 2022
Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral, Phoenix, AZ

Houston Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 5, 2022
Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Houston, TX

Chicago Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 12, 2022
Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago, IL
Bishop Joseph N. Perry, Celebrant

Mid-Atlantic Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 12, 2022
Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Baltimore, MD
Archbishop William E. Lori, Celebrant

New England Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 19, 2022
Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston, MA

Southern California

Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)
Saturday, March 19, 2022
Christ Cathedral, Garden Grove, CA
Bishop Kevin W. Vann, Celebrant

Fort Wayne-South Bend

Mixed Voice (grades 4-12) (Closed Registration)
Friday, March 25, 2022
St. Pius X Church, Granger, IN
Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, Celebrant

Pittsburgh Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)

Saturday, March 26, 2022
St. Paul Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA
Bishop David A. Zubik, Celebrant

New York High School (grades 9-12)

Date & Location, TBD

New York Treble (grades 4-8)

Saturday, March 26, 2022
St. John Nepomucene Church, New York, NY

Professional Development Credits available for participating school conductors.

Visit www.pcchoirs.org for individual Festival brochures, repertoires and additional details.

2021 Pueri Cantores Virtual Choir Festival

PUERI CANTORES

**VIRTUAL CHOIR
FESTIVAL**

June 12, 2021

AMERICAN FEDERATION
PUERI CANTORES

In case you missed it--- click on the image above to see and hear the 2021 Pueri Cantores Virtual Choir Festival. On May 22, 2021, Pueri Cantores singers in grades 3-8 across the country joined with their peers and guest conductors via Zoom to rehearse and perform several sacred music pieces. This Virtual Choir Festival presentation is the product of their hard work and dedication to choir, passion for spreading God's Word through music, and their love and joy of singing. Enjoy!

Meet the Singers

AMERICAN FEDERATION
PUERI CANTORES

Meet the Singers



Samantha Rodriguez

Age 14

Mary, Mother of God Parish/St. Ita Children's Choir, Chicago, IL

My name is Samantha Rodriguez. I am 14 years old. I am a part of Mary, Mother of God Parish/St. Ita Children's Choir, and I have been in this amazing choir since I was 6 years old. I love singing because it gives me a chance to express myself in a way that I know no one will judge me. I also find myself to be the most creative when I am reading musical notes, trying to compose my own songs, and learning how to deliver them with all my heart.

Most importantly, however, the reason why I love singing is because it brings me closer to God. Specifically, when we are singing in the church, I feel like I am talking to God in a deep and powerful way. It is an enlightening experience. I am singing praise to Him, so that makes the connection even stronger. With the poignant lyrics that we are singing, I also find it a humbling experience. I can reflect on my own life, realize my wrongdoings, and use the lyrics to help me become a better person. Singing is such a unique way to worship the Lord.

When all of the St. Ita Children's Choir sing together, the harmonies, melodies, and emotions merge together with beauty that I can not explain. Mr. Dan Lagacy and Ms. Josephine Layug conduct us in a way that we can all understand and feel the music. When I was 6 years old, I loved singing already, but I did not fully understand how our choir group functions as a whole. Now that I am older and a bit more mature, I have a new profound respect for what they do to guide us and how we all work together in order to bring the songs to life. Because of Mr. Lagacy and Ms. Layug, our choir is a second family to me. The more we got to sing together, the more we got to know each other. This bond allowed us to get closer, and work better together to sing beautifully during mass.

I have been singing in the Pueri Cantores Festival for 4 years. There are so many elements that make this festival so special; I can not name just one. But, the most prominent part that sticks out to me is that the Festival gives us this great opportunity

to meet other choir members and sing as a larger community.

My first experience singing at Pueri Cantores, going through the day practicing, and hearing us all sing in harmony at the conclusion during mass, I was in awe! It was so heavenly, as if, in unison, we were sending a message to all of the statues and glass paintings of our Lord, Blessed Lady, Saints, Cherubim, Seraphim, etc. It was an unforgettable experience, and it has been every year until the pandemic.

The absence of it made you long for it. I was so glad we joined together this year, even virtually. Hearing and seeing how all our voices can still come together to create beautiful music surely made up for last year. I truly hope that with this re-opening, we can come together in person again soon. I realized one thing for sure. The Pueri Cantores Festival gives a new meaning to Hope. Together, we can conquer anything in faith and in song. Nothing can stop us from praising God and from growing as a community of believers.

Singing, music, and my religion are important components of my identity that shaped who I am today. I am grateful to have the opportunity to be a part of Mary, Mother of God Parish Children's Choir and Pueri Cantores. I hope to continue implementing music in my future by singing in the Adult Choir of my parish and playing the piano. I also hope that one day, I learn to play the guitar.



Samantha with her fellow singers at the Pueri Cantores Chicago Festival

Would you like to feature one of your choristers in our new "Meet the Singers" series?
Please send your singer's write up, photos, and/or videos to info@pchoirs.org.

Choirs in Quarantine

Did you see our final "Choirs in Quarantine" issue below? Thank you to all the church and school choirs that submitted their activities and allowed us to share them with our Pueri Cantores community. Thank you for keeping the beauty of sacred music alive through the youth of Our Church. We hope this publication created a sense of unity during difficult times and helped to spread joy and meaning in your lives. Catch up on all the "Choirs in Quarantine" issues [HERE](#).



Choirs in Quarantine

Keeping the children singing during the pandemic



June 29, 2021

Vol. 5, Issue 3



"Our school choir rehearsed via Zoom throughout this school year until May 20th when we had our first in-person rehearsal since March of 2020!

We successfully recorded 3 songs for our virtual Spring Concert. The video above is both our Cherub and Choristers singing "I Want to Thank You." [HERE](#) is the Chorister Schola singing "Share God's Love," and [HERE](#) are the Choristers singing "Children of the Light."

The students truly amazed me with their dedication and enthusiasm for choir throughout the pandemic."

-Cheryl Pelzer, Choir Director
St. Margaret Mary School, Winter Park, FL



"Holy Family Catholic School is in a small town in Arcadia, WI, with only 180 students in grades preK-8. Fortunately, this year our school managed to run school in person 4 days a week. Although it was a rocky year having to quarantine many, including the entire 7th grade, we still managed to have music in some way.

Our classes could not play/sing together so I got creative with

GarageBand, Acapella and iMovie to put together our concerts. This piece, "Were You There," was our project the week before Holy Week and included children in grades 1-8. Enjoy!"

-Elizabeth Bork, Music Teacher
Holy Family School, Arcadia, WI

Choir Organizational Tip

Re-forming Your Youth Choirs in a Post-COVID Age

Over the course of this wretched pandemic our youth choirs have taken a tremendous hit. When considering the affect this extended period of vocal dormancy has had on our younger singers, and all the physical and physiological changes that have taken place in their bodies over the year and a half, perhaps the best thing we can do as choir directors is to get to know our choristers and their continually developing instruments.

In this regard the "Vocal Assessment" is an invaluable tool, both to renew our relationships with the children and teen choir members, learn about their interests and potential schedule conflicts, and discover how their voices have changed over the many months. Take care not to employ the off-putting definition "Audition", as that can have negative connotations. In my experience this task is best accomplished by interviewing/assessing two or three singers at a time. Ideally, schedule this series of "Free Vocal Assessments!" in the 2-3 weeks prior to the initial rehearsal, and plan for approximately 5-7 minutes per singer. This assessment is especially important when working with boys who are approaching puberty and are getting an entirely new range of equipment. The first rehearsal back in place is the wrong time to learn that

your strongest boy treble from March of 2020 is now an unconfident bass, trying to control a very unpredictable instrument. A gentle assessment will allow the conductor to identify any shift in his range, and thus aid in the placement of the boy into the proper section.

As we, at long last, are able to return to singing, we choir directors will be well served by building some protracted time at the beginning of each rehearsal for an extended period of vocalization, and a review of good choral habits. Don't brush off the warm-up period in a rush to begin working on repertoire, but rather embrace that period as a time to re-form your ensemble and allow your singers ample time to find their voices within the section and remember the thrill of singing God's praise! Review posture and alignment, proper breathing - deep and diaphragmatic - without tension, and remember that the vocalization period:

1. Awakens the eyes, ears, and lungs of the choir member
2. Engages the eyes, ears, and "musical leadership" of the conductor
3. Focuses and tunes the ensemble
4. Releases physical tension and readies the ensemble for rehearsal

For the first 4-6 weeks back in rehearsals plan on a slow, careful vocalization period of 10 minutes, and an additional 5-10 minutes per rehearsal reviewing music theory and sight reading, so as to both build back your choral ensemble's sound, but also their musicianship.

Choir Organizational Tip brought to you by Paul French
President, American Federation Pueri Cantores
Director of Music, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Chicago, IL

Reimagining the 21st Century Choral Rehearsal



Click on the video above to watch Dr. Richard Robbins' presentation from the NCEA 2021 National Convention. Description: Choir directors and music teachers across the country have radically transformed their curricula in various combinations of face-to-face, hybrid,

and distance learning. What are the opportunities for growth here, in the face of these challenges? Dr. Richard Robbins, Director of Choral Activities at the University of Minnesota Duluth and a consultant for choral programs across the country, discusses various modes of delivery and the renewed focus on assessment and rehearsal planning that directors are now navigating. Ideas for assessment, repertoire, rehearsal, and tips for using some of the more popular forms of online learning are discussed.

Free Choir Uniforms for Girls



The *Spirito Singers* of Oak Brooke, IL are changing their uniform for their Ragazze singers, which has left them with around 80 uniforms that they'd like to gift to another organization. The uniforms are pictured on the left and consist of a black and gold top and short black skirt. If interested, please contact Mary Jean Adkins at mjadkins@spiritosingers.org.

Job Postings

Do you have a job posting for a choir director, music teacher, or worship leader position at your church or school? AFPC would be happy to advertise the position through our extensive communication channels. Just email the job description with contact information to info@pcchoirs.org.

Support Pueri Cantores today, and you can make a difference in the lives of the youth of Our Church tomorrow!

Encounters with sacred music can have a profound, transformational and lasting impact on the lives of young people. By bringing Catholic youth together to sing beautiful music from the Church's rich historical repertoire, the American Federation Pueri Cantores provides a unique opportunity to educate and engage these young singers in their faith and in the arts. In addition, Pueri Cantores offers resources and educational opportunities to conductors to assist with their knowledge and training. Through its work, Pueri Cantores seeks to bring the peace of Christ to our cities, our nation, and our world.

[Make a Gift Here](#)



American Federation Pueri Cantores

www.pcchoirs.org / 714-633-7554 / info@pcchoirs.org

