



AMERICAN FEDERATION PUERI CANTORES

The Vatican based official student choral organization of the Catholic Church



National Catholic High School Choral Festivals & Pueri Cantores Choral Festivals

March 2021

AFPC NEWSLETTER

Vol 13, Issue 1

2022 Pueri Cantores Festival Season

What a year it's been! We hope you and your families have remained safe and healthy during these uncertain and trying times. It's hard to believe that this time last year the pandemic was becoming a true reality, and that here at AFPC we had to make the difficult (yet necessary) decision to cancel the remaining 2020 Festivals. One year later and we are in much the same position, having to cancel our entire 2021 Spring Festival season.

As sad as it is to think that we have missed out on two years of Festivals, we are hopeful that we will be able to gather again in 2022, and thus the AFPC office has begun making arrangements to ensure a robust and exciting 2022 Festival season. As eager 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 stay tuned for more details soon!

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Virtual Spring Choir Festival

While we are unable to gather in person for our annual spring Festivals, we are happy to announce that we will be hosting a VIRTUAL Choir Festival in

May for singers in grades 3-8 across the country! The brochure with more details will be available soon. Space will be limited, but we hope some of your choristers will be able to join us!



SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, May 22

PUERI CANTORES

VIRTUAL SPRING FESTIVAL

for singers in grades 3-8

Unite with choristers across the country for this unique event including:

- Zoom rehearsals with guest conductors
- Recorded individual performances
- Learning two repertoire pieces
- Live viewing party on June 12 of official virtual choir festival

More information will be announced soon!



Meet the Singers



McKenzie Lancaster

Grade 9

Church of St. Mary Children's Choir, Rutherford, NJ

The Church of St. Mary Children's Choir has been an important part of my life since I first joined the choir in the second grade. In choir I have enjoyed singing and learning with my friends. Miss Andrea, our choir teacher, is not only a brilliant singer, but she has also been a wonderful role model and mentor. At rehearsals, we explore the many components of singing as well as much of Jesus' teaching. Despite the pandemic, we found ways to continue learning with rehearsals on Zoom. There, Miss Andrea teaches us about both music and the Bible. Whenever we learn a new song, she goes in detail about what it is about and how it relates to our faith.

One of my favorite parts of choir was when we would go to Pueri Cantores festivals in New York City. It was really interesting to learn new songs and to meet new people. The churches we visited were so beautiful, especially St. Patrick's Cathedral, as were the songs that we sang. In addition, we sang at the Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart in Newark, New Jersey, which is a magnificent and historical church. Between the glorious churches in big cities and our home at St. Mary, we have grown as a choir and as individuals who love Jesus.

Throughout the pandemic I have missed going to choir. Singing during mass each Sunday was special and I am looking forward to better days when we can return to join the celebration at Mass. Choir is such a big part of my life and I sincerely recommend that anyone who may be interested consider joining a choir in their local church! My decision to be a part of choir has made an immeasurable difference in my life.



McKenzie with fellow singers at Pueri Cantores Festival, St. Patrick's Cathedral, NYC

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@pcchoirs.org.

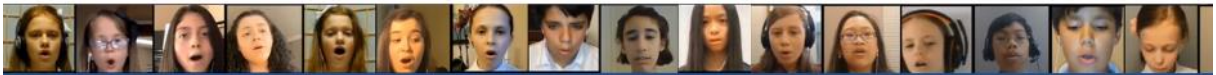
Choirs in Quarantine

Have you seen our latest "Choirs in Quarantine" issue below? During a time of uncertainty and separation, we wanted to create a sense of unity by sharing youth choir activities across the country. While the pandemic continues to limit choral activities in our Catholic schools and churches, music educators and choir directors have found creative ways to engage their singers. The youth of our Church are keeping the beauty of sacred music alive, and we hope it has helped to spread hope and happiness in your lives!



Choirs in Quarantine

Keeping the children singing during the pandemic



March 9, 2021

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"We became and have remained a Zooming choir since March of last year. Student cantors and small scholas (up to 5 singers) lead the music at weekly school Mass which is live-streamed to the classrooms and the homes of virtual students.

A small group of middle school singers sang with masks, and socially distanced, at the outdoor Christmas event at San Pedro Retreat Center.



The school choir, Cherubs and Choristers, participated in a virtually recorded Christmas Concert which was a gift to the greater school community.

Though very different and somewhat challenging, we continue to connect & support each other, and our community, through our song. For this, we are blessed!"

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

"This year our Crusaders created a one-of-a-kind Christmas STREAM Program. The annual program has always been one of the highlights of the school year. Families, students, teachers, and staff gather in prayer to share in the anticipation and the joys of the Christmas season. This year, however, COVID-19 created new challenges and limitations that not only affected the Christmas Program but also developed it further.

Wearing masks and adhering to social regulations are not the key ingredients to a well-executed performance. We utilized this unique situation to introduce music technology in an innovative and modern way. Students explored music technology and engineering that have never been done before at CtR. They engaged in the process of recording music, video production, and acting.



Students were forced to really listen while intoning and blending their voices. Once the sections were mastered, the music room turned directly into a recording studio. Using their Chromebooks and logging into Google Meets, students would sing while listening simultaneously to the accompaniment.

In the end, students embarked on the creative journey of digital and music recording, hopefully instilling a hunger to explore more ways to incorporate the arts with technology and engineering."

-Mary Ann Addis, Fine Arts Director
Chris the Redeemer School, Houston, TX

Click [HERE](#) to view all the "Choirs in Quarantine" issues.

To feature your youth choir activities in future publications of "Choirs in Quarantine," please send your content to info@pcchoirs.org.

Papal Musings on Music



Pope to musicians: Create context in the heart of God's voice

Pope Francis sent a video message to the participants of a music convention that took place on 4-5 February, and urged musicians to draw inspiration from the Bible.

By Vatican News staff writer (See the original article [HERE](#).)

Pope Francis opened his video message by extending his greeting to all who are participating in the 4th International Conference on Music, organised by the Pontifical Council for Culture, in collaboration with the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music and the Pontifical Liturgical Institute of the Ateneo Sant'Anselmo".

The Pope went on to express his hope that their reflections, on the theme 'Texts and Contexts', "may enrich ecclesial communities and those who work in the field of music, an area that is very important for liturgy and evangelisation."

The Bible in music

As is well known, noted the Pope, "the Bible has inspired countless musical expressions, including fundamental pages in the history of music."

He offered the examples of Gregorian chant, Palestrina, and Bach to stress that "it has inspired a great variety of compositions on the five continents" and that various contemporary composers have also dealt with the sacred texts.

"The Church's musical heritage, in fact, is very varied and has ample space, in addition to the liturgy, for concert performances, in schools and catechesis, and even in the theater," he adds.

Pandemic-hit music

Pope Francis then went on to note that since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, activity in the field of music has been greatly reduced.

"My thoughts go out to all those who have been affected: to the musicians, who have seen their lives and professions disrupted by the demands of distancing; to those who have lost their jobs and social contact; to those who have had to cope, in difficult contexts, with the necessary training, education and community life," he said, adding his hope that "this aspect of social life can also be reborn, that we can return to singing and playing and enjoying music together."

Silence in music

The Pope then reflected on the importance of silence in music, saying that "a good musician knows the value of silence, the value of pause."

"The alternation between sound and silence is fruitful and allows for listening, which plays a fundamental role in every dialogue," he said.

The common challenge is to listen to each other, he said, noting that in the liturgy "we are invited to listen to the Word of God."

Music, too, he added, can help the biblical texts to "speak" in new and different cultural contexts, so that the divine Word can effectively reach minds and hearts.

Emergence of a new song

Concluding his video message, Pope Francis asked a question, one which he says "comes naturally in the situation in which we find ourselves, caused by the pandemic."

"Is the silence we live empty or are we in the process of listening? Is it empty or are we in the process of listening? Will we allow, afterwards, the emergence of a new song?"

Finally, he prayed that the "text and context, now present in a new form, might stimulate us to resume our journey together, because 'the unity of hearts is made

deeper by the unity of voices' (Musicam sacram, 5). May voices, musical instruments and compositions continue to express, in the present context, the harmony of God's voice, leading towards 'symphony', that is, universal brotherhood."

Prayer for Lent for Pueri Cantores

PRAYER FOR LENT FOR PUERI CANTORES

Loving God,

We thank you for the gift of music and in a particular way for the work of the International Federation of Pueri Cantores as it seeks to worship you and to share your love through singing and service.

In these days of pandemic, while our voices are silent, our hearts continue to beat to the rhythm of your loving presence among us.

So as we undertake our Lenten journey with our hearts set on the glory of Easter, we pray that you will continue to pour your strength into our hearts.

Continue to anoint the work of our youth choirs that together we may find new and creative ways to use our gifts for the glory of your name.

Keep us focused and united, each playing our part in the work of the Federation until we can once again gather together and sing of your glory.

We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer was created for all the choirs of the International Federation of Pueri Cantores by Fr. James Conlon, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Ann Arbor, MI, Board Member of the American Federation of Pueri Cantores, and member of the International Federation of Pueri Cantores Spirituality Committee.

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](#)



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