



# 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*

October 2019

AFPC NEWSLETTER

Vol 11, Issue 2

### **2020 Pueri Cantores Festivals**

The 2019-2020 Festival season is upon us, and we are thrilled to be able to offer 12 Pueri Cantores Festivals to Catholic school and church youth choirs around the U.S.! Individual Festival brochures, repertoires, and downloadable music can be found at [pcchoirs.org](http://pcchoirs.org). All Festival music and MP3 recordings will be available soon.

Choose a Festival location as your next travel destination or find a Festival near you! Give your singers the opportunity to be part of one of the most memorable and enriching singing experiences of the year by including this special event in your 2019-2020 choral education plan!

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*Be a part of this nationally recognized student choral experience!*



**Announcing  
2020**



**AMERICAN FEDERATION  
PUERI CANTORES**

**National Catholic  
High School  
Choral Festivals**

**&**

**National  
Pueri Cantores  
Choral Festivals**

*Phoenix Treble (grades 4-8)*

*Diocese of Phoenix and neighboring dioceses*

*Saturday, February 1, St. Mary Magdalene Church, Gilbert, AZ*

*South Florida Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)*

*Archdiocese of Miami and neighboring dioceses*

*Saturday, February 22, St. Luke Catholic Church, Palm Springs, FL*

*Chicago Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)*

*Archdiocese of Chicago and neighboring dioceses*

*Saturday, February 29, St. Vincent de Paul Church, Chicago, IL*

*Southern California High School*

*Archdiocese of Los Angeles and neighboring dioceses*

*Friday, March 6, Our Savior Church, University of Southern California  
Los Angeles, CA*

*Mid Atlantic Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)*

*Archdioceses of Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C.  
and neighboring dioceses*

*Saturday, March 21, 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)*

*Archdioceses of Boston and Hartford and neighboring dioceses*

*Saturday, March 21, Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston, MA  
Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, Celebrant*

*Pittsburgh Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)*

*Diocese of Pittsburgh and neighboring dioceses*

*Saturday, March 21, St. Paul Cathedral, Pittsburgh, PA  
Bishop David A. Zubik, Celebrant*

*Fort Wayne-South Bend Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)*  
*(Closed Registration)*

*Wednesday, March 25, St. Pius X Church, Granger, IN  
Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, Celebrant*

*New York High School*

*Archdioceses of New York and Newark  
and neighboring dioceses*

*Friday, March 27, St. Malachy's - The Actors' Chapel  
Times Square, New York, NY*

*New York Treble (grades 4-8)*

*Archdioceses of New York and Newark  
and neighboring dioceses*

*Saturday, March 28, St. John Nepomucene Church, New York, NY*

*Southern California Treble (grades 4-8)*

*Archdiocese of Los Angeles and neighboring dioceses*

*Saturday, March 28, Christ Cathedral, Garden Grove, CA  
Bishop Kevin W. Vann, Celebrant*

*Houston Mixed Voice (grades 4-12)*

*Archdioceses of Galveston-Houston and*

*San Antonio and neighboring dioceses*

*Saturday, March 28, Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Houston, TX*

**The William H. Hannon Scholarship Fund is available for  
choirs in need of financial assistance to purchase music  
for Festival participation.**

*Professional Development Credits available for participating school conductors*

Visit [www.pcchoirs.org](http://www.pcchoirs.org) for schedule updates, repertoires and additional details.

# *Pueri Cantores International Rome Congress*



44<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF  
**PUERI CANTORES**

*Rome*

**DECEMBER 26, 2021 - JANUARY 2, 2022**

YOUR CHOIR IS CORDIALLY INVITED TO JOIN YOUNG SINGERS FROM AROUND  
THE WORLD TO SING THE PEACE OF GOD AT THIS EXTRAORDINARY EVENT

 *Classic Performances*  
BY CORPORATE TRAVEL

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Click on the image above to open a pdf of the UPDATED Congress brochures for more details.

# *Pueri Cantores Around the World*

## News from the Federation Pueri Cantores of Rwanda



### **Feast of S. Domenico Savio in Rwanda**

On March 9th, 2019 almost all of the of choirs of the Rwandan Federation of Pueri Cantores celebrated together the feast of Saint Dominic Savio, the Patron Saint of the Pueri Cantores. This celebration was characterized by two basic activities: singing a Holy Mass together and other social activities.

Each choir organized their activities themselves: visits to medical patients, helping them to solve practical problems: such as applying for medical insurance, providing clothes, food such as porridge and drink. The team of Pueri Cantores also gave support to these patients with psychological, socio-economic and spiritual help. Patients without caregivers were assisted with counseling and basic needs. People that were assisted by Pueri Cantores appreciated their mission and their help.

During the day, celebrated by most of the choirs of national Rwanda federation, the young singers of peace of God also benefited from being taught about Saint Dominic Savio and learnt a great deal about caring for vulnerable people, with various difficulties often caused by poor living conditions. The leaders of the federation, in collaboration with various parishes, organized these lessons of one or two hours to show the children how Saint Dominic Savio, even though he had a very short life, was still able to bring great happiness to others living around him.

## Pueri Cantores Congo: Meeting in Bukavu



Les Petits Chanteurs de l'Archidiocèse de Bukavu avec la Secrétaire Internationale de l'Oeuvre Pontificale Missionnaire (Enfance Missionnaire), la Soeur Roberta venue de Rome pour une session de Formation des encadreurs de groupes d'enfants. La Messe était chantée par 7 chœurs de petits chanteurs.

During a visit of Sr. Roberta of the Pontifical Missionary Council coming from Rome for a meeting of formation of leaders of groups of children. The Mass was accompanied by 7 Pueri Cantores choirs.

## Congrès diocésain des Petits Chanteurs à Gitega / Burundi



For the first time a meeting of children's choirs was organized in the Archdiocese of Gitega/Burundi by a local committee of the diocese. This committee was made up of priests that had a choir in their parish:

- PC Stamroiseet, Gabriel de Mucunguzi, PC Mucunguzi, PC Yoba, PC Mushasha, PC Rukundo and the PC du Bon Pasteur.

The programme consisted of a Holy Mass, a March and a concert for Peace, instruction about the tasks and behavior of young singers based on the bible, the undertakings of the various choirs and a feast for the children.

Another regional congress is planned for July 2019 by the Vicariate of the diocese of Bujumbura. Preparations have begun for a national congress in the autumn of 2020.

## Burundi II: Rencontre de choeurs à Kinama

On August 18, 2019 the choirs of the Parish of Ste. Famille de Kinama, the Pueri Cantores de Buterere (Parish of St. John Paul II) and the Pueri Cantores de Musaga (Parish of Ste. Anne) gathered in Kinama to celebrate Mass for the foundation of the Diocesan Pueri Cantores Federation of Bujumbura. After Mass we gathered in the large parish hall to drink a toast of friendship. The secretary of the Congolese Federation of CPs was present to offer his support. A further meeting is planned in Musaga on November 17, 2019 so as to strengthen links between choirs. (Alexis Ntakirutimana)



## Germany: National Choirs' Festival in Paderborn



Junger Chor Achern-Fautenbach with organizers and guests of the congress (Picture: PC Germany)

From 3 - 7 July 2019, 93 children's and youth choirs, with over 2700 participants from all over Germany, came together to celebrate a festival full of community spirit, faith and music. Under the motto "You are our source", the old Bishops' town of Paderborn was, for five days, filled with choral singing by young people.

The very varied programme, with Prayers for Peace and Church Services; "Encounters" and "Walking Concerts" for a total of 8 venues; "Singing Stations" throughout the city; a flash mob in the market in the midst of the stands, and excursions around the region made Paderborn and the surrounding area a sea of sound and the event became an unforgettable celebration of young people coming together. Thanks to the many young voices, it also became clear to outsiders that Pueri Cantores stands for community in faith, friendship through music and singing for peace. (Anna-Kathrin Dietrich)

## Poland: National Congress in Lublin



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAKRW5iNFwo&feature=youtu.be>

From 4th to 11th July 2019, some 19 Polish choirs gathered in Lublin to celebrate the 10th National Congress of the Polish Federation. In addition, two choirs from Hungary and one from Latvia were also guests of the Congress. The programme, under the theme "Ut unum sint", included everything for a successful congress: an opening ceremony in the main square in front of the castle, choral concerts in parishes open to everyone, two Prayers for Peace in Lublin Cathedral, a very high quality gala concert and the closing Mass celebrated by the Bishop of Lublin who was very impressed by the choirs' performances.

## Choir Organizational Tip

### Recruitment

I'm finding it's more difficult to recruit new singers to my program these days, so here are some helpful tips: Singers might not just sign up for choir on their own. Sometimes you have to go after them! The school principal and the director of religious education need to be your best friends/advocates. Go visit all the school classrooms and talk about the choral program, then invite prospective new members to an open house rehearsal. Invite the parents as well! Choir is FUN, they just need to experience it in person! Be sure to include a break with some refreshments, and give the singers and parents an opportunity to socialize! During a school or parish Mass, see if you can talk to the assembly about the choral program during the announcement period. If you are connected to a school, attend the music classes and listen to the children sing. Then get the contact information of the kids who are GOOD. Write to the family and tell them their child has a gifted voice, and that joining choir is a great opportunity for them to honor their God-given gift! There are about 700 students in our cathedral elementary school (grades K-8) and about 1,600 in our religious education program. We also have excellent public schools in our

town, so these students come to me with some good basic music skills. Not all students will sign up at first. Don't be discouraged! Sometimes the family has to think about it, and then they might join the following year.

### **Be Flexible**

As a member on a sports team, if you miss a practice or a game: "you're out!" Unfortunately, we can't afford to be this stringent with choir. In the eyes of a parent, the most important priorities of a child are completing homework assignments and studying for tests, then family events, sports-sports-sports!, orchestra, school play, and the list goes on. Choir often takes a backseat to these activities. Some of my best singers are also awesome athletes. It's important to be excited about ALL their activities, and then they'll be excited to get to choir as often as they can. Choir is a full-year activity, and other activities are a shorter period of time. If you assemble a strong base of singers, you can survive when certain ones are away. Ask the parents to kindly communicate the activities schedules of their children so you can plan your choral program schedule accordingly. This is Columbus Day Weekend, and here in New York, I already know I'll be missing a number of singers. I use the Royal School of Church Music training scheme (adapted version) where the choristers get points for each rehearsal, Mass, and performance they attend. The singers receive medals, ribbons, and titles depending on how many points they accumulate. The charts are posted on our bulletin board for all to see. This procedure really helps to get the choristers there as often as possible!

### **Vocal Development**

Have a good knowledge of basic vocal production: body stretching, breathing, consonants, then vocalizes. I start in the center of their range, go up fairly high, then lower in the range, then higher, then lower. Be sure to go lower for the boys whose voices are dropping. They need to feel special, but also develop that part of the range. Then go higher for the ones who can show off those soprano high Cs! We sing in a very large building with moderate acoustical properties at my church. I blend both ranges: chest voice as well as head. I know the "old school" method was head tone only. In recent decades, even the finest British choir masters have incorporated the chest voice into the production for color and power!

Once children find their voices, they LOVE to sing. Parents tell me that their children sing all the time around the house, in the car, in the shower, and while doing homework! Give singers good vocal exercises, solfege, and melodies to practice at home. They also love sustaining! Play a game of: "how long can they hold a note?" Especially when staggering the breath, some can hold it up to 3 minutes!

### **Perform WITH your Adult/Teen Choirs**

At St. Agnes, we have brothers, sisters, cousins, moms, dads, uncles, aunts, and grandparents. What is more beautiful than singing with another family member at Mass? This will build a stronger community, and the singers will learn from each other! Most advanced teens/young adults have great choral skills. Well-developed youth singers have NO FEAR of the high notes. Each age group will learn from the other! There's no need to worry about their voices blending either. I'm amazed, how, in the course of a rehearsal, their various qualities (and indeed varied!) will begin to meld into one sonority! This is especially true if you are training various ages. The younger voices will help to "clean" the production of more mature instruments. The strength of adult voices helps to demonstrate to the young singers the possibility of a healthier production in their voices!

On November 10 at St. Agnes, we will have a "Choir Recognition" Mass, where ALL singers in ALL choirs will sing together and be recognized!

### **Special Events to Build Enthusiasm**

Yes, the primary purpose of choir is to prepare for the liturgy and help people pray with the aid of beautiful sacred music and singing. Singing in choir makes the Mass more enjoyable for singers too!

In addition, "special events" further create enthusiasm in your choir. My program has developed so much over the years and we are doing major high visibility events, such as singing the Mozart "Requiem" in German Latin at St. Stephen's Cathedral with the director of the Vienna Boys Choir! Even a simple pizza party or refreshments during rehearsal break will get the singers super excited! Go get ice cream on the practice after Holy Week or organize a trip to an amusement park to thank them for their amazing singing on Easter. This past August we sang the National Anthem at Citifield for once of the biggest Mets/Nationals Games of the year with 37,000 fans in attendance! This was an unforgettable night with 180 family members and friends sitting together in a reserved area of the stadium!

You can also take your choir to sing during Mass or perform a concert in another church with another youth choir! The exchange is priceless! A Pueri Cantores Festival is a FANTASTIC way to build enthusiasm, interest and continuity in your choir! If you have a small choir and are developing the program, this is a GREAT opportunity to see what is possible for your singers in the future! It's not often that your choristers will get see what it is like to sing in a large combined ensemble!

### **A Few More Thoughts**

Love and value your singers! Consider them YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION! Children are unbelievably intuitive! If you are genuine and treat them with respect,

you will get the same in return. Talk to them like you would a friend. Listen to their opinions, and invite them to speak their minds. Allow them time for conversation and socialization, and then when rehearsals start again they will be more focused!

Never embarrass a child! They are revealing their inner person by singing, so make them feel comfortable and confident. Some children are very sensitive! Others can be tougher, so a stronger approach might be needed. Each child is different, and we need to acknowledge and honor those differences.

Let the smart, talented, leaders of the group "Be the Leaders!" These beautiful young Catholics are the ones making the music. Empower them! Work hard, but play hard too! If they are having fun, they won't even realize how hard they are working!

Choir Organizational Tip brought to you by Michael Bower, Director of Music at St. Agnes Cathedral, Rockville Centre, NY

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## Pueri Cantores on Facebook



**NEW! Are you a current member of AFPC? A new Facebook group has been created for our members to interact with each other, share fundraising and organizational tips, discuss repertoire, share experiences as a choir director and musician, encourage collaboration, and make connecting with like-minded individuals across the U.S. easier! Click [HERE](#) to request to join the group if you are a member of AFPC.**

**Please encourage your colleagues, singers, family and friends to "like" AFPC on Facebook. Individual photo albums will be posted for each U.S. Festival next year. Encourage your choir to serve the Church and community and share their experiences. Send us photos and videos of your activities and they will be featured on our Facebook page.**

**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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