

The Catholic Voice



Choir members from St. John Paul II Academy and V.J. and Angela Skutt Catholic High School, both in Omaha, and St. John's Catholic High School in Beloit, Kansas, gather for a photo after Mass at the 2026 Omaha Pueri Cantores High School Choral Festival, held March 20 at St. Cecilia Cathedral. SUSAN SZALEWSKI

EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

Listen as choristers join voices in sacred song

March 26, 2026 by [Susan Szalewski](#)

About 50 teen choir members filled [St. Cecilia Cathedral](#) with the beautiful sound of sacred music during the 2026 Omaha Pueri Cantores High School Choral Festival.

The March 20 event was the first of its kind for the archdiocese, drawing choristers from [V.J. and Angela Skutt Catholic High School](#) and [St. John Paul II Academy](#), both in Omaha, and St. John's Catholic High School in Beloit, Kansas.

Pueri Cantores – Latin for young singers – is an international student choral organization, which consists of 32 federations and involves 70,000 young singers worldwide. Its mission is to evangelize and catechize students through sacred music, helping them grow in the Catholic faith.

Organizers of the Omaha Pueri Cantores hope to continue the choral festival next year and possibly involve more schools and choirs.

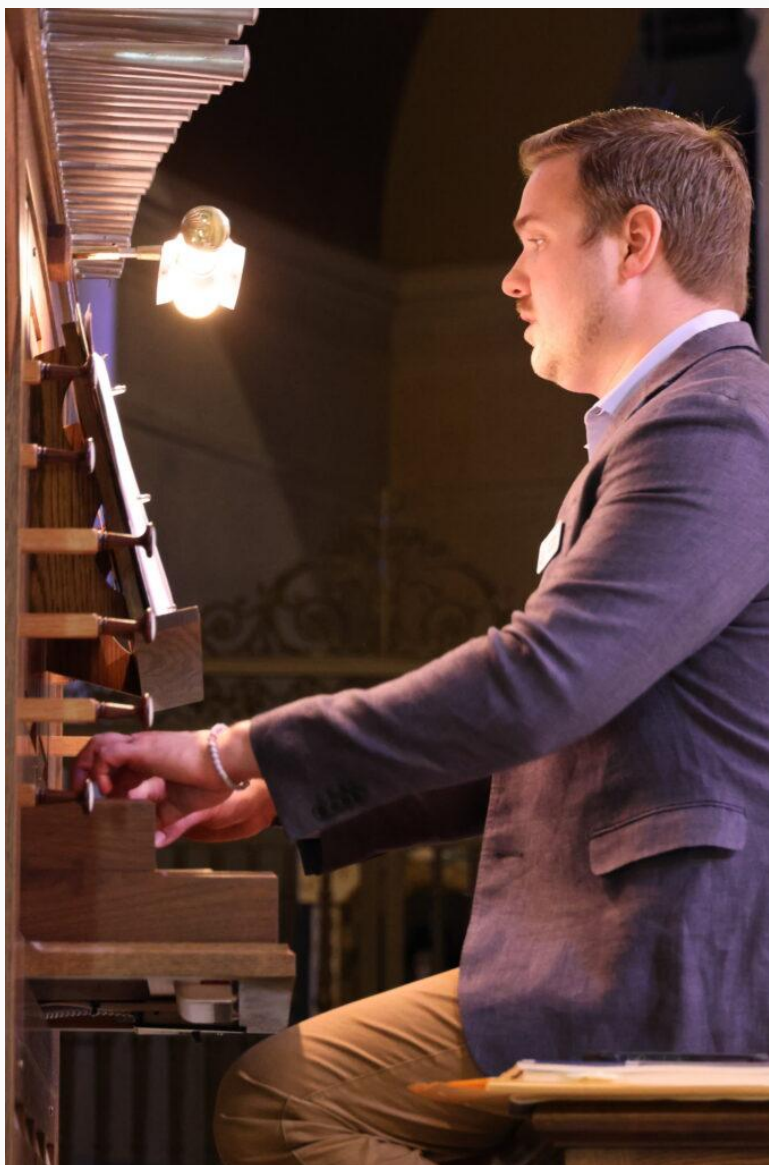


The daylong event at St. Cecilia concluded with Mass celebrated by Archbishop Michael G. McGovern. Family members, friends and other worshipers were in attendance for the liturgy and its uplifting music. Individual school choirs had rehearsed the choral pieces before March 20 and finessed the music as a combined group earlier that day.

Richard Carrillo, assistant professor and director of choral activities at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, served as choir conductor.



Singing in a space like the cathedral is a unique experience for any vocalist. It can be both fun and challenging, said Michael Emmerich, archdiocesan director of liturgical formation as well as an organist and singer.



The cathedral's vast sanctuary and its building materials affect the acoustics, allowing sound to billow and bounce around the space, Emmerich said.

The students sang in various places in the cathedral and with three different organs, including the grandest, the Martin Pasi Opus 14 dual-temperament organ in the choir loft. The instrument is 34 feet tall, weighs 25 tons and has 6,000 pipes.

Because of the cathedral's acoustics, the organ continues to "sing" for up to seven seconds after the organist stops playing.

For a choral prelude and the Mass, the students sang from the front pews at St. Cecilia. They can be heard in a video provided by St. John Paul II Academy:







