

Notes From the Choir Loft, January 10th, 2019

Did you know that the choir has OPEN rehearsals? This means that any time you want to come and watch/listen to the choir in rehearsal, you can; the schedule is in the bulletin.

I've heard countless reasons why people don't want to sing in the choir: "I'm not very good," "I don't have a good voice," "I don't have the time." All these reasons have different levels of credibility, and I find that some have very solid credibility and certainly apply. For some, there's just too much of LIFE going on. For others, their reasons might be that they don't know anything about those little round and square black dots on the paper.

My favorite thought about all of that is that I have some good comebacks to the reasons. "I'm not very good": well, I'm a decent teacher. Just listen to the choir at high Masses; most choir members didn't learn all that by magic. "I don't have a good voice": you can speak. Do you have some scratchiness to your voice? No? The bottom line is, if you can speak, you can sing with some training and experience. "I don't have time": well, for that one, fair enough; we make time for the things that are important to us. "Singing is for women" (I hear that one way too often). Well, some examples: monks sing the office, priests sing the office; in the medieval times if you didn't sing, you were considered effeminate. Isn't it interesting how the Devil has changed that sensibility in the way modern men think about masculinity? Singing chant is very masculine.

In regard to the learning part, more and more, we're going to be implementing courses to allow individuals to work on different aspects of singing. In fact, we're starting with another of our vocal pedagogy conferences on the **23rd of February**; it's an all-day conference that goes over the usage of your voice and how you can make it work even better by learning to adjust certain muscle groups. If you're curious about it, just ask Fr. Jackson how the conference helped him. More information about that will be forthcoming in bulletins.

Many have heard the phrase "to sing is to pray twice"; unfortunately, that's a misquote. The real phrase is "To sing well is to pray twice." What does that mean? Only good singers get to pray twice? No, what it means is that when you actively participate in the Mass as a singer and not just an observer, you receive more graces than simply reciting a prayer. The *Kyriale* in a sense is a prayer; the hymns in a sense are prayers. Therefore to put EFFORT into singing them IS singing well. To put EFFORT into learning to sing better is singing well. And with all of this, you pray twice because you have put effort into singing well.

When I listen to the congregation sing at high Mass, I hear many of you singing. Why not give the choir a try, and see how it's done from the inside?

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