
S T . C E C I L I A



CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

CHOIR MEMBER HANDBOOK

2016-2017

Mission of the Saint Cecilia Choir

Through the glorious gift of music:

We give glory and praise to God.

*We assist the worship of our faith community
through our music.*

*We provide a nurturing environment for our members
and offer a source of prayer, community and support.*

What Does Membership in the Saint Cecilia Choir Involve?

This *Handbook* is intended to provide general information to new and long-standing members of the Choir. It describes the expectations the ministry and its members have of each other and offers guidelines in a variety of areas.

Members of the St. Cecilia Choir are subject to required levels of attendance (at rehearsals and Liturgies) and preparation. If you anticipate that you will be experiencing excessive absences due to work or family obligations at any point during the Choir year, please see the Director for guidance.

Sections and Section Leaders

The Saint Cecilia Choir is divided into sections. From the highest voice to the lowest, these are Sopranos and Altos (women's voices) and Tenors and Basses (men's voices.) Each section has a section leader who is there to help you. The Section Leader's job is to help you learn your part. Your section leader is also the person to call if you have a question or concern about something besides music. Of course, you can also contact the Director if such questions arise.

Rehearsals

The Saint Cecilia Choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 9 PM. Rehearsals will begin and end promptly at the appointed time, unless you are informed otherwise in advance. Arrive a little early if you would like time to visit with your friends before we begin. All rehearsals take place in the Church unless you are otherwise notified. If you will be absent, call your Section Leader or the Director so we'll know you are okay. But remember, each rehearsal is important in preparing not only for the upcoming Sunday, but future Sundays and Feasts. Even if you know all the music, many notes are given on important things like breathing, phrasing and interpretation. The Director relies on every member knowing these things so the Choir can produce a unified and persuasive sound.

Extra Rehearsals

During most of the year, the regular scheduled rehearsal is enough time to prepare our music. During the busier times of the year however (such as Christmas and Easter), it may be necessary to have additional rehearsals, or sectional or instrumental rehearsals. These rehearsals are in addition to the regular rehearsal, and will be held either in the Music Room, the Church, or possibly in members' homes. You are strongly encouraged to make time for them. Sectional rehearsals are a fun way to get to know others in your section better, and the easiest way to learn your music and make sure you have all the markings noted in your part. You may also be asked to attend an occasional Saturday morning rehearsal, as needed.

Absences and Tardiness

In order for our rehearsal time to be as efficient and productive as possible, it is very important that members show regular attendance and punctuality for the rehearsal. Additionally, the Choir will only produce a full choral sound at Mass when as many members as possible are present.

If you will be absent from rehearsal or Mass, you should inform the Director or your section leader as soon as you know you will be absent. You should also inform us if you know that you will be more than 10 minutes late for a rehearsal or a call time. Please be prompt for all rehearsals and call times.

Music

The Choir performs a wide variety of music throughout the Liturgical Year. The music you use belongs to the Parish and represents a substantial investment. You are responsible for keeping track of it and you may be asked to pay for it if it is lost or destroyed. If you decide to resign from the Choir (which, of course, would never happen) or take a leave of absence, please return your music to the Librarian.

Copying Music

The Saint Cecilia Choir respectfully asks that members do not make photocopies of music. This is a violation of copyright laws. Besides that, the Choir feels it is just in seeing to it that composers, arrangers and publishers of music continue to make a living at their craft. To make unauthorized copies deprives them of due income.

Folders

When you first join the Choir, you start out as a discerning member. After you have completed one month of rehearsals, you become an active member and are given a permanent folder of music and Choir book. It is at that time that you will also begin singing with the Choir at mass. Before you become an active member, please return your folder and book to the Librarian at the end of each rehearsal. Folders are kept in the numbered slots in the Choir access way.

Markings

Be sure to bring your music and pencil to every rehearsal! There are only a few spare copies (if any). Besides, you will want to mark notes in your music as the Director points out problems and describes interpretation. Always bring a pencil to mark your music. Someone else may get the copy you are using later and need to make different markings. Please, don't use pens or highlighters to mark your part. If it is difficult to follow your part in a particular piece, don't mark through the other parts; instead, ask your Section Leader to help you find a way to make your part easier to find.

When We Are Singing at Mass

When you are singing at Mass, focus your attention on the Director and your music. When the focus should be elsewhere (such as during the readings or Eucharistic Prayer), please don't be sifting through your music or talking. This is very distracting to the assembly.

Stay relaxed and maintain a natural comfortable position when you are singing. Don't move around unless you are told to do so, but remember to keep your knees relaxed (not locked), and feel free to shift your weight from one foot to the other. When we are singing, remember that the assembly can see you as well as hear you. Try to maintain a pleasant look on your face. You might even try smiling once and a while (yikes!)

Please refrain from eating or drinking anything except water from a water bottle, and there is no chewing gum.

Before Mass Begins

Choir members are asked to arrive at the Music Room at the time listed on the yearly calendar. This is usually at 10:15 am for the 11 am Mass. This will allow ample time to warm-up and go over music. When we have finished warming-up and move into the Church, be considerate of the people arriving for Mass and keep your voices down. It doesn't take much for a large group to suddenly become very loud. Use that time to prepare yourself spiritually for Mass.

Attire

The general rule regarding attire for Ministers at Liturgy is that we should be dressed on the “nicer side” of how the community dresses as a whole to come to Church. Women should wear a dress, skirt or dress pants and a blouse. Men should wear dress pants, a nice shirt, and a tie. *No one should wear jeans, shorts or sweat outfits. EVER!* Please refrain from using heavily scented perfumes/colognes, but the use of deodorant is appreciated.

Prayer

All rehearsals begin and/or end with prayer. We are here to pray with and for one another. If you have a specific prayer request, you will have an opportunity to voice it yourself during prayer time. If you are not able to be at rehearsal and need a prayer intention, contact your Section Leader or the Director.

Workshops

Various workshops are scheduled throughout the year around our Archdiocese and offer a wonderful opportunity to gain deeper insight and understanding of our ministry and liturgical music. Choir members are strongly encouraged to attend periodic workshops. The more education our members receive, the more successful we will be in ministering to our faith community. Most workshops may require a registration and/or materials fee. Financial Aid is available to those who would like to attend and cannot afford the extra expense. Talk to the Director if you are interested and in need of such assistance.

Socials

The Choir usually hosts social events for its members throughout the year. These provide an opportunity to get to know other members of the Choir.

Service to Others

As ministers of the Church, we feel it is our responsibility to continue our ministry outside of the Church into the world around us through our actions and deeds. Members may be asked to participate in various service projects during the year. If you have an idea for a project or service, please contact the Service Projects Coordinator or the Director.

Glossary of Common Music Terms

1. A capella - to sing in church style; generally unaccompanied.
2. Accelerando (Accel) - to go faster.
3. Accidentals - a sharp, flat, or natural inserted in the notation for the purpose of altering the pitch of a written note for the remainder of that measure.
4. Anthem - a sacred composition based on a Scriptural text, or with a joyful, worshipful theme.
5. A tempo - a return to the original rate of speed that preceded a change in tempo.
6. Chord - the sounding of two or more tones together.
7. Chromatic - to move up or down by half steps.
8. Coda - a closing movement which brings the song to a finale.
9. Con - with.
10. Crescendo (Cres. or $<$) - to swell or gradually increase a tone in loudness.
11. Decrescendo (Decres. or $>$) - to decrease a tone gradually in loudness.
12. Diatonic - to move step-wise either by whole or half steps, but moving to some form of the next lettered note of the scale.
13. Diminuendo (Dim.) - to diminish gradually in power of tone.
14. D. C. (da capo) - repeat from the beginning of the song.
15. D. S. (dal segno) - go back to the sign and repeat.
16. Falsetto - the artificial tones of the voice making the voice considerably higher than its normal range.
17. Fermata - means that a note is to be prolonged.
18. Forte (F, FF, FFF) - loud, louder, loudest.
19. Half-voice - keeping the natural quality of the voice but using only one-half of the normal volume of tone.

20. Intonation - the production of tone as it applies to giving a tone the right quality so that it is exactly on pitch or in tune.
21. Key - a pattern of notes built around one central note known as the tonic note.
22. Legato (Leg.) - to perform the passage in a smooth and connected manner, with no break between the tones.
23. Octave - a distance of eight tones.
24. Phrase - any short melodic figure or passage complete in itself and unbroken in continuity.
25. Poco - little
26. Rallentando (Rall.) - to grow gradually slower and slower.
27. Ritard (rit.) - to perform a portion of a song at a slower rate of speed than the original tempo.
28. Rubato - a flexibility and elasticity of tempo in order to bring out the meaning of certain words.
29. Staccato - abruptly disconnecting and emphasizing individual notes.
30. Staggered Breathing - when individual choir members breathe at various times in order to give the effect of one long sustained phrase.
31. Syncopation - putting the accent on a weak part of a beat or on a weak beat of a measure rather than where the accent normally comes.
32. Tempo - the speed at which a song is performed.
33. Triplet - three notes grouped together and performed in the amount of time in which two notes would normally be sung or played.
34. Tutti - after a solo or solo group has sung or played, indicates that the entire group should join together with full power and strength.
35. Unison - when the entire choir sings together the same notes on the same pitch or at an octave apart.
36. Vibrato - the natural, pulsating effect in a voice that gives it life and interest and does not result in a variation of pitch. When this pulsating effect becomes uncontrolled, however, it then becomes a tremolo.

Who's Who

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