

Greetings, St. Bartholomew Parishioners! Once again, we find ourselves in the month of August, fall will soon be upon us. With the return of many people in our community from various vacation destinations and the start of another school year for the children of our parish, our church choirs will once again be resuming regular rehearsals, and before long will be singing at our many liturgies throughout the coming 2026-2027 choir season.

Vibrant and active choirs are an integral part of any thriving Catholic parish, and St. Bartholomew's is certainly no exception. The Constitution on Sacred Liturgy explicitly states, "The treasury of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. Choirs must be diligently developed..." (#114). Just as plants need water and nutrients to grow, so too does our Music Ministry need to be watered and cultivated with our own God-given gifts and talents. Last year was especially exciting, as both our adult and children's choirs experienced an invigorating influx of new members. We would love to sustain that growth, and so I humbly but fervently implore and invite every one of you, regardless of your previous singing experience or your perceived musical proficiency, to consider joining (or re-joining) one of the wonderful choirs here at our parish! There is room for all people of all musical backgrounds, whether you have previously sung in a choir at this or another parish or school, or whether you just enjoy singing in the shower or in your car. (I promise you that the acoustics in our church are far better than in any automobile!)

Our **Adult Choir** is open to any member of the parish from high school freshman through adult, and usually sings every Sunday morning at the **12 Noon** Mass starting from the first Sunday in October until early-mid June. The Adult Choir also sings at other special celebrations and feasts throughout the church year, including the Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols Service/Midnight Mass and the liturgies of the Sacred Holy Week Triduum, which include the Great Easter Vigil. The regular rehearsal time for the Adult Choir is from **7:30pm-9pm** on **Thursday evenings** in the choir loft, although during Advent and Lent, rehearsals may go slightly later as we prepare for Christmas and Holy Week. This year, our first rehearsal will take place on **Thursday, September 10th**, starting with fellowship and light refreshments in the narthex of the church at **7pm**. The only requirements for the Adult Choir are an enthusiastic spirit and an ability to be on time. **Prior singing experience is not needed, and the ability to read music is NOT required** (but is definitely a plus!). There is NO audition requirement. (In other words, just come to rehearsal and jump in!) Rehearsals not only focus on the music to be prepared each week, but also on fostering an increased knowledge of the liturgy itself and sacred music. **All voice parts** are welcome and very much needed (And if you don't know your voice part, that's okay too!). However, as always seems to be the case, **we are especially in great need of males to fill our tenor and bass sections**. (When I am at the organ, I hear lots of great singing from the men of the congregation. Come and join us!) Additional information can be found here: <https://stbartseb.org/choir>.

Our **Children's Choir** is directed by **Mrs. Janet DeFreitas** (JanetDeFreitasSTB@gmail.com) and accompanied by me. It is open to all young members of our congregation in grades 3 through 8. The group sings at the **10am Mass** on the second and fourth Sundays of the month starting in October and continuing through Pentecost Sunday, and every Sunday in Advent and Lent. They also sing at several special celebrations throughout the year, including the Children's Liturgy on Christmas Eve, First Penance Services (which take place in January), and First Communion Masses which take place on three Saturday mornings in the Spring. **Again, the ability to read music is a plus but is NOT required**; all one needs is an enthusiastic spirit and ability to follow directions and be on time. As with the Adult Choir, the rehearsals focus not only on preparing for Sunday mass but also fostering increased general knowledge in music as well as our own Catholic faith. Just to clarify, one **need not be** a student of St. Bartholomew School to be a member of our parish Children's Choir. The Children's Choir's regular rehearsal time is **Wednesday afternoons** in the choir loft from **4:30-5:30pm**. I would like to invite any children interested in joining (as well as any returning members) to our first rehearsal on **September 16th**. The Children's Choir handbook can also be found online following the link at <https://stbartseb.org/childrens-choir>, and updated schedules will follow soon.

I hope that you may consider prayerfully giving your time and talents so that our music ministry may continue to contribute meaningfully to our beautifully rich and reverent liturgies. Further announcements will come as September approaches. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or e-mail me in the parish office (732-257-7722 x438 or ngatto@stbartseb.com). Also, feel free to visit the choir loft after any mass, consult our parish website, or just show up at our first rehearsal! Thank you very much, God bless, and I hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,
Mr. Nicholas Gatto, Director of Music/Organist