

GUARDIAN ANGELS PARISH YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA: 2021-2022

Welcome to the 2021-2022 season of joyful, melodic praise! Our directors include professional music educators:

Mrs. Colleen Puscas, Director and Mrs. Kerry Filloramo-Hochdorfer. We are grateful to Lee Carey, Renee Anderson and Donna Ambrosia, who are again this year helping with weekly registration, "crowd control" and all the details that fall under the heading "etc."

REGISTRATION & PARENT TABLE: New registration forms need to be filled out every year.

We are asking that all families please fill out ONE form per family which will be available on the First Night. If you would prefer to fill out the form ahead, you can find it on the parish website, and bring it with you on the First Night. There is usually some kind of handout every week. Please stop by the Parent Table BEFORE or AFTER choir to pick up the handouts for your family.

REHEARSALS: Held in the parish hall Wednesday: 5:45-6:45. Occasionally, we will rehearse in the church. **Picking up your children AFTER choir: We ask that all parents come into the parish hall, QUIETLY, to pick up your children at the end of the rehearsal.** The parking lot is increasingly busy, and vehicles sometimes zip around a corner into the lot unexpectedly. Young People's choir members should not leave the hall until a parent/guardian comes in to get them.

PARENTS AT REHEARSALS: Parents are most welcome at all our rehearsals. However, if you wish to have a conversation with another person, or if you have smaller children that might distract the choir members, please remain on the far side of the hall where the partition is usually drawn. The choir members find it hard to pay attentions with even the smallest distractions. It is even harder, once they are distracted to bring their attention back to singing!

At the end of each Young People's Choir rehearsal, the children netball pray or sing the "Our Father" and/or "Hail Mary". **We ask that EVERYONE (parents, grandparents, smaller children, etc) come join with us in the closing prayer.**

SEATING FOR REHEARSAL: This year we will be following the CDC guidelines (as our Diocese does) for socially distant seating and mask wearing. We understand that wearing a mask is not ideal for singing, but for some of our littlest ones who may be compromised, we ask that all children (who are not vaccinated) wear one. As guidelines change, so will we. Our goal is to keep everyone safe and healthy so remaining in our seating area is very important.

Please instruct younger, smaller children (K-2 who have NOT yet received their 1st communion) to sit in the 1st and 2nd rows, and the older children (who have received 1st communion) to sit in the rows further back, so that we can best see everyone in the choir. This will also help with the distribution of communion at Mass.

CELL PHONES: Are **NOT** to be used during rehearsal or Mass! If this should occur, the cell phone will be taken away and returned at the end of the rehearsal or Mass. In the even of an emergency, the young person may ask one of the directors or parent helpers for permission or assistance.

WEATHER: If the weather is bad, parents are free to keep their children home. **If the Colchester Schools are canceled or dismissed early because of weather, choir will also be canceled.**

SINGING TALENT: Each rehearsal begins with a “sung blessing” for each child. During this blessing each child is called by name, and sings back “God bless you”. This gives us an opportunity to listen to each voice, to welcome them to rehearsal, and to give them God’s blessing. In addition, members of the young people’s choir learn to sing if they stick with it, whether they began the choir with any aptitude for singing or not. Learning to sing “on pitch” has nothing to do with the voice, and **everything** to do with training the **ear**. Children learn by listening to one another, and by being absolutely surrounded by singing for one hour a week.

SOLOS: Children are never required to sing solos at Mass, but do have many opportunities to sing by themselves or with a group at rehearsal and at Mass. If your child would rather not sing a solo at Mass, please make that notation on the Registration Form. You may also let Mrs. Puscas know.

IMPORTANT: Since most solos are quite simple, members are encouraged to have their solos memorized by the rehearsal before the Mass for which they are singing.

DURING MASS: The choir usually sings once a month. The directors feel it is important for the children to learn to pay attention during the Mass and to exhibit the self-control necessary to perform the task of leading the community in song at Mass. Members of the choir are informed of the “choir rules” and will be encouraged to demonstrate proper behavior at rehearsal and Mass.

DRESS CODE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MASS: Nice church clothes. Dress up. No jeans. In the past, it has been our custom to encourage members of the choir to wear “appropriate”, “dressy”, or “Sunday best” clothing. However there are different interpretations of “appropriate”. Keeping in mind that we are in God’s House, the following is recommended:

General: Dress should be clean, tidy (no rips, tears, stains) and **modest**.

Jeans: As always, **jeans** are **not** considered appropriate.

Length: Young people are always growing, so we understand that clothing is in various stages of being too big or too small. However, for girls it is suggested that skirts, dresses, etc be knee length approximately.

Tops: Girls’ tops should not be strapless. If they happen to be strapless, a shrug or some lights sweater can be worn. For teens, please do not show cleavage.

Boys: If you have nice slacks, dress pants, polo shirt, or shirt and tie, wear it! Wear what is most respectful for the occasion.

Finally, We know that Jesus loves us all for what is on the inside, not the outside. However, we can love Him with all that we are by honoring him with neat, respectful clothing when we are leaders of music ministry. If you are unsure about the appropriateness of an article of clothing, please contact one of the Young People's Choir directors.

PRIZES!: There will be a "drawing" each month for a number of prizes to be given out at the first rehearsal following each month's Young People's Mass. (Small prizes donated by parents are always welcome...please sign up on the Registration Form) The prizes are the director's way of saying that you to them as they are learning good behavior in rehearsal and at Mass.

ATTENDANCE: Young people are invited to sing with us as often as they can. Children were among Jesus' favorite people! Although most children are with us for the entire year, many join at different points. There are "seasons" during which some members have not been able to sing at all because of sports, illness, etc. and they join us when their "season" is over. It is entirely permissible for children to join (or rejoin) the choir at any point in the year. We merely as that they learn the music as best they can regardless of when they join the choir.

AGAIN THIS YEAR:In order for the directors to have an accurate accounting of the eligibility of the young people for end-of-the-year choir awards, there will be a "sign in" sheet, where the young people can put a check next to their name at every rehearsal. To be eligible for an end-of-the-year award, the young people must participate in at least four (4) Masses. This includes ample rehearsals for good participation. Again this year, there will be two end-of-the-year awards. An "attendance" awards and a "Did you bring a friend to join choir" award.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES:As a member of the Young People's Choir, children may miss their religious education class on the Sundays when they are the music ministers for the Mass. However, please inform their religious education teacher, so that they will not be marked absent for that particular class. *Please keep in mind that your young person may have a homework assignment to do to make up for not attending the class.*

BATHROOM USE: We encourage the young people to use the restroom BEFORE rehearsal and (especially) BEFORE MASS. It makes our job a little easier. However...they should always feel free to use the restrooms in the hall and church when nature calls. They will be reminded that bathroom time is not "social" time, and therefore will be allowed to use the restrooms one person at a time.

SIGN LANGUAGE: For the most part, we use standard American Sign Language for the "motions" to many of our songs. Since this is the language of hearing impaired people, and not mere choreography, we expect our members to be respectful with this language. If, for some reason, members feel silly or awkward doing these motions, we ask that they merely NOT do

them, rather than to do a mocking version of these signs, which would be offensive to hearing impaired people.

REHEARSAL PLAN: By and large, the rehearsal “methodology” is the following:

Week 1: Learn all or most of the music for the next Mass

Week 2: Review all music learned last week, and learn any remaining music

Week 3: Solos/duets/trios, etc. given out, all music reviewed

Week 4: Final rehearsal. Music **memorized** in preparation for **MASS** on **SUNDAY**