

Greetings, St. Bartholomew parishioners! Once again, it's that time of year where summer is starting to draw to a close. Soon, Labor Day will be here, schools will soon be in session, and our parish choirs will once again again commence their regular rehearsals. As I normally do around this time, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about our various choral groups in the hopes that you might prayerfully consider becoming a part of our vibrant and active music ministry here at St. Bartholomew Parish.

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 either Pentecost or the Feast of Corpus Christi (depending on how the calendar falls). The Adult Choir also sings at other special celebrations and feasts throughout the church year, including Confirmation, the Christmas Eve Mass at Midnight, and the liturgies of the Sacred Triduum, including the Great Easter Vigil. The regular rehearsal time for the Adult Choir is from **7:30pm-9pm** on **Thursday evenings** in the church, 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 6th**, 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. **Ability to read music is not required**, but is definitely a plus if you can. There is NO audition requirement. I certainly hope that all current choir members will return for another exciting season. If you have been a choir member in past years but had to leave us, I would like to cordially invite you to prayerfully consider coming back. If you have never sung with us before, this is the perfect time to start! Rehearsals not only focus on the music to be prepared each week, but also on fostering education both musically and liturgically. **All voice parts** are welcome (And if you don't know your voice part, that's okay, too!). However, as is often the case, **we are always especially on the lookout for enthusiastic males** to help grow our tenor and bass sections. In addition, I would like to especially invite any musically inclined high school-aged parishioners to consider joining us. Singing in the choir is a fantastic way to further enrich one's music education, and many in this age group have become very valuable members of the choir over the years. Our Adult Choir is a very supportive and enthusiastic group that contains members of a wide range of ages, and the young adults of our church are always welcome.

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. They sing 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), First Communion Masses in the Spring, and in combination with our Adult Choir on Holy Thursday. **Again, 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 Sundays but also fostering increased knowledge in music and also of our own Catholic faith and how it relates to our Sunday liturgy. Just as a clarification, 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 church 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 12th**. The Children's Choir handbook can also be found online following Children's Choir link on the "Liturgical Ministries" page on the church's website (www.stbartseb.com).

In addition, I am always on the lookout for any instrumentalists that may wish to join us to enhance the Sunday liturgies. If you play an instrument (especially a woodwind, brass, or string instrument), and might be interested in lending your talents on a Sunday, I would be interested to hear from you, whether you are in high school or an adult. I would, however, require that you be able to read music and have at least some years of playing experience. I know there is a lot of talent in our congregation, so please don't be afraid to contact me.

Further reminders and information about the music ministry will follow 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 x38 or ngatto@stbartseb.com). Sitting at the organ, I am blessed to hear so much wonderful singing from the congregation every weekend, so don't be shy about becoming more involved. Thank you very much, God bless, and I hope to see you in September!

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