

THE LEAVEN



HOME

LOCAL NEWS ▾

WORLD & NATION ▾

COLUMNISTS ▾

MULTIMEDIA ▾

ARCH

Search...



Topeka children's choir sings for pope

POSTED BY MARC & JULIE ANDERSON ON JANUARY 22, 2016 IN LEAVEN NEWS | 45 VIEWS | LEAVE A RESPONSE



The children's choir from Most Pure Heart of Mary Church in Topeka, Kan., sings "Adeste Fideles" as Pope Francis concludes Mass marking the feast of the Epiphany in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Jan. 6. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

by **Marc and Julie Anderson**

mjanderson@theleaven.org

TOPEKA — At age 11, Becca Madden has done something most people only dream of.

She went to Rome and saw the pope.

And then she sang for him.

Becca, along with more than 40 other children, is a member of Most Pure Heart of Mary Parish's Schola Cantorum. More than a year ago, the choir was invited to join the Sistine Chapel Choir, along with choirs from around the world, to participate in the first- ever Children's Festival for Epiphany in Rome. Besides sightseeing, rehearsals and public concerts, the weeklong pilgrimage culminated in the Children's Festival Choir singing for the papal Mass at St. Peter's Basilica on the feast of the Epiphany.

Founded in 2011 under the direction of Lucas Tappan, the Schola Cantorum is a

POPULAR STORIES



Priest assignments announced

1635 VIEWS / POSTED MAY 22, 2015



Bishop Johnston installed: Archbishop Naumann thanked for efforts in Kansas City-St. Joseph

1137 VIEWS / POSTED NOVEMBER 13, 2015



Archbishop Naumann welcomes new bishop named to KCMO

783 VIEWS / POSTED SEPTEMBER 15, 2015



Midwest Stem Cell Therapy Center in Kansas City, Kansas, proves that ethical and effective are a one-two punch that's hard to beat

663 VIEWS / POSTED OCTOBER 16, 2015



St. John the Evangelist named Best Place to Worship in Lawrence

640 VIEWS / POSTED JULY 31, 2015



Strawberry Hill transplant finds love, life's work in corporal work of mercy

637 VIEWS / POSTED DECEMBER 10, 2015



Holy Destinations: Sacred Heart in Baileyville

558 VIEWS / POSTED OCTOBER 8, 2015



Small town grows big-city talent

524 VIEWS / POSTED DECEMBER 18, 2015

EVENTS CALENDAR

choir school modeled in the European cathedral tradition. The school’s mission is “to promote the musical and spiritual development of its members within the context of the Roman Catholic liturgy, forming Christians for the lifelong praise and worship of God.”

The group leads the parish congregation in song a few times each month and gives several concerts throughout the year.

Throughout the week, the choir performed a variety of selections, including: “Behold a Star from Jacob Shining” and “Ding, Dong, Merrily on High.”

And not every performance was planned.

Mary Sutherland, mother of three choir members ranging in age from 12 to 19, said that when the group was touring the Basilica of St. John Lateran, one of the four major basilicas of Rome, the youngsters broke into a spontaneous rendition of “Silent Night.”

“It wasn’t like the choir directors said, ‘We’re going to sing now.’ The children just sang,” said Sutherland.

“The children were just in awe of the church’s beauty, and so they offered their gift of song,” she added. “Everyone was just speechless.”

The tourists in the church soon took note and moved closer to hear better.

“They were all drawn to the children,” said Sutherland, “and they started gathering around them.”

Another high point was the choir’s performance of its specially commissioned version of “Ave Maria” composed by Colin Mawby, the former master of music at Westminster Cathedral in London. The Schola Cantorum performed the piece for the first time during a public concert at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, and Mawby flew to Rome for the premiere.

Choir member Will Sutherland, 17, counts the piece among his favorites.

“The piece has a particularly solemn sound. It puts your heart in a reflective mood. It’s very moving,” he said.

Although invitations were sent to choirs across the globe, most, if not all, of the participating choirs hailed from the United States. The Schola Cantorum ended up joining choirs from Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Merritt Island, Florida, among others.

Both Tappan and Most Pure Heart pastor Father Greg Hammes received many compliments on the choir.

“I was very, very proud of them. They performed wonderfully,” said Father Hammes. “I might be a little biased, but they were the best. They really were.”

Tappan said some of the other choir directors came up to him and remarked on how well-trained the children were, but it wasn’t just choir directors that complimented his crew.

One day, the group was running a little late for a scheduled event. To make up time, members clad in their choir robes literally ran the streets of Rome past the Trevi Fountain.

« JANUARY 2016 »						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

WED **‘Late Nite Catechism’**
27 January 13 - January 31

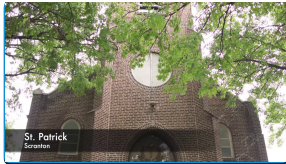
THU **‘Living with the Grief of Suicide’**
28 January 28 @ 9:00 am - 4:00 pm

SAT **Centering Prayer at Sanctuary of Hope**
30 January 30 @ 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

SAT **Spaghetti Dinner at Holy Cross in Overland Park**
30 January 30 @ 4:30 pm - 7:30 pm

RECENT VIDEOS

01:47



"There were people everywhere and so we had to be a little assertive," Tappan said.

Some of the kids lost shoes while trying to keep up, and much of the time, the kids were singing. Tappan admitted it made an interesting sight, but the kids loved it. And tourists on the streets complimented them on their voices as they returned some of their shoes.

The weeklong festival's climax at St. Peter's Basilica on the feast of the Epiphany was, of course, the moment for which everyone had been preparing for months.

During the Mass, Will, a bass, ended up near the back of the main altar. Although his view was somewhat obstructed, he remembers watching Pope Francis process in for Mass.

"He was probably 50 to 75 yards away, although it's hard to judge the distance. So, he wasn't extremely close to me, but still much closer than I'll ever be again," he said.

"It was just like, 'Wow! That's our Holy Father and I'm able to see him,'" he added. "It's something I never expected to be able to do in my life."

Due to the seating arrangement, some choir members ended up in the first few rows.

"I was in the third row. I got to see him up close," said Becca, a soprano. "It was amazing, because most people never get to see him. And I saw him, and I'm a kid!"

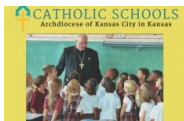
All in all, Tappan said he's extremely proud of the choir. And he's already looking forward to the group's next performance, a concert on Jan. 31 at 3 p.m. at the church during which the group will share some selections from the festival, along with pictures and stories.

Share this:

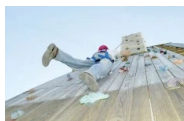


POSTED IN LEAVEN NEWS

Related Posts



Catholic schools are more important than ever→



Registration for summer camp begins on Jan. 26→



Resources available to rural teens in crisis→



Holy Destinations: St. Patrick in Scranton→

Leave a Reply