

Résumé • Jeff Ostrowski

What I Do

My expertise is recruiting choir members *from the parish* and teaching them authentic sacred music. Parishioners who embark upon this journey don't just “sing in the choir.” Rather, they take part in a **PROGRAM** of musical formation—and along the way, they learn about sacred theology, the divine office, our Lord, our blessed mother, the saints, the great Catholic composers, the liturgical year, and so forth.

The Art Of This

Why do my singers return year after year? How is it possible that virtually none ever leaves voluntarily, unless circumstances—such as moving—necessitate their doing so? How do I achieve such success with volunteer singers of utterly disparate musical capabilities? (Some are professional singers while others couldn't find MIDDLE C to save their life before I start working with them.) *That's the art of what I do.*

I've directed Catholic choirs since I was a teenager. In the early 2000s, I directed choirs as my 'tithes' while I earned a professional music degree (BACHELOR OF MUSIC) at a major conservatory.

Core Belief About Parish Music

I believe Catholics have a right to attend Mass where the music: (1) is not too loud; (2) is not too soft; (3) is dignified and beautiful, not goofy or secular; (4) is performed with a certain excellence—not in a sloppy, unprofessional, or unpleasant way. The music shouldn't be *burdensome* or *painful* to listen to; rather, it should be a delight. It should be a mixture: familiar selections alongside less familiar items.

Parishes Where I've Worked

I've directed choirs in small parish churches—**both Extraordinary Form and Ordinary Form**—as well as cathedrals. When I served as organist and *Schola Cantorum* director for CORPUS CHRISTI CATHEDRAL (Texas), I played on television hundreds of times, since the Mass I played each week was televised.

In 2014, I sold my house in Texas and moved with my wife and children to Los Angeles to serve as music director for the FSSP parish established by ARCHBISHOP JOSÉ H. GOMEZ. I've held this position since 2014 without interruption.

Photographs

Perhaps a few photos would be welcome.

(We exclude our children from public photos; nor do we post our children's names online.)

(2018) • Click here • Jeff Ostrowski with FSSP volunteer choir :

<https://www.ccwatershed.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/34592-FSSP-Choir-Photograph-2018-JPEG.jpg>

(2023) • Click here • Jeff Ostrowski with FSSP volunteer choir :

<https://archive.ccwatershed.org/pdfs/35291-photo-saint-vitus-parish-choir-after-midnight-mass-photograph-of2o/download/>

(2023) • Click here • Jeff Ostrowski (*without choir*):

<https://www.ccwatershed.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/34594-Jeff-Ostrowski-Headshot-JPEG.jpg>

Sacred Music Symposium

I founded (and still oversee) the annual *Sacred Music Symposium*, which brings in 90+ musicians each summer. The faculty I assemble hail from famous conservatories—such as the *Juilliard School of Music*. Also on the faculty I choose are choirmasters from major cathedrals & basilicas in the United States. The following photograph shows faculty and participants from the most recent symposium in 2023:

Click here • Sacred Music Symposium 2023

<https://archive.ccwatershed.org/pdfs/37939-photograph-sacred-music-symposium-2023-of2o/download/>

Hundreds of spectacular **testimonials**—written by participants from across the globe—have been posted at the website: <https://www.ccwatershed.org/symposium/>

Audio Recordings • My Volunteer Singers

Shakespeare wrote famously: “the past is prologue.” Anyone who’s observed human nature would agree with a phrase attributed to Mark Twain: “The best predictor of future behaviour is past behavior.” Therefore, it seems appropriate to include examples of the volunteer choir I direct each week. None of my singers have ever been paid (except when they sing at weddings). These are Catholics **whom I recruited from the pews** at our parish. Some had musical training in the past; others had none. One man in particular initially struggled to match pitch (!) before I started working with him—but became a superb singer. More than ninety percent cannot read music.

(1 of 10) • “Veni Creator Spiritus” (sung in English)

<https://ccwatershed.org/40132/>

—Live recording by Jeff’s volunteer choir.

(2 of 10) • “O Sola Magnarum Urbium” **(females only)**
<https://ccwatershed.org/34851/>

—They had never rehearsed this piece before singing it!

(3 of 10) • “Songs of Thankfulness” **(In Epiphania Domini)**
<https://ccwatershed.org/34856/>

—Live recording by Jeff’s volunteer choir.

(4 of 10) • “A Solis Ortus Cardine” **(sung in English)**
<https://www.ccwatershed.org/47646/>

—Studio recording by members of Jeff’s choir.

(5 of 10) • “A Solis Ortus Cardine” **(sung in Latin)**
<https://ccwatershed.org/34735/>

—Studio recording by members of Jeff’s choir.

(6 of 10) • “What Child Is This?” **(sung in Latin)**
<https://ccwatershed.org/43743/>

—Jeff sings all the voices to his own arrangement.

—Jeff even attempts to sing the girls’ parts!

(7 of 10) • “Ave Maris Stella” **(sung in English)**
<https://ccwatershed.org/34556/>

—This is a very beautiful hymn.

(8 of 10) • “Victis Sibi Cognomina” **(sung by females)**
<https://ccwatershed.org/34558/>

—Live recording by Jeff’s volunteer choir.

—**You can hear Jeff play the pipe organ in this recording.**

(9 of 10) • “Kyrie VIII” **(Missa de Angelis)**
<https://ccwatershed.org/34553/>

—Live recording by Jeff’s volunteer choir.

—**You can hear Jeff play the pipe organ in this recording.**

(10 of 10) • “O Magnum Mysterium” **(T.L. de Victoria)**
<https://ccwatershed.org/34552/>

—Jeff conducting his volunteer choir • JANUARY 2024

—Jeff’s choirs always do tons of polyphony (such as this one)

Thesaurus Musicæ Sacræ • The Church's Treasury of Sacred Music

It's been our honor to sing **not only** for parish Masses each Sunday, but also for “major”—if you'll forgive the term—Masses. For example, our volunteer choir was chosen to sing at the annual conference of the *Society for Catholic Liturgy* when they met in Los Angeles. We've sung for pontifical Masses. We've sung for solemn Masses offered by more than one superior general of the *Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter*.

Each week—in addition to CARMEN GREGORIANUM (“plainsong”) and hymnody—we sing Masses and motets by Palestrina, Guerrero, Morales, Rice, Kevin Allen, Machaut, Verdelot, Van Nuffel, Gabrieli, Lassus, Victoria, Byrd, and so forth. In other words, we embrace the *thesaurus musicae sacrae*.

Indeed, the various rehearsal videos and scores I create for our choir have been downloaded **for use by other Catholic choirs**—viz. what older manuals refer to as the “church militant.” Such items have been downloaded more than 10 million times.

Additional Items

In this résumé, I've tried to include the most salient items regarding my expertise, qualifications, and track record as a choirmaster. Additional items were excluded. In terms of my familiarity with the sacred liturgy, I believe that will be evident if one examines the various publications I have created or overseen:

<https://www.ccwatershed.org/2012/12/24/jeff-ostrowski-biography/>

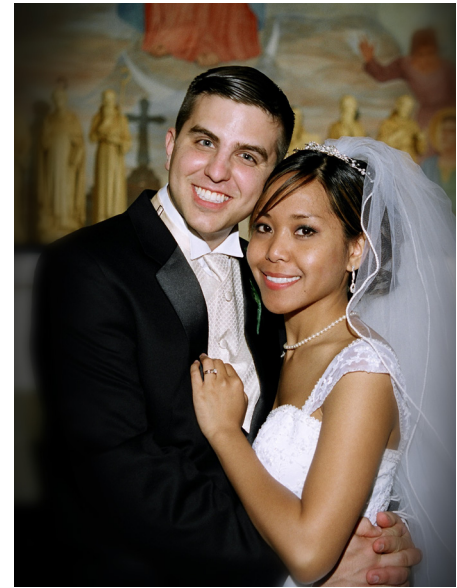
That link contains further information about much else, such as my education and the high school choral program I ran. (My high school students won top prizes at choral competitions in the state of Texas.)

Since 2011 I've served as president of CORPUS CHRISTI WATERSHED, a 501(c)3 institute known across the globe for its dedication to Roman Catholic sacred music. The choirmaster at Saint Peter's Basilica (*Vatican City*) said: “Corpus Christi Watershed is doing very important work for the Church.” While still a teenager, I won 2nd place in a state-wide piano competition playing serious concert music—Bach fugues, Beethoven sonatas, Debussy preludes, Chopin etudes, and so forth—granting me a scholarship. Years later, that training would serve as a foundation for playing **one of the largest pipe organs** in south Texas on a weekly basis. Over two decades, I've published thousands of articles about Gregorian chant (and other topics) in various journals. I was responsible—beginning in the early 2000s—for procuring, scanning, and uploading **crucial and seminal** Gregorian books, which were *extremely* rare, such as: LIBER GRADUALIS (Dom Pothier, 1883); VESPÉRAL DOMINICAL (Dom David, 1932); LIBER USUALIS (Dom Mocquereau, 1903); GRADUALE (Father Hermesdorff, 1863); and so forth. I've shot and directed **films on sacred music** which have been broadcast annually on international networks (including EWTN).

Final Thoughts

I love sharing the awesome *thesaurus musicae sacrae* with my fellow Catholics. Perhaps a small anecdote will help illustrate my zeal. After the apostolate in Los Angeles was founded, **for years** we had no home of our own; we celebrated Mass in churches which were not our own. I was told we had no place to rehearse and **no budget** to rent—but I went out and found places where we could have our weekly rehearsals. Other instances could be cited.

In spite of my zeal for sacred music, my vocation is being a Catholic husband and father. Above all else, I strive each day—in spite of my flaws and sinfulness—to remember the Mark 8:36.



PLEASE feel free
to contact me
at my personal
email address :
dom.pothier@gmail.com