

Polyphony Choir

St. Bartholomew's Polyphony Choir was founded in 1969 to provide four-part choral singing at Mass. It aims to offer a prayerful and appropriate contribution to the liturgy on the first Sunday of each month, at Christmas and during the Easter Triduum, and on the great feast of Christ the King. In addition the Choir offers an annual Christmas Carol Concert, and generally sings one other concert of sacred choral music each year, often in partnership with St Bartholomew's Orchestra.

Following the move of Daniel Battle, to become Associate Organist at St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick (well done Dan!), the Choir has been delighted to welcome Antony Matthews (formerly Director of Music at St. Joseph's, New Malden) in his place as organist to the Polyphony Choir. Dan had been organist to the Choir (bar his university years) since 2000, and made a huge, happy and successful contribution both professionally and socially. Antony took up his position in January, and has already proved to be a loyal asset to both parish and Choir, an extremely gifted musician and great fun to have around.

We have been delighted to welcome Jeannette Da Silva, Kitty Ferma, Tricia Hall, Sr. Helen, Andrew McMillan, David Marston, and Mary Meyern into our numbers this year, and have also said a very fond farewell to long-serving contralto Conchita Wright as she moved away to be nearer her family.

A very successful Christmas Concert, in conjunction with St. Bartholomew's Orchestra, was an occasion held on the Sunday afternoon before Christmas Day and saw the church nearly full. The intention is to repeat the afternoon timing as it seems much more popular than the previously traditional evening slot. This year's concert will be on Sunday 23rd December; a real Christmas concert! Christmas Midnight Mass was once again a thoroughly joyful liturgical celebration.

The introduction of the New Roman Missal in Advent last year saw the parish learning the chant music from the New Roman Missal from January 2012 through to the Easter Vigil – this was a 'whole parish' initiative shared by all the choirs with the congregation. It is hoped that this music will be maintained in the parish repertoire in the years to come.

On the Wednesday of Holy Week this year the Choir sang Sir John Stainer's most moving work The Crucifixion as an illustrated musical meditation on Christ's passion and death on the cross. The many comments from a large congregation were warm and appreciative, with a great many finding the evening prayerful, moving and contemplative. Hopefully we will repeat this, as has been requested of us, on Wednesday 27th March in Holy Week 2013. The Good Friday service and Easter Vigil Mass were both wonderfully uplifting parish occasions as is always the case at St. Bart's.

On Sunday 24th June the Choir sang at Our Lady of Ransom & St. Gregory, Eastbourne's main Catholic church, and enjoyed a hearty lunch together, time on the seafront and pier and then retired for afternoon tea at the home of former Choir members and parishioners Margaret & John de Waal.

Saturday 29th September will see us participating in the Last Night of the Croydon Proms at the Fairfield Halls, which promises to be a splendid occasion.

In 2013 (as well as Stainer's The Crucifixion in Holy Week) we are also hoping to sing Fauré's Requiem on 10th November – this has yet to be confirmed.

The Choir continues to extend a warm welcome new members and is particularly seeking two new Sopranos with some previous singing experience for next year's programme of music.

Membership of the choir is open to all with love of sacred choral music, experienced or not. Practices take place every Tuesday evening (not school summer holidays) from 8pm to 9.45pm (latest), and new members are always welcome. See the Choir's Web site www.polychoir.co.uk for more details or contact Tony Price by 'phone on 07967 467313 or email director@polychoir.co.uk.