



**NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
PASTORAL
MUSICIANS
ARCHDIOCESE
OF KANSAS CITY
IN KANSAS AND
KANSAS CITY/
ST JOSEPH**

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**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS**

Virtual Spirituality & Skills	On-going
KCMO Office of Worship	
NPM ZOOM Meeting	Oct 18, 7 pm
NPM Social O'Malley's	Oct 25 5 pm
St Cecilia Celebration Golddome	Nov 22 7 pm
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NPM News

Volume IV, Issue II

October 1, 2021

Rise From the Ashes as One United Family

We as Church celebrated the Memorial of Saints Cyprian and Cornelius on Sept 16. These two saints are remembered for their efforts to unify the Church. As we continue our work to foster the art of musical liturgy while rising above the constraints and changes caused by a pandemic, we call upon them to intercede for us in our brokenness.

This rising WILL happen if we begin with prayer—prayer without ceasing. Rebirth will happen when each of us becomes a positive force to those around us, lifting others up as we all find new reasons to rejoice.

This issue of NPM News is dedicated to prayer with ideas from several authors. The breath support exercises can easily be accomplished while praying, inhaling the Holy Spirit and exhaling Grace to the world. Ideas for asking Mary and Joseph to intercede are offered by Denise Slaven and Margaret Hochla. Bob Sandford, a frequent contributor, writes a meditation on language and rest. Fr Michael Hawken writes of his gratitude for the work of pastoral musicians.

The National NPM Convention showed how important it is to gather in person and develop relationships as well as hear new ideas. The Mass is essentially communal and in-person prayer. May we continue to embrace and grow from this reality.

NPM Happenings

Have you checked out the Virtual Skills and Spirituality offerings? Videos were created by local pastoral musicians as well as arts and environment ministers on a variety of topics. These range from Fr Paul Turner's lesson on chanting the Introductory Rites for priests and deacons to Justin Hurst's Ministry Insights from a First-Time Music Director. Ideas are given for rural parishes, high school musicians, music reading and many more. Go at any time to watch them at:

<https://kcliturgymwixsite.com/sands2021>

Many thanks to Dr. Mario Pearson, from the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and the Office of Worship in the KC/St Joe Diocese for heading the effort. He plans to continue adding videos to create a permanent library of formation opportunities that you can watch whenever convenient.

National NPM continues to add formation materials to their website. Please go to www.npm.org and become a basic level member for only \$39.00 At the recent virtual members meeting a "special" of 15 months for the yearly fee was announced. All church musicians should take advantage of the opportunity for growth as well as support others in our family of pastoral musicians.

St Cecilia Mass and Reception —Monday, Nov 22, 7:00 pm

Come join other ministers of music along with all those passionate about the ministry at a special Mass in honor of St Cecilia, patron saint of music. Bishop Johnston from the Kansas City/St Joseph Diocese will celebrate Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Kansas City, MO at 7:00 pm. A reception follows with the opportunity to visit with attendees from both dioceses while sharing light refreshments and having the opportunity to learn more about NPM and register for the annual membership.

St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, St. Cecilia, St. Gregory, St Ephrem pray for us!

Rising Up With Mary's Help by Denise Slaven



In the Church year, the months of May and October are dedicated to Mary and to the Most Holy Rosary respectively. To show our devotion to the Blessed Mother, we at Holy Spirit sing a Marian song after communion at each weekend Mass during these months. But Mary desires more; she wants each of her children to pray the rosary and consecrate themselves to her Immaculate Heart. We cannot change world events by watching the news on TV, but we can by each bead of the rosary and each word of consecration prayed from the heart.

You don't have time to pray the rosary? How about on your daily commute, during a walk, or by sacrificing 20 minutes on social media? You find the rosary boring? My neighbor, Mike Scherschligt, founder of the Holy Family School of Faith, podcasts a daily rosary that teaches the faith and is never boring! You can subscribe to it via text or email here:

<https://www.schooloffaith.com/daily-rosary-meditations>.

Instead of listening to the news and wringing your hands, put a rosary in them and pray! You can Google a Consecration to Mary online, or write your own. This is mine:

“My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you, and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to you this day:

My right eye that it may be open to seeing God in all that is true, beautiful, good, merciful, just and holy, and closed to every distraction that takes my gaze from Him; my left eye that it may be open to seeing the face of God reflected in my brothers and sisters, and closed to judging them.

My right ear that it may be open to hearing the quiet inspirations of the Holy Spirit guiding me to do God's will, and closed to the temptations of the evil one; my left ear that it may be open to hearing the cries of my brothers and sisters in need, and closed to listening to gossip or slander against them.

My mouth that it may be open to receiving Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist, to speaking and singing the Good News about Him, to eating nourishing food in moderation, and closed to uncharitable words and overeating.

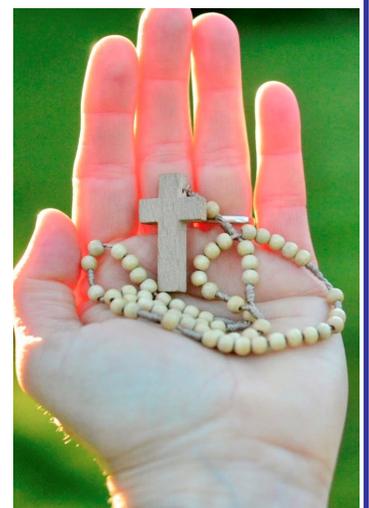
My heart that it may be open to loving God fully along with my soul, strength, and mind, and closed to every evil especially pride, vainglory, lust, anger, covetousness, envy, jealousy, sloth, greed and gluttony.

My whole being without reserve that I may know God's will in my mind, go about doing it in my body, and not think about my own selfish wants and desires.

Wherefore good Mother as I am your own, keep me, guard me, as your property and possession. Amen.”

So, my friends, go ahead and “Sing of Mary”, “Bring Flowers of the Rarest,” to adorn her altar, but “On This Day O Beautiful Mother” I promise to pray your rosary and consecrate my life to you! My friends, will you do the same?

Denise Slaven is Director of Liturgy and Music at Holy Spirit in Overland Park. She creates beautiful Facebook photo collages combined with Scripture.



My Year of St Joseph by Margaret Hochla

December 2020: So many questions and emergencies during that time: Would there be a vaccine? When would the pandemic stop? Then, too, we embarked on a journey to celebrate the Year of St Joseph. At our parish we:

- * pulled a 4-ft wooden statue of St Joseph from some dark niche
- * put the statue on a tablecloth-covered Hi-Top table in the narthex
- * placed two candlesticks with candles on either side
- * pulled a plant over beside it
- * placed a stand-up sign, "Prayer Intentions;" cut up some colored paper and provided an empty basket

What began as, "well, at least we've done something," became a humbling and awe-inspiring experience. The empty basket was soon overflowing with prayers. It was a touching reminder of fidelity, belief and trust to come upon someone adding a prayer. And who brings the fresh flowers week after week and removes the dead ones?

All this is in the middle of the narthex, not a designated prayer space. Maybe it's something like the accommodation in the cave for the birth of Our Lord instead of the inn. The prayers are many and varied and are placed before the monstrance during adoration. Here are a few:

My husband's conversion and path to happiness—for the safety and safe return of my son in the Armed Forces—please send me the perfect employee—for my dead dog—for strength to do what I am called to do...

Did you ever notice how promptly St Joseph obeyed God? How quickly he believed in dreams? When God told Joseph to get up and go, Joseph unhesitatingly got up and went. He also carried out the task the way God wanted it done.

Let's entrust our ongoing conversion and ministry to the intercession of St Joseph for: fidelity, renewed enthusiasm, a spirit of collaboration, ears to listen for the Spirit's promptings, a loving heart that risks doing God's will. Saint Joseph, pray for us!

Margaret Hochla is Director of Liturgy, Music and RCIA at St. Ann's in Prairie Village.

Prayer to Saint Joseph by Pope Francis

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

*To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.*

*Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.*

*Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.*

Theresa Vitt answered the call to be Hospitality Chairperson on the Kansas side. Thank you, Theresa!

Idea from the NPM Convention:

Canto Divina. Choose a hymn from the upcoming weekend's liturgy to use for prayer and meditation all week. Post it in the parish bulletin.

Rebuild Voices. Spend plenty of time on vocal technique as choirs resume. Polish unison or 2-part music rather than trying to learn new SATB music with unbalanced or missing sections. Use time for spiritual and musical growth—like reading music.

October NPM Local Activities: Please attend a Zoom meeting for all church musicians in our two dioceses on Monday, Oct 18, 7:00 pm. Monday, October 25 is an NPM Social at O'Malley's in Weston, MO 64098. O'Malley's is inside an 1842 brewery and features a delicious menu of pub faire and drinks from which all can order. The link for the Zoom will be sent out via the NPM website as will a flyer for the social. These events are open to anyone involved in music!

Breath Support Exercises by Barbara Leyden

Issue IV/I (July 2021) of the NPM News explained the basics of effective and healthy breath support for singing. Refer back to “A Breath Support Primer” for details. Breath exercises lend themselves particularly well to prayer. Dedicating one’s practice and rehearsal to the Lord is always beneficial. Consciously invite the Holy Spirit inside while inhaling and when exhaling either spread the Holy Spirit to the world with the audible exhalation or expel one’s sinfulness in silent exhalation. Praying simultaneously adds another dimension to exercises that need to be done regularly to successfully form technique, build muscular coordination and strength. As E. Jane Rutter said in *Seasons of the Spirit*, “with every breath we inhale, we invite Christ in and accept His gifts of ‘righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.’ With every breath we exhale, we give witness to Christ and invite others to come to Him.”

Inhalation: Begin by blowing all the air OUT first and pulling the stomach/abdomen in--then inhale. It is easier to relax and inhale if the reverse is done first. This theory is based on biofeedback and deep relaxation techniques where users have found it easier to relax muscle groups if they are tightened first, then suddenly relaxed.

Inhale through the nose in any of the following body positions:

1. lying down on the floor with feet flat and knees bent
2. sitting down with legs a shoulder-width or further apart, arms or elbows resting on the knees and the torso relaxed forward and down
3. squatting
4. with hands on the bottom of rib cage either standing or sitting
5. standing or sitting with healthy singing posture

Other inhalation tips:

1. Inhale through the nose with lips closed tightly, which helps some people feel the sensation of the chest expanding
2. Drop abruptly into a deep knee bend while inhaling—the body naturally wants to take a deeper breath
3. Say “huh?!” as in “I don’t beLIEVE it!” Say it silently/imagine great surprise while inhaling.
4. Sniff breath in a series of short sniffs, as if trying to smell something or clear the nose, with mouth slightly open.
5. Sip the air through a straw from your cup of air

Check rib expansion by putting the heel of the hands at the side of the bottom ribs with the tips of the fingers in front. Exhale and fingers touch. Inhale and fingers should move apart substantially. Measure expansion in the back ribs this way with thumbs to the back.

Exhalation. Place the hands on the bottom ribs while inhaling and exhaling. Feel the ribs expand and move outward when inhaling. Let them collapse inward and down naturally as air is blown out quickly and silently. Now try pushing gently against the ribs with the hands while exhaling to feel the sensation of maintaining breath pressure with the ribs.

Place one hand on the abdomen and one on the bottom rib during inhalation. Check that the abdomen relaxes, giving space for the diaphragm to flatten and push organs downward, and that the ribs expand outward. Move the abdomen hand to the epigastrium (the area right under the sternum) and apply pressure. Keep the hand on the ribs and apply pressure while keeping the ribs expanded as much as possible. Sizzle out the air on “s” or “sh.” This combined action is strong support that allows the rest of the singing apparatus to operate freely and without excess tension.

To train the muscles to respond more naturally, do rhythmic breathing exercises, starting with a purposefully extended inhalation of 8 or 4 counts and exhaling to 4 or 8 counts. Exhalation can be silent, on “s,” “sh,” “z,” hummed, on a vowel or on a glissando from high to low or changing pitches as desired.

(Continued page 5)

Music: Language of the Spirit by Bob Sandford



So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17

A friend's drawl thickens when he calls family in Texas. Another friend, far from her native Taiwan, finds a balm for homesickness in speaking mandarin with newfound friends. This is our heritage: our mother tongue sings our homecoming.

What a wonder, this gift of language that holds community, kin and home! These things live in our song when we sing our faith together. Experience this and, even if words escape you, you'll know in your bones that Spirit, spirit and community dwell natively in music. Experience this and you may wonder what makes music such a powerful language of faith.

This native dwelling is so well crafted that the very brick and mortar sing of its Maker. Consider a quarter note rest. Well placed at the end of a poignant phrase, it punctuates, gathers, brings the phrase to fruition and honors it in due measure. This is the rhythm of breath. This is the rhythm of Martha and Mary; of doing and being; of silence and sound. And, like Mary resting at the feet of Jesus, if we lose the flow of the song, the rest is an opportunity to right ourselves. That rest offers us a *moment* immersed and set apart; a *space* to let go a little, open up, take in and prepare ourselves for what follows. The rest is a glimpse of the longer opus of worship; it is the sanctuary ready to inhale God's people and sing out disciples.

There is another sort of silence: the sound of a musician listening. Listening makes music a social art. Hospitality is so central to the language and art of music that its presence or absence is immediately apparent. Our quarter note rest is a hospitable moment, allowing what was just said to resonate. What good host would cut off their guests' sentences? Or fill every pause in the conversation with whatever is handy? A lull in the conversation could be a charged moment on the verge of a deeper conversation. A rest can carve out a space where what follows utterly belongs. Imagine: When Mary arose, she entered a space carved out by Jesus where what she did next had a place. Her still moment redefined her living.

Our quarter note rest is but one instance of how, down to its very syntax, music sings us home to God and community.

Bob Sandford is Music Director at St. Catherine of Siena Church, KCMO, author of A Jungian Approach to Engaging Our Creative Nature and writes for The Catholic Key. He is currently working toward a book on music in communal worship. bsandford.sc@gmail.com or www.bobsandford.net

(Breath Support continued)

Decrease the length of the exhalation to two, then one, and extend the exhalation longer and longer to 16, 24 and 32. Do not exhale singing longer than it can be supported without tension.

Pant slowly like a dog from the abdomen, contracting/relaxing so your stomach "bounces." Sizzle-pant on "s," "sh," "f," "v," "p," "b."

Inhale as above with hand pressure to feel support as needed. Groan out on various vowels on mid-range pitches. Add a tall, pitched "hoot" space to the top and back of the throat while groaning. Extend to hoot-groaning out short glissandos, then very smooth 5-note patterns in an expanded range. Do the same, but sustain the bottom pitch while maintaining the groaning support. Extend to singing short phrases of songs, then to longer phrases and then the entire piece.

Imagine oneself as a steeple bell ringer: the abdominal muscles and diaphragm pull the rope, which extends from down low to up and out of the throat to ring the bell in the front of the mouth. Sing "bong..."

Begin sung vocal patterns with an unvoiced consonant, such as "f," "p," "s," "h" and "th" to ensure the sung sound is started with air and not the vocal folds mechanically brought together.

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NPM CHAPTERS FOR
THE DIOCESE OF
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NEWSLETTER

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Gratitude—Pastoral Musicians by Fr. Michael Hawken

Recently the local NPM board meeting was hosted at Church of the Nativity in Leawood, KS, where I am pastor. Our music director, Vicky Neely, invited me to have lunch with board members and attend the meeting. Being an organist and former church music director myself, I thoroughly enjoyed being with church musicians and hearing about what was happening musically in their particular parishes. I was uplifted by their optimistic joy of having choirs safely return to practice and singing for liturgy. But most of all, it was edifying to be with a group of people who love what they do as music ministers in the Church!

Other observations I gathered from the board meeting was an ongoing commitment on behalf of our local NPM chapter to foster good liturgical music in both dioceses, the desire to increase membership in NPM as a network of support for all parish musicians, special effort to invite our musicians who serve outside the metro area to be a part of NPM, being intentional about our outreach to rural or inner-city parish musicians where resources may be limited; and our call to invite, welcome and form the next generation of liturgical musicians.

I left the meeting grateful for all that our parish musicians do to help us pray and worship. I appreciate the vision and commitment of our local NPM chapter to unite musicians in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas and the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph in our common purpose of glorifying God, bringing beauty to the liturgy, and helping our people pray through sacred music. I hope to see many of our parish musicians gathered for the St. Cecilia Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on November 22nd. It will be an opportunity to worship together with other musicians, receive a blessing upon your ministry from Bishop Johnston, and celebrate your call to serve as a music minister in the Church.

Fr. Michael Hawken serves as pastor of Church of the Nativity in Leawood, KS. He is an organist and former music director and a member of NPM.

(Breath support conclusion)

Sustaining breath support: Once tone is healthfully initiated:

1. Consciously try to “use” breath, exhaling, rather than “holding it in” throughout the phrase.
2. Buzz lips or trill the tongue while singing SFMRD/54321, other vocalizes, or phrases from song literature, especially phrases with large melodic skips.
3. Crescendo/decrescendo through the phrase and note how breath pressure must increase for both.
4. While singing, beat oneself (lightly) on the upper abdomen “a la Tarzan” to help feel the muscular sensation of active and flexible abdominal support to singing. Continue singing without the pounding and try to maintain that sensation of singing the vowel over and over to sustain the sound.
5. Flutter one hand in the air by the mouth, or hold one hand in front of the mouth and move it in small circles away from the mouth while singing, providing a visual imagery for maintaining a continuous flow of breath.
6. Rub the palms of the hands together or one finger on the other hand’s palm, or a hard surface throughout the phrase. Increase the rubbing speed to sing higher, louder, or softer.