

## **Message to Cantors . . . from Joe Hebert, Music Ministry Director**

### **Reverence in Church**

...and in doing what we can to maintain an air of reverence as leaders. Some items discussed that we are initiating are:

- a) observing a silence just before the "warm-up" ...as many minutes as you can.
- b) leaving water bottles out of the sanctuary...trying to make it through a liturgy without water. After almost 25 years of cantoring, I have rarely needed water, even when ill (it has more to do with diaphragm support more than anything else). We discussed that it is probably more of a habit rather than need probably...and actually the presider says prayers and sings liturgy after liturgy, and rarely needs water, so let's give it a try, and we'll discuss it further after we've tried it.
- c) using a cup of water, if necessary, rather than drinking from a sports bottle in a church environment.
- d) gentle talking while in the church; trying to avoid guffawing in personal conversations before and after liturgy, especially while others are still praying.

### **Reverent music preparation**

- a) We will also be asking the accompanists to arrive a minimum of 20 minutes before every liturgy so that cantors can run through entrances etc... especially because of different accompanist styles.
- b) By 10 minutes before the liturgy if not sooner there is no more rehearsing....accompanists will be asked to play a prelude on piano or organ so that a relaxed reverent tone is created before the Cantor stands from their silence to begin the welcoming and song preparation 3 to 4 minutes before the procession is to begin.

### **Reverence in our hearts**

We discussed the intentions of our hearts as members of the Body of Christ. Equally as important as being musically prepared is to prepare your heart...there is truly power in prayer, but we oftentimes forget to intentionally remember why we assemble on Sunday's, and to embrace the community with our leadership, love, and thankfulness

- a) Please offer a prayer to others for healing, peace, joy, hope. There is much brokenness in us and in our community; during the silence before the "warm-up" and even during the liturgy, extend your prayer to individuals or the community as a whole. Try to reach out to the community through and beyond the mechanics of liturgy and music, in prayer.

- b) Try to have a countenance of joy, especially during our welcoming, we after all are also ministers of hospitality. We aren't trying to get the community to like us...we're trying to let the community know that we like and appreciate them through our demeanor and preparedness. We aren't talking big grins on our faces, it's moreover something that comes from your hearts and overflows into all you respectfully do in the name of God. What's ironic though, is that everything falls into place much easier when we are more open to the community (as scary as it feels sometimes)...the catch is that we can't be afraid to be a little more vulnerable.

### **Reverent proclaimers**

- a) just a reminder to proclaim the prayers of the faithful. You are the spokesperson on behalf of the community, and you are the Cantor. They need to know that their prayers are heard by each other and God by you their leader. Assume that for most of us, our speaking voices will be 50 percent less than our singing voices. So we need to:

Move a little closer to the microphone...annunciate everything with clear consonants, especially at the end of words and sentences.

Speak slower (obviously only applicable if you read quickly, as if to get it over with, or out of nervousness).

Try to remove sentimentality in your tone until you are completely comfortable with proclaiming, and even then only very subtle emotional responses to the prayers you are reading...that doesn't exclude the joyful countenance.

We are also liturgical proclaimers of the gospel messages through our actions and knowledge of the readings, so even if you are late to practice or couldn't make it, please please please be responsible to exploring the Word on your own...on any level.