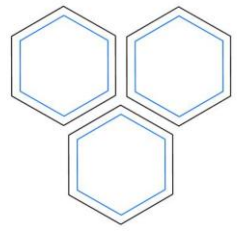


THE NATIONAL
CATHOLIC
YOUTH CHOIR



Spreading the Catholic Faith Through Great Music

June 16, 2009

Dear parents and guardians of the National Catholic Youth Choir,

Greetings from Saint John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota. I am the founding director of the National Catholic Youth Choir, and Dr. Axel Theimer is the choral conductor. As we begin our 10th season, I wish to share with you some thoughts about this youth program, and also provide you with some useful information.

It is a great privilege for all of us to work with these talented and dedicated young people. Thank you for sending your loved ones to be a part of the National Catholic Youth Choir. It is our goal to work with you in providing a caring and supportive environment as we offer guidance, formation, and inspiration to maturing young people. As you can see from our website (www.CatholicYouthChoir.org), including archives of past years, the NCYC is a rich mixture of music rehearsal, prayer, worship, music and religion class, sports and recreation, and singing at liturgies and concerts. During the camp, be sure to view our online daily photo diary.

For anything you mail to campus, below is the best address to use. If it is something mailed to a chorister, put the chorister's name on the first line, with "c/o Dorothy Kantor" on the second line.

Dorothy Kantor - NCYC
Saint John's University
PO Box 7288
Collegeville, MN 56321

During the time we are on campus, I can be reached any time at 320-363-3233, but it is best rather to email me at awruff@csbsju.edu or contact Dorothy Kantor at 320-363-3154 or via email dkantor@csbsju.edu. We will respond to you as promptly as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any concerns or questions – we enjoy helping you in any way possible. When we are on tour I do not have a cell phone myself, but you can reach our Office Manager, Dorothy Kantor at 320-248-2077, or Head Camp Leader (i.e. counselor) Anne Phillips at (507) 383-9663.

Saint John's Abbey and University take very seriously the obligation to provide a safe environment for the young people entrusted to our care. We do a background check on every staff member, and they all have been trained in safety policies as well as our stringent policies on boundaries and safe touch. I am happy to say that we have never had a troubling incident with a chorister or staff member in the history of NCYC.

NCYC choral conductor Dr. Axel Theimer is a renowned leader, not just in the U.S. but also internationally, in the area of vocal care and choral conducting. His philosophy of working with developing singers is very much based on affirming all singers where they are at, and encouraging them to reach their full potential by means of affirmation and encouragement rather than shaming or scolding.

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This humanistic educational approach reinforces the religious philosophy of the NCYC, which is based on a God who is unendingly loving and merciful.

During camp the choristers will have opportunities to contact you by telephone. We understand that choristers, especially the younger ones or those who are from farther away, wish to be in contact with their parents. At the same time, I encourage you to keep an appropriate distance from your child during camp so that he or she can be immersed fully in the choir experience and grow in self confidence and independence. Some youth camps have policies preventing contact between parents and children for the first week or even for the entirety of summer camp. This is not our policy; we leave it to your judgment in finding the right balance between offering support and encouraging independence.

Our schedule of public appearances at concerts and liturgies is found on our website. I hope to see as many parents as possible at these wonderful events. And be sure to spread the word to all your friends and relatives. If you do come, be sure to introduce yourself to me – I very much enjoy meeting choristers' parents.

On the final day of camp, Thursday July 9, there is a gather for family and friends of choristers at 10:00 a.m. at Saint John's in the Alumni Lounge of the Quadrangle Building. This is an occasion to thank everyone involved in the program and to present blessed medals of St. Benedict to all the choristers. Then, at approximately 10:30 am, the choir will sing for the final time in the Great Hall. After we take photos on the steps of the Abbey Church and give the choristers and their family and friends a final blessing, the camp draws to a close. Lunch for the choristers is included in their camp registration fee, family and visitors are welcome to join them at their own cost. I hope you are able to join us on July 9.

Fun, friendship, prayer, music, study, travel, growth – NCYC is all of this and more. I hope that NCYC 2009 is a powerful and wonderful experience for your child, as it has been for hundreds of past choristers. It is an honor to work with you in our common task of forming young Catholic Christians. Please say a prayer for everyone involved with the National Catholic Youth Choir.

God bless you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Anthony Ruff, O.S.B." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Fr. Anthony Ruff, O.S.B.
NCYC Founding Director