

For Immediate Release

**Benedict XVI Institute Launches First “How to Teach Chant Camp”
Workshop for Catechists, Music Teachers and Religious**

Missionaries of Charity Sisters and the Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa Learn from the Best

San Francisco, CA – August 15, 2018 – Benedict XVI Institute, a non-profit dedicated to inspiring the faithful through sacred music and art, launched its first “How to Teach Chant Camp” workshop aimed at teaching catechists, music teachers and religious the sacred art of Gregorian chant through a fun and interactive format. Held at the beautiful Vallambrosa Retreat Center in Menlo Park last week from August 9-12th, participants included the Missionaries of Charity, the Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa, several music directors, teachers and cantors, as well as a priest.

By energizing a Catholic culture of the arts, Benedict XVI Institute hopes to elevate or ignite engagement in prayer and liturgy. By energizing a Catholic culture of the arts, Benedict XVI Institute hopes to elevate or ignite engagement in prayer and liturgy. “Our vision: In every parish, every liturgy – every Mass – is a real encounter with the Lord and sets people on fire for their faith,” said Archbishop Cordileone

Prior to the workshop, the Benedict XVI Institute began teaching chant earlier in the week to 25 Missionary of Charity sisters (the order founded by St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta) from downtown San Francisco. Their goal was to learn how to chant more beautifully – both for their own prayer life and to teach it to the children they serve in poor neighborhoods.

“We have an after-school program called Our Lady of Fatima, which prepares the children we work with from poor families for consecration to Mary,” Sister Maximillia explained, “We want to learn how to teach children so they can sing beautifully for the Mass.”

Mother Teresa Christe is one of the founding sisters of the Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa, a new order founded by Bishop Vasa in 2012 whose charism combines an intense devotion to Mary accompanied by a distinct mission to teach and evangelize in schools and parishes. “Our mission at the Marian Sisters of Santa Rosa is to teach joyfully the truth, goodness and beauty of our faith; we work with a lot of children and teens in Catholic schools,” Mother Teresa Christe explained, “So we are very grateful for this Benedict XVI Institute workshop.”

The workshop was led by Camp Director Mary Ann Carr-Wilson, who has taught children's chant camps for the past ten years, as well as the Latin Mass. As a soloist with the San Diego Chamber Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony and the San Diego Master Chorale, she has proven to be one of the best teachers of this beautiful patrimony.

Father Ted Magpayo is a parochial vicar at St. Pius in Redwood City. He’s been asked to form a chorale for fourth to eighth graders: “I am very interested in learning from Mary Ann Carr Wilson’s deep experience in what works with tweens and teens.”

Some of the teachers had deep backgrounds in music, but little experience with chant.

Aaron Fidler teaches at Kolbe Academy and Trinity Prep, a small, Catholic classical private school in Napa. "I'm a violinist, with many years of experience in teaching. But recently the principal asked me to take over preparing the school's choir for chanting the Latin Mass. I'm here to learn from experts. Very glad this exists!"

Mary Castaneda is on the other side of the spectrum: "I've taught chant to adults for many years. But in my parish here in Bremerton, I am now teaching chant to children and teens. It's really useful to get a sense from Mary Ann what she does that young people respond to."

"If you give children respect, you get respect back," says Mary Ann Carr Wilson. "Give them a high aim. Let them know what they are doing in helping sing the Mass: praying not performing, with all the angels and saints. They respond."

Many of the children may not know they can offer up the Mass for family members, for friends, for the things they care about. "I hold up my five fingers and ask them to come up with a prayer intention for each finger," Mary Ann added.

That way when they look down at their hands at Mass, the children will remember they can actually offer intentions. And then Mary Ann suggests "We can also offer the Mass for the souls in purgatory." For many kids this may be the first time they hear that we can pray for the souls of the departed.

We at the Benedict XVI Institute for Sacred Music and Divine Worship deeply understand: the point of teaching children chant is not to teach a musical skill, but to give children, tweens and teens a deeply rooted sense of their Catholic identity. *It is not performance it is prayer.* And they learn their patron saint, and their guardian angel, and all the angels of heaven will sing with them, giving their best to God at the Mass.

The workshop ended with one of Mary Ann's fun tricks for teaching chant to children: a large colorful parachute and a ball. The game is to chant while flowing the parachute up and down without losing the ball. Father Ted laughed the whole way through: "Music should be fun. I love this idea for incorporating the flow of chant into a visual and physical image for the children!"

About Benedict XVI Institute

Under the direction of Archbishop Salvatore Cordelione, Benedict XVI Institute aims to elevate beauty and reverence in the liturgy, bringing more people closer to God and His church. It provides opportunities and practical resources to help increase the adoption of sacred music and promote a vibrant Catholic culture of the arts. Benedict XVI Institute hopes to be a driving force for increasing active participation in the liturgy - setting hearts on fire for the Lord. Through its Chant Camps, Chant Camp in a Box Curriculum and Music Workshops, Benedict XVI teaches children the beauty and tradition of sacred music. The Benedict XVI Teaching Choir helps parishes with the adoption of sacred music in their liturgies. [Catholic Arts Today](#), a new online magazine published by Benedict XVI Institute, connects a new community of Catholic artists together and inspires them to new heights of excellence in the arts. And, special events, such as the San Quentin Schola, Mass of Americas and Solemn Requiem Masses, open new opportunities for Catholics to experience sacred music, in some cases, for the first time. For more information, visit www.benedictinstitute.org

Press Contact: If you'd like photos to accompany this story or to speak to a Benedict XVI spokesperson, please contact John Sperrazzo at (858) 361-4495.