We all know that music is a regular aspect of the celebration of the Mass. But do we ever think about the true significance of music’s role in the liturgy?

“Singing is praying twice,” says Catherine Henderson, Coordinator of Liturgical Music for our parish. “Plus, it enhances our worship at Mass. Before scheduling the music for Mass, I look ahead at the readings and antiphons. The music that I select helps us in our worship because it connects us to the readings for that Mass.”

In the past, our parish’s Music Ministry has mostly consisted of cantors and groups of singers who sang at different weekend Masses. But last year, we began a new initiative to bring choir members together into one main choir to sing at one weekend Mass. This is how the St. Cecilia Choir was born – named for St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. This choir leads the music at the 10:15 a.m. Sunday Mass for three Sundays each month. The youth choir sings on the other Sunday.

“We’re trying to have consistency that will build up our music ministry,” Catherine says. “We’re also trying to include all age groups. By having our main choir at one Mass, we are drawing attention to our music ministry, which in turn, will build up interest so others will consider joining.”

The St. Cecilia Choir includes parish musicians of various ages. It is open to adults of all ages, beginning with those in the ninth grade or older. There are currently between 15 and 25 active members in the St. Cecilia Choir, and there is always room for more. Our goal is to eventually have enough people involved so we could have choirs at every Mass.

continued on back cover
Everyone loves springtime. The weather is warmer and beautiful flowers are blooming all around us.

But anyone with a beautiful garden will attest that the flowers do not magically appear as if the season change itself miraculously makes the flowers bloom. Beautiful flowers and lush gardens are the result of the gardener’s hard work.

Imagine that a man is given some flower seeds. The man then buries the seeds in the ground and leaves them on their own. As the months pass and rain falls, some seeds may receive enough nourishment to bloom. But simply burying seeds in the ground will hardly make for a gorgeous garden. Rather, if the man truly wants to enjoy many beautiful flowers, there is much care and work ahead. Recognizing the hidden beauty within these simple seeds, he must cultivate the ground, plant the seeds in a solid foundation, then water and fertilize them throughout the year. Only then will he see the proper fruit these seeds were made to bear.

This simple illustration speaks to the heart of us this season — not only as we look around at the flowers, but more importantly as we reflect on the springtime of the Church. We are celebrating the great feast of Easter when, through His death and resurrection, Christ offers us the greatest gift of all — eternal life with Him forever. This celebration leads us to reflect on the many gifts God has given us in this life and the fruit they will bear, especially as we look to life eternal.

He has given each of us a multitude of gifts so that we can better serve Him and bring others to Him. Do we notice the hidden potential of our gifts? Do we see them, like the seed, as seemingly small yet so full of fruit? Everything we have — our time, talents and treasure — is a gift from the Lord. Do we accept gifts in gratitude, then put them to use by cultivating and nourishing them so they will bear the proper fruit?

Just like springtime flowers that we enjoy, our time, talents and treasure need to be cared for. Our gifts need to be cultivated and nourished. Only then will we see them for what they are — wonderful gifts given by God meant for His greater glory.

Like the seeds, if we use our gifts flippantly, we may see some fruits here and there. But we are called to so much more — we are called to build a beautiful garden. We are called to offer God the most beautiful flowers of all.

This season, as we look at all the beautiful flowers around us and enjoy God’s creation, let us think about the seeds in our own lives. Ask yourself if you have accepted the gifts God has given you — your time, talents and treasure — and have cultivated and cared for them properly. Or, do they just sit dormant within you yearning to bloom?
Dear Parishioners,

This month, we kick-off the Forward in Faith campaign for Immaculate Heart of Mary. The campaign is the culmination of more than a year’s worth of study and planning and creating a long-range plan for the parish. Sixty-five years ago, more than 200 Catholic families began the journey of creating our parish and school. They sacrificed much, gave generously and left us a lasting legacy. Now it’s our turn to move Forward in Faith, and create a long-range vision for future families at Immaculate Heart.

Our campaign goals are:

**Celebration Goal**

- Church/School Maintenance Fund $250,000
- School/Gym Connector $58,500
- Priests for our Future Seminarian Campaign $595,000
- 2015 Diocesan Annual Catholic Appeal $60,000

**Challenge Goal**

50% of the cost for a new Fellowship Hall $1,350,000

(Architect’s rendering is pictured below)

Total ........................................................................................................ $2,313,500*

*Goal amounts do not include campaign professional fees and expenses

By the end of the month, every household will receive a personal letter and campaign case booklet that will contain details about the campaign goals and objectives. Every parish family is being asked to consider a sacrificial and meaningful gift. We are blessed by a dedicated team of parish campaign leaders and volunteers who are raising funds for the campaign by visiting with their fellow parishioners. Please prayerfully consider how God has blessed you, and how you can return his blessings with a meaningful gift. Please join me in praying our campaign prayer below and making it a part of your daily prayers:

“Almighty God, You are the center and focus of our lives. We thank you for your presence in our daily experiences. Guide us as we go Forward in Faith with our church plans, responding with trust in you. Send us your Spirit to enkindle our hearts and complete your work in us. We ask this through Christ, your Son. Amen.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. John Silva
Pastor
As we strive to find ways to live out our faith in our day-to-day lives, we sometimes feel overwhelmed and can’t help wonder, “Can one person truly make a difference?” It’s a sobering question. But to find the answer, look no further than Lucia Matenaer who, at only 9 years of age, realized that making a difference has to start somewhere, so it might as well start with her. And so with the idea that she wanted to collect baby

Lucia, where did you come up with the idea to sponsor a Baby Drive?
During our nightly prayers, my mom prayed for families who do not have enough to support their babies. I thought about my brother because I was holding him, and I thought I should help because I wouldn’t want him to be like that.

What were some things you did to put your idea into action? Why did you pick the Women’s care center?
My mom suggested the center, so I called them right away. I also put the flyer on my blog and hung them around my school, Immaculate Heart of Mary.

How did you get the principal of your school to help?
I asked my mom to email the school for me, and they said sure!

What were some of the baby items you collected?
I collected lots of baby clothes, diapers, toys, teething things, pacifiers, blankets, a stroller, a crib, and some other things.

What did you learn about yourself and/or your faith during this project?
Lots. I learned that this helps lots of families in need and I’m sure God was happy with me!
items for the Women’s Care Center in Madison, Lucia got to work. She designed and printed flyers, she approached family and friends, she placed a donation bin in her school, and for two weeks in early February she collected new – or gently used – items such as baby clothes, diapers, toys, and strollers. On Valentine’s weekend, she delivered everything to the Women’s Care Center. She was one person making a difference.

Did you recruit some friends to help you?
Yes, Maya Forcier and Guiliana Maestre, who are in third grade with me. They were an amazing help! Maya was on morning announcements with me at school, and both Maya and Giuliana helped haul all the baby drive items to the Women’s Care Center.

What is your plan now? Will you continue to collect baby items?
Now the baby drive is over, but maybe someday I’ll start another one!

Do you think kids can make a difference in the world? How so?
Yes! They can do lots of things like holding a drive for something or volunteering somewhere. One time, I even raised lots of money for our Humane Society by selling used Beanie Babies in my neighborhood that my grandma had found!

What advice do you have for kids your age who have the desire to help someone, but don’t know where to start?
I’d start by making a flyer, and calling the place you want to do it for.

What was it like when you delivered the items? How did you feel?
It was really cool! When we delivered the items, I got to see the small chapel at the Women’s Care Center. I felt very proud of myself when I delivered the items.

Lucia Matenaer collected new and gently used baby items which she donated to the Women’s Care Center.
Thank you to everyone who helped make this year’s Gala such a huge success! We want to extend our congratulations to Armella Sonn, who was this year’s recipient of the Stewardship of the Year Award, and Sharon Derks, who received the IHM School Lifetime Commitment Award. The theme for the gala was “Love is in the Air” — which it truly was as we raised over $40,000 which will be used for facility improvements within our school and parish.
Winter Gala
The St. Cecilia Choir  
continued from front cover

“Everyone is welcome, even those who can’t read music,” Catherine says. “The main thing that we need to remember is that we’re praising God, so if it’s in your heart, you can come up and sing. You don’t have to have a degree in music. You aren’t expected to know how to read music.”

Through the St. Cecilia Choir, our parish liturgies are greatly enriched. Our parish recently conducted a survey on the music at parish liturgies, and the results indicated that people find the music at IHM very prayerful.

“The main thing I’ve heard is that it enhances the liturgy and helps people to pray,” Catherine says. “So I select music with a goal of making it prayerful. A lot of people participate in singing during Mass, which is very encouraging. The choir sings a meditation song after Communion as a way to help us feel closer to the presence of Christ.”

We should all sing our praise to God at Mass, whether we are part of the choir or in the congregation. Those who participate in the St. Cecilia Choir find that it is a great blessing in their lives.

“We’re praising God, and we’re having fun,” Catherine says. “There are long-lasting friendships. It’s a very supportive group of people – very welcoming. I’d like to see more parishioners join us. Sometimes people may feel like they don’t have the time or the skills, but I am willing to work with them at their level and with their schedules because I know we all have busy lives.”

For more information about the IHM St. Cecilia Choir, or to become involved, please call Catherine Henderson at 608-221-1521, ext. 305, or e-mail her at chenderson@ihmparish.org.

“Everyone is welcome, even those who can’t read music. The main thing that we need to remember is that we’re praising God, so if it’s in your heart, you can come up and sing. You don’t have to have a degree in music. You aren’t expected to know how to read music.” – Catherine Henderson, Coordinator of Liturgical Music