

Christmas Eve Mass 2023 with Schola Alumni at St. Anthony of Padua, Gardena, California

On Sunday, Dec. 24, The Schola Cantorum of the Pacific, under the direction of Choirmaster and tenor Vicente Bastidas, sang the First Eucharist of Christmas 2023, joined by Schola alumni at one of our original home parishes, St. Anthony of Padua in Gardena, Calif.

Carols and Choruses before the 5:30 p.m. Mass opened with the Gregorian Introit, *Puer natus est* ("Unto us a child is born," from Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, and Psalm 97). This was followed by the Schola's arrangement of *A la Nanita Nana*, a traditional Mexican lullaby sung to the Baby Jesus. Soprano Louinn Lota sang the 19th century carol, *What Child Is This?* by William Chatterton Dix to the English folk song melody, *Greensleeves*. Then all choristers sang the lively *Ukrainian Bell Carol*. Soprano Christina van Ingen finished the set by singing French verses by Placide Cappeau to *O Holy Night* (music of Adolphe Adam), with the Schola joining in the chorus.

Mass began with celebrant, Fr. Roberto Pirrone, processing to and blessing the parish Christmas Crèche while the congregation and Schola sang *Silent Night* in English. The Kyrie was from W.A. Mozart's *Misa Brevis K.259*; then Schola and parishioners sang the *Gloria in Excelsis* of the Gregorian Mass of the Angels. The Responsorial Psalm was from the Schola's own psalter, while the Gospel Acclamation was Jesuit Fr. Joseph P. Gelineau's *Eighth Mode Alleluia* with a Christmas verset.

For the Offertory, the 19th century congregational hymn, *Once in Royal David's City* by Irish poet C. F. Alexander was sung to the famous melody by H.J. Gauntlett. Congregational Eucharistic Prayer music was Gregorian, including the *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* of the Mass of the Angels.

During Communion, Schola and alumni sang Benjamin Britten's *A Hymn to the Virgin*, conducted by Schola founder, Fr. Ted Ley, SM. Then the Schola and alumni sang the Christmas vesper hymn, *Jesu Redemptor Omnium* (Jesus Redeemer of All), in the setting by Oreste Ravanello in English and Latin.

Congregation and Schola sang, as the Recessional, the well-known 18th Century hymn of Isaac Watts, *Joy to the World*, to the melody by G.F. Handel arranged by American composer Lowell Mason. To close the service, Fr. Ley played a postlude identified with J.S. Bach: *Uns ist ein Kind geboren* (To Us A Child Is Born).

Schola alumni singing in the choir loft Christmas Eve: alto Elizabeth Tew, and sopranos Glecly Rosario, Lynh Nguyen and Karen Timko. Tenor and bass alumni included Julio Maldonado, Theo Greene, Clint Damm and Luis Navarro. Alumni singing with the congregation David Bastidas, Kevin Ramirez, and Mrs. Stephanie Bastidas, the choirmaster's wife.

Schola members singing Christmas Eve included: Sopranos Marilu Reyes, Cynthia Bih; altos Genesis Tadeo, Alisa Benitez; tenor Abraham Tadeo and bass Mike Tabor.