



Sacred Heart Beat

## Diocesan Choir



Shakespeare famously said, 'If music be the food of love, play on'? Well, if music is the food of love, it is also the food of faith, if for no other reason than faith is an expression of love. And Augustine is reputed to have said, 'To sing is to pray twice'!

Liturgy is of its nature musical. So are people. For some time, the Diocesan Liturgy Council has been imagining ways to enrich the faith and liturgical life of this local church through music. We now have a name for this initiative, *Sacred Heart Beat*. We hope to grow *Sacred Heart Beat* over time with your involvement.

A long-standing initiative that now comes under this banner is what we have called 'The Diocesan Choir'.

# The Diocesan Choir

A bit of background might help. The Sacred Heart Cathedral is the seat of the Bishop for the Church of Maitland - Newcastle. It is also the 'diocesan home' of all the faithful. It is where we gather with our Bishop to celebrate major moments of life and faith across the liturgical year.

Like all cathedrals, ours has a choir, under the Direction of Dr Anne Millard. The Cathedral Choir supports the weekly cycle of liturgy in the Cathedral, with a particular focus on the 9.30am Sunday Mass at which the bishop often presides. The Cathedral Choir is therefore mostly comprised of local people from Newcastle and surrounds.

When the Cathedral hosts significant diocesan liturgies, we endeavour to ensure those exercising a liturgical ministry are drawn from the wider diocesan community. The Chrism Mass is a great example of this.

Music ministry allows for a very flexible and inclusive approach as we 'expand' the Cathedral Choir with the voices of many who love to sing in a choir at these big events.

With the launch of *Sacred Heart Beat* we are hoping to further grow the pool of singers who from time to time would like to join the Diocesan Choir for significant diocesan liturgies. We also hope that this will develop a broader sense of diocesan belonging to the Cathedral and help to nurture parish music ministry as parishioners take ideas back to their own parishes.

Over recent years there has been an increasing number of people registering to join the Diocesan Choir. For the 2024 Chrism Mass we had 38.

The Office of Worship and Prayer, working with Anne Millard, is seeking to expand our data base so that when something is on, we can notify people, they can indicate their availability and we work from there with whoever is available. Making a commitment to be part of the choir for a given liturgy also involves a commitment to attend scheduled practices.

## Nominated events

The following is a list of diocesan events that involve some forms of the Diocesan Choir:

- Called to Serve Mass
- Project Compassion Launch
- RCIA Rite of Election
- Chrism Mass
- Catholic Schools Week
- NAIDOC Week Prayer Service – when hosted by the Diocese of Maitland - Newcastle
- Season of Creation Celebration
- Other diocesan liturgies as these occur such as ordinations, Jubilees, liturgies for ecclesial events such as the 2025 Jubilee Year.

To add your name to the Diocesan Choir database please complete this [form](#).

*The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. Choirs must be diligently promoted, especially in cathedral churches; but bishops and other pastors of souls must be at pains to ensure that, whenever the sacred action is to be celebrated with song, the whole body of the faithful may be able to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs... (SC 114)*