

NEWS RELEASE

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University of Saint Mary and Benedictine College Combine Choirs for the Love of Music

3 p.m. Sunday, April 3, 2005

(Leavenworth, Kan.)— It has been a fixture in the Leavenworth-Atchison area for the past 17 years. Now in its 18th year, the Saint Mary-Benedictine Oratorio features the combined Concert Chorales of the University of Saint Mary and Benedictine College as they perform in concert, not in competition.

At 3 p.m. Sunday, April 3, the two chorales present Haydn's "Third Mass in D," more commonly known as the "Lord Nelson Mass," in Annunciation Chapel, located on the south side of the University of Saint Mary campus, 4100 S. 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan. The performance will be repeated at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 10 at the Benedictine Abbey, 1020 N. 2nd Street, Atchison, Kan. Both performances are free and open to the public. Call 913-758-6460 for more information.

The Saint Mary-Benedictine Oratorio is a unique production stemming from the close-knit relationship of the director and organist. The performances will be conducted by Dr. William Krusemark, chair of fine arts and professor of music at Saint Mary and his sister, organist Dr. Ruth Krusemark, professor of music at Benedictine. The Krusemarks created the pact between universities nearly 18 years ago.

Joining the Krusemarks will be trumpeter Alan Dunavan and timpanist Sister Gloria Solomon. Featured soloists will include bass-baritone Taylor Gillespie, a Saint Mary sophomore from Pueblo, Colo., and soprano Kim Simpson, a Saint Mary senior from Abilene, Kan.

While the alliance between schools began locally, it will soon take a tremendous leap into the global spotlight. Next December, members of the Saint Mary-Benedictine combined choirs head to Italy to perform for a European audience under the watchful eyes of the Pope. "The students enjoy the opportunity to meet their peers from another institution in a collaborative rather than competitive way," Dr. William Krusemark said. "Our collaboration will take a giant step forward next December and January as members of the two chorales will join forces to travel to Italy, where they will give concerts at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, the Duomo in Florence and at a high mass celebrated by the Pope at St. Peter's in Rome."

The two schools combined chorales for the first time in 1988, the first year Saint Mary became residentially co-educational. Works performed in the annual collaboration include Handel's "Messiah," Haydn's "Paukenmesse" and scenes from the "Requiem Mass" by Faure, Mozart, Verdi and Rutter.

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