

The Contemporary Choir By, Jacque Schrader

I was a teenager at Mass in 1976. We always went to Mass on Sunday, but this particular week we were going to the 5:00 mass on Saturday. Serving the mass was the newly formed musical group my father unenthusiastically and reluctantly called “the guitar group”. They were singing “...And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love, and they’ll know we are Christians by our love.” I was unexpectedly and immediately moved by that melody and couldn’t wait to sing along. I was already about to head to college to become a music teacher, so I loved singing everything. I had always loved the traditional Catholic hymns- Immaculate Mary, Praise to the Lord, Come Holy Ghost. But something about that guitar mass, and the music they sang resonated in me.

Fast forward to 2016. I had, unfortunately, fallen away from the Catholic church for more than ten years. A friend said to me, “You ought to give it another try at Holy Family Church in Davidsonville. That parish is really special. “

So, I did. It just so happened that the Contemporary Choir was singing at the 11:00 Mass on the day I hesitantly walked into Holy Family. I heard them sing “Peace I Leave” and something very deep inside me stirred and awakened. It was a memory, a yearning, even a beckoning for repentance. It was raw emotion. Then the choir sang Confitemini. Tears started to well. I felt like I was in a silent landscape, and the only other presence was God.

The next week I went back. The choir was singing “Be With Me Lord... when I’m in trouble and I don’t know where to go...Be with me Lord.” The music was so beautiful, haunting almost, just like when I was a teenager. My very soul was shattering open. I truly felt that the Lord was calling back. I felt a deep but peaceful surrender. The very next day I called Father Andy, went to confession and the rest is history.

I asked to join the group. That is when I saw just how deep is the commitment of the many people who make this beautiful music possible. I feel so blessed to now be a part of this ministry. When I sing with them, and I look out into the congregation, I can see faces of people who sincerely seemed to be moved by our music. A lot has happened since that day that I heard, “And they’ll know we are Christians by our love...” but I feel like I am finally home at Holy Family.

