

PRESS RELEASE
November 12, 2008

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH
Charles Town, West Virginia

The Parish of Saint James the Greater dedicated its new neo-Gothic church building in July, 2006. Designed by architect James O'Brien, it is the largest Catholic building in the state of West Virginia.

This parish of 3,500 supports a graded choir program including eight vocal choirs (Kindergarten to Adult) and two handbell choirs. The Pastoral Associate for Liturgy and Music is assisted by five choir directors and a Sacred Music Intern. The Music Department offers a series of bi-monthly Abendmusik Concerts following the Saturday evening Mass. Future plans include a Conservatory of Music, offering lessons and ensemble within the church complex.

A large four-manual Allen Quantum™ Organ with one hundred thirty-six stops has been installed in the Choir Gallery in the west end of this 1,000-seat nave. It speaks from five different locations throughout the room. The main organ is fronted by two custom-designed pipe façades. An Antiphonal division supports cantors and soloists at the lectern three hundred feet from the choir loft, sounding from the rear of the chancel. This division also furnishes additional support for congregational singing at large festival services. An eight-stop floating String Division speaks from an ingenious "shadow-box" chamber atop the south transept entrance that produces a spine-tingling dimension of soft, ethereal voices completely surrounding the worshippers.

Carefully planned acoustics bring music to life in this great room, even with a large congregation present. Congregational singing here has become especially noteworthy.



This comprehensive instrument was realized at a price that was within the parish's original organ budget, which would have otherwise produced a pipe organ of very modest resources. Additional saving will be realized in the future without the burden of large maintenance and tuning outlays.

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