

# Conference XXVII: St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral, San Francisco, California

Paul Monachino

The 27th Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians was held January 4-7, 2010 in San Francisco, California. St. Mary Cathedral music director **Chris Tietze** was the conference host.

Members gathered on Monday afternoon for a tour of the cathedral and demonstration of the Ruffatti pipe organ. A reception and dinner hosted by the cathedral followed in the rectory. A brief welcome meeting was held, where attendees introduced themselves and the business agenda for the week was announced. Evening Prayer in the cathedral concluded the evening.

Tuesday began with Morning Prayer followed by a spiritual reflection by **Fr. James McKearney**, rector of St. Patrick's Seminary and University. His reflection suggested that we undertake our ministry with "courage, compassion and competence."

**William Mahrt**, president of the Church Music Association of America, delivered a presentation focused on Gregorian chant as a template for the sacred nature of music. Following lunch, members took a tour of three significant structures in the city. St. Mark's Lutheran was severely damaged during the 1989 earthquake but has been completely restored and includes a fine Taylor & Boody organ. Temple Sherith Israel was one of the few structures to survive the 1906 earthquake and houses an unaltered Murray Harris organ. The final stop was the Palace of the Legion of Honor, where we were treated to a concert by **John Karl Hirten** on the E. M. Skinner organ and had time to browse the extensive art collection. Organ concerts are regularly scheduled at the Palace and, from our experience that day, attract a fascinated and enthusiastic audience. In the evening an organ concert was presented at St. Mary's by **Ron McKean** of Oakland, who performed an entirely improvised program in musical styles and forms from the fifteenth through the twentieth centuries.

Wednesday began with Morning Prayer at the cathedral and a second spiritual reflection by Fr. McKearney focusing on music in relation to discipleship. After a business meeting, members traveled to Oakland and the new Cathedral of Christ the Light. After lunch, **Fernand Létourneau** gave a presentation on the design of the organ at the cathedral. Then **Brother William Woeger, FSC**, the liturgical art consultant for the cathedral project, offered a presentation on the artwork and design of the cathedral. He began with a reflection on creation and human creativity, particularly related to ecclesial art and worship. A cathedral tour followed. That evening, a concert featured the choirs of St. Mary's Cathedral, Blessed Sacrament Cathedral (Sacramento), and St. Joseph Cathedral (San Jose). Newly appointed music director **Rudy deVos** accompanied the choirs and performed several organ solos.




On Thursday, Morning Prayer was followed by a business meeting and the composers' reading session. At noon, Mass was celebrated, with **Archbishop Niederauer** presiding. Music was provided by the cathedral musicians and the Honors String Quartet from San Domenico High School. After some free time in the afternoon, members attended Evensong at Grace Cathedral, and then returned to St. Mary's for the banquet. During the cocktail hour, music was provided by the **Golden Gate Bellringers**, a group associated with the Golden Gate Boys Choir. ■

*Paul Monachino is Director of Music/Organist at Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Cathedral in Toledo, Ohio and a member of the Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians.*




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