



ST MARY'S CHURCH, NEWPORT

RI'S FIRST ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH, 1828
A NATIONAL HISTORIC PLACE, 2008

For Immediate Release
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St. Mary's Church Celebrates its Successful \$1.2 Million Campaign with a Unique Musical Production of the Original Silent Film "The King Of Kings" Featuring the Youth Choir

Newport, RI – May 4, 2018 - With gratitude and gratefulness to donors and volunteers of the successful St. Mary's Church *Souls In Harmony* \$1.2 million campaign, the church invites the public to attend a special presentation of the original Cecil B. DeMille's epic silent film, "The King of Kings," featuring musical accompaniment by the St. Mary's Youth Choir and Cantorum Vigilae on Sunday, May 27, 2018.

The free event is produced by world-renowned organist Peter Edwin Krasinski, an award-winning creator of live improvised silent film presentations around the world. "The King of Kings will be shown on a full-sized movie screen inside St. Mary's Church, located at 14 William Street in Newport. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. with the performance beginning at 7:30 p.m. The Youth Choir and Cantorum Vigilae will perform a live musical soundtrack, which becomes the narration of the film, under the direction of Cody Mead, St. Mary's Director of Liturgical Music.

"St. Mary's is blessed to have received the outpouring of support that achieved our goal of raising funds for the restoration of our choir loft and magnificent pipe organ," said Father Kris von Maluski. "I thank the entire community for helping us steward this very important reconstruction project to protect and preserve our remarkable church building for the future. We are forever grateful."

St. Mary's *Souls In Harmony* campaign was officially launched in late 2016 following the dismantling of the church's nearly 60-year-old Casavant pipe organ – a 33,000 piece instrument that is historically meritorious for its ingenious engineering and mechanics, and a sound that is unique only to St. Mary's Church. The project drew national attention due to the nearly 200 years of history of the church and its status as a national landmark. Once the choir loft was emptied of the massive instrument and over the next several months, restoration of the space and surrounding area took place, including reconfiguring the choir loft floor, stabilizing structural deterioration and eliminating public safety and fire hazard issues.

Since the project was completed, St. Mary's has expanded its music and educational programming and is now home to nearly fifty singers of all ages and backgrounds in three choirs. Of special note is the growth and participation in the Youth Choir program, which provides unparalleled

opportunities for musical development and formation for children in a faith environment. In addition to St. Mary's choral program, the church has also built relationships with a host of musical organizations from the choirs of Providence College to the Newport String Project.

The May 27th special event marks the official end of the campaign.

"This performance will showcase St. Mary's monumental pipe organ and its many capabilities. Through a tremendous variety of tones and colors, St. Mary's Casavant pipe organ can create music of any genre and mood," said Mr. Mead. "The renovated choir loft and marvelous acoustics of the church will also be put to great use as members of St. Mary's choirs aid in creating a live soundtrack for the film. In "The King of Kings," all of St. Mary's musical strengths will be on full display!"

Mr. Krasinski agrees and credits St. Mary's with having the foresight to recognize the value of refurbishing the organ as part of its *Souls In Harmony* campaign. "Throughout history, the pipe organ has been an integral part of Christian worship. It's particularly heartening for St. Mary's Parish in Newport to understand that fact and undertake the restoration of this wonderful instrument: a valuable sonic treasure. This instrument, along with the voices of the choir of St. Mary's will serve as a musical narration to one of the greatest cinematic masterpieces of all time, "The King of Kings" directed by Cecille B. DeMille."

For more information about the event, the campaign or upcoming music activities and special events, music education and to participate as a member of St. Mary's choirs for adults and children, as well as media tours, please contact Father von Maluski at 401-847-0475 or email stmarynewport@aol.com, or Cody Mead, Director of Liturgical Music, at 401-239-8239 or codywillmotmead@gmail.com.

Peter Edwin Krasinski Bio

Peter Edwin Krasinski is broadly recognized as a motivating consultant for the pipe organ community, and as a conductor, organist and music educator, whose imaginative and energetic performances elevate and inform audiences. Along with regular concert appearances he specializes in the art of live improvised silent film accompaniment, worldwide. He is the recipient of a number of prizes including the First Prize in Improvisation from the American Guild of Organists National Competition. Mr. Krasinski, past Dean of the Boston chapter of the American Guild of Organists, currently serves as Organist at First Church of Christ, Scientist in Providence RI and is faculty member of St Paul's Choir School, Cambridge MA. He regularly presents master-classes in improvisation to the Harvard Organ Society. He holds both a Bachelor of Music Degree in Music Education and Organ Performance, and the Master of Sacred Music Degree from Boston University.

About The King of Kings

The *King of Kings* was originally produced in 1927 and was considered the world's greatest screen epic at that time. It is reported that it required one of the biggest budgets in Hollywood to produce and that DeMille was inspired by the life and passion of Christ to create a silent-era blockbuster, featuring texts drawn directly from the bible, a cast of thousands, ground-breaking lighting, perfectly detailed costumes and cinematic novelties. The film is both spectacular and deeply reverent and is one of the most ambitious presentations of the final years of the life of Jesus. St. Mary's Church was chosen for the presentation by Mr. Krasinski "to create a feeling of being immersed in the film's surroundings."

About St. Mary's Church

St. Mary's is Rhode Island's First Roman Catholic Parish, established in 1828. The church, in its present location, was built in 1848. For two centuries, it has held a prominent place in Rhode Island's history and U.S. military history as the Church that served as the U.S. Navy Academy's chapel during the Civil War (1861-1865). The Church gained international acclaim as the location where President John F. Kennedy married Jacqueline Lee Bouvier on September 12, 1953. In 1975, St. Mary's was included as a contributing resource for Newport Historic District's recognition in the National Register of Historic Places, and in 2008, St. Mary's was singled out as an American treasure when it was named to the National Register of Historic Places.