

*“In my eyes and ears the organ will forever be the King of Instruments.”*

W.A. Mozart

The pipe organ is the grandest musical instrument in size and scope, and has existed in its current form since the 14th century. It is the most symphonic of all the music instruments being able to “speak” in many different distinct voices, represented by the individual stops. Each different “family” of stops and sounds are located in different “divisions” controlled by the multiple keyboards along with the pedal board. An organist has often been likened to an “octopus,” playing with both hands and both feet while changing keyboards, changing stops turning pages, and often singing or directing the choir. The organ offers the greatest variety of expression in through both the combinations of the various stops and ability to “sing” from the softest to the most powerful sound produced by all the classical instruments.

The Second Vatican Council had this to say, in its document on the sacred liturgy: “In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church’s ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man’s mind to God and to higher things.”

Pope Benedict, in an excerpt from his dedication speech of a new pipe organ in Regensburg, Germany, September 2006, said this:

“The organ has always been considered, and rightly so, the king of musical instruments, because it takes up all the sounds of creation – as was just said – and gives resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation. By transcending the merely human sphere, as all music of quality does, it evokes the divine. The organ’s great range of timbre, from *piano* [meaning “soft”] through to a thundering *fortissimo* [meaning “loud”] makes it an instrument superior to all others. It is capable of echoing and expressing all the experiences of human life. The manifold possibilities of the organ in some way remind us of the immensity and the magnificence of God.

In the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council (Sacrosanctum Concilium), it is emphasized that the “combination of sacred music and words ... forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy” (No.

112). This means that **music and song** are more than an embellishment (perhaps even unnecessary) of worship; **they are themselves part of the liturgical action**. Solemn sacred music, with choir, organ, orchestra, and the singing of the people, is not therefore a kind of addition that frames the liturgy and makes it more pleasing, but an important means of active participation in worship. The organ has always been considered, and rightly so, the king of musical instruments, because it takes up all the sounds of creation – as was just said - and gives resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation. By transcending the merely human sphere, as all music of quality does, it [the organ] evokes the divine. The organ's great range of timbre and dynamics, from *piano* [meaning "soft"] through to a thundering *fortissimo* [meaning "loud"], makes it an instrument superior to all others. It is capable of echoing and expressing all the experiences of human life. **The manifold possibilities of the organ in some way remind us of the immensity and the magnificence of God.**

Psalm 150...speaks of trumpets and flutes, of harps and zithers, cymbals and drums; all these musical instruments are called to contribute to the praise of the triune God. In an organ, the many pipes and voices must form a unity...Now, this is an image of our community in the Church. Just as in an organ, ...so we in the Church, in the variety of our gifts and charisms, always need to find anew, through our communion in faith, harmony in the praise of God and in fraternal love. The more we allow ourselves, through the liturgy, to be transformed in Christ, the more we will be capable of transforming the world, radiating Christ's goodness, His mercy and His love for others."

We have in our parish an Allen electric organ installed during the 1980's with 45 stops and 2 manuals. There are 8 different "alternate tuning" options, available through a card reader, to deliver the sounds of additional stops with even more different varieties of sounds.