

## The Choir Loft

I remember climbing up the hill of Parkton Road in JP as a 10-14 year old, often in the snow, and walking the quarter-mile to sing in the choir at the 7 a.m. Mass weekdays. This was followed by classes in the school behind the church till 3 p.m.; then the quarter-mile walk back home again.

This magnificent building has been closed now for more than 10 years but the structure still stands tall, majestic, and strong. Sure, the interior of Blessed Sacrament needs work but the building itself is like bedrock. But I have clear, lingering, and sustained memories of this building. As a Roman Catholic girl, I received all the Catholic sacraments in this church, was married in this church, my parents married there in 1935, and have family buried with funeral Masses from this church. So here I am, 70+ years later and still in love with this building.

I grin remembering rushing up the narrow, creaking staircase to the choir loft, trying so hard not to make noise, lest the parishioners below be disturbed from prayer. Our rotund organist, Mr. McNeil would shhhh us as we approached our places in that loft, coats off, bookbags dropped on the floor. And then the singing! —what beautiful sounds we made up high in that celestial garret, in honor of our creator. Beautiful, yes, but I hated it, being a choir girl, especially under the direction of loud and cranky Father Ryer! 😬

Choir practice and Masses seemed endless to me as a girl, I really thought those days had no expiration date. But we sang the Kyrie, the endless Amens, and the recessional hymn at the end of each and every Mass. Those seemingly endless years, devoted to usually appease grumpy Fr. Ryer, get the occasional, affirmative nod from our organist, Mr. McNeil, and as carefully instilled by our nuns, always for the glory of our God.

-- Dorothy V. Malcolm

