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DISTINCT TRADITION

*Choir works to
revive Gregorian
chant in local parish*

ED ENOCH
STAFF WRITER

The St. Cecilia Schola Cantorum held its second annual sacred music workshop Saturday at Saint Michael's Catholic Church in Auburn.

The schola is a parish choir attached to St. Michael's, according to the workshop brochure. The workshop included approximately 80 choir members and parish music directors from four states, said Arlene Zinner, president and co-founder of the schola.

Scott Turkington, a Connecticut native, instructed the participants on Gregorian scale, Latin and other idiosyncrasies of the music.

"It seems a little funny to us, but it's the scale we would have learned in the 13th century," Turkington said.

What the music sounded like in the 13th century is a mystery though.

"What we have today is 150 years of research," Turkington said. "We can't be sure what it sounds like because we can't go back in time."

But modern-day chanters shouldn't worry, according to Turkington. Just sing in the way that works best for your group, he added.

"This is the beauty of Gregorian chant," he said. "It's very practical."

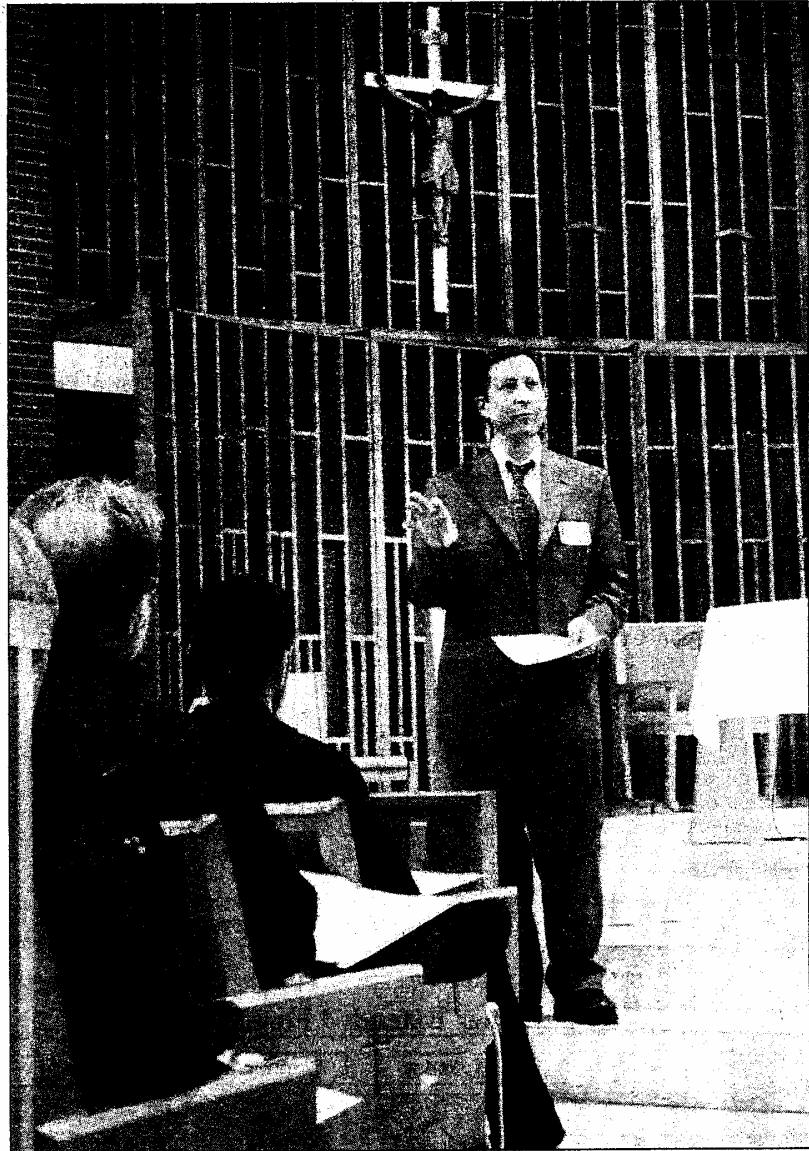
The daylong workshop is designed to help the participants revive the Gregorian chant and polyphonic tradition in their parishes, Zinner said.

"It's a distinct voice," Zinner added. "It's a distinct Catholic tradition."

It's music you're likely to hear in cathedrals or on recording, but rarely, if ever, in local parishes, according to Zinner.

It's traditional music that some Catholics have never heard in their local parishes, she added.

Jeffery Tucker, director and co-founder of the schola, said there is only one member of the group who re-



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Scott Turkington instructs choir members and music directors about scales and other differences between Gregorian chant and contemporary music as part of the Sacred Music Workshop at St. Michael's in Auburn on Saturday.

members hearing chant in the church.

Gregorian chant began in the early Middle Ages and was the official form of church music for the Roman Catholic Church, according to the Catholic encyclopedia on the New Advent Web site.

In 1963, the Second Vatican Council decided to permit the "vernacularization," of the liturgy (the use of languages other than Latin in church

services) to increase participation and help modernize the church, according to Zinner.

Tucker said the schola started about four years ago when some of St. Michael's parishioners decided to try to resurrect the music in their parish.

Tucker said it's taken four years of practice for the schola to develop its singing voice and its repertoire.

"It's just becomes a passion," Tucker said.