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**RENOWNED PHILADELPHIA BOYS CHOIR TO PERFORM FOR POPE FRANCIS
AND THE WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES BEFORE PAPAL MASS**

Philadelphia, PA – For the past 47 years, the Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale, who as America’s Ambassadors of Song have traveled to the far reaches of the world connecting with audiences through the universal language of music, now get to sing before the eyes of the world right here at home, having been selected to perform prior to Pope Francis’ Papal Mass – the culminating highlight of the World Meeting of Families 2015.

The Choir will be performing a unique arrangement of a popular hymn, an incredibly moving spiritual written by a Philadelphia composer, and a classical/sacred choral selected specially for His Holiness, during the run-up to the public Mass to be led by the Pontiff on Sunday, Sept. 27. Taking place on the Eakins Oval Stage on Benjamin Franklin Parkway, the performances will begin at 12:00 and continue up until the Papal Mass is set to begin at 4:00 pm EDT. The Mass is expected to draw a crowd of more than a million people.

“The Papal Mass is the capstone event of the World Meeting of Families and we are absolutely delighted to have such incredible talent prelude this momentous event,” said Donna Crilley Farrell, Executive Director of the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015. “From the Joybells of Melmark to Irish soprano Margaret Keys to **the beloved Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale**, such beautiful and spiritual performances will truly set the tone for the Papal Mass and herald the arrival of Pope Francis on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in the most joyful way.”

Says Music Director, Jeffrey R. Smith, “Although the boys and men in our choir come from families of many different religious beliefs, Pope Francis’ message can appeal to all of them. His emphasis on love, charity and forgiveness has touched many inside and outside of the Catholic faith. I am thrilled that our boys and men will have a chance to sing in his presence and perform for the millions of people inspired by him.”

Renowned for their musicianship and interpretive abilities, the Emmy-winning and Grammy-nominated Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale has cultivated a devoted following worldwide for highly acclaimed concerts and performances. Since its inception in 1968, the Choir has proudly represented both the City of Philadelphia and the USA on its many concert tours throughout the world. In fact, the choir was honored to be able to perform in 1984 for His Holiness, Saint John Paul II, so the upcoming performance presents an extraordinary opportunity for a new generation of young singers to perform for a new generation’s Pope, Pope Francis.

When asked how they feel to be singing for Pope Francis, Aiden Bagi from Chester Springs commented, “Singing for the Pope would be life-changing.” Although just 11 years old, the significance of the event is not lost on him as he considers what it would mean “to have our voices heard by someone with the influence to change the world!” Added Zachary Brosky, an 11 year old from Wenonah, NJ, “I consider it a great honor to represent the City of Philadelphia at such an amazing event. Being able to sing for the Pope and in front of that many people is beyond my wildest dreams.”

Thirteen-year-old Jonathan D’Souza remarked, “Not only is the Pope, the leader of the Catholic community

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and revered by all, a figure full of history and tradition, but throughout the world, the Pope is regarded for bearing the highest level of moral and ethical standards. Pope Francis, with his heartwarming and humble personality, is an inspiration for me, and singing for him would implant a memory in my mind that I will never forget."

And 13 year-old Philadelphian Hunter Kaminski couldn't contain his excitement, "...Awesome... exciting... unbelievable!!!! Since I joined the Philadelphia Boys Choir, I've had so many wonderful experiences traveling the world and performing before many dignitaries but singing for Pope Francis makes me feel especially blessed! He is such a humble person but has already done so much for the Church. How fantastic that he chose to visit Philadelphia and that the Philadelphia Boys Choir will have the opportunity to perform for him!"

The numbers the choir hopes to sing include the following, described by Music Director Jeffrey R. Smith:

Ubi Caritas: http://phillyboyschoir.org/files/ubi_caritas_clip.mp3

This piece is absolutely perfect for Pope Francis, as the text is "Where charity and love are, God is there". I know his leadership of the Church could practically be summed up by this phrase. In addition, the piece is absolutely beautiful, with lush and complex harmonies. It was written for the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton in 2011.

Amazing Grace: http://phillyboyschoir.org/files/amazing_grace_clip.mp3

A familiar and universal hymn that is known by all, this arrangement is powerful and was created with the intent of punctuating the text. It was arranged by a friend of the choir, David T. Clydesdale -- a well-known arranger in the Christian Pop field, having written some of the best arrangements for some of the top Christian pop singers, like Sandi Patti, Larnelle Harris, Dino, and Anointed. In typical Clydesdale fashion, there are several key changes, full powerful chords, and a big ending.

Holy: http://phillyboyschoir.org/files/holy_clip.mp3

This is a prayer that NEVER fails to move audiences. It was written by Philadelphia composer, Verolga Nix. Sadly, Dr. Nix passed away last year after a battle with cancer. She will be sorely missed - she wrote great arrangements of many spirituals and was also a great supporter of ours. The piece includes the choir spread across the stage (or in churches, we spread throughout the whole sanctuary), performing in sign language while singing. It opens with different voices speaking phrases which describe God, and then ends with a beautiful spoken prayer. This is a very effective, spiritual piece that often leaves people in tears.

About the Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale

PBCC's achievements include recordings with internationally renowned orchestras and soloists, such as Luciano Pavarotti, national television appearances including *Good Morning America*, *Saturday Night Live* and *The Today Show*, and praise from critics and audiences worldwide. PBCC continues to break through social, political, and cultural barriers to invite the most talented boys and men in the region to join in a journey of musical education and discovery.

Music Director, Jeffrey R. Smith, has firmly established PBCC as one of the most successful boy-choirs in America. Maintaining an extensive concert schedule regionally as well as an illustrious international touring program, the choir's 2014 tour took the boys to England and Wales with appearances at Kings College and at the Millenium Center in Cardiff. For the 2015 tour, PBCC performed in 15 concert halls across China in 19 days to enthusiastic acclaim. Recent and upcoming engagements include Carnegie Hall, the Kimmel Center, the Mann Center for the Performing Arts and the Academy of Music.

For more information on the Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale, please visit www.phillyboyschoir.org or call 215.222.3500. For information on media appearances or to set up an interview, please call Nina Zucker Associates at 610.457.4387 or email info@ninazucker.com.