Brief Bios, Orin Johnson

All-Purpose Snapshot

Orin Johnson is a composer, conductor, liturgist, and author whose work spans Catholic liturgical music, choral conducting, theological writing, and parish ministry. Published by Oregon Catholic Press, GIA Publications, World Library Publications, Choristers Guild, and others, his music serves assemblies, choirs, and communities across the country. He serves as Director of Music and Liturgy at St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in St. Louis and as Assistant Director of the St. Louis Chamber Chorus.

Long Form General Bio

Orin Johnson (b. 1973) is Director of Music and Liturgy at St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in the Shaw neighborhood of St. Louis, a post he has held since 2022. From 2012 to 2022 he was Director of Music Ministries at Sts. Joachim and Ann Parish in St. Charles, Missouri. From 1998 to 2012, he was Coordinator of Music and Liturgy at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois.

Originally from Tyler, Minnesota, Orin received his B.A. in Music and Folklore & Mythology from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, his M.A. in Music Performance, with Choral Conducting emphasis, from Radford University in Radford, Virginia, and his M.A. in Theology from Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Missouri.

He is an active composer and musical artist, with over 50 pieces published with ECS, Choristers Guild, OCP, GIA, SL, and others. As half of Oddwalk Ministries, with Shannon Cerneka, he travels the country leading prayer, giving concerts, offering workshops and retreats, and more. He has books and other resources on prayer and liturgy published with Twenty-third Publications, GIA Quarterly, Liguori, NACCM Pastoral Music, and Liturgical Press.

Orin is also an accompanist and music director at Congregation Shaare Emeth in Creve Coeur, Missouri. He is an Assistant Director of and a singer with the St. Louis Chamber Chorus. He is active with Catholic youth summer camps such as Youth Sing Praise (for which he has co-written a full two-act musical) and One Bread, One Cup, and at various other churches and schools in the St. Louis area as a musician and director. He serves on the national board of the National Association of Catholic Church Musicians (formerly NPM). He resides in St. Louis with his wife Erin.

Visit him on the web: orinjohnson.com

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Catholic Liturgical Music

Short Bio

Orin Johnson is a composer and liturgical musician whose work has been published by Oregon Catholic Press (OCP), GIA Publications, World Library Publications (WLP), and Choristers Guild, among others. He holds advanced degrees in music and theology and serves as Director of Music and Liturgy at St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in St. Louis. A frequent contributor to Catholic summer programs such as Youth Sing Praise and One Bread, One Cup, he is also co-founder of the music and ministry duo Oddwalk Ministries.

Long Bio

Orin Johnson is a composer, liturgical musician, and theologian whose sacred music spans a wide range of styles and contexts for assembly, choir, cantor, and ensemble. His compositions have been published by Oregon Catholic Press (OCP), GIA Publications, World Library Publications (WLP), Choristers Guild, and Simply Liturgical Music, with works designed for Sunday liturgy, the sacraments, and the full liturgical year. Johnson holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Harvard University, a Master of Arts in Choral Conducting from Radford University, and a Master of Arts in Theology from Aquinas Institute of Theology. He served for fourteen years as Coordinator of Music and Liturgy at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois, followed by a decade as Director of Music Ministries at Sts. Joachim and Ann Parish in St. Peters, Missouri. Since 2022, he has served as Director of Music and Liturgy at St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in St. Louis. He is a co-founder of Oddwalk Ministries and a frequent presence at Catholic youth music programs, including One Bread, One Cup. His book *Incarnate in Word and Song: Exploring Music in Liturgy and Life* (Liturgical Press, 2023) offers a theological and practical exploration of music's role in liturgy and preaching. He serves on the national board of the National Association of Catholic Church Musicians (formerly NPM).

Catholic Liturgical Writings and Theology

Short Bio

Orin Johnson is a liturgist, author, and composer whose writing and practice integrate theology, liturgical music, and parish ministry. He holds graduate degrees in music and theology—the latter from Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis—and has served in parish liturgical leadership for over twenty-five years. His book *Incarnate in Word and Song: Exploring Music in Liturgy and Life* (Liturgical Press, 2023), reviewed in the journal *Worship* as offering "a challenging and accessible freshness to the principles that define liturgical preaching and liturgical music," reflects his ongoing work at the intersection of music, preaching, and theology.

Long Bio

Orin Johnson is a liturgist, composer, and author whose work integrates theological inquiry with parish practice and the art of sacred music. He holds a Master of Arts in Theology from Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis (2008), as well as a Master of Arts in music and choral conducting, and has served as a liturgical minister in Catholic parishes and shrines for more than twenty-five years. Since 2022, he has served as Director of Music and Liturgy at St. Margaret of Scotland Parish in St. Louis. Johnson's book *Incarnate in Word and Song: Exploring Music in Liturgy and Life* (Liturgical Press, 2023) explores how the craft of musical composition and the art of performance illuminate the work of liturgical preaching and the living of the Gospel in everyday life—drawing on scripture, liturgical documents, and musical examples throughout. The journal *Worship* described the book as offering "a challenging and accessible freshness to the principles that define liturgical preaching and liturgical music." He is a co-author of multiple editions of *Living Liturgy* (Liturgical Press), contributing lectionary-based prayers, catechetical essays, and scriptural faith-sharing prompts. He co-authored *Let Us Go Forth!* (Twenty-Third Publications, 2018), a collection of prayer services for teens and faith formation settings. Johnson's compositional output—published by Oregon Catholic Press, GIA Publications, World Library Publications, Choristers Guild, and others—reflects his theological convictions about the assembly as the primary subject of liturgical music. He is a co-founder of Oddwalk Ministries and a regular contributor to Catholic conference and summer program liturgies, including One Bread, One Cup.

Choral Music Performance

Short Bio

Orin Johnson is a choral conductor and composer based in St. Louis, Missouri. He serves as an Assistant Director of the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus, where he has prepared and led a wide range of repertoire, including new commissions and world premieres. His choral compositions are published by GIA Publications, World Library Publications, Choristers Guild, and others, and have been praised for their "expressive writing" and "carefully crafted choral parts." Johnson holds a Master of Arts in Choral Conducting from Radford University and a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Harvard University, where he sang with the Harvard Glee Club.

Long Bio

Orin Johnson is a choral conductor and composer whose work spans concert and liturgical settings. He serves as an Assistant Director of the Saint Louis Chamber Chorus, one of the region's most distinguished choral ensembles, where he has prepared and conducted a wide variety of repertoire—ranging from Mendelssohn's *Aus tiefer Not* and works of Healey Willan and Morten Lauridsen to world premiere commissions and contemporary American choral music. Reviewers for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and KDHX have praised his conducting for its precision, musicality, and command of complex scores. Choral writing has also included commissioned arrangements, including an SLCC-performed arrangement of a Taylor Swift song requested by the ensemble's artistic director. Johnson holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Harvard University, where he sang with the Harvard Glee Club, and a Master of Arts in Choral Conducting from Radford University. He has also sung with the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, Pro-Arte St. Louis, and the St. Louis Archdiocesan Chorus. His choral compositions are published by GIA Publications, World Library Publications, Choristers Guild, and other houses; Choristers Guild has described his music as featuring "expressive writing" that is "musically rich and balanced," with "carefully crafted choral parts.” He writes works suited to liturgical and concert performance alike.

Musical Composition and Publishing

Short Bio

Orin Johnson is a composer whose catalog of published works spans congregational and choral music for the liturgical year, psalm settings, hymns, anthems, and sacred song. His music has been published by Oregon Catholic Press, GIA Publications, World Library Publications, Choristers Guild, Transcontinental Music Publications, and Simply Liturgical Music, with nearly 190 psalm settings available through SLM alone. He also accepts commissions and has self-published a selection of secular choral arrangements. Publishers and reviewers have praised his versatility, harmonic richness, and craft of text-setting across multiple voicings and instrumentations.

Long Bio

Orin Johnson is a St. Louis–based award-winning composer with a catalog spanning liturgical song, choral anthems, psalm settings, hymn tunes, and sacred vocal music. His work has been published by Oregon Catholic Press (OCP), GIA Publications, World Library Publications (WLP), Choristers Guild, Transcontinental Music Publications, and Simply Liturgical Music (SLM), with nearly 190 psalm settings available through SLM and a steady stream of new releases from OCP and Choristers Guild. His published output includes congregational music for the full liturgical year, SAB and SATB anthems, hymnody, settings of Mass propers and acclamations, and works for children's choir. Recent publications include *Easter Alleluia (Psalm 118)* (OCP, 2025), reviewed in NACCM's (formerly NPM's) *Notebook* as radiating "Easter joy" with "a sparkling piano accompaniment"; *Christ, Enthroned in Light*, and *Make Us Faithful Servants* (Choristers Guild, 2025), both with texts by Alan J. Hommerding. WLP has described Johnson's compositional voice as embodying "versatility" while Choristers Guild praises his "expressive writing" as "musically rich and balanced," particularly his SAB writing. He also accepts commissions and maintains a catalog of self-published secular choral arrangements. Johnson holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music and Folklore and Mythology from Harvard University and a Master of Arts in Choral Conducting from Radford University, as well as a graduate degree in theology from the Aquinas Institute of Theology.