

Meet the Music Director

Rossana Neglia-McLaughlin



I was born in New York City to Joseph and Vina Neglia, the 3rd of 5 children in the house. I come from a long line of musicians, with strong genes that carry throughout Italy and Sicily, even with a music conservatory bearing our family name: NEGLIA. My paternal Grandfather, Angelo, and his brothers, were hired to play their brass instruments every hour in the church tower in Sicily. One of his brothers, Francesco Paolo Neglia, is a world-renowned composer of operas and other works.

None of us were forced into the music field, but we all somehow ended up here. My siblings and I have all made a living in Catholic Churches and Schools throughout the Newark Archdiocese. I, myself, have played in at least 30 churches, off the top of my head, throughout my career. My eldest Brother, Joseph, is the Music Director at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Mountainside, NJ, and is recently retired from his post at Seton Hall Prep. My sister, Dorothy worked for many years as the Music Director at St. Joseph in West Orange, NJ, and as a Music Therapist. My late brother, John, was the Music Director at Sacred Heart Church in Lyndhurst, NJ, and my youngest brother, Jim, who started out as my Song Leader, is now the Personnel Director of the Jacksonville Orchestra in Florida.

Along with being a Church Music Director (St. Peter Church, St. Helen Church, St. Joseph Church), I have been a theatrical director (St. Helen, Roselle Catholic), a High School teacher (St. Joseph Regional HS), a Grammar School teacher (St. Joseph the Carpenter, OLMA, Mother Seton, St. Joseph), a Choral Director (Roselle Catholic, St. Joseph Regional HS), a music arranger, Instrumentalist (Organ, Piano, Flute, Guitar) Vocalist (English, Spanish, Italian, Tagalog) and have even taken a stab at composing some easily singable congregational hymns, for specific days in the church calendar.

My music education began many years ago, at Manhattan School of Music Prep Division, where my older brother and sister and I travelled every Saturday to learn Music Theory, Ear Training, Sight Singing, Dictation, and Instrumental lessons, and performed in yearly Children's Operas. In other schooling, I attended Queen of Peace High School in North Arlington, Caldwell College in Caldwell and Rutgers University in Newark, where I received my BA in General Music.

I can't feel that I have really told you who I am, without mentioning my family. I have 2 wonderful sons, John and Alex. They and their partners are my strength! We have been through some tough times together, which has helped to shape them into the adults they are today. I have been blessed with a bunch of nieces and nephews to whom I am "Nana". From them, I have 4 great-nephews, who are my joy! My happiest moments are spent surrounded by my family and dear friends.

I am so excited to be here, at Our Lady of Mercy Church! I have many plans and ideas for our future together. I look forward to introducing some new music to our parish, as well as keeping some of our more traditional hymns and songs in rotation. My wish is to have great congregational participation in our weekly Liturgies and special Services throughout the year.

Thank you all for receiving me so warmly! May God continue to Bless you and your family.

Con molte grazie e grande affetto,

Rossana

Anyone interested in learning more about my family background is encouraged to read the book, "Music is in Our Blood" by Jim Neglia, available on Amazon.