The State of Your Strength
3/6/19

At last night's rehearsal, I made a passing comment that now you—the Chamber Singers—are collectively stronger than my Concert Choir singers at Wheaton Conservatory. A few of you took the news with an air of disbelief; I heard a few gasps. Given our history of slow growth, our new strength may have come as a surprise; maybe it has sneaked up on us.

I loved my Wheaton students because of their passion, dedication, spiritual depth and talent. Those strengths combined with FIVE HOURS OF WEEKLY REHEARSAL allowed them to perform at surprisingly high levels. Don't just take my word…. their American Choral Director Association performance record speaks for itself with competitively won invitations to State, Divisional and National conventions. Their performance of the Bach *B-minor Mass* in my final year was so good that I doubt a better performance (of any extended choral work) will ever take place at Wheaton College.

But they were just kids, children really: talented, learning, discovering their strengths and weaknesses, emotional, mixed up, learning how to survive away from home.

You, on the other hand, bring maturity and experience along with dedication and talent. Being human, I know that you struggle with some of the same issues I attributed to my students, but still, you are so much more mature and stable. And your voices are grown up, trained. And more than eight of you are capable of being a section leader.

In our fourth year, the Chamber Singers are collectively strong enough to have a productive rehearsal with six singers absent, three of whom are section leaders. The significance of your strength should be marked with a celebration, a plaque, a statue or certainly with applause. Let's acknowledge that in the parable of the talents, we have been given FIVE.

The State of your Strength is a result of visionaries who dreamed, planned, sacrificed and prepared the way, of a strong group of returning singers combining with an amazing group of (recent) new members.