'Simple but beautiful' Mass required 2,000 loud voices



By KATHY PARRISH

Molding 2,000 singers from 75 churches into one choir meant a "lot of headaches and a lot of time" for Norah Duncan.

Providing music for Sunday's Mass of Thanksgiving honoring Cardinal John Dearden was something the music director of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral had to do, though.

"There was no stepping back," said Duncan, who said he was confirmed by Dearden as were most of his brothers

At Dearden's request, the music for the service was "simple but beautiful" from the opening "Look For Me In Lowly Ones" to "And One Bread, One

While the combined voice of 100

singers would fill Blessed Sacrament with sound, Joe Louis Arena was another matter. "The acoustics were against us," said Duncan, whose solution was to recruit 1,500-2,000 singers. "There are no acoustics in the arena."

Still he said it was a moving experi-

Duncan had no trouble recruiting for the choir. On the contrary, registra-tions were still coming in two days be-fore the Mass.

"My big mistake was not giving a cutoff date," he said.

The singers were rehearsed in groups of 150, 300 and 1,400. They performed with organist Gerald Puri of St. Stephen Calboic Church in Port Huron, cantor Frances Brockington of Blessed Sacrament, the Gesu Folk Group, and Galliard Brass Ensemble.



Acoustics aside, 2,000 singers, organist Gerald Furi, the Gesu Folk Group and the Galliard Brass Ensemble gave it their best during Sunday's Mass honoring retiring Cardinal John Dearden. (Photos by

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