

June 20, 2008

We met at Holy Communion this morning and sadly said goodbye to our Memphis hosts for the last two days. The host families had treated the kids to a special evening of dinner and activities and everyone had a special story to tell of their time in Memphis. The kids were also given special t-shirts from Holy Communion illustrating their parish wide study of “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat”. Our rendition of the music added wonderfully to their study.



We continued our record of on-time departures, and left the church for our drive through Mississippi and into Alabama on our way to Birmingham. The four hour drive was lovely, but definitely our longest trek without seeing a rest area or fast food restaurant. As we reached the outskirts of Birmingham, we were able to find a place to stop for lunch. Unfortunately, while finding the perfect spot to park the bus, the lead bus found itself in a spot it could not maneuver out of. While we ate, the tow truck came and quickly raised the rear of the bus, so it could again be driven. We were then on our way to Vulcan Park and Museum.

The Vulcan Statue in the park is the largest cast iron statue in the world, originally created for the St. Louis World’s Fair in the early 1900’s. Now it is a famous landmark for Birmingham. The kids learned that Vulcan was the Roman god of forge. The tour through the museum taught them more about the making of cast iron and the growth of Birmingham. The trip up to the foot of the statue included a ride in a glass elevator and to the platform with a grillwork floor. The panoramic view of Birmingham from the platform was definitely spectacular. All the kids



made

the trip up to the viewing platform and conquered any hesitation they had of the height. Many decided to walk the circular staircase down to the ground- just for fun. You can see by the picture of all the kids at the base of the statue how tall it really is!



Another interesting fact they learned about Birmingham from the museum: The medical center in Birmingham boasts the largest number of kidney transplants performed in the world.

Then it was on to St. Thomas Episcopal Church for our Friday night concert. We quickly adapted to the intimate performance space and enjoyed singing in it. One of the goals of



tour is to grow as a performer by having to adjust to a different space every night. We can easily say that this tour has provided us with the most varied and best meals! We have had a different meal every night and tonight it was a tasty poppyseed chicken dish on rice.

Every night we have had a great number of people in the audience and tonight was no exception. The center section of the church was full and they

were so appreciative of our choirs, once again providing them with a heartfelt standing ovation. It was interesting to think of singing our commissioned piece about Thomas in St. Thomas church. Also unique tonight was the number of extended family members in the audience. Three of our choristers had friends and family there to hear them. Tonight's "Lord Bless You and Keep You" soloists were Hannah Plank and Nathan Fisher.



Tomorrow, we continue on to Chattanooga for our final full concert of the 2008 "Blues City" tour before leading church at All Saints Chapel in Sewanee on Sunday.

