



St Peter Julian's Church - Haymarket

The Blessed Sacrament Congregation's Sydney centre of Eucharistic life and spirituality

TO PLAY AND TO FIGHT

Here's a question for you: what do Pope Benedict XVI and Jose Antonio Abreu have in common? To which you might reply: who is Jose Antonio Abreu? I didn't know but found out while exploring a related matter on the internet.¹ Here's a distant clue: the motto "To play and to fight". You might think this a street slogan thought up by a bunch of young hooligans mixing innocent play and gang violence. Well, you'd be on the right track with both "young" and "violence" but not in the way you might expect. "To play and to fight" is the motto of the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. Their website explains it this way. It means "undertaking music as a collective experience which also involves individual effort; it entails a relentless pursuit of excellence and, above all, it means persevering until dreams become a reality".

A kind of violence lies behind the motto, the violence of poverty, the poverty experienced by too much of the population of Venezuela. In 1975, a remarkable man – yes, [Jose Antonio Abreu](#) – launched a visionary music project to keep the children of Venezuela off the streets and out of the way of drug and alcohol and gang-related violence. His brilliant idea was to provide instruments and tuition to the nation's kids through a network of after-school centres across the nation. The programme – known as the "System" (short-hand for the State Foundation for the National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras of Venezuela) – has generated over 30 professional orchestras and some 125 youth orchestras and involves a quarter of a million children. It has produced several world-class musicians, the most famous of them being the sensational conductor Gustavo Dudamel, just recently appointed music director of the prestigious Los Angeles Philharmonic. Dudamel was once described by the chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, Sir Simon Rattle, as "the most astonishingly gifted conductor I've ever come across".

In an article in the British paper *The Guardian* back in 2007², Charlotte Higgins had this to say about Abreu: "Maestro Abreu, as he is universally known, is a delicate, birdlike man, verging on the shabby. He has built the System with religious zeal. Dudamel calls him 'otherworldly', and there is certainly a monkishness about him; though he doesn't mention it openly, it is obvious that creating the System has been an act of deep religious devotion." Higgins quotes Abreu himself: "From the beginning, I had the idea of inserting strong teachers in classrooms in sectors with dire social

needs. In those cases it's not just the lack of a roof or of bread, it's also a spiritual lack – a loneliness and lack of recognition. The philosophy of the system shows the vicious circle of poverty can be broken when a child poor in material possessions acquires spiritual wealth through music."

It's hard to imagine a more compelling demonstration of the power of music to make a difference in people's lives, to nourish a deep hunger in the human heart, to create community out of individual isolation, to affirm the value and dignity of the human person, and to inspire hope in places of deprivation and misery. Which brings me to a short speech made by Pope Benedict just a month ago and an answer to the question with which we began. Benedict was speaking in response to a concert played for him by young concert students of the Music School of Fiesole on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of his pontificate. What he had to say resonates perfectly with Abreu's musical mission in Venezuela.

This is part of what Benedict said. "The present conditions of society require an extraordinary educational commitment in favour of the new generations. Young people, even if they live in different contexts, have in common a sensitivity in face of the great ideals of life, but they find many difficulties in living them. We cannot ignore their needs and hopes, or the obstacles and threats they meet. They feel the need to approach authentic values such as the centrality of the person, human dignity, peace and justice, tolerance and solidarity. They also seek, at times in confused and contradictory ways, spirituality and transcendence, to find balance and harmony. In this regard, I wish to observe that music is, in fact, capable of opening minds and hearts to the dimension of the spirit and of leading persons to raise their gaze on High, to open to absolute Goodness and Beauty, which have their ultimate source in God."

He went on: "The joy of song and music is also a constant invitation to believers and to all people of good will to commit themselves to give humanity a rich future of hope. Moreover, the experience of playing in an orchestra also adds the collective dimension: the constant practices carried out with patience; the exercise of listening to the other musicians; the commitment not to play 'in solitude,' but to do so in a way that the different 'orchestral colours' -- while maintaining their own characteristics -- are established; the common search for

the best expression: all this constitutes a powerful 'gymnasium,' not only on the artistic and professional plane, but in the overall human profile."

Compare what Benedict said about "the collective dimension" with what Abreu said to Charlotte Higgins about the "System": "The culture is one of mutual support. The point is not to be the best but to be the best you can. The height of achievement for these children is to be part of the national youth orchestra – in other words, to be part of a group, an ensemble."

These are not new convictions that Benedict has acquired as Pope. Writing as Cardinal Ratzinger some fifteen years ago³, he declared in explicit theological terms: "Music uncovers the buried way to the heart, to the core of our being, where it touches the being of the Creator and Redeemer. Wherever this is achieved, music becomes the road that leads to Jesus, the way on which God shows his salvation." Provocative theologian Hans Kung has recently both criticised and complimented his former theological colleague. One subject they would appear to agree on is the spiritual power of music. In 1991 Kung was invited to give a lecture in Munich to mark the beginning of the Mozart bicentenary.⁴ One of his themes was the mystery of Mozart's music: "If we start . . . from the fact that this Mozart did not write divine music, nor demonic music either, but rather a music that was humane in every respect, then the mystery of this music lies in the fact that it constantly makes audible both the light *and* the dark, joy *and* sorrow, life *and* death. However, neither side stands neutrally in equilibrium over against the other and through the other, but the darkness is always transcended and done away with in the light."

Kung doesn't use the phrase but he certainly implies what the church happily rediscovered in the course of the 20th century – the paschal mystery, the transforming event of Jesus' death and resurrection. In the dying and rising of Jesus light has dawned in darkness, love has

disarmed hate, and life has triumphed over death. This is what we celebrate whenever we pray together as church. As the bishops of the United States say in their 2007 document, *Sing to the Lord*, "The primordial song of the liturgy is the canticle of victory over sin and death." But they go on: "The paschal hymn . . . does not cease when a liturgical celebration ends. Christ, whose praises we have sung, remains with us and leads us through church doors to the whole world, with its joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties." This is what the music of the Mass – the music of congregations and choirs, organs and orchestras – is all about. It's about singing a new world to birth. As Benedict said, "The joy of song and music is . . . a constant invitation to believers and to all people of good will to commit themselves to give humanity a rich future of hope." And as Jose Antonio Abreu has proved, ". . . the vicious circle of poverty can be broken when a child poor in material possessions acquires spiritual wealth through music."

All this reminds us of the power of music and song when we gather as church to pray. Music and song are never just optional extras at worship, never just pretty adornment. They're the irrepressible language of the heart. They bear before God the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties, of the human family. They translate the raw material of human experience into "worship in spirit and truth". How can we not sing and make music for the Lord? Aren't we all called "to play and to fight" until a new world is sung into birth?

Tom Knowles SSS

¹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orquesta_Sinf%C3%B3nica_Sim%C3%B3nica_Bol%C3%ADvar (and associated links)
²27.11.07

³Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. *A New Song for the Lord*. NY: Crossroad, 1996, p.110.

⁴Hans Kung. *Mozart. Traces of Transcendence*. London: SCM, 1992, p.19.

"Walk with Christ"

Join thousands of Catholics as we "Walk with Christ" in procession through the streets of Sydney on 6 June from 2.30-4.30pm from St Patrick's Church Hill, Sydney to St Mary's Cathedral Forecourt.

Further information:

www.facebook.com/walkwithchristsydney.

Adult Education Session presented by Sister Elizabeth Crilley rsj

Mary MacKillop Place
7-11 Mount Street, North Sydney Phone:9929 7344
Guided Meditation
Monday 21 May and Monday 28th June 2010
11.00am—1.00pm
Cost: Individual Session \$10

Mary MacKillop East Timor Mission and St Joseph's Centre for Reflective Living

Will be presenting a display of the complete Mary MacKillop Literacy program "A Touch of Timor" from Saturday June 5 to Wednesday June 9.

St Joseph's Centre, 64 MacKillop Drive, Baulkham Hills

Further information:

www.stjosephscentre.org.au

Eucharist: THE BASIC SPIRITUALITY With 30 Witness Stories Questions for group discussion

An ebook by Fr Frank O'Dea SSS
Available free on-line at
theeucharist.wordpress.com

"Ways of Being a Catholic". Intensive Course presented by Dr. Andrew Kania, Anthony Cleary and Grace Kordahi.

Venue: The Catholic Centre, 3 Keating Street, Lidcombe. Telephone: 02 9646 9010.

Date: Thursday 10 June 8.30am—4.00pm. Friday 11 June 9.00am—4.00pm. Cost \$150. Further information: www.caec.com.au

St Peter Julian's Mass Times

1st & 3rd Saturday:	2.15pm (Indonesian)
Saturday Vigil Mass :	5.30pm
Sunday Mass Times:	9.30am, 11.00am (Chinese) 12.30pm, 3.30pm & 5.00pm (Korean)
Monday to Friday:	7.30am, 12.10pm, 5.30pm
Saturday	12.10pm & Vigil at 5.30pm
Public Holidays:	12.10pm

Silence and Solitude

Young men interested in the Catholic Priesthood are invited to join the Seminarians of the Good Shepherd Seminary for prayer and reflection.

Sunday 20th June. Time—9.00am—1.00pm

Venue: Seminary of the Good Shepherd
50—58 Abbotsford Road
Homebush 2140

Enquiries : vocations@sydneycatholic.org

Phone: 9390 5970

"Convivial", a youth Congress for students in years 10 to 12.

Theme: "What are you searching for?"

When: Friday 25th to Sunday 27th June

Where: University of Notre Dame, Sydney
104 Broadway (Cnr Broadway and
Abercrombie Street)

Registration: www.convivio.org/sydney

For more info contact Rian Galliot
Mobile 0402 135 637.

Writings of St Peter Julian Eymard

RA 19

Directory of the Aggregation. Chapter 1 (OC VIII, 478)

1. Concerning the Eucharistic love

The love of Jesus Christ in the most Blessed Sacrament must be the life-moving principle of an associate, all the acts of his life must be its natural fruit: such a love, such a life. But how can the Eucharistic love of Jesus Christ become the principle of the life of an adorer, his dominant virtue? To reach this happy goal, two means are essential: the first, be very convinced that the Most Blessed Eucharist is the greatest act of love of Jesus Christ for us men; and the second, be totally convinced that the love for man is the purpose for the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

PG 293,1

The love of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Preaching (OC XII, 213)

3. The institution of the adorable Eucharist is this supreme and perpetual gift; that's why it is called the sacrament of love. Yes, my brothers, it is the sacrament "par excellence" of the love of Jesus Christ for redeemed humanity.

PO 37,6

May 8, 1862. Forty-Hours with the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament in Paris (OC XII, 597)

2. [The Eucharist] teaches us to love, to acts of love that are nothing else than virtues.

The Eucharist is the sacrament of love quia [because] Jesus Christ exhaust his love there. He gives everything he has, and he gives himself. He wants to form us in love. He forces us to love him because of the excess of his own charity.

PC 13,2

First Communion. Preaching. "The Eucharist is a sacrament of love" (OC XIII, 552)

All the sacraments of Jesus Christ are coming from his infinite goodness and a precious grace of his love, but the sacrament of Eucharist is the sacrament of love "par excellence". The other sacraments contain sanctifying grace, but the Eucharist contains the author of all grace; the other sacraments pour out a few divine rays, but in the Eucharist, it is the very sun of justice and love who gives himself totally and freely. It is the burning hearth of divine love, and it is concerning this sacrament that Jesus Christ says: "I have come to bring divine fire on the earth, and my only desire is to see it set fire to every corner." Ignem [...] [Lc 12,49]

YEAR OF EYMARD

The worldwide Blessed Sacrament Congregation began celebrating a **Year of Eymard** on **4 February, 2010**.

This will conclude with the bi-centenary of his birth on **4 February 2011**.



DIARY DATES ~ JUNE 2010

LITURGY

Sundays: Year C

June 6th The Body and Blood of Christ
 June 13th 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time
 June 20th 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
 June 27th 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Memorials:

June 1 St. Justin
 June 3 St Charles Lwanga
 June 5 St Boniface
 June 11 Sacred Heart
 June 12 Immaculate Heart of Mary
 June 21 St Aloysius
 June 24 Birth of John the Baptist
 June 28 St Irenaeus
 June 29 Sts Peter and Paul

Mass celebrated in INDONESIAN ~ *Misa Bahasa Indonesia* ~ with the CIC/SPJ Community on Saturdays, 5th and 19th June at 2.15 pm.

All members of the Indonesian community are especially welcome.

Information: <http://www.cicspj.org>

Mass celebrated in CHINESE: In Cantonese every Sunday at 11.00 am.

Information: www.chinese.sydney.catholic.org.au. Contact John Wong.

Mass celebrated in KOREAN every Sunday at 5.00 pm. Contact Esther Kim—0416 100 499.

Holy Trinity Prayer Community at St Peter Julian's

The Community gathers for Eucharistic Adoration on the 2nd & 4th Saturday evenings of each month at 6.45 pm at St Peter Julian's after the Vigil Mass.

Next dates - June 12th and 26th

For more information please email - holytrinity@catholic.org.au

The next gathering of The Associates of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation will be on Saturday 12th June, 2010.

Contact person: Fr Marcellus Glynn SSS (Director) 02 9211 4100

St. Peter Julian's Altar Auxiliary

The 12.10pm Thursday Eucharist is offered for the Members of St Peter Julian's Altar Auxiliary. For information on becoming a member please speak to the Receptionist.

The Filipino Community monthly Community Mass on 1st Sunday—6th June at 1.30pm.

All members of the Filipino Community are warmly welcome.



<u>Contact us:</u>	Community Leader:	Fr Joe Fernando SSS
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