



St Francis' Church Melbourne Blessed Sacrament Congregation



**Newsletter
June 2010**

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 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 2007, 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."² 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. This 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 ago, 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.”³ 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 November

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.



JOIN A CHOIR AT ST FRANCIS’ CHURCH!

St Francis’ Choir- go to the website: www.stfrancischoir.org.au

Julian Singers- contact Ms Beverley Phillips: 9639-4560

Youth Choir-contact Ms Shanti Michael: shantimichael@gmail.com

Musica Camara- contact Ms Beverley Phillips 9639-4560

Filipino Choir- contact Fr Alfred Yap SSS: 9631-5020

‘A FUTURE WITH HOPE. MAKING A DIFFERENCE’

ACU is hosting **The Big Event (TBE2010)**, open to all past & present ACU students from every Australian campus. **Four days of fun, inspiration, opportunities, workshops and talks from national & international speakers.** Explore personal, social justice, leadership, professional and faith issues. **July 2-5, Melbourne.** Registrations close **4 June.** Contact Emily Wolfenden email emily.wolfenden@acu.edu.au or 9953-3098

‘DOING’ RCIA: A PRACTICAL APPROACH



Part 1: Models of RCIA for Adults

Part 2: Models of RCIA for Children

Presenter: Fr Elio Capra SDB

Saturday 5 June 9.30 am –3.30 pm

BYO lunch. Tea/coffee provided.



St Clare’s Parish Centre Box Hill North (enter off Killara St)

Registration is essential: contact Suzanne at the

Archbishop’s Office for Evangelisation –Tel: 9926-5761

ST VINCENT de PAUL WINTER APPEAL

Please bring your **gift of goods or money for the poor** to Mass on **Friday 11 June, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart.** Members of the St Vincent de Paul Society will be in the porch to receive your offering.

A WEEKLY WAY OF THE CROSS

You are warmly invited to participate in a Way of the Cross Walk each Friday at 10.00 am,

Page 2 *beginning at St Francis’ Church.. **For booking, please contact Rev Peter Gador-White: 0417-425-188***



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

Social Justice in The City Seminar
Wednesday 30 June 12:00 –1:00 pm
St Francis' Pastoral Centre

Dr John Honner: 'Louise de Marillac'
Enjoy a complimentary cuppa– all are welcome.
Further information: **Paula: 9895-5800**

OZANAM LECTURE 2010

Sponsored by the St Vincent de Paul Society State Council
Lecture by **Fr Richard Benson CM** (from California)
Respondent: **Catherine Collins**
Board Member, VincentCare Victoria
Thursday 3 June at 7.00 pm
St Francis' Church, Lonsdale Street

SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB

Dr Paul Collins –historian, writer, broadcaster
'Dismantling Vatican II: The Reform of the Reform'
Pumphouse Hotel
128 Nicholson St Fitzroy
Wednesday 2 June at 8.00 pm

MELBOURNE COLLEGE OF DIVINITY

Centenary Conference **5-7 July 2010**
'The Future of Religion in Australian Society'
Trinity College, University of Melbourne
Celebrate 100 years of ecumenical theological education by attending some stimulating conferences.
Keynote Speakers: Tom Calma, Paul Fiddes, John McDowell, Andrew McGowan, Sandra Schneiders, Justin Taylor. **Register: www.mcd.edu.au**

ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE FOR EVANGELISATION

Don't miss out on upcoming events in the Archdiocese!
Check the website for a host of great opportunities at
www.evangelisation.org

MACKILLOP YOUNG ADULT COMMUNITY

Retreat weekend for people 18–35
'Mary MacKillop–Inspired & Inspiring'
Friday 9 July (evening) to Sunday 11 July
19 Ocean Boulevard, Jan Juc (RSVP 30 June)
Info: Tel: 9306-8903 email macyac@sosj.org.au
Rita– 0419-299-065 or Janette 0411-406-152



PARISH DANCES

8.00 pm Fri 25 June (& last Friday every month)
Our Lady Help of Christians Hall
49 Nicholson St (next Barkly St)
East Brunswick
Bring own food/drink; tea/coffee provided
Ring Maurice 9895 5266
Admission \$5
Learn to Dance: classes with a variety of music at **8.00 pm every Tuesday.**

FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMME

The St Francis' Faith Formation Programme will continue until **Sunday 6 June** then go into recess until **Sunday 18 July.**

MELBOURNE CITY CHURCHES IN ACTION

The next meeting of the MCCIA will take place on
Wednesday 9 June at 6:00 pm at
St Peter's Eastern Hill
Cnr Gisborne and Albert Streets
East Melbourne. All are most welcome!

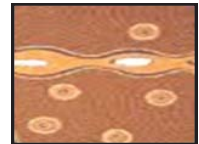


EUCHARIST: THE BASIC SPIRITUALITY

An e-book by **Fr Frank O'Dea SSS**
30 Witness Stories and **Questions** for **Group Discussion**
Available *free* online at:
theeucharist.wordpress.com

ART AT ST FRANCIS'

25 May - 14 June
Project Dreaming Tracks
featuring *Indigenous artists*
17 June - 11 July



Chinese-Vietnamese Art by
Sr Marguerite Nguyen, FMA
Mon-Fri 10.00 am-5.00pm, Sun 10.00 am-3.00 pm



HEART OF ST KILDA CONCERT

Tuesday 29 June, Palais Theatre, St Kilda
A great way to support the work of the **Sacred Heart Mission** in St Kilda. Check out the list of stars at:
www.sacredheartmission.org
Tickets: www.ticketmaster.com.au



2010 REFLECTIONS...

Celebrating the Year of the Canonisation of Mary MacKillop
Wednesday 2 June: 10.30 am-2.30 pm or 7.30-9.00 pm
St Joseph's Convent 16 Esplanade, Williamstown
Facilitator: **Moya Unthank, RSJ:**
'Mary's Relationship with God: Aspects of Mary MacKillop's spirituality, including her devotion to the Will of God, her trust in God's providence and her love of the Sacred Heart.'

REGULAR MONTHLY MASSES

Mass signed for the deaf: 10.00 am first Sunday (6 June)
Tertiary Students Mass: 6.00 pm first Sunday (6 June)
For people living with HIV/AIDS: 5.30 pm second Tuesday (8 June)
Filipino Mass: 2.30 pm second Sunday (13 June)
Indonesian Mass: 2.45 pm third Sunday (20 June)

For your Diary

June 2010 at St Francis'

- **Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ:** Sunday 6 June
- **Mass signed for the deaf:** 10.00 am Sunday 6 June
- **Tertiary Students' Mass:** 6.00 pm Sunday 6 June
- **Mass for people living with HIV/Aids:** 5.30 pm Tuesday 8 June
- **Solemnity of the Sacred Heart:** Friday 11 June
- **Filipino Community Eucharist:** 2.30 pm Sunday 13 June
- **Indonesian Community Mass:** 2.45 pm Sunday 20 June
- **Solemnity of the Birth of John the Baptist:** Thursday 24 June
- **Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul, Apostles:** Monday 29 June
- **Fr Ed's monthly reflection for June:** *Jesus, Fount of Love*
- **Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help & Eucharistic Benediction:** 12.30 pm Friday
- **Rosary:** 11.30 am Monday to Saturday in the Ladye Chapel
- **Sung MORNING PRAYER** of the Church: 8.30 am Monday to Friday
- **Sung EVENING PRAYER** of the Church: 6.00 pm Monday to Friday, 5.30 pm Sunday

EUCCHARISTIC ASSOCIATES

Next meeting: **Sunday 27 June**

2.00 pm– 2.30 pm Newcomers only– Pastoral Centre

2.30 pm - 3.30 pm Adoration (all)- Church

3.00 pm - 4.00 pm Talk– Pastoral Centre

Contact person: Melville Miranda on **9809 4316**

SERVITIUM CHRISTI

(Eucharistic Secular Institute)

Next meeting: **Saturday 19 June at 2.00 pm**

St Francis' Pastoral Centre

Contact: Mary Williams on 9818 5375 or
Tina Lazzaro on 9432 4441

Study Tour: Advance Notice

Put **November 2011** in your diary now!

Come on a **four-week liturgical study tour**.

Visit key Catholic and ecumenical centres in Europe that inspired and continue the implementation of the vision of Vatican II.

"Realizing The Vision: 150 Years of Liturgical Renewal" is a Yarra Theological Union initiative.

Ask for the flyer—email studytour@ytu.edu.au

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND

A wonderful opportunity for married couples to enrich their marriages. Volunteer couples and a Priest present the weekend. It is based around Catholic values, but you don't need to be Catholic to attend.

The next weekends are **25–27 June & 20–22 August**.

Further information from **Peter & Erika Smith** on **9899–0824**, or email vicbookings@wwme.org.au
Check the website: www.wwme.org.au

NEED A SPIRITUAL BREAK IN YOUR BUSY DAY?

Look no further!

Go to the **Irish Jesuits'** popular meditative site:

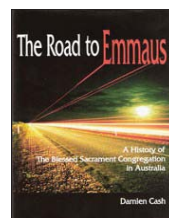
<http://www.sacredspace.ie>

and another by

David Stendahl-Rast, a Benedictine monk:

<http://www.gratefulness.org>

A GREAT READ!



by **Damien Cash**

A fascinating history of the Blessed Sacrament Community in Australia

Buy a copy at St Francis' Pastoral Centre!