

2020- 6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

As I sat down to prepare this Homily I dutifully went to my sound system to turn the music off. As a mere male I cannot multi-task! But I hesitated. Giuseppe Verdi's Opera 'La Traviata' was in full flight and the wonderful chorus 'Libiamo' was just beginning. No I couldn't turn it off. It had to be enjoyed. So I settled back in my La-Z-Boy and let the exquisite sounds of that superb chorus caress me.

And it occurred to me that without Giuseppe Verdi this music would never ever have existed. He was its creator. His was the mind who gave this sumptuous Opera birth.

Likewise- behind the order, the harmony and the immense complexity of the wondrous creation of the Universe is the mind of a far greater Creator- the Father.

If that Orchestra, the soloists and the chorus had tried to perform La Traviata without a highly skilled Conductor- a person who knows the mind of the creator, Verdi, through and through, there would have been chaos. In that beautiful performance there had to be an authoritative leader to integrate the soloists, the chorus and the orchestra and to control the whole performance.

And so it is with the Universe. Jesus is its Conductor. He perfectly knows the mind of the Father because He and the Father are utterly one. As he said in today's Gospel: "I am in the Father" and the Father is in Him. Jesus' teachings reflect with absolute accuracy the mind of the Father.

We, who are the Church, are the chorus and the orchestra. The Pope, the 1st violinist- the leader of the Orchestra- sets the pitch. Bishops, priests and saintly laity are the soloists.

None of us- whether we are soloists, singers or musicians- must ever take our eyes off Jesus, the Conductor. We must be utterly obedient to our Blessed Lord and also be very, very aware of each other, blending our varied tones and melodies to make music in perfect harmony.

But what sort of sound will we make? Will our performance be inspired or will it be downright boring? A performance can be technically correct but also be quite dead. There has to be a spirit within a performance lifting what is being played from being just a collection of notes into something redolent with beauty- capable of lifting the spirits of all the hearers into ecstasy.

Thus it is with great music. As I sat in my La-Z-Boy a few minutes ago listening to 'Libiamo' I chuckled with joy.

And so it is with us in the Church. To play the divine melody as it should be played, we need the presence within us of a powerful spirit- the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the love, the passion, bonding the Father and the Son, making them utterly one. From all eternity, the Holy Spirit has been the life-force of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is the life of God; God who is Love.

That which makes the Church different from any other Group in our world is the indwelling presence within it of the Holy Spirit. We, the orchestra, the soloists and the chorus are called to be bonded with the Composer and the Conductor by the Holy Spirit- all playing as one- music of the most exquisite beauty.

Our audience is the world. Certainly not all in the world want to listen. Just as there are many people who shut Classical Music out of their lives, so there are many people who choose to shut Christianity out of their lives and even mock it.

Nevertheless most people hunger for beauty, for truth and for goodness. And we- each one of us- are called by Christ to boldly play divine melodies for them. As we lead our daily lives, our eyes must be focused on Christ and our ears need to be attuned to each other. We must open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and allow ourselves to be inspired to play divine melodies in all that we say and do.

When people sense that our souls are infused with God's Spirit; as the beauty of the music of our lives sweeps over them and embraces them, they too, in turn, will open their hearts in love to the Eternal Composer and the Divine Conductor.

What I have missed the most over the last seven weeks of lockdown has been my ability to join with my brothers and sisters in Christ at Mass. Yes, I have been permitted to celebrate Mass every day with Father Tovio. I have been lucky in that respect. But any Opera lover will tell you that Opera most comes alive when the solo arias and the duets give way to a climax with all singers and the full orchestra pulling out every stop for a chorus. We all crave for choruses! And I have missed the marvelous dynamic of being a part of a crowd of Spirit-filled people combined as one to worship our wonderful God.

I have dearly missed having Communion with people I have grown to love. I have dearly missed having people around me as we pray the Creed. And now I so much look forward to being with a crowd once again, singing, praying, embracing, crying and laughing.

I look forward so very much to Pentecost when perhaps the restrictions will be lifted and we will be able to sing with all the ardour of our souls: 'Come Holy Spirit'. What a Chorus that will be! Verdi's 'Libiamo' just won't rank!