

## The Holy Family Church Thanksgiving Concert

– A very happy “Brothers and Sisters, ALL” musical event

The Holy Family Church’s biggest concert of the year kicked off on Sunday, November 17, 2019 in the welcome speech by Fr. Rao Zhicheng. The Vice Principal Priest, Fr. Shen Dezhong, plans and prepares 4 music feasts each year. This year's 4th concert is performed in conjunction with major groups in Taipei, including the Holy Family Church Choir, Joy Choir, DwaDuDia Orchestra, the Medical Musical Group (MMG), which came a long distance from the United States, is in line with the meaning of “Brothers and Sisters, All” (「四海一家」 the family of the Four Seas).

The MMG is a non-profit organization composed of Philharmonic people who work in healthcare field, and Dr. Victor Wahby, who was born in Egypt, is the conductor. Dr. Wahby is a medical professor at Yale University and the Chicago School of Medicine. He led the MMG to win the Congressional Medal of Honor (CMOH) Society’s Bob Hope Award. The members of MMG include a symphony orchestra and a choir. In addition to performing in the United States, members pay their own travel expenses, tour the world, convey the message of love and peace, and bring the healing music to the corner of the world where it is needed. Most of its members are first time visitors to Taiwan with great joy.

The opening show was performed by the prestigious Holy Family Church Choir. Under the guidance of Professor Su-yiau Wang, it was committed to promoting the sacred music and improving church etiquette. League members range from students to all walks of life and retired friends. Regardless of age and parish, we will serve the music concentrically, and praise the Lord with wonderful singing. Debuted three songs: "Amor de Mi Alma", "My Final Resting Place", and the familiar "Prayer of Saint Francis", sincerely: "God, make me your instrument of peace, and Love is spread in the place where hate it is spread; forgiveness is spread in the place where it is cruel; hope is spread in the place of despair ...". Sentence by sentence, the speech is loud, clear and exciting.

Then, the 44-year-old Joy Choir performed. Under the leadership of the Director Pingshan (Sam) Chen giving back to the society with love, the Joy Choir often touring the nurseries, elderly care centers and communities. The well-known songs, "Green Island Serenade", "Grandma's Penghu Bay", and "Glorious Daylight" evoke everyone's beautiful memories. The audience followed the brisk melody beating involuntarily, murmuring, singing, and was drunk together with music.

The groups chorus “Amazing Grace” gathered three performance groups, singing the infinite love of God, softly soothing the soul, and revealing the unlimited gratitude of God’s children.

After the intermission, an orchestra of nearly 50 people appeared. The DwaDaDia Orchestra is composed of amateur musicians in a spirit of diversity and openness. They integrate music into their busy life and joyfully reunite in group practice. Under the direction of Conductor Dr. Xueren Huang, many DwaDaDia concerts were widely praised and acknowledged by the music scene. In just 4 nights before the performance, they rehearsed with the MMG and cooperated well with each other to complete the wonderful performance. Their standard is high and truly amazing!

"Ave Verum Corpus" is the work of the music master Mozart in the last year of his life. It is often sung during Mass. Tranquility, peace, love and forgiveness are perfectly interpreted in the singing of the groups chorus.

Especially invited piano soloist, Rita Chen Kuo, is a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music in New York and an awardee of the Certificate of Perpetual Professional Achievement by the National Association of Music Teachers and the New York State Music Teachers Association. With superb playing skills accompanied by the orchestra, she perfectly interpreted the beautiful, gorgeous, bold and unique melody of Liszt's "Hungarian Fantasia". During the 17-minute music, the leaping notes struck the heart of the audience. The concertmaster of the MMG, Dr. Richard Chen, who returned from the United States with honors, fascinated every audience with a famous violin solo piece "Thais Meditation". The contemplation of tranquility in a perfect combination of the violin and orchestra slightly buckled and stayed in my mind for a long time.

"Ave Maria" is a classic tribute familiar to people inside and outside of Catholic community. Teacher Suyiau Wang was especially invited to perform as a soloist. With the pious and sincere prayer via her beautiful, simple and unembellished voice perfectly accompanied by the string orchestra, the listener's admiration for the Holy Virgin was born.

Dr. Anita Chen Marshall (the younger sister of Dr. Richard Chen) also sang famous songs with a unique voice. With the backing of the three major choirs, the two songs, "Panis Angelicus" and "Climb Every Mountain", won the scene full of energy. The unstoppable encore, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy", even brought the concert to its climax; the audience followed the melody and sang gently, nodded and beat, the scene was a joy. After the performance, the applause was endless! Dr. Wahby appeared again, thanking greatly and expressing he was deeply touched by the enthusiasm of all audience for religious music upon his first visit to Taiwan. As Vice President Jianren Chen said in a speech before the concert, he quoted St. Augustine by saying: "A beautiful singing is a double prayer!" In the concerted devoting efforts of various groups, the prayer strength to the Lord reached 100 times and 1000 times. Ask the Lord to reward peace and joy at the most needed moment of our time. Music evangelization has been a tradition of the Holy Family Church for many years, bringing people into the temple of the Lord, and bringing closer the personal relationship between people.

The principal priest, Fr. Zhicheng Rao, also emphasized in the opening welcome speech: "The four groups that have never met previously, acquainted, coordinated, cooperated and cared for each other in just four rehearsals, thus accomplished a successful concert smoothly and completely. Such a miracle can be achieved only through communion within the Holy Spirit. "

Praise the Lord! The 1,300 full-filled performers and audience all made this worthwhile trip, and the live broadcasts outside the venue also worked effectively. The beautiful music evangelization is so convincing. We look forward to more music feasts like this, calling the lambs to return to the main stack. "Brothers and Sisters, All" go to the path of sanctification with "Music and Joy".

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Photos:

(1) Top left: Photo with Vice President of Taiwan and his wife. From the left, Soprano soloist Dr. Anita Chen Marshall; piano soloist Rita Chen Kuo; violin soloist Dr. Richard Chen; Principal Priest of Holy Family Church, Fr. Rao Zhicheng; Vice President Chen Jianren and his wife; Dr. Elizabeth Chen Christensen (Harpist); and Cynthia Chen (Dr. Richard Chen's wife).

(2) Top Middle: The Programs of Holy family Church "Brothers and Sisters, All" Thanksgiving concert are wonderful, of a high standard, and conveying love endlessly!

(3) Top right: Fr. Rao Zhicheng thanks everyone for participating in the music feast.

(4) Right Middle-1: Conductor Dr. Wahby was impressed by the enthusiasm of Taiwanese fans.

(5) Right Middle-2: The Holy Family Church Choir performs a message of love and peace.