

BENEDICT XVI

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FOR SACRED MUSIC AND DIVINE WORSHIP

The Amazing Gifts of Richard Carrillo at the Miami premiere of *The Mass of the Americas*.

By Maggie Gallagher

I wish you could have been there. It was breathtaking.

As I sat in the front pew they nicely reserved for me, as the pews behind me filled up, almost to standing room with the faithful and the curious. I watched the young conductor Richard Carrillo address his festival choir: More than 100 singers gathered from the nearby St. Thomas University, the University of Miami and parishes around the archdiocese.

Richard Carrillo told his singers that this was worship not performance. He told them to think about Our Lady whom this Mass honors as Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. Then to my surprise Richard Carrillo whipped out his personal copy of our poet-in-residence James Matthew Wilson's book of poems *The River of the Immaculate Conception* which was inspired by *The Mass of the Americas*. And then Richard proceeded to read to 100 singers a poem *Hymn to San Juan Diego*. He circled back to dwell on a few of his favorite parts including this one:

"All those who seek me, Little One,
Will have me for their mother;
And those by pride or greed estranged
Will someday call you brother."

This celebration of *The Mass of the Americas* was Richard Carrillo's Phd. project for the prestigious Frost School of Music at the University of Miami. More importantly, it was an offering from his heart to Our Lord:

"It has been a dream of mine to use my gifts as musician to help bring attention to the Mass, particularly in this season of Eucharistic revival, to do our part as musicians to bring greater attention to the Eucharist and to the Mass."

What a jewel, what a gift from and to the Church. I have a feeling we are going to be hearing great things from this young Catholic conductor and I can't thank-you enough for helping us help him do what he is called to do: move the hearts and stir the souls of hundreds.

After the Mass ended, you could hear a pin drop as the congregation sat in holy silence. Then the Epiphany Pastor Father José Alvarez started up applause and the assembly came to their feet in thunderous appreciation.

"I have listened to this Mass so many times," one new friend of mine told me, "but I've never *heard* it before."

That is the difference between sacred music as a concert piece, and the experiencing of letting sacred music aid us in the worship of Our Lord.

I was glad Benedict XVI Institute provided a simple reception after because nobody wanted to leave immediately. Thank those of you who help us with your prayers, your encouragement and your gifts. This is a treasure you have helped Archbishop Cordileone build.