

TELL THEM ABOUT ME

Original music and lyrics by Denise Morency Gannon, ASCAP, ©2012

Instrumental music arranged and produced by Ron Gamache
based on original scores by Denise Morency Gannon

Vocal arrangements by Denise Morency Gannon

Ephesians Prayer piano arrangement by Patrick Gannon

Mixed and mastered at Bongo Beach Studio, Westport, MA
John Mailloux, engineer

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE

Ron Gamache, acoustic and electric guitars, piano
David Edmond, English horn
Mary Ellen Ault, trumpet
Philip Smith, violin, viola
Victoria Perreira, percussion

VOCAL ENSEMBLE (*soloists)

Samuel Brunner, *Charles Micah Christian, *Bethany Conway, *Martha Gannon,
Jacqueline Pina, Sarah Pothier, Matthew Quinn, Derrick Souza, Corey Waldron

PLAYLIST

Song of the Prophet	Music by Gustav Holst, arranged by Ron Gamache	Soloist: Martha Gannon
I Love You Lord, My Strength	Psalm 18	Soloist: Martha Gannon
The Lord Upholds My Life	Psalm 54	Soloist: Martha Gannon
How Long, O Lord?	Based on Psalm 6	Soloist: Bethany Conway Descant: Martha Gannon
O Blessed are the Ones		Soloist: Bethany Conway
Tell Them about Me Christian		Soloist: Charles Micah
Come Follow Me	Lyrics adapted from Pope John Paul II's address to youth in Boston Common, 1979.	Soloist: Martha Gannon

Without You

Soloist: Bethany Conway

Ephesians Prayer

Ephesians 1:17-18

Soloist: Martha Gannon

Tree of Life instrumental

O Death, Where is your Victory? Based on 1 Corinthians 15:58

Soloist: Martha Gannon

Introduction

The collection Tell Them About Me employs jazz, classical, folk and gospel music. The talents of young college singers who sang on the recording inject life into the lyrics and the notes on the page. Music married to lyrics equals a powerful evangelizer. The songs provided food for rich conversation with the students who sang the project.

Producer and writer Ron Gamache created stunning instrumental arrangements based on my original scores. Our collaboration took place over the phone, through emails, Facebook notes and iTunes segments of the music sent through Dropbox. We worked independently in our own writing holes and together in his studio. John Mailloux joined the team as the engineer when the collection appeared properly dressed and ready for voice recording and mastering. In the middle of production, John moved his equipment from one location to his brand new state of the art studio. Tell Them About Me took six months to complete.

The cover art for this collection came about in rather unusual way. While vacationing with my husband and our friends Kathy and Curt Moraes, we all looked up to watch a sky writer patiently sketch the name Jesus from his aircraft. Mesmerized, I took a picture on my Smartphone before the name evaporated into the wild blue yonder. Thanks to the anonymous author for a true ascension moment. Evangelization takes on a myriad of wondrous forms. Seize their moments to reveal the living God.

I could not have produced Tell Them About Me without the fiscal backing of Deacon Marcel G. Morency who financed the project. A 92 year old retired Catholic deacon, Dad believed in the project and its message. Dad has lived the Gospel his entire life, even in his old age. I wrote O Death, Where is Your Victory, the last song on the collection, in anticipation of his Christian burial as a deacon of the church and a veteran of World War II.

I dedicate this entire collection with all of my love to my husband Patrick Gannon and to our wonderful children Sean, Timothy and Martha. Through their consistent support, encouragement and participation in all of my artistic endeavors, I continue to respond to the creative Spirit of God with their love and help. They are my heart and soul.

I extend my profound gratitude to Ron Gamache, longtime friend and colleague for loving this project and writing arrangements worthy of heaven. I'm also grateful to John Mailloux for his technical expertise and easy going and collaborative partnership throughout this project.

To the young artists who participated in the project, my heartfelt thanks for sharing your musical talents to create Tell Them About Me. I encourage you to use your artistic gifts to offer the world a window into God's heart.

I include these notes as a backdrop to this eclectic collection of Christian music and invite you to post comments, questions and opinions on my website at denise.morencygannon.org. Vocal scores, some orchestral scores and lead sheets may be purchased at Morgan Music and Liturgy. <http://www.mmlit.com>

COLLECTION (LINER) NOTES

In the summer of 2001, I studied with theologian Megan McKenna (www.meganmckenna.com) at Boston College. A gifted teacher and story teller extraordinaire who seduces listeners into her imaginative scriptural midrash, McKenna fed our imaginations through a veritable banquet of words. As her scriptural prowess led a hungry remnant of pastoral ministry students through a sojourn of biblical and modern day prophets, we examined contemporary issues of church, government and world issues through the eyes of faith based justice on behalf of the poor. McKenna addressed dominant economic and cultural structures with the fiery intensity of a post-modern day prophet standing in our midst and speaking boldly for God. Her passionate pedagogy drew me in like a moth to a flame and ignited a gas fire under my Christian burner.

At the end of the course, McKenna offered the class two options as a final for the class. We could write a paper or we could create an original work of art, music, poetry, marketing tool or any other project, mining our imaginations and summing up the weeks of study as a conversion experience. I chose the second option and wrote music and lyrics like crazy that summer. I selected four pieces of music from that project and expanded them for the collection Tell Them About Me: Song of the Prophet, The Lord Upholds My Life, How Long, O Lord? and O Blessed are the Ones. An asterisk marks the notes on each of these songs. I gratefully dedicate these four pieces of music to Dr. Megan McKenna.

***Song of the Prophet** (Tune: THAXTED) Original lyrics by Denise Morency Gannon

The lyrics of this song address systemic injustice, power, dominant and subdominant cultures, violence and evil on behalf of the poor, the heavily burdened and those who cannot speak for themselves. The coda extols Jesus, the new Moses, as the exodus of freedom for all the world as it hungers and thirsts for God's justice and mercy through human activity and right relationship.

Use: justice; reconciliation; peace.

Lyrics for Song of the Prophet

Who will name the God of mercy, who loves whom we forget?
God's heart bleeds with the broken, the reason Christ was sent.
Do we find the Lord of freedom among gods of green and gold?
Do our world powers rule us as prophets have foretold?

Does our worship lead to works of peace and solidarity?
Are we Christ's in mind and body as one community?

Just as war created divisions, so does our apathy
toward the ones who cry for justice, who yearn for liberty.
Do we speak for the weary, rousing hearts with words of fire?
Does God's word burn within us as Joel and Jeremiah?
Do we commit to the long haul or set our own decree?
Do our good works ring with good news for the community?

Are we breeders of corruption, untroubled by God's tears?
Do we help create the system that governs us through fear?
Let the shofar blast the signal that God's day is at hand
as we sing of God's justice and follow Christ's command?
Let us beat our swords to ploughshares, praying for our enemies
fighting greed and self-destruction in our communities.

Coda

Let the earth resound the witness and echo through all time
that the exodus of humankind is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 18: I Love You Lord My Strength Original music by Denise Morency Gannon

I wrote this piece in 1977 as an experiment in harmonic progression wedded to vocal passagio. The chromatic work occurs in the orchestration rather than in the vocal score, while the vocal passages require the psalmist to alter the vowel sounds so that the throat can remain open on ascending and descending passages. The recto-tono refrain allows for a simple assembly response. The accompanying harmonies may be implemented by an SATB ensemble or by an organ or piano. The bulk of the vocal and instrumental work rests with the psalmist in the verses. The psalm's ABC form creates a musical variety while employing the musical interpretation of the prayer's text.

Use: 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time, A; 31 Sunday in Ordinary Time, B; Liturgy of the Hours; distress; praise; trust

Lyrics for Psalm 18: I Love You, Lord, My Strength Original music by Denise Morency Gannon

Refrain: I love you Lord my strength.

Verse 1

I love you Lord, my strength; my stronghold, my safeguard, my shield.

Praise be the Lord, I am kept safe from all my enemies.

Verse 2

Blest be the Lord who steers my way, the God who lifts my heart.
You save the lowly from despair, a lamplight to lighten the dark.

Verse 3

For who is God except the Lord, whose hand upholds my life?
Who is my stronghold save the Lord, my refuge, my delight!

***Psalm 54: The Lord Upholds My Life** Original music by Denise Morency Gannon

A prayerful paraphrasing of Psalm 54, The Lord Upholds My Life expresses the plight of the poor at the mercy of dominant world powers. This song/psalm places the poor within specific contexts: people without health care insurance; those who must choose to pay bills rather than buy food; families without decent housing or clothing; the sick who must decide whether to buy medicine or pay the heating bill; those who suffer from substance abuse; women victimized through violence; the elderly without advocacy or assistance to navigate the labyrinth of complicated health care. The psalmist retains a firm faith in God. However, we may ask, "Who is the evil doer in this time and place?" "Who will en flesh the living God for those who need upholding? How will we defend the poor, advocate for them, put our lives on the line for them in long haul gospel charity?"

Use: 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time; social concern; faith; trust; ecclesial community; providence.

Lyrics for Psalm 54: The Lord Uphold My Life

Refrain

The Lord upholds my life, the Lord upholds my life.

Verse 1

God by your name save me,
by your might defend me;
God, hear my prayer.
God is my helper,
God sustains my life.
I will praise God's name.

Verse 2

Though evil doers seek
to destroy what is good,

I am not afraid.
God is my protector,
the Lord is my defender;
I will praise God's name.

***How Long, O Lord?**

Original music and lyrics by Denise Morency Gannon

Originally called Song of the Unheard Voice, this song is an outcome of reading Sarai and Hagar: Who is Our Mother in Faith? from Megan McKenna's book Not Counting Women and Children. Through McKenna's exposition of a familiar Genesis story, I grew increasingly interested in the goldmine of scriptural midrash within horrendous tales of male brutality. Misogyny, politics and imbalanced economies, capitalism, wealth and privilege, individualism and materialism too often annihilate the cries of voiceless women who lack political power to change unjust structures.

McKenna exposes the story of Hagar, a disenfranchised Egyptian slave at the mercy of her owner Sarai, wife of Abram. Old and presumed barren, Sarai gives her maidservant to Abram as his concubine with the intent that Hagar will become pregnant with Abram's child, a cultural accepted practice in ancient biblical times. However, the tables turn when Hagar becomes pregnant. Sarai complains to Abram about Hagar's disdainful attitude. Abram passes the buck; he tells Sarai that her maid is her own business. She can do with Hagar whatever she pleases. Sarai abuses Hagar so much that Hagar runs away. God intervenes and tells Hagar to return to Sarai; she must consider the wellbeing of the child in her womb. Hagar returns and gives birth to Ishmael.

When God blesses Abram and Sarai with a child of their own, Isaac, Sarai turns into an enraged and vindictive woman. She does not wish for Ishmael to share in everything that Abram and Sarai's son Isaac will inherit. Sarai cruelly insists that Abram drive out 'that slave and her son' (Genesis 21: 10) into the Middle Eastern desert. Sarai wants to banish Hagar and her son from her sight and from Abram's memory. Although Abram (now called Abraham) is "greatly distressed on account of his son Ishmael," he heeds Sarai's demands, places Ishmael on her back with some bread and water and casts her into the sweltering terrain of desert. Hagar, a single mother and refugee, pleads to God for the life of her son. God hears the cry of the poor and intervenes, saving Hagar and Ishmael from a slow and torturous death in the wilderness.

McKenna tells us that the people who understand Hagar from the belly live on within women and girls who experience the same oppressive and misogynistic cultures today. For example, Afghan Womens Justice Project (www.awjp.org) provides an eye-opening encounter with Afghan women and children imprisoned for leaving home without the permission of a husband, refusal to marry a rapist and running away, and, like Hagar, trying to escape from the cruelty of domestic abuse. AWJP provides a voice to speak on behalf of those women convicted of 'moral crimes' by men who render them powerless and incarcerated for gender-based injustices.

Consider the stories in Half the Sky by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl Wudunn. Kristof and Wuduun plunge us into the real life odysseys of marginalized women and young girls victimized

by the sin of misogyny in developing worlds. The authors give these women a voice and offer their readers a front row seat as the hidden stories emerge with power and eye-opening candor.

When I wrote the lyrics for the verses, I realized that they must epitomize and include all women and men who are victimized by apathy, silence and injustice within societies with cultural, political and religious agenda. But I still wanted to give my 'voiceless women' a voice. As a result, the structure of the refrain or the 'burden' repeats the melodic and rhythmic components to emphasize the ageless epidemic of cruel injustice, from Genesis through postmodern globalization. The counterpoint harmony of the female descant echoes the initial oboe descant introduced in the first burden and replaces it with a new vocal female descant in burdens three and four. Sung with a Middle Eastern mode, the wail of despair can be heard behind the repeated burden that offers a 'voice' to the voiceless. The text of the verses includes the sin of apathy, pride, greed, verbal abuse and power at the expense of another. The wide parameter of chanted verses lives a generous margin for writers and communities who sing How Long O Lord to incorporate your own experiences, insights and wisdom as an outcome of prayer on behalf of the marginalized to activate a response on behalf of those who are victimized.

Use: Mission; repentance; social concern; reconciliation; justice; right relationship; mindfulness.

Lyrics for How Long O Lord?

Refrain

How long O Lord, how long
will you hide your face?
How many nights must sorrow be my friend?
How long, O Lord, how long?

Verse 1

For all the times we resist your love and bitterness hardens our hearts.

Verse 2

For all the missed opportunities to sow you as seed in someone's heart.

Optional verses

For bleeding hearts ravaged by our words and deeds,
creating the breach that will not end.

For comforts gained by our power and greed,
exploiting the poor for our own end.

*** O Blessed are the Ones** Original music and lyrics by Denise Morency Gannon

Originally written as an acclamation to accompany the procession of the Book of the Gospels, O Blessed are the Ones took on a life its own in musical construction and contextual content. The song makes use of the elements of bossa nova, a derivative of samba that reflects the jazz of diversity, incorporating creative guitar riffs behind the joyful sung refrain and verses. Hispanic verses that simulate the English verses and refrain followed as a natural outcome.

The original version did not include Spanish verses; Spanish found its way into the music. I feel that any community that wants to insert lyrics from their own culture can access the musical freedom that this piece of music offers. I can only say this because of my own experience with the piece. Let it light your own creative embers and have a good time with it! The gospel challenges and stretches us beyond where we ever thought we would venture. Our active listening to God's word initiates an active, joyful response.

Use: Word of God; confidence; joyful service; discipleship; Christian initiation; reign of God.

Lyrics for O Blessed are the Ones

Refrain

O blessed are the ones who hear my word, who love my word.
O blessed are the ones who hear the word of God!

Verse

We have been told the way of life, Alleluia!
We have been shown the way of life, Alleluia!

Spanish refrain

Benditos son los que oyen mi palabra y amo mi parabra;
Benditos son los vive la palabra de Dios.

Spanish verse

Le ha nostrado el modo de la vida. (Alleluia)
Se nos la nostrado el modo de la vida. (Alleluia)

Tell Them About Me Original music and lyrics by Denise Morency Gannon

Birthed on a paper napkin, I wrote Tell The About Me as a result of prayer and the 'Now what?' the questions that arose out of my discernment of an uncertain future as a chronic spine patient. Some of the lyrics are inspired by Francis X. Clooney, S.J.'s paper Christ in Ten Thousand Places, in Every Blade of Grass and James Martin, S.J.'s book My Life with the Saints. Teacher, author and good friend Bruce Morrill, S.J. helped me to understand how the Paschal Mystery lives within every human experience and that the Gospel is clear in its priority of the poor. To these Jesuit priests I gratefully dedicate the song Tell Them About Me.

Micah Christian's superb vocal interpretation that Ron orchestrated in a style that sways between James Taylor and Carole King suggests an intimate dialogue between Christ and the listener. The harmonies behind Micah's solo provide a more robust structural undergird of musical orchestration. However, a simple rendition of this piece can be as powerful as the fuller version.

Use: Easter season; Christian initiation; mission; faith; trust' reign of God; ministry; youth gatherings; prayer services.

Lyrics for Tell Them About Me

Verse 1

Find me walking with companions,
saints and patrons now and past.
Set me in ten thousand places
and in every blade of grass.
Search for me within your heart,
deep within your memory.
When you ask, "What shall I do, Lord?"
Tell them about me.

Refrain

Tell them about me, tell them about me.
When you ask "What shall I do, Lord?"
Tell them about me.

Verse 2

I am love beyond all telling, ever ancient, even new;
from behind and ahead, always walking here with you.
In your living and in your dying, find me deep in mystery.
When you ask, "What shall I speak, Lord?"
Tell them about me.

Verse 3

Look for me within the grieving; I am shrouded in their tears.
Watch for me within the lonely, I hide behind their wall of fear.
When you ask, "How can I repay what the Lord has done for me?"
You will hear me in your heart, saying,
"Tell them about me."

Come Follow Me Original music and lyrics by Denise Morency Gannon

In 1979, Pope John Paul II came to Boston, MA, the first of his countless visits to cities and countries around the globe. Through the collaborative efforts of the city of Boston and the Archdiocese of Boston, Beantown welcomed the new pontiff to America. National news coverage broadcasted the Mass on Boston Common where the pope presided and preached for approximately 100,000 people who welcomed him with joy despite the torrential rain storm that began the night before he arrived and did not cease until after the papal Mass ended. But the soggy clothes and shivering bodies of worship did not dampen the spirit of that unforgettable moment. During the liturgy, I shared a mound of mud with a friend. We hung out on the top of a slippery hill and waited for hours, hoping to get a look at the pope. But the thousands of umbrellas raised like mini canopies in front of us blocked our view. My friend and I glimpsed periodic peeks of the pontiff in between body wedges when someone inched left or right. Even so, we made the most of just being in the moment. How many times in your life can you say that you stood in the mud on a slippery hill in the pouring rain for hours with thousands of people to see a pope?

In his homily, John Paul II invited young people (I was one of them at the time) to follow Christ. "Come, follow me," he called out in halting phrases. "Stand by my side." "Walk in my path." "Remain in my love." The poetic content of those four phrases blew my hair back. When I returned home that night, I listened to his homily on a rerun broadcast to hear him repeat those four phrases. I scribbled the four lines down on a piece of paper and stuck the note in my wallet.

The next day, I skipped lunch in the teacher's room and stayed in my music room to use the piano. I removed the scribbled note of four lines from my wallet and placed them on the piano. I chose a key and 4/4 time and sang the melody conceived when I first heard John Paul II invite the young people of the world to follow Christ. I married the four sentences with the melody. The next two lines of the song followed as an essence of what John Paul II conveyed in his message of life, love and longing that all young people crave and desire. After deciding to use ABA form, I wrote the verses the next day in the same music room, once again skipping lunch to create musical art.

I gathered a group of friends and asked them to record the choral score with simple instrumentation. The first recording of Come Follow Me was released as a single 45 with Without You on the flip side. I sent a copy to the Vatican; who knows what office it landed in but I never heard whether John Paul II actually got to hear his words set to music. The song gained local popularity for music at wedding liturgies and retreats. But I really had no idea how far the song had traveled until the 11:00 PM news broadcast one of the first church closures in the Archdiocese of Boston. Protestors stood with signs outside of the church. A camera zoomed in on a woman holding a sign and singing Come Follow Me at the top of her voice. You could have knocked me over with a feather duster.

I re-recorded Come Follow Me on my second collection Lift Up Your Hearts with an innovative piano arrangement by Joe Carrier. However, Ron Gamache's instrumental arrangement of Come Follow Me is the most faithful rendering of my original manuscript. In the early stages of production for Tell Them About Me and what music we should include on the collection, my daughter Martha insisted that we include the song that she most embraced as a young child and growing up with my music. Martha's love for Come Follow Me can be heard in

her warm and exquisite rendering of this song that still seems to dig deeply into the marrow of people's bones and move them inexplicably. I'm grateful to Martha for prompting me to include Come Follow Me in this collection of music and for giving new life to this song through her magnificent vocal ability.

Lyrics for Come Follow Me

Refrain

Come follow me, stand by my side.
Walk in my path, remain in my love.
Here in my heart, deep in my love,
longing for life, come follow me and live.

Verse 1

I come to you to hold you in my heart;
no one can love you as do.
Be with me when I call your name;
all that you long for I will give to you.

Verse 2

Deep in my love, safely home and secure,
you are here in the palm of my hand.
You are the gift of life, the stars of fire.
You are my hope and joy throughout the land.

Without You Original Words and Music by Denise Morency Gannon

I wrote and recorded this piece of music in 1976 with producer Carl German at Metcalf Studio in New Bedford, MA. I re-recorded the piece with producer Ron Gamache in 1981 with a back-up ensemble and Dick Johnson on jazz saxophone at Normandy Sound in Warren, RI. However, the piece is so completely different from my other material that I never included Without You on any of my other recordings. The second version exists on a 45 record on Sadbird label. When I met Beth Conway at Stonehill College in 2009, I knew that she would be the new voice that sang Without You. Originally, I wrote and sang the original version in the key of C with different choral and instrumental arrangements. I rewrote the solo and piano arrangement in B^b and re-voiced the choral parts and piano score to produce a different texture than the original version. Ron Gamache took the piece a step further and produced the final product for this collection. I'm grateful to Beth Conway for heartily embracing Without You and singing this music with such full-bodied passion.

Lyrics for Without You

Verse 1

Within you I seek my beauty; without you there is no life.
Oh grant in me your serenity; bring me home to my inner light.

Refrain

When I'm down, give me hope to go on.
Give me faith in you when everything goes wrong.
When I'm weak, give me your love
that I may be strong;
I'm nothing, nothing without you.

Verse 2

Within you I have discovered
that without you, I can't see the light.
Deliver me and set me free;
you are the center of my life.

Ephesians Prayer Original music and lyrics by Denise Morency Gannon

Originally written as reflection on the reading by Paul to the Ephesians, I thought the piece would work as a reflection at a wedding as a post Communion meditation. I suggest the piece for weddings, anniversaries of married couples or people in vowed religious life or ordained ministry, school graduations and rites of passage.

My husband heard a completely different accompaniment from the original one that I originally wrote. This new version reflects the style of Franz Schubert. However, if you play guitar, a simple arpeggio pattern of the chords to accompany the singer(s) works equally well.

Ephesians Prayer (Based on Ephesians 1:18)

Original music by Denise Morency Gannon

Piano arrangement by Patrick Gannon

Refrain

Father of Jesus, guide us to glory.
Create in us the fullness of your love.
Enlighten the eyes of our hearts
that we may see how great
is the hope to which we are called.

Tree of Life

Original music by Denise Morency Gannon

In 2002, my college campus ministry director Fr. John Denning, C.S.C. asked me to create a prayer service to offer our students an evening of quiet reflection. He trusted my artistic and pastoral creativity to come up with the specific elements of the service. Fr. John would preside; I would provide the content, organize and market the event and provide pastoral music for the event.

After research, prayer and discernment, I felt that prayer in the Celtic tradition rather than prayer in the Mediterranean tradition would best serve as the foundation of the service. Two elements of the Celtic tradition appealed to me as a means of prayer for young adults. The first element of Celtic spirituality finds at its root the belief that the core of our being is the image of God. The second element of Celtic spirituality recognizes creation as an expression of God in its own personhood. These two inseparable elements connect the spirituality of our own lives into our labor for the life of the world. Together with the great love of scripture as reflected in the centuries of artistic expressions of Celtic spirituality, this tradition accommodated an opportunity to provide a different kind of ecumenical spiritual experience for the students hungry to discover a new way of seeing and being in the world.

Celtic Prayers from Iona by J. Philip Newell provided an evening prayer service that included scripture, periods of silence, free prayers of thanks and intercessions, the Lord's Prayer and an opportunity for shared reflection with room for artistic expression. Running with the ball, I decided to write an instrumental piece of music for cello and oboe. Because of the nature of the service, candles naturally weaved their way into the fabric of the evening prayer service. I imagined that while the cellist and I played the instrumental piece that I named 'Celtic Eventide,' Fr. John would invite the students to light a tapered candle and place them within a smoking incense pot filled with sand on the floor of the chapel. Their lit candles would represent their prayers and mingle with the burning incense in the pot to lift holy smoke to heaven. It sounded like a good idea at the time.

Fr. John approved both the idea and the subsequent prayer service. I called my friend Perry Rosenthal, a professional cellist to play the new piece. I ordered the white tapered candles, wrote the prayer content and put it into a binder for the presider, sent the email invitation to the student list serve, announced the prayer service at all of the Sunday liturgies the week before, posted flyers in the residence halls and student centers, asked a student to serve as a reader for the scripture passage, created and printed the worship aid with the service's assembly responses and went to the beach near my home to dig up some sand for the incense pot.

The afternoon prior to the service, I placed the worship aids at the doors of the chapel entrances and lowered the dimmer switches on the light panel. I placed the scripture reading in a binder at the ambo and put my director's presider book with his text on the small table near his chair. The tapered candles lay in baskets near the worship aids so that the students could collect one of each as they entered the worship space. The music for the leader of song waited on the music stand near the piano, where I placed a music stand and an armless chair for Perry. I felt thoroughly prepared for the event. And evening came.

Perry arrived an hour before the service for a brief rehearsal of the premiere performance of Celtic Eventide. He unpacked his cello, shaved some resin on his bow and ran a few scales. "Okay, ready," he said. "Where's my score?"

I felt as though someone poured ice cubes directly into my veins. I think that I stopped breathing for five seconds before I recovered and answered him. "The score is in my head, Perry." Preoccupied with the other details of the service, I completely forgot to transcribe the score.

My student reader arrived at the chapel early and wanted last minute instructions. Fr. John asked for specific directions while he vested. The sound system needed to be turned on. I needed to light the charcoal so it would be red hot and ready to burn incense at just the right time in the service. By the time I answered inquiries, ran to flip the sound switch and flick a quick Bic on the charcoal in the incense pot (something I NEVER do!), students began to arrive in the chapel for the service.

"Give me five minutes," I told the cellist over my shoulder as I ran from the chapel into Campus Ministry. "Don't panic," I thought. "Just write the music that's in your head." I grabbed some staff paper from my drawer and scribbled the cello score in pencil. Running back to the chapel, I handed the scratched score to the cellist. "Look this over; we won't have time to rehearse. Just follow me; I'll conduct you. Watch for my nod." I sprinkled pebbles on the red hot charcoal. A snake of smoke began to waft upward, releasing its intoxicating scent of frankincense. I sat down behind the keys of the Steinway and waited for Fr. John to pray the Invitatory. Let the games begin.

I began to relax a bit in the dusky sweetness of the chapel. The students seemed genuinely engaged in the rhythm and images of the Celtic folk prayers as the words seeped through the music. The presider asked them to light their tapers; the chapel glowed with their candlelight. I motioned to Perry that our time to play our unrehearsed piece was upon us. The students approached the lit incense pot and placed their tapers into the sand of the smoking vessel. Perry's lush cello solo dripped from his instrument like maple syrup and sweet cream butter smeared generously on thick homemade pancakes. I closed my eyes, my hands finding the piano accompaniment from deep within me, where the piece lay hidden in secret until this moment. "Thank you, God. The piece is working and it's beautiful," I prayed. Completely absorbed with relief and gratitude, I savored a breather moment. And then something made me open my eyes and look up.

Fr. John ran out of the doors of Campus Ministry back into the Chapel of Mary. He carried an oblong cake pan in his hands. "When in the world did he leave the chapel and why he is holding a cake pan?" I wondered, completely puzzled. Perry and I continued to play our unrehearsed duet. Fr. John looked straight ahead of him with a look of restrained panic. My eyes followed his intense gaze. I saw the blaze of his focus.

A flame of Easter fire proportions arose from the incense pot. The dripping wax from the student's tapered candles spilled onto the hot coals and ignited the incense. Prayers lifted in a fiery fury. We could have sizzled steaks for everyone in the chapel. Still fully vested in liturgical garb, Fr. John smothered the fire with the cake pan. The smooching of the ancient Celtic practice authenticated our eventide prayer on the spot. Perry and I continued to play as we watched the dramatic display in fascination.

Once doused, Fr. John picked up the smoldering pot and placed it on the cake pan. The students mouths formed an 'O' that reminded me of the carolers in A Charlie Brown Christmas. Fr. John ran up the side aisle of the chapel and shoved his body against the glass door that opened to the outside patio. Perry and I continued to play Celtic Eventide. To this day, I cannot say how we performed this piece without rehearsal throughout that dramedy. Through the glass wall, the entire chapel watched as Fr. John placed the fuming pot down on the cement. He threw back his head and laughed so hard that his vestments flew over his head. My friend Perry threw me a comment in the space of a quarter rest. "You Catholics have really interesting customs."

*Sometimes the best intentions go up in smoke. You just know that God must be saying, "Nice try," with a compassionate chuckle. I buried Celtic Eventide deeply in my files. In 2011, I resurrected the piece and changed its name to Tree of Life, inspired by a painting of the same name by artist Joshua Oliveira (www.joshuaoliveira.com). Josh donated his painting to accompany a talk given by my friend George Campeau about his son Justin for the opening of a new oncology center for Southcoast Health System. I voiced the music for string quartet, piano and viola to honor Justin, a young violist who died at age 22 from leukemia. To read the story of that moving event, go to *Inviting the Sacred into the Secular: Ritual and Grace in the Marketplace*, published *Ministry and Liturgy Magazine*. You can download the article on their website at rpinet.com/ministry/3806.html. You can also watch the YouTube of the oncology center event at *Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care Opening Program 2011.mov*, hear George's talk in its entirety and listen to a live performance of Tree of Life.*

O Death, Where is Your Victory Original music by Denise Morency Gannon
(Lyrics based on Corinthians 15:51-57)

My most recent original piece of music inspired by one of my favorite scripture passages, this music may be sung in unison by an assembly with a basic minimum of orchestration or with full choral and orchestral score.

Use: Easter season; Vigil for the Deceased; Christian Funeral.

Lyrics for O Death, Where is Your Victory?

Refrain

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting.
Thanks be to God who gives us victory through the love
of Christ Jesus.

Verse 1

Stand firm in faith and live the mystery. We trust our toil is not in vain.

Verse 2

We shall be changed and live forever through the creative power of God.