

Reflection for Holy Week 2020 The Playlist in My Soul

During this time, like no other we've seen; our faith, ancient yet ever new is what is keeping us together, moving forward with our new realities. Every day we rise to see how much more has been changed, lost and hopefully learned. Every night we try to fall asleep wondering, worrying about what will happen in the darkness. For me, the night is the hardest time; my mind starts to go to all the scary places I talk myself out of during the day. I have spent hours in many types of prayer, alone and with others and have found varying degrees of comfort in it. Sometimes, even the prayers seem overwhelming. I begin to think....am I praying hard enough...am I focused enough...is it the right prayer...is my prayer being heard in the collective cries being sent heavenward?

I have found that during these dark, alone times of the night that I had unknowingly developed a Lenten playlist in my head that has gotten me through this far. It's simple, short and even though it's my security in the night, I find myself hearing it when I go into overload. It's got only three songs, Hosea by Talbot, Amazing Grace and How Can I Keep from Singing.

First, Hosea (by John Michael Talbot), which I had known as Come Back to Me calms me with its flowing feeling and call to come home. God is calling, gently calling us back, understanding our fear and promising comfort after the storm. He's been waiting, longingly for us to live deeply in Him. His promise of comfort comes with realization that we are responsible for listening when He speaks the truth of what we need with integrity and tenderness, that we must bend to others' call. But to know that God is longing for me to listen, trust and come back to Him, even when I'm terrified of what's happening because He will teach me, gives me great peace and comfort.

Second is Amazing Grace. I fell in love with Amazing Grace when my third child refused to sleep, ever. I spent endless, or so it seemed, hours rocking him and quietly singing Amazing Grace. The gift of God's Love, so freely given, is so precious that once it's truly accepted it forms an unbreakable bedrock to help weather any storm. The difficulty is accepting the truth that God's love is unconditional...even to a wretch like me. His Word, Jesus, the Word made flesh, secures our hope by the Resurrection. The

Resurrection is the truth that gives us the hope and joy in eternal life. The final verse that describes our reunion with God, singing His praise always gives me hope.

Lastly, How Can I Keep from Singing? I remember the first time I heard this song; it was being played with such joy and keyboard flourishes that I didn't want it to end. The tempo was upbeat and the Easter feelings were in the air. I still love to sing it that way. It's a song of hope that recognizes all the difficulty and strife of life, but refuses to turn away from the Love that is lord of heaven and earth. How else can we go on, if not for the love of God? His love is planted so deeply in our souls, that once we recognize it's there, we can't help but cling to it in times of trouble. There's a quiet peace that comes with knowing that no matter what God is with us. The tempest roaring around us can shake us, batter us and make us feel abandoned, it's true. It's the second verse that gives me my greatest comfort: "What though the tempest loudly roars
I hear the truth, it liveth. What though the darkness round me close, Songs in the night
it giveth " The great truth is that God is Love and that truth lives in your soul and mine. Sometimes I feel it so powerfully I do sing. Sometimes when things are difficult the most I can manage is a pitiful squeak or an anguished cry. But still I cling to that truth and deep down there is a calm, still point where God resides. So, I keep on singing until I can get there.

Those are the songs on my playlist, songs of comfort that remind me of God's care, yet they remind me that I still have work to do in this world. Work that He's given me to teach me His ways, and hopefully in doing so show others His love for them. What's on your playlist these long nights? Is it helping you see God's love and care for you? Can sharing it bring peace and comfort to another restless soul? I pray it may be so. I also pray that the joy and strength of the Resurrection be with you and your loved ones, always. Happy Holy Week and Blessed Easter to all.