

St. Michael and All Angels in the Capital Pride Parade 2010 – An Inspirational Ministry

It would be a stretch to call me a “song writer”. Although I love to write songs, I don’t do it very often. The last song I wrote was in 1997. As part of a clinical family law course, I spent 20 hours observing mediation sessions at the court house in Kingston. It was the first time I met people trying to cope with the disintegration of their families. Most of them were teetering on the brink financially, emotionally and, in some cases, physically. Some were singularly focussed on meeting their children’s needs while others were entirely unwilling or unable to take responsibility for anything. The mediators in the centre were engaged in God’s work. They infused some calm consideration into the chaos of lives in ruins, started conversations about ways forward and listened compassionately without judgment. Our final assignment was to write a reflective piece about our placements. I handed in a recording of a song I wrote honouring the work I had observed. I don’t think my professor quite knew what to make of it, but I got an A.

Last Sunday, I started writing another song. It’s also about God’s work in action. On August 29th my husband, John, our three children, Jessica, Jackson and Justin, and I walked with numerous members of our parish and Integrity Ottawa in the Capital Pride Parade. We carried signs professing God’s love for everyone and handed out cookies and invitations to worship with us at St. Michael and All Angels.

I wish I could say I was moved to participate by some profound inspiration to act against the injustice that persists in our society, but my motivation was less political and idealistic. In truth, I really just wanted to show support for Linda and others in our parish by walking alongside them in the parade. I did not know what to expect and I did not give much thought beforehand to the kind of message we would be part of. It was not until we started walking that I understood how moving it is for people who have been ostracized, condemned and hated by the Church to see the same words that have been (and continue to be) used against them recast as missives of acceptance, love, and peace. Seeing Christians marching in solidarity with the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered members of our community drew cheers from many people we passed

along the route. One man stepped off the curb, as we walked past, to ask, “Are you the Anglicans?” When we nodded, a smile of pure delight crossed his face. He had obviously been waiting for us. Or, maybe, he had just been waiting for a sign, for confirmation, on that hot sunny August day that God loves him. Maybe, at that moment, he was finally proud to be a Christian. For me, it was the defining moment of the afternoon. That’s when I realized I was part of something really wonderful and really important.

Inspired by the event, my song-writing “dry spell” has ended. One day, perhaps if I can enlist the help of some of the talented musicians and voices in our parish, you’ll get to hear the melody. For now, here are the lyrics:

The Angels’ Song

A prayer of integrity is our radical welcome hymn,
A ministry infused by the Spirit within.
We’ve left the path that was narrow and straight,
We’ll march with you and fill your plate.

In the knowledge that we all belong,
We proclaim the glory of the Angels’ song,
Proclaim the glory of the Angels’ song.

The streets are lined with gold and leather,
As we travel with the Eagle’s feather.
The halls of justice and the busts of leaders past,
Bear witness to the crowds amassed.

In the heat that the summer brings,
The rainbows of pride uplift the Angels’ wings,
Rainbows of pride uplift the Angels’ wings.

Along the road, there are cowards in the crowd.
Twisting Your loving words, to condemn out loud.
They hide behind their signs of disdain,
But in the end, they walk in shame.

In the splash of the fire rain,
And, under the shadow of the Angels’ reign.
Under the shadow of the Angels’ reign.

In the knowledge that we all belong,
We proclaim the glory of the Angels' song,
Proclaim the glory of the Angels' song.

Catherine A. Lawrence
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