

- Okay, great, pick it up again.

- So, with then, Latin going out, it was mandatory, the vernacular language, which we had lobbied for for years, it happened, but again, I was rendered irrelevant, and feeling deeply irrelevant, and I said to myself, and I think I attended some simple conference somewhere, where someone was singing a very simple song, in English, to be used in ritual, I think it was only about four lines. And everybody was cheering, and looked at myself, I said, "I can do better than that". And I didn't mean it in any demeaning way, but since the age of six, six and a half, seven, I was writing poetry, I had books of poems. It was my instinctive way to go, like, and I said, "I've got a degree in music, and all these four manual "189 stop organ pipes, and I can't do anything." So I picked up a guitar, it was the Hootenanny Movement, and the singalongs, we were singin' along on the side, I said, "I can learn three chords", which is about what what I did, and I started to sing. And at one point, I was so, kind of down, they sent me to our vacation spot in New Jersey to cheer up, and I remember, it was a terrible rainy day, and I was with my guitar, other sisters were there, but they were out of the room, and I was singing, ♪ I saw raindrops on my window, joy is like the rain ♪ ♪ Laughter runs across my pane ♪ ♪ Slips away and comes again ♪ ♪ Joy is like the rain ♪ And the third verse, Christ asleep within my boat, whipped by wind, yet still afloat, joy is tried by storm. And I ended up, and I'm sobbing, and I'm screaming in sight of God, "You got me into this mess, "You got me into this mess, I tried to follow "the Holy Spirit, and Your Spirit, and I have no life, "I have no nothing, I'm useless, I feel terrible! "And you know what, I made my final vows, "and I ain't gonna break them, so You better do something, "You better get me out of this, You better do something!" Over time, there hasn't been a place on Planet Earth, that I have physically gone to, that that song hasn't gotten there before me. And the numbers of people, even during the Viet Nam War, I've had airline pilots, medic evac people, a person sent, you know, I came back, and I turned on Voice of America, and there were these nuns singing. I got the guts to go out again, God is gonna be with me. The stories were, you know, "My little child is a, "was a dwarfed child, and he loved the song Zacheus, "and he died, can we use it at the funeral?" Ah, I cannot come to the banquet, I would give these concerts, and I had this, give out these song sheets to sing along, and there was one woman, with her six kids, and one had his little legs stickin' out, he was only about four or five, at the most, and he wanted a sheet of paper, okay, and I'm singin' and watchin', he had every syllable, he was, and he was lookin' at the paper, and later I went over, but he had the paper upside down, he couldn't read, he just wanted the paper, like the adults. He sang the whole song verbatim. So, I mean, stories about meaning that a big seed was sown early on, that I take steps in directions, I don't know why.

- Yes.

- There's no reason for it, I don't even know if I want to do it, I don't not want to, but I don't want to, it's not a choice. That has been the pattern, consistently, to this very moment, okay, ending up in this place, and finding, all of a sudden, as I look back, which is so important, to have people like yourself, asking people like ourselves, "What did you do, "and why'd you do it?", you know.

- Yes.

- Because, in looking back, and that's my teaching modality now, with the new degree that we have, to have people do that, to look, and discern, what is the finger of the divine leading, what is the wisp of spirit grace, that somehow is there, and it leads you to hear that somehow makes sense of all that is here and now, even though you'll never comprehend it, even though it's beyond, because the finite can never, never comprehend the infinite. So all we can do is grasp a little piece, and say, "Yes, "this feels right for the moment". If it's not right, then you need to do something about it. You know, so, the music that started then, the path I was on, and so why I tell this circuitous story, it's so important to know, that the context in which I have been, this international community, whose membership, and its leaders are diverse from around the world, those women that we were helping are now leaders of their own, in our community and elsewhere. And, in fact, one of our Indian sisters, I just spoke with her a few minutes ago, she's our NGO representative at the U.N., very involved with the women, and we have, it's the context I needed to be in. And then, what I eventually did, I followed, like, the song lines, I followed the paths, I went around the world to our places, so I have been, I have dipped my toes in the oceans that lap the shores of Africa, and India, and you name the places, you know. And, deeply grateful for the privilege of being able to be a vessel of some of some spirit energy, not only passing through me out there, and helping others, but then to turn around and be able to be a receptor of someone's story, spirit, and encouragement, to say, and they'll always say, "I don't know why I'm here". Sometimes they talk to me, "I don't know why I'm here, "I don't know why I want to talk to you". And I say, "I don't either, but you know (chuckles), "the Spirit is saying something". And that's what happens, you know, you give a safe place to not know what you're doin'. To now know who you are, to make sense of nothing, but to know there's something, there's something, where to feel safe, and then, when you get connected with other women, who are similar, all of a sudden, you've seen it.

- Yes.

- The bonds that form, that literally last forever. And the difference that we're making out in the world quietly, in our own little spaces, homeplace, workplace, and that's what I've been doing consistently. Then I came here, why? I turned it down three times, I didn't want to teach

- Did you really?

- I didn't want to teach.

- You didn't want to teach, that's right.

- I wasn't, I didn't even want the degree, why would I do this? You know, why am I here? When I got the music done, I went on, and kinda did concerts and programs around, and then I thought I gotta learn more about, because, you know, I was big, I was not big among Catholics, except underground, you know, and never made it into the institutional hymnals, it was always, like banned, in, ah, like the school rooms and all. But it was the Protestants, and the Mennonites, and the, I mean, you name it, the Baptists, and the

Presbyterians, and the Canadians, all over the ... And so I needed, I said I've gotta learn more about the Protestant biggies, and so McMaster offered, and they paid my whole way, to a degree, you know, in Masters of Religious Ed, I got done with that, and I thought I still don't know enough, and I might as well learn some more about the Bible, so I applied to Princeton Theological Seminary, and they asked me, "Well, what are your others?" I mean, it was weird, they only take 15 people out of hundreds.

- Yes?

- And, why are you coming here, and I said, "Well, it's close to my Mother House". (Laughing)

- Okay, "And you have good Bible people". I wanted to learn Bible, so that was a saving grace. But I also wanted to invent my own degree, which, of course, you don't say that to Princeton. But I did, because that's what I wanted to do. And, what other schools have you applied to? I said, "None". "Are you gonna apply to anything else?" And I guess they thought I was gonna be arrogant, I said no. He said, "What if you don't get in?" And I said, "Well then, I won't go to school, "that will be a sign". That was it, well, I got in.

- Oh!

- Full ride.

- That is amazing.

- It's amazing! And then, I did, for my dissertation, toward, to look into, is there a theology of Catholic Church music, 'cause I didn't know any. And the conclusion, with all these incredibly wonderful scholars, you know, I mean, we had the, Bruce Metzger, the big scholar, I mean, and Anderson, I mean is, all these people, you know. And so, my final thing was, the heads of all those departments, 'cause I created my own design, my degree, I took these, I studied liturgy, and all through the Old Testament, all the Protestant denominations, everything else, and then I did this Catholic Church music, you know. But in the end, I got validated, and I did say Catholic Church has no theology of music. What it has is an aesthetic of music. You can't say that, if it sounds like the Heavenly Spheres, this is sacred music. Because who's ever heard the Heavenly Spheres? You know, In other words, you can say that in a Catholic University you get away with it, because, you know, they feel the same way. But go to another Protestant, or sectarian place, and they're gonna say, "What's your proof, what's your basis, what's your evidence?" So I learned a lot, I needed Princeton, they were wonderful, because, you know, I had to get out of my totally naive Catholic, you know, just spinning the same old story comfort zone. And so, I also had this wonderful Eucharist background, you know, really understanding the sources, getting to know Jesus in a different way, and the whole Eucharist tradition, how it evolved, and how, so that led to all kinds of things, like my book, Eucharist With a small "e", and eventually, my latest, recent, not this recent, but a couple of, some years ago, 2009, Paradoxology: Spirituality in a Quantum Universe, so, I added to that, like, science, and the quantum sphere, but I got the rudiments of that experience from Princeton, you know, And then while I finished, before I finished my dissertation, I said, "I'm gonna be a, I have to delay "this a little bit, 'cause I'm going, I'm going "to the refugee camps". There was a call, you know, the fall of Pol Pot, and there was a call for the refugee camps,

and our community, Medical Mission Sisters, they're sending a team, and I said, "I wanna go". And they said, "Anybody free". And I said, "Oh my God, I just finished "my comprehensives, I'm free, I'm free!" And then I said, "But what good am I, who needs a Eucharist person, who needs a liturgist, what good am I?" And they said, "Oh, we need a non-medical, you cannot imagine". So myself, and this other non-medical who wouldn't have had a prayer of a chance to go, she said, "I wanna go too!" I said, "We'll come together". And so, a team of 12, and that changed me radically. That sense of, I have all these academic understandings, and wonderful background on Eucharist, but the most powerful sense of what it really meant, to break the bread of life, was those biscuits we gave of, several times a day, to those who were emaciated, these children, and the bringing the dead back to life. And as we said, on this first, Easter will never be any more profoundly experienced, than when I came to the camp, and those who were comatose, after we had established this little relationship through music. I came this one day, and they came running, these little kids, up this dirt road, screaming, and threw their arms around our knees, and hugging us, that's resurrection, that is resurrection. And, and so, it's using the skills of music, and prayer, and poetry, and play, and we had marches, and dances through the ward, you know, it was the infectious disease ward, but what the heck, you know. (laughing) Had to be after we gave the injections, and then we had play time, and sing time. But it tells you more about getting back then, to the spirit of Jesus who walked the countryside, and didn't get into all of these theatrics later on, or these, kind of, systems of talk down. So then I get this call, from this place, to, you know, I turned it down three times, I said, "I'm not gonna teach". And I came ...

- Why did you come? I don't, because they wouldn't take no, and I ...

- You don't do "no" well.

- I don't do "no" well, you got it. So I'm gonna go tell them that I'm not coming. And so, I'm saying, and then also, the third time, I said, oh, I say, "Why is this?" So I go. Talk about intimidating, I stand there, in this room, the hall full of students, faculty, guess what they were looking for, this is the irony of ironies. They were looking for a person, to establish a department in worship, liturgy, and spirituality. They wanted a female, because they had none as their core faculty. And they needed a Catholic, because, get this, wait for it.

- Yeah?

- They were starting a track for the Doctor of Ministry program, with the Roman Catholic priests.

- Oh, my goodness! And I would be teaching Roman Catholic priests. I, who could not get two feet within the sanctuary, placed there. The irony of, it was unbelievable, so when I came, I didn't know quite that, they didn't tell me, but when I stood there, and they said, I said, "I need to say something first, please", and why I do these things, I have no idea, I said, "You need to know, I don't wanna waste your time, "but I don't want this job". And I mean, they're lookin' at me like, I said, "Seriously, I tried to say no, I said it a number "of times, so I'm coming here, but you need to know, "I have to be honest, I am not looking for this job, so ... "And why would you want me anyway?" I'm looking at, there's so many priests in the room, what's goin' on? Thing gets over, I get the call, the next day, "You're our unanimous choice". Over someone from London,

and someone who was the head of the Liturgical Commission, I mean, the Academy of Liturgy thing, hold the mail. I said, "You've gotta be kidding". First of all, when I was turning it down the third time, I said, "I can't go, I haven't done my Christmas cards yet, I don't have time". I mean, what a, you know ...

- I love it.

- So, they tell me this, and I said, "But I haven't even told my Major Superior that I'm even investigating, "I can't do this". So then I start discerning with a friend, and I say, "What's going on here, what?" So I said, "Should I explore it further?" And I did, and ah, I said, "Okay, I need someplace to write my dissertation". Now this is another thing, I'm in the second year of a two year residency, I hadn't finished my residency.

- Oh, my goodness!

- I wasn't, hadn't finished any, you don't do this.

- No!

- You don't do this at Princeton. So I came back, I said, "Well, I've been hired by ..." They said, "What!" Oh my, there are no words, there are no words. I said, but I told 'em I couldn't come for a year, they're gonna hold it for a year, until I finish the courses, and my, you know, tests and exams, and, you know, orals, and God knows what all.

- This is remarkable.

- It's insane! It makes no, the whole, my whole life makes no sense. But it made sense to me to do it that way, but you can see, I'm not in the world, or of the world, where normal people act normally. It was, and it was so flabbergasted. (laughing) Oh, my God, so, long story short, that's how I got into here, and then I, it was back in, what was it, '80, 1980 I showed up, I signed up, and then I went to the camps, and I came in 1980. The computer thing was just, they had this old Mac, not Mac, what was it, not, something was ...

- IBM, or ...

- No, it was this green, with a green screen, and you did things, it was a dot between each letter. It was really quite good, anyway, they were, and I said, "Could I use that at night, you know, to do this thing?" So, I ended up getting on, using a computer, and, I finished this thing, and so ...

- Then you did your dissertation.

- That's right, did my dissertation. And I did a Catholic dissertation at that thoroughly Princeton institution, and I don't think there were any Catholics on the committee at the end. But I did my, you know, and I was pleased with the ...

- Can I stop, just for one second?