

# *Don't quit! Keep on playing!*

## REFLECTIONS FROM FR. ROSS



Here's a neat little story with a powerful message. It's called *The Concert*.

When the house lights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that the child was missing. Suddenly, the curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive Steinway piano on stage. In horror, the mother saw her little boy sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. At that moment, Paderewski, the great piano master, made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit. Keep on playing." Then, leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child, and he added a running *obbligato*.

Together, the old master and the young novice transformed what could have been a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience. The audience was so mesmerized that they couldn't recall what else the great master played the rest of the night. What stuck in their minds and hearts was "only" the classic, *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*.

Perhaps that's the way it is with God. What we can accomplish on our own is hardly noteworthy. We try our best, but the results aren't always graceful flowing music. However, with the hand of the Master, our life's work can truly be beautiful. The next time you set out to accomplish great feats, listen carefully. You may hear the voice of the Master, whispering in your ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing." May you feel His arms around you and know that His

hands are there, helping you turn your feeble attempts into true masterpieces.

Remember, God doesn't seem to call the equipped, rather, He equips the "called." Life is accurately measured by the lives you touch and those lives that touch more than by the things you acquire or the positions you hold. Our lives become enriched by enriching the lives of others. Whatever we give to God and others comes back to us many times over.

In our dealings with others, hopefully we can learn from Paderewski, the great piano master and, more importantly, hopefully we can learn from the Master of us all. When we share our gifts and talents we can create things that are true masterpieces in the sense of the impact that they have on building up people's lives and helping them to reach their potential. Whether we are like the little boy or the piano master, the masterpiece came out of both them working together in harmony—harmony can only happen when there are two or more voices together.

Calling to mind the events of the first 9/11 this weekend and aware of all the violence, war and terrorism that continues, let us remember that we all can do our part to make our world better by opening our own worlds to God and others. Let us encourage one another as God encourages us when he says to each of us, "Don't quit. Keep on playing." A little *Twinkle* can go a long way!



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