

Today's Advent Devotional Is offered by Jim Garner

Joy

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth.

Worship God with gladness;

come into God's presence with singing.

Psalm 100:1-2 (New Revised Standard Version)

My Mother was named Carol. Her name means joyful song, happy singing. It was a most fitting name for her. She was always singing or whistling around our home. When I was very young, I remember one of her splurge purchases, which was an unusual act for her, was a stereo set. It was basically a large piece of furniture with a record player and built-in speakers.

At Christmastime, my Mom worked especially hard to fill the home with joyful music. She had lots of green, red, and gold-covered albums for the season. There was Vic Damone and the Young Americans on The Firestone Christmas album singing "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," Perry Como roasting chestnuts on an open fire, The Ray Conniff Singers pleading to "Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it



Snow," and Andy Williams telling us that this is the most wonderful time of the year. I was blessed as a child to be serenaded every December with these classic songs.

It was only later, when I was in high school, that I learned that this was actually one of the roughest times of the year for my Mother. It was then that I learned that when she was in high school, her older brother – her hero – died of tuberculosis on December 26, 1945, at the age of 20. This was her deepest memory of Christmas. However, for her family, especially for me and my brother, she worked to overcome her own grief and sadness and tried to ensure it was a time filled with joyful noise for us. Looking back, I wonder how she did it. I can only appreciate and value this act of love.

Prayer: God, I come to you thankful for the love given me as a child and the joy of music that has always been in my life. May I be aware that this season is not a time of joy for many and give me the opportunity to show, in words and/or deeds, support to those who are suffering. Amen.