



# Every Moment Singing

## Easter is Alive!

"The Easter bunny's coming, the Easter bunny's coming," I hear my four-year old proclaim several days before Easter.

"You're right Emma, and why is he coming?"

"Because it's Easter!"

"What's so important about Easter?"

"It's when Jesus rose from the dead. He was dead and now he's alive. The bad guys hung him up on the wall (our crucifix is on the wall), because he was trying to be their leader and they didn't like him, so they beat him up and killed him. Then God was mad and ripped the curtain because they did that to Jesus. Then Jesus was in his grave and then he was **ALIVE!**" (*said with wide eyes and a very loud whisper*)

"Wow! That must have been pretty amazing, huh?"

"Yep! That's why it's Easter. That's why the flowers come up in the spring. Because they're alive."

Someday, we'll let Emma and Maggie (and any other children that come along the way) watch my now-favorite movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. After seeing the movie twice now, any other movie seems trite. I'll talk about our thoughts on the movie inside.

This time of year, is filled with a variety of sights, sounds and smells. Weather changes, time changes (at least for most of us following the daylight savings time rules), the landscape changes from white, to gray, to green. Our girlies call the flowers and buds along our biking and walking route - "signs of spring". While winter symbolizes death, or at least slumber, spring symbolizes life. Both new life and refreshed life of the existing life that was already there.

The seasons can be symbolic of our own lives - in the wintertime, we find ourselves much less active, even depressed

with the shortened days and long, cold nights. We seldom leave the shelter of our warm homes - unless the outdoor temperature hits 40 degrees. As spring enters our lives, we clean out the cobwebs, sweep out the garages, rake the lawns and even clean the cars. We clean up and spruce up everything that Old Man Winter has dirtied and stomped down.

Our physical, emotional and spiritual lives also begin the rebound from the lazy, too-much-food, too-much-sitting, too-much-TV winter. These past few weeks have transitioned us from the darkness into the light. From denying to accepting to embracing. New life has begun its blossoming in our hearts, in our minds and in our souls. What will we do with this blossoming this year?

Will we read more? What will we read? What should we read? Will we spend more time together? Will we spend more time at church? Will we have a focus or will we grow wildly out of control? We prune our gardens and pull the weeds. We edge our driveways and sidewalks so they look nice and have the appearance of order. But what about inside? Are we weeded and pruned? Do we have it together inside or do we just look that way?

Every day is a struggle to keep the weeds of distraction out of our spiritual garden. But, as can be found in our scriptures and visualized in *The Passion*, the most treacherous and glorious journeys taken by any human began in a garden. Our fall occurred in a garden. Our redemption began in a garden. Life and death occur in a garden.

This Easter, we have the opportunity to

***...the most treacherous and glorious journeys taken by any human began in a garden. Our fall occurred in a garden. Our redemption began in a garden. Life and death occur in a garden.***

choose the life that is offered us, despite the weeds of our sinfulness and unworthiness. We have the opportunity to water, feed and tend the

*(Continued on page 2)*

# The Passion of the Christ – thoughts

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What can be said about the movie that has not been said by someone more eloquent than I? I can barely put into words my thoughts and feelings about this movie. Both the subject matter and the presentation completely blew me away. I have now seen it twice (once alone in Nashville, once with my Jenny). Both times I was overwhelmed. Jen and I like to analyze films after we have seen them. We typically like the independent films more than the Hollywood blockbuster kind, though I have a special place in my heart for those guy movies with little talking, lots of action and prevailing justice at the end.



This movie was nothing like anything we had ever experienced before. Of course we approached it as a potential spirit booster especially during Lent, but what we got was so much more than that.

As a Catholic Christian, I was impressed with the familiar symbols and visual depictions of so many of the scenes from Jesus' ministry, teachings and commands (the Last Supper, the washing of the feet) juxtaposed with His passion, crucifixion and death. These scenes really bring out the reason why I believe what I believe. In my short time with this music ministry, I have been approached a number of times regarding how people are confused that I can be "on fire" for or have a love for our Lord and yet remain a Catholic. This movie embraces what I believe it is all about, and regardless

of denomination, the truth in His suffering and death for what I have done (to Him) and what He did for me keeps me where I am and pushes me ever onward to learning how to love Him more and keep Him central to everything in my life so that one day, I may be with Him in eternity..

If you haven't seen the movie but expect to, don't read on, as I want to list a few things that

Jen and I found really "cool" about Mel Gibson's rendering of the events that matter most (or at least should matter most) in our lives...

- Jesus' followers were a bunch of big time cowards who were chosen and loved by Jesus even though he knew they were weak and would leave Him alone. He picked them to carry on His message and lead His church. Coward? Me, Lord? Yes.
- What does it mean to be a mother? What does it mean to be the mother of Jesus Christ? Can you even imagine?
- Blood is vital and blood is symbolic. Blood is crucial for our life, salvation and redemption.
- One man lost everything. One man got it back.
- Easter depends on Good Friday. Life requires death.
- How about the table Jesus builds...does it look similar to the one at which the Roman torture master is seated? Is it not symbolic when Jesus sits on the "table" once it is built. Yes, rich men

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## Easter (continued)

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*(Continued from page 1)*

seed that was planted on the day of our baptism. We have the opportunity to blossom into that glorious Easter lily, so pure and white, ready to take hold of Jesus' hand and walk quietly with Him into eternity.

It is a harsh spring in upstate NY. But our hardiness is in our genes and our lives are in good hands. Take hold of those hands. Hold them close. Kiss them. They have done wonderful things for you and me. They embraced a cross for you and me. They washed our feet. They fed us and held us. They are the hands that gave us life. Make them your own this Easter. Choose life because Easter is ALIVE!

# Performance Reviews – My thoughts

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## March 4-7, 2004 - CIA Summit, Franklin, TN

CIA Summit - Christian Independent Artists  
What an awesome experience! The weekend was filled with presentations on the how-to's and why's of the independent Christian music scene. There were some "huge" names like Bob Kauflin, Dawn Jones, Tom Jackson and Mike Smith as well as some really great performances during the two evening coffeehouses. There was more there than I could have imagined. It was awesome!

## March 13, 2004 - Pray for Jonathan Benefit, First United Methodist Church, West Schuyler, NY

Mark and Sue Jones helped to coordinate this benefit concert that featured several local Christian musicians and bands. The evening featured a wonderful spaghetti dinner with all proceeds benefiting Jonathan Welsch, a 2-year old boy struggling with cancer and his mother Andrea, who was present for the concert.

I am so blessed to have been given the opportu-

nity to share with all of those present some of the wonderful music that is out there. I cannot imagine the pain and sorrow this young mother must face every time she looks into her baby's eyes.

May God hold them close to His heart and keep them safe. May He grant them healing and joy amidst the struggles.

## March 21, 2004 - Lenten Concert, St. Anthony of Padua Church, Chadwicks, NY

Despite the winter weather, around 50-60 people joined Lisa Griffin and myself for an evening of reflection. We were able to donate \$186 to three charities following the concert. Hope House, Abraham House and the Rescue Mission all benefitted from the generosity of those who attended. I was truly blessed to have been able to share with everyone. Plus, it was the first time that Lisa and I played together outside of the liturgy or normal church services. She is awesome and I thank God that He made her available and willing to play for our parish community. We are blessed.

## *Passion... thoughts*

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may sit at that table, but so will millions of poor, all sinners sharing in a timeless meal of bread and wine raised up by His command, held between heaven and earth for all eternity.

- People are cruel. They were cruel in 30-whatever AD, they are cruel now.
- Some of the other "characters" are amazing - Mary (the Mother of Our Lord), Mary Magdelene, John, Peter, Judas, Pilate, Simon and the miscellaneous people who through God's grace were able to glimpse and maybe comprehend the enormity of the events taking place (the African in Herod's court, Claudia - Pilate's wife, Malchus - the earless High Priest's servant, the Roman guards, some of the Jewish council members who spoke up, Veronica who wiped Jesus' face). Where do

we fit in to the whole picture? Silent, crying, speaking up (not many did then, how many would now?).

There are so many other points that I'll have to add a page to my website to include our thoughts on each of these and the many other amazing parts of the movie. The movie is graphic, turn away from parts if you have a weak stomach, but for your sake, go see it.

There is a great review of *The Passion of the Christ* written by Orson Scott Card, a fantasy book author. The review can be found at <http://www.ornery.org/essays/warwatch/2004-02-29-1.html>. It includes a letter to Mel Gibson asking that the film not be submitted for Oscar consideration. Hmmm...

## Upcoming Engagements

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- r **May 4, 2004 - 7PM - The Gathering Place Coffeehouse** - behind Big Apple Music - corner of Seneca Turnpike and Commercial Drive, New Hartford, NY. I will be playing for the beginning of the evening.
- r **May 12-16 - CAM Conference** - Little Portion Hermitage, Berryville, Arkansas. This is a retreat / learning experience for me and many other Catholic musicians. The event is held at the Hermitage of John Michael Talbot.
- r **May 22, 2004 - 5PM - St. Anthony of Padua Confirmation Mass** - St. Anthony of Padua church, Chadwicks, NY.
- r **June 12, 2004 - Relay For Life** - Sauquoit High School, Sauquoit, NY - Luminaries Ceremony (10 PM)
- r **Weekend of August 26-28, 2004 - Revive Christian Music Festival** - Delta Lake Bible Conference Center, Rome, NY (*tentative*)
- r **September 3, 2004 - Bread of Life Café - 7PM** - West Schuyler United Methodist Church, West Schuyler, NY - Woods Road, West Schuyler, NY.
- r **September/October - Central NY Correctional Facilities** - Rome and Marcy, NY (*tentative*)

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## Album News

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We now have Tuning Up available on Cassette!

They are nicely priced at \$10 each, 2 for \$20, 3 for \$30, etc...

*Copies of Tuning Up are still available at:* Utica Catholic Bookstore •

Morgan's Tru-Value Hardware - Waterville, NY •

Life Discovery Christian Bookstore - Whitesboro, NY

*Order Online* at [www.indieheaven.com](http://www.indieheaven.com) (*until July 2004*) •

[www.catholicmusicnetwork.com](http://www.catholicmusicnetwork.com)

*Or Order direct by phone* at 315-797-6882 • *by email* at [sean@seanclive.com](mailto:sean@seanclive.com)

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