

The Rock and Roll Journey

Music, isn't it interesting how our experience is so different when we are in our cars, working out, or spending time with friends, and then we return to church. It is so interesting how the music ~out there, does not quite fit the same way into church. We can really feel the difference in energy, almost as if the two are in complete separate energetic motions. But the cool thing is that it also reveals a spiritual dichotomy within us.

Lately, I have been sharing some of the music I have been listening to outside of church, through Spotify on my workouts, and I think it is really fascinating. Sometimes I'll think, "Oh wow, this song mentioned and has a channel for Mother Mary," yet the music itself is completely dichotomous to church when I place it on the church page, it is very earthly, worldly. There may even be darker elements to it, and at first it can seem so wrong for that kind of music to appear on a church page.

Though because we promote liberty, of spirit and arts, and of freedom, I have been sharing music that is dichotomous, because it truly opens our minds to the boundary wall or "bar" as we refer to within the Saints that exists between church and reality. It reminds us that there is a protective boundary within a spiritual domain, while also helping us become more aware of it. In many ways, it operates almost like an antidote. It allows us to observe both worlds while remaining grounded in our Santa path and faith.

Much like when we discuss crime, violence, or warfare, these are difficult subjects. Yet reflecting on them can actually strengthen our commitment to peace. It is almost as if we say, "That's a place I don't want to go, and I don't want to resonate anywhere near there." In many ways, it builds a kind of fortress within us and around us.

Like taking a vitamin. Sometimes we do not like the taste, but we know it is healthy for us. Or when we are exercising, it does not always feel good because we may sweat and become tired, yet we know it is strengthening our bodies. Freedom of choice often works in much the same way.

It is also like telling yourself, "No, no, no. I can't have a cookie. I can't do this, or I can't do that." Suddenly it becomes "forbidden," and that's when we may over indulge. This is one reason I am not really one to diet. Instead, I choose healthy foods. If I want a cookie, maybe it's gluten free. It's always vegan. I do not really worry because I am fair to myself, and I focus on my needs, rather than restriction.

I feel much the same about many aspects of society. For example, I recently went to Las Vegas. Many people say gambling is a sin, and I understand why. I enjoyed walking through the casinos, seeing the different machines, and experiencing the atmosphere. It was really neat just being there, even if it was only for a few days.

I did not gamble, but I was fortunate enough to win a cruise and one hundred dollars through a timeshare presentation. It was completely unexpected. In a way, I felt like I had won in Las Vegas. It was a chance I took, a gamble, I made the drive, and it was totally worth it! They call Las Vegas "Sin City," and I went there, but I didn't need to "sin" to enjoy the experience.

This is a part of the journey with the Union of Saints and embracing what I call the rock and roll spirit. Many of us come from the world before entering more fully into our church minds. Rather than shunning this part of ourselves or saying, "That's bad," "That's sinful," or "I don't want to be around people who listen to rock and roll," we choose to embrace the whole story of life and living. We do not want people to feel inhibited from expressing their authentic spirit. Many people enjoy concerts or different styles of music, and that's okay. We want to embody freedom and liberty, but also, never in a way that harms ourselves or others, and I think that's really where our spiritual boundary is.

It is really fascinating to listen to music on our church page and notice just how different the energies are. When we are outside of church, we may not even recognize those differences. But placing them side by side gives us an opportunity to meditate on them. It fortifies us because it invites us to reflect on what it truly means to cultivate a churchly body, mind, and spirit.

Maybe it becomes an anchor point. Maybe it reminds us, "I really enjoy this song, but I do not necessarily participate in the same activities the artist sings about." We can appreciate creativity without adopting every lifestyle it portrays. It gives us an opportunity to honor the music while also strengthening our own self, mind and discernment.

This activity is a little abstract, and it is something we do at our church that's different. It helps US to reflect on the world out there. We are a bridge. We call ourselves a union because we are free to explore other churches, learn from them, and resonate with the many ways people seek God and Goddess and express their faith. We also live in the *real* world :)!

Of course, we also want to keep the Union of Saints welcoming for children, families, and the elderly. Our Universal Prayer Page and many of our programs are designed with this in mind. We are still in the process of building, and this takes a great deal of hard work.

We labor every day to help bring this vision to life so that we can become the best version of ourselves. But I am only one person, and we are just one subchapter of our 501(c)(3). Life is cool! We continue to grow, continue to build, and continue becoming the most fortified and saintly versions of ourselves.

Thank you for being part of the rock and roll journey!

~Nel