

Twenty years ago, in 1997, after a thirteen-year absence from church I decided (admittedly on a bit of a whim) to apply to NYU Tisch School of the Arts Graduate Writing Musical Theatre Program. Low and behold I was accepted and became one of the twenty-two out of the two thousand that apply annually from around the globe to an amazing and extremely intense program. In retrospect, I needed the tools to create the vehicle that would bring the message of Our Mother, the Beloved Beautiful Lady of Fatima to our much-wounded world and this was where I would get them. I learned how to tell the story through scene and song making it accessible so that many ears will listen, and hearts will embrace Her plea for peace.

I was neither special, nor terribly religious before entering the program, however, by April of 1998 I was attending daily mass at St. Gabriel's church in Milford, CT. I began my days running on the beach praying the rosary in the wee hours of the morning. I was already working on a musical adaptation of my autobiography as my thesis project; working alone because no one wanted to work with the "older woman who lived in Connecticut and spoke often of faith". One morning in May, while running on the beach praying, I heard a voice so loud that I thought someone was behind me. The words were simple, "You must write about the Marian apparitions." I spun around, surely there must be someone there, but no, I was alone. The first thing that came to mind was the film, *The Song of Bernadette*, then Medjugorje – I had seen a special on television a few years earlier, Fatima was not a thought in my mind. I kept running, returned home, got in the shower and once the voice repeated the same command. "You must write about the Marian apparitions." I laughed aloud, thinking, sure I'm going to write about the Mother of God in the den of iniquity and get it produced. The voice haunted me day and night, driving me to the quest for information on the subject matter. I discovered that there were (back in 1998) over 8000 recorded visits from Mary since 40AD when She first appears to James as he is evangelizing outside of Zaragoza, Spain. It is seven years after the death of Christ and he is feeling very much alone and unworthy of doing what he committed himself to do. He cries out for his beloved Christ to return, just once to reassure him, and it is Mary who comes, interceding on behalf of Her Son.

One of the supervisors at the hospital where I worked as a nurse was starting a Rosary Society for children spoke to me; she gave me a few short films to watch on the subject and I was drawn in. For a few weeks I tried, hard to pull something together on the subject, completely abandoning my autobiography, however, the task was daunting, and I threw up my hands in defeat. I left my writing/music room in anger, frustration and headed for the beach and not with my rosary in hand, just unworthiness in my heart. I returned after an hour heading upstairs, opened the door and was immediately taken by the scent of roses that filled the room. The beautiful fragrance lasted for over a week, others smelled it as well, only in that room, nowhere else in the house. I discovered via the internet that that was one of the ways the Blessed Mother makes herself known. And so, I said looked to the heavens and said, "Alright, I'll do it, but don't leave me, because I do not know what I am doing." She has been at my side, during the highs and low during the process of writing and developing the show. The love I experience from Her and for Her is indescribable and I will forever be in Her service and that of Her Son How blessed am I to have such a job as to spread Her message of Peace to the world through music and words that came from Her through me.

An interesting note to this already amazing journey. Nearly one year after our opening at the Merton Theater in December of 2000, and four months after the close of a limited run in Hartford, CT. something happened. On September 11th, 2001 our world was forever changed. Like you, I sat in horror watching the television. Four days after the event of September 11th, on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, I shut off the television and began to weep and clean to distract myself and then Our Lady did what She had been doing since the beginning of this journey She sang to me. When I asked how I might serve Her at this time of much suffering and sorrow, Our Lady sang these words to my heart. The song, *Through You He Lives*, is now part of the production for they are the words that humanity must hear; they are the flame of the torch that will lead the world to peace.