

## DAILY DEVOTION

### Scripture Reading: Romans 6:1b-11

*When the world says, "Give up," Hope whispers, "Try it one more time."* —Author unknown

Niccolo Paganini was a well-known and gifted 19<sup>th</sup>-century violinist. He was also well-known as a great showman with a quick sense of humor. His most memorable concert was in Italy with a full orchestra. He was performing before a packed house and his technique was incredible, his tone was fantastic and his audience dearly loved him.

Toward the end of his concert, Paganini was astounding his audience with an unbelievable composition when suddenly one string on his violin snapped and hung limply from his instrument. Paganini frowned briefly, shook his head, and continued to play, improvising beautifully.

Then to everyone's surprise, *a second string broke!* And shortly thereafter, a third!

Almost like a slapstick comedy, Paganini stood there *with three strings dangling from his Stradivarius!* But instead of leaving the stage, Paganini stood his ground and calmly completed the difficult number on the one remaining string.

This is a wonderful story, but in actuality, Paganini occasionally broke strings during a performance on purpose so he could further display his virtuosity.

What do you think is the lesson from this story?

There's no one correct answer, but, for me, the story reinforces the importance of *perseverance under duress*. It might have been easier for Paganini to walk off the stage and demand a different violin, disrupting the concert, or perhaps cancelling it altogether. But he didn't.

It's also a lesson in *courage*. It took courage for him to persist when he could not be at his best.

It's also a lesson in *humility*. Not being able to play at his best, he had to be willing to play as well as he could with only one string.

It is important to remember during this present crisis, that God knows how many strings we have at our disposal. God knows if we have four, three, two or only one. Perhaps we're in such a crisis that we feel as though we don't have any strings at all!

God knows and God understands. Let's just tell God that we are willing to serve God with as many "strings" as we have left, and we can also say the prayer below.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord, I am out of strings. I am out of energy. I have nothing left. But what I have, I give to you. Amen.*