

## Keyboard Accompaniment

### *Mass of the Humble Servant*

*In Memory of George McDonald*



Music by Laverne Wiles



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*George McDonald*

1/12/1947 ~ 5/17/2007

George Thomas McDonald was a beloved character at St Dominic Catholic Church, Houston, serving for more than eighteen years as choir director and organist, director of religious education, and pastoral assistant. He led training for Eucharistic ministers, lectors, and altar servers, while directing the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) courses and planning the procedures, texts, music, and decor for Sunday Masses and other liturgical services.

In addition to his work at St Dominic's, George used his extensive biblical and doctrinal knowledge in the conduct of seminars at other churches in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. He also taught music and religion at Incarnate Word Academy during these years.

George was a blessing to all who knew him. His beautiful music "magnified the Lord" and lifted our souls. His tender devotion to the sick, elderly, and lonely people of the parish was faithful and constant. His warm heart, his generosity, and his many acts of kindness to others endeared him to family, friends, and associates all the days of his life.

This music is offered in his name.

## *Tribute to George McDonald*

Excerpts from Phyllis Holley's Eulogy, May 21, 2007

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I had originally heard of St. Dominic's Church from a former pastor here, but what got me coming regularly to St. Dominic's was George McDonald. When George was playing the organ, he would look out all around him and make eye contact with people. It was his eye contact and great smile that got me. After visiting a couple of times I spoke to him after Mass and asked about choir practice. I've been in this choir ever since—thirteen years now.

George was an amazingly holy man. He was a sensitive individual who was in tune with people and was a great judge of character. He had a very clear vision of right and wrong, and if he ever thought he might have hurt someone's feelings, he would totally agonize over it.

He was humble and unselfish. George put others' needs before his own. He felt other people's pain. He always offered to pray for your friends and family members; he would ask, "What is her name?" and then—boom—you would hear her name mentioned at Mass, or see her name in the prayer list. Even as he lay dying in the Intensive Care Unit at St Joseph's, he asked after my mother-in-law, because he knew she had just undergone some serious surgery.

So many people knew him and loved him. I believe he "prayed without ceasing," just like St. Paul advised. God was truly the center of his life. In my husband Alvin's words: "He had no life other than God." Alvin believed him to be a soul saver.

He was a great educator, not only of children and teens, but of adults as well. His knowledge of the stories of the saints was exhaustive.

[And he was a great lover]; his great love was for Holy Mother Church, and he always claimed to be married to her.

And he was a great musician. He loved all kinds of music. He had a huge collection of church songs that he knew by heart, and he taught us so many [of them]. Sometimes we aggravated him, and he would scold us with little nonsense ejaculations, like "shadutzka hunza, cabronskga!"

But he was very appreciative of us. He gave us little pet names, and after every difficult Christmas season was over, he would throw a party and make sure we each had a little gift—they must have loved him at the Dollar Store. I've kept every one of the figurines and candle holders, etc., and display them every Christmas in my house.

George absolutely loved the Christmas season. He often reminisced about the caroling he did growing up in his neighborhood—one of his most treasured childhood memories. At a New Year's Eve party, at midnight he had us all go outside with pots and pans, banging on them—a Russian tradition. Also, he told us to put a penny above the front and back doors for prosperity for the coming year.

He talked about his family often. If one of their birthdays happened to fall on a Thursday practice day, he would hold the phone up, and we would all sing "Happy Birthday." [He always had us add a religious verse, sung to the same tune: "May the good Lord bless you, May the good Lord bless you, May the good Lord bless Ella-Mae..."]

[Often we would gather after practice to chat and share anecdotes.] He was so funny, and he loved jokes, especially "heaven" jokes—you know, the ones about getting to St. Peter's gate...

And now his turn came to reach that gate. And we miss him so very much. He just can't be replaced because he was such a special and talented man.

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MUSICAL SETTING BY

Laverne Wiles

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contact: [metalark@metalark.com](mailto:metalark@metalark.com)

<http://metalark.com/mass/>