

# The Death of Prince

By Father John Catoir JCD

The death of legendary Rock Star, Prince Rogers Nelson, April 21, 2016, led me to reflect on the impact that fame and fortune had on his life. Prince was once a wild youth; he grew up to be a person who could say with conviction: "I felt called by God to come into complete oneness with the Spirit of God and the knowledge of his truth."

Beatle John Lennon wrote these words: "Fame and fortune won't ruin you, you do that to yourself." Prince heeded that wisdom, and turned his life around. He concentrated on producing a body of work that many considered the gold standard of creative excellence. James Brown and Miles Davis, both amazing musicians, said that Prince was exceptional.

Over the past forty years, Prince created music and films that touched the lives of hundreds of millions of fans all over the world. As an aging priest, I must admit I barely noticed him, but the outpouring of love that followed his passing opened my eyes to the phenomenal influence he had on the world.

My niece, Dionne Benjamin Smith, who lives in Nassau, is the Founding Editor and Publisher of the weekly E-Magazine, **Bahamian Art & Culture**, (Cf. [dionne@smith-benjamin.com](mailto:dionne@smith-benjamin.com)). She has published it, free of charge, for the last 18 years. Here is the substance of the tribute she paid to Prince:

"The first time I heard his music my mind was blown, it was so distinctive and captivating. Purple Rain was my favorite album. It helped me get through a turbulent time in my life. His music had a sadness to it, and as a misunderstood teenager, I identified with him and his music....I also admired how he stood courageously behind his work, as evidenced by the protracted legal battle he had with Warner Bros. over his copyright and his name. It was a battle he eventually won."

Prince was raised as a Seventh Day Adventist, and later became a devout Jehovah's Witness. After he entered recovery, he spent hours talking to people about his faith in God and Jesus; confessing that he made many mistakes when he was young. He hoped to help others avoid his mistakes so they could become the new creation God wants all of us to be.

It is for these reasons that I celebrate his life. Prince used his talents well. He understood this truth: God doesn't raise us up to great heights for our own glory; he lifts us higher so that we can lift others up as well.

I am aware of the fact that he was addicted to pain-killers, but he needed them, like so many millions who take such medication. I'll leave that issue for God to judge.

The sin of pride is the inordinate love of self. Prince loved himself, but in the way that God urges all of us to love ourselves; by perfecting our talents, and using them to serve the common good. To do this Prince became a man of prayer.

Each of us fulfills our need for God in our own unique way. For Catholics, Pope John Paul II put it best.

"The human desire to be with God is not just a wish, but a need that can be as physical as the need for food and water...One way this hunger can be satisfied is by receiving his body in the Eucharist."

May the soul of Prince, and all the faithful departed, rest in peace.