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Jimmy 'Spoon Man' Cruise

Jeannette Cooperman | Sep. 28, 2008

Jimmy ëSpoon Maní Cruise

How did this begin?
I wanted drums. I fell in love with music when I was 9, and the spoons ended up becoming my imaginary drum set.

How did you learn?
Both my grandpas played; I'm from Michigan. But mainly I've taught myself.

What's the history of spoon-playing?
Well, it was the ancient Egyptians who came up with formal utensils, and ever since there have been utensils, people have been clacking them together.

You played for Mary Ann from "Gilligan's Island" and a string of other celebs. How have they reacted?
John Davidson tried to play. Luckily I had trainer spoons with me; anybody can play those. President Ford just kind of looked at me like, "What are you doing?"

When you performed in Moscow, you were part of a variety show?
I was one of the novelty acts. Musicians, gymnasts, baton twirlers, me.

So how does it feel to be a novelty?
Well, it gives me a certain niche, but on the other hand, it scares people away. If I try to book myself as a comedian, people can relate to that. When you say "spoon player," most people think of an old guy sitting in a chair.

So what do you put as "occupation" on your income tax form?
Entertainer.

What's the connection between your career and your faith?
I've been playing for 20 years. I'm married with five children and a mortgage, and I support my family by

playing the spoons. If that's not a testimony to Christ, I don't know what is.

You sometimes use your performances in Catholic schools to talk about Eucharist or other sacraments. Is there something almost sacramental about transforming such a plain, everyday object as a spoon into music?
People have asked me, "Why don't you put together electric spoons, something like that?" I could, but that takes away from the simplicity. Everybody can relate to a spoon, and that's what makes it somewhat magical. It's just two spoons. That's it. [Pause.] Although I also play forks, knives and pie servers.

Is Cruise a stage name?
Krzewski is my real name. I'm a Polish spoons player. I only wish I could have played for Pope John Paul II.

Has it ever been hard to muster the energy to perform?
My daughter had a tumor on her kidney when she was 6. That was a trying time for me, seeing all these healthy kids, and my daughter's in the hospital bald, and I've got to wear a happy face. But we saw Christ in people's kindness, and now I feel more confident in life, that the Lord is always going to be there.

You pray before every performance. What do you ask the Holy Spirit?
Make me an instrument.

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