

The Story Behind the Hymn

“What Is This Thing That Men Call Death?”

—Janice Kapp Perry

During President Hinckley’s funeral the Tabernacle Choir sang a hymn text written by President Hinckley which I set to music in December. I would like to share with you the story of how it came to be:

About two months before my niece Kathy Blacker died, on January 11, 2008, she found a three-verse poem by President Hinckley among her files. Although she was resigned to dying, she had some fears about the dying process and his words greatly comforted her, especially the second verse which described exactly what she was feeling. She wrote to President Hinckley’s office to ask permission to have the poem printed on her funeral program, and she received a very nice letter from his secretary, Don H. Staheli, saying that President Hinckley gave his permission for her to do so. The letter also conveyed some very comforting words from President Hinckley which were helpful to Kathy in her final weeks, and he said he would remember Kathy in his prayers.

Kathy then suggested that I write and ask permission to give the poem a hymn setting. I did so, and Brother Staheli conveyed President Hinckley’s permission for me to write the hymn. After offering some heartfelt prayers that I might be able to write appropriate music for his profoundly beautiful and moving text, I wrote the hymn setting and sent a copy to President Hinckley’s office for approval at the end of December. I received no immediate response.

Kathy passed away January 11 and after her funeral I sent a copy of her funeral program to President Hinckley’s office so he could see how nicely his poem was displayed along side my brother Gary Kapp’s painting of Christ. When I heard President Hinckley had passed away last Sunday night I was feeling a little sad to think I hadn’t received a letter with his official approval. But the very next day after his passing, the hoped-for letter arrived with his approval, his permission for me to publish it in a future volume of my series “Inspirational New Hymns for Choir & Home,” and leaving it to my discretion as to whether to submit it to the Church Music Division. The timing was so unusual and I was extremely grateful to receive the letter as a tender mercy in my life.

Then on Monday afternoon Craig Jessop, Mormon Tabernacle Choir Director, heard about the hymn and had his office call me to obtain a copy of the hymn for consideration for President Hinckley’s funeral. On Tuesday, while traveling in California, I learned that the hymn would be performed by the Tabernacle Choir at President Hinckley’s funeral on Saturday.

Having seen the great comfort this hymn brought to my niece who died just two weeks before President Hinckley passed away, my great desire is for people throughout the world to have a free copy of these magnificent words of President Hinckley to comfort them in times of the loss of loved ones. This is just one more way his influence could be felt down through time.

What Is This Thing That Men Call Death

Text by
Gordon B. Hinckley

Music by
Janice Kapp Perry

Reverently $\text{♩} = 52$

1. What is this thing that men call death, _____ This qui - et
 2. O God, touch Thou my ach - ing heart _____ And calm my
 3. There is no death, but on - ly change, _____ With re - com -

Ped. *Ped.*

pass - ing in the night? _____ 'Tis not the end but gen - e -
 trou - bled, haunt - ing fears. _____ Let hope and faith, tran - scen - dent,
 pence for vic - t'ry won. _____ The gift of Him who loved all

Ped.

sis Of bet - ter worlds and great - er light. _____
 pure, Give strength and peace be - yond my tears. _____
 men, The Son of God, the Ho - ly One. _____

Ped.

¿Qué es el misterio de morir?

Texto por
Gordon B. Hinckley

Música por
Janice Kapp Perry

Con reverencia $\text{♩} = 52$



1. ¿Que es el mis - te - rio de mo - rir? _____ ¿Un si - len -
2. O Dios, to - ca mi co - ra - zón _____ Ven, mis te -
3. No hay muer - te, so - lo tran - si - ción _____ Con ga - lar -



cio - so ter - mi - nar? _____ No es el fi - nal, es Gé - ne -
mo - res a cal - mar. _____ Que la es - pe - ran - za y la
dón al ven - ce - dor. _____ El don de a - quel que nos a -



sis De luz y glo - ria sin ce - sar. _____
fe Mi llan - to pue - dan con - so - lar. _____
mó, El San - to Dios, el Sal - va - dor. _____

Acaso Traz A Morte O Fim?

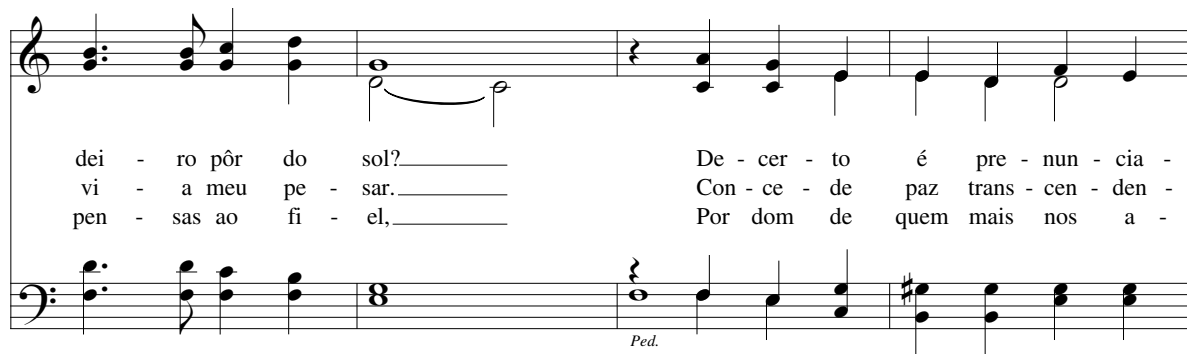
Letra de
Gordon B. Hinckley

Música de
Janice Kapp Perry

Reverente $\text{♩} = 52$



1. A - ca - so traz a mor - te o fim, _____ o der - ra -
2. A - cal ma, Deus, meu co - ra - ção _____ e a - li -
3. Mor - te não há, mu - dan - ça sim. _____ Com re - com -



dei - ro pôr do sol? _____ De - cer - to é pre - nun - cia -
vi - a meu pe - sar. _____ Con - ce - de paz trans - cen - den -
pen - sas ao fi - el, _____ Por dom de quem mais nos a -



ção De um mais bri - lhan - te ar - re - bol. _____
tal e o meu pran - to faz ces - sar. _____
mou, O Cris - to, Rei de Is - ra - el. _____