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The Open Door Community – Hospitality & Resistance in the Catholic Worker Movement

Vol. 37, No. 3

PO Box 10980 Baltimore, Maryland 21234 404.304.1483 / 404.290.2047 www.opendoorcommunity.org

March 2018



Brian Kavanagh

Out of the Shadows Into the Light of Life

By Murphy Davis

Mark 5: 21-43

This long gospel story is actually two stories woven together. We begin just as Jesus and his friends get out of the boat coming from the Gentile side of Lake Galilee. Then that story is interrupted with another story before we get back to the “main” story.

But in another sense, this is one story — and it’s the ongoing story that Jesus is telling with his parables, his teachings, his healings and his Life. It is the story of Resurrection — restored life to people who are sick, people who are dead, and to a dying social order — a dying community. It is also the story of the Beloved Community — the New Covenant — the new set of relationships that make up the New Social Order of the Reign of God.

Jesus heals Jairus’ daughter and the woman with the issue of blood reaches out for her healing. When we come to this part of Mark’s story, Jesus and his community have been going back and forth over the Sea of Galilee, making a strong point, of course, about the Beloved Community as a non-segregated, non-exclusive community. Jesus has come to welcome any and all comers to the Beloved Community. Gentiles who responded with faith and restored life were *in, y’all*.

Now, Jesus and his community are back in Jewish territory. And right away, he’s approached by Jairus, the leader of the local Synagogue. This is an unlikely scene. The presumably wealthy synagogue leader would be one of the least likely folks to come to Jesus, because of his social and political standing. People might think less of him for approaching this vagrant itinerant preacher who hung out with so many sick and poor people and smelly working class folks

like those who fish for a living. Given all this, you know that Jairus had to be up against a wall to approach the infamous Jesus for help. This brother was desperate.

But Jesus, of course, said yes; and they started moving toward Jairus’ home. But there was, as usual, a crowd — a large crowd. This meant that they moved slowly at best. Jairus was in a big hurry; it was a matter of life and death. But they were moving like an amoeba with this gaggle of the hoi polloi who latched onto Jesus whenever he came through. Who’s in the crowd? The poor, the hungry, the sick, all those other desperate people at the bottom of the heap under the heel of an Empire that was sucking the life blood out of them — body and soul.

So — somebody reaches out to Jesus — a woman, no less. And, unbeknownst to Jesus or perhaps anyone else, she is bleeding. She is known classically as The Woman with the Issue of Blood. Unclean, unclean! Get away! If she touches you, you’re unclean too. She does not speak to him or ask him for anything — simply reaches out to touch him. Gustavo Gutierrez says she is perhaps trying to “steal a miracle” from him. It works. The blood flow stops.

“Who touched me?”

“Oh come *on*, Jesus! A lot of people touched you.” But watch it: he *knows* what he’s doing. He’s calling her out, giving her another opportunity.

It scares her to death. She could be severely punished for this. She is “unclean” and illegal and she’s out in the crowd touching people. She’s a woman and she touched a man. She’s poor and that makes everything worse. She is one of the “medically indigent,” just like so many among us today. She spent all she had on doctors, and she still didn’t

Conversations on Holy Ground

By Nibs Stroupe

I have never been a big fan of the Gospel of John. Although I like many of its stories and sayings, its approach to Jesus always seems to make him too divine and ethereal. He seems so far toward the “God side” of the “two natures” doctrine that he loses relevance to human life. My discomfort with John’s Gospel is deepened when I recall that it was the favorite Gospel of my home church and of many white Christians in the South. You don’t see John 3:16 popping up everywhere for nothing! The divine Jesus of John’s Gospel seemed to be the Jesus who denied the importance of human life and of the human dimension. Thus, white people could hold people as slaves in 1808 and in 1964, and feel like the Jesus of John’s Gospel would not care.

I have been helped by the African American tradition in that the Black Jesus takes on the suffering of the world, and if he does not dignify it, he at least is aware of it and takes it in to the Godhead, where Mother Mary weeps for us all, especially those on the margins. I’ve also been helped to appreciate John more by two women theologians who were part of my tenure at Oakhurst Presbyterian: Dr. Deborah Krause and Dr. Susan Hylen. They helped me to see the deep empathy that Black Jesus has for the most marginalized of all people: women. Race is so powerful in the Western world and especially in America; poverty is pandemic world-wide, but no matter what one’s category or station, there is always the oppression of women, and John seems well aware of this.

We engage that dynamic early on in John’s Gospel. In a remarkable conversation in John 4 — the longest that Jesus has with anyone in the Gospels — Jesus encounters an unnamed (what else is new?) woman at Jacob’s well in Samaria. This is both holy and contested ground. Holy because it is near the site where the bones of Joseph were buried, once they were brought back from Egypt. Contested because Samaria is the site of the rebellion, when Jeroboam led the northern tribes out after the death of King Solomon, and the kingdom had never been reunited. So, at Jacob’s well in this story in John 4, we see the powerful intersection of rebellion and patriarchy. Samaritans and Jews, men and women operating out of their categories and hostilities; yet even here, there is a conversation and there is conversion.

Black Jesus is traveling back to his home territory of Galilee, and the journey tires him out. He stops at Jacob’s well, and a Samaritan woman comes to draw water. In line with the patriarchal system of his day, Jesus asks the woman to give him a drink. The Samaritan woman, however, is no pushover — she doesn’t bow to the patriarchy and give Black Jesus some water. She gives as good as she gets. “Oh, so you,

Out of the Shadows continued on page 8

Conversations continued on page 9

George's Ancestors

By Peter Gathje

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed —

I, too, am America.

Langston Hughes

George was missing from Manna House. For the last six months there was no sign of him. No one knew why he had stopped coming. Was he dead? Sick? Imprisoned? Did he move away? He had been such a regular guest. Every day that we were open he would arrive in his beat up SUV. He would slowly get out, and leaning heavily on his cane, walk up to the front door. His dreadlocks and ready smile were well known by both guests and volunteers. Then he disappeared.

Until Tuesday, when he showed back up at Manna House.

"Where have you been, George?"

"Had a flat tire and my vehicle wouldn't start. Didn't have the money to get that all fixed. Until now."

"We missed you. We were worried about you."

"Nothing to worry about. I am fine."

And to underscore that George is fine, he showed up at Manna House again today. But now he came bearing a book. "I have my family history here. One of my aunties wrote it. Thought you might want to have a look. You can order it on Amazon. It's a real book."

He handed me the book, *Pillars of Strength: Our Ancestors' Stories*, by Hazel Alice Moore. I started to look through it as I stood on the front porch. Usually our guests give small bits and pieces of their family histories. A story is told one day, then another maybe a few months later. Memories get shared. Favorite times or tragic times are

recalled, maybe embellished a little bit or straightened out to be more acceptable. With this book, George was offering me much more.

On the opening page was a long quotation from Sojourner Truth that explained how she got her name. "When I left the house of bondage I left everything behind. I wasn't going to keep nothing of Egypt on me, an' so I went to the Lord an' asked him to give me a new name. And he gave me Sojourner because I was to travel up and down the land showing the people their sins and bein' a

**"I have my family history here.
One of my aunties wrote it."**

sign upon them. I told the Lord I wanted two names 'cause everybody else had two, and the Lord gave me Truth, because I was to declare the truth to the people."

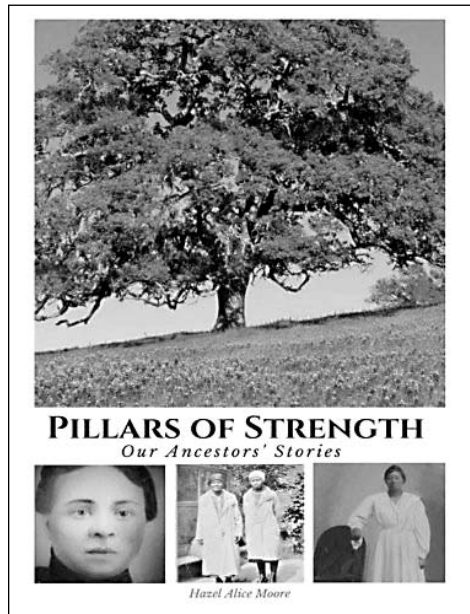
I turned the page and there was a family tree. "George," I said, "you have ancestors that were born into slavery."

"Still true today," he said. "We're still born into slavery."

I kept reading. What unfolded before me was a tour of that slavery. George had an ancestor who fought with the Union Army. The author observed laconically, "He served on the side that promised him freedom, which made joining the army less difficult." That he received less wages than white soldiers was duly noted.

George had ancestors sentenced to jail who ended up enslaved in the coal mines around Birmingham. See the book, *Slavery by Another Name*.

George had an ancestor who was part of the infamous Tuskegee Study that left rural Black men untreated for syphilis while claiming to give them free health care. He died of syphilis.



George had several ancestors who were bootleggers. "Officers who knew the family were not too interested in stopping the distribution because they were supplied with the product themselves."

Then the stories of George's ancestors connected with Manna House. George's relatives in recent years have lived in Atoka and Munford, and they worship at St. Mark African American Episcopal Church. A longtime volunteer and supporter of Manna House, Rev. Dave Adams pastors that church.

"Thanks George," I said. "You have a long and beautiful history."

"Yes, I do. Don't I?" ♦

Peter Gathje is Vice President for Academic Affairs/Dean of Memphis Theological Seminary, and a founder of Manna House, a place of hospitality in Memphis. He wrote Sharing the Bread of Life: Hospitality and Resistance at the Open Door Community (2006) and edited A Work of Hospitality: The Open Door Reader 1982 – 2002. (pgathje@memphisseminary.edu)

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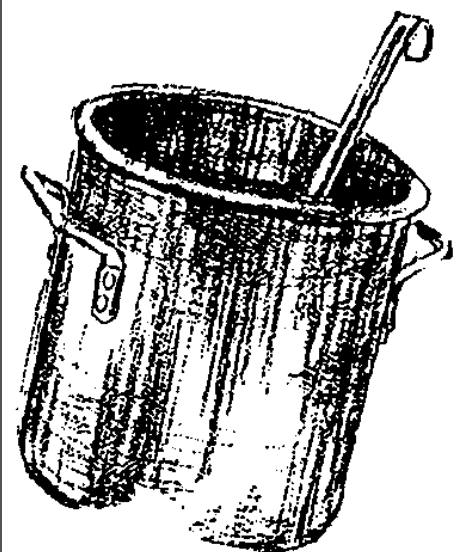
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**A Visitation from The Black Jesus:
On Monday, February 26,
ODC added Soup to her serving!!**

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is published by the Open Door Community, Inc., a Baltimore Protestant Catholic Worker community: Christians called to resist war and violence and nurture community in ministry with and advocacy for the homeless poor and prisoners, particularly those on death row. Subscriptions are free. A newspaper request form is included in each issue. Manuscripts and letters are welcomed. Inclusive language editing is standard.

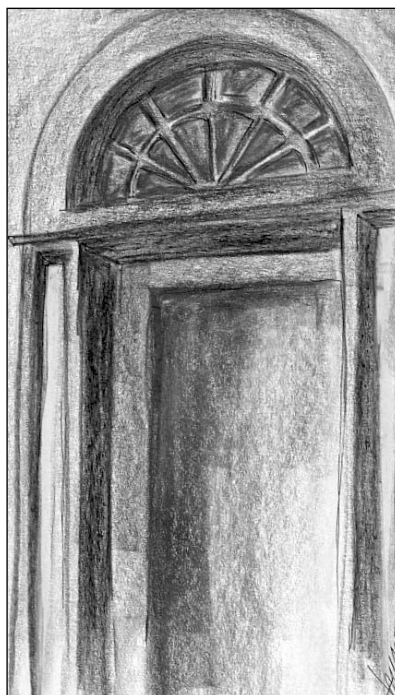
A \$10 donation to the Open Door Community would help to cover the costs of printing and mailing *Hospitality* for one year. A \$40 donation covers overseas delivery for one year.

Open Door Community

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Baltimore, Maryland 21234

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Remembering 910

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Circulation: A multitude of earthly hosts

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Please join us on **Facebook**

for the continuing journey of the

Open Door Community in Baltimore.

Thank you. David, Eduard and Murphy.

Save Us!

By Joyce Hollyday

This sermon was preached by Joyce Hollyday on Palm Sunday 2017 at Circle of Mercy church in Asheville, NC.

Our text tonight is Luke 19:29-41. I'm reading from the *New Revised American Version*.

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his billionaire cronies, saying, "Go into the town ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a stallion that has been ridden many times in war. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord wants it. And what the Lord wants, the Lord gets.' If necessary, pay off its owners with a bribe. Close the deal with whatever it takes." So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them.

Then they brought the warhorse to him. They threw upon it their cashmere suit jackets and silk ties from the famous fashion line IVANKA, which stands for Incestuously Vain, Arrogant and Narcissistic Killer Apparel. Then they lifted him onto the spirited steed. As he pranced proudly through the crowd, he proclaimed, "This is the biggest Passover parade ever — a million people at least!" — though the Roman centurion estimate was seventy-three people and a few stray sheep.

The multitude began to shout with a loud voice, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of himself!" To these he said, "I'll tax the poor and cater to you. I'll dismantle the academies and double the chariots. I'll slash dung cleanup in the streets and beef up DAFT, the Department of Alternative Facts and Truth."

And on the other side of the road, the ragged people waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna!" which means "Save us! Deliver us!" To these he said, "I will save you. And I will deliver you — from the perverts and the prostitutes, the criminals and the crybabies; from loathsome lepers, radical revolutionaries, and woefully wise women — by driving them all into the desert. I'll send the Parthians and Medes, the Elamites and Mesopotamians, the Egyptians and Libyans, Romans and Arabs back on camels where they came from. But before they go, I'll make them rebuild the wall around Jerusalem and close off all her gates — the Sheep and Fish Gates, the Horse and Fountain and Mercy Gates — except for the Dung Gate, out of which our olives and arms will flow to every corner of the earth. And all the world will see and worship our exceptionalism."

As he came near and saw the city, he wept for joy, saying, "You, all of you, recognize the things that make for war!" And as he charged into Jerusalem, he shouted, "Drinks for all at the Jerusalem Towers Inn!"

This is the word of truth for the people of lies, brought to you by the *New Revised American Version*, also known as *The Massage* — because it feels so good.

Well, OK, maybe it didn't happen exactly that way. But I wanted to make a point, because sometimes we forget just how audacious and unexpected the piece of satirical street theater known as the triumphal entry really was.

The Jews were longing and looking for a Messiah to save and deliver them from the horrors of occupation by the

Roman Empire: the brutal exploitation of their labor, the high taxes forced upon them, the poverty they couldn't escape, the complete disregard for their health and well-being and the common good. They pictured a Messiah much more in line with the version of the story we just heard than what they ended up with. They wanted a warrior-king. And they got a humble teacher-healer whose idea of a triumphal entry was to ride into Jerusalem on a donkey that had never been ridden before. It was a piece of comedy designed to expose and poke fun at both the tragedy of their situation and the absurdity of the men who ruled over them.

It's likely that a second "grand entrance" was happening that same day. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, kept his chief residence and office at the beach, in Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea. I think it was called Mar-a-Lago... but I may be confusing it with something else. Pilate also had

of my colleagues for twenty-five Syrian pounds. A young, multilingual entrepreneur ensuring the survival of her family.

The professor who led our sojourn in the Middle East has kept us all on an email list, and I heard from him recently. He reminded us of the tragic destruction of Palmyra's ancient wonders by ISIS in January [2017]. He took us back through our journey from Damascus to that jewel in the desert, on a route that ran south through Homs, with a stop there to visit with families who lived in domed mud huts in the shadow of a military base. "As near as I can tell from the news reports," he wrote, "this is the location of the Al-Shayrat airfield, from which the Assad government delivered the chemical weapons and which our missiles hit overnight."

"When Jesus came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!'" Jesus still weeps over our



Ade Bethune

Sometimes we forget just how audacious and unexpected the piece of satirical street theater known as the triumphal entry really was.

headquarters in Jerusalem, and a footnote in my study Bible says that "because of the large crowds at Passover, [Pilate] came up to Jerusalem to help keep order." He may well have been arriving with his entourage from the west at about the same time that Jesus and his disciples were entering from the east. They represented two very different types of power, headed for a showdown.

Twenty years ago, in the spring of 1997, I was in Syria with a group of Atlanta-area seminary students and faculty. I hold many images in my mind of that beautiful country: the bustling souk, the market in the heart of Damascus; the gorgeous embroidery that Syrian women are known for; the biblical Street Called Straight, which is the oldest known road still in existence.

But the picture that remains most vividly, like a stunning postcard, is from our trip at dusk to Palmyra. Centuries ago, caravan drivers were guided to this oasis along the trade route known as the Silk Road by fires at night and the glint of sunlight off the city's gilded columns during the day. We walked under the ancient arches, amid the sacred ruins of the temple, palace and amphitheater, where resting camels were silhouetted against a brilliant red ball of sun, and the air shimmered and glowed.

The tombs there were the playground of gypsy children. As the sky darkened, their parents gathered their sheep and lit a fire. A little girl held out her hands, begging for candy, and I handed over a pack of LifeSavers. She said "Merçi," "Danke," and "Thank you." Moments later, she sold it to one

dying cities and our ravaged earth, over last week's horrific chemical and missile attacks and today's Palm Sunday bombing of two Coptic churches in Egypt. He is still deeply grieved by our relentless refusal to see and do the things that make for peace.

My other lasting memory of Syria is of a visit to the village of Maaloula. In a small church there, candles cast dancing shadows on cold stone walls as a gray-haired priest in a blue robe prayed the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic. Rain and hail pounded the roof — a rare spring storm in the desert — and lightning knocked out the electricity, paralyzing the well. "We usually serve our guests water," the priest explained, "but because of the storm, we'll give you sweet wine." As he ushered us toward delicate glasses, he announced proudly that he was serving "the best aperitif in Syria." In one of the few villages left in the world that still speaks Jesus' tongue, a priest changed water to wine, and I was a beneficiary of the miracle.

In a time such as ours, we need to remember and cling to the miracles. And so I want to share the most recent one I witnessed. I've been meeting for about two months with a group of women called *Mujeres Unidas en Fe*, Women United in Faith. We're about 10 Spanish-speaking and 10 English-speaking women who get together for three hours in the middle of the day every Thursday at a church near my home. We spend the first hour doing Bible study in Spanish. Before sharing a potluck lunch, we devote our second hour to

Save Us! continued on page 9

The Lion and the Lamb

When Will They Lie Down Together?

A review by David Eberhardt

Jim Forest's book is so needed as of NOW! The lion's den of Trump surrounds us and Forest's meticulous book presents the saintly peacenik, Father Daniel Berrigan, SJ as an antidote. The book is copiously illustrated with photos, and Forest, a protester and biographer of Dorothy Day, knows whereof he writes.

Dan Berrigan, who died at 95 in 2016, was a Jesuit priest renowned for his many books of prose and poetry and for his anti-war and anti-nuclear weapons protests, notably the Catonsville 9 and King of Prussia 8 Plowshares demonstrations.

It is a full biography so I can only highlight the bits of most interest to me. Forest's book documents Dan's participation in the Catonsville 9, that is, the nine Catholics who in 1968 protested the Vietnam War by burning draft files with homemade napalm. Forest describes Berrigan's travels in the "underground," (when the FBI was looking for him after he had refused to turn himself in to begin his prison term). Forest writes of Berrigan in prison and about various other protests and his poetry.

In an interesting oddity, Forest writes: "President Nixon and White House Chief of Staff Haldeman were discussing the Berrigan brothers. Haldeman wondered where the Berrigans got their money for legal defense" and Nixon responded: "They're loaded, they've got millions." Actually most of their legal defense was donated for free!! I quote this because it shows how stupid these men of power are, not even knowing that priests live lives of poverty and service.

Forest acknowledges that Phil and Dan squabbled. He details a slight dustup after a trip they took together to Germany; the back and forth in letters is revealing. Dan writes, "Dear brother, there's a certain violence that afflicts you. It reminds me of our father and his way of 'taking it out' on his own." Dan's gentleness was always evident, as was Phil's abruptness.

Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement, stood by the participants in actions similar to the Catonsville 9, like the Milwaukee 14 (of which Jim Forest was a member) when Dan Berrigan told her about them. The destruction of property bothered her and people accused her then of inconsistency as she supported the 14, but her granddaughter writes: "*She always respected the people's willingness to go to jail. You cannot go to jail as a gesture, it is real suffering.*"

Forest's coverage of Dan is so complete, it answers questions you may have as to his views on celibacy and sexuality, abortion, Palestine, etc.

I think it was Dan who, in the Catonsville 9 press release, coined the sentence, "Some property has no right to exist," a great addition to the tactics of non-violent resistance. In my opinion, this tactic means property can be destroyed so long as humans are not hurt. It means bombing the railroad tracks to concentration camps, for example, or Weathermen bombings during the Vietnam resistance. There were Washington, D.C. bombs set off and no one was hurt. No one was ever prosecuted either. Frank Cordaro of the Des Moines Catholic Worker has been publishing several essays and observations on this tactic.

In his interchange with the Nicaraguan poet, Ernesto Cardenal, Dan writes at length on the issue of non-violence: "*But one thing we have — our refusal to take up bombs or guns aimed at the flesh of others. ... Shall death have dominion?*"

Dan, like Dorothy Day and the commandment "Thou

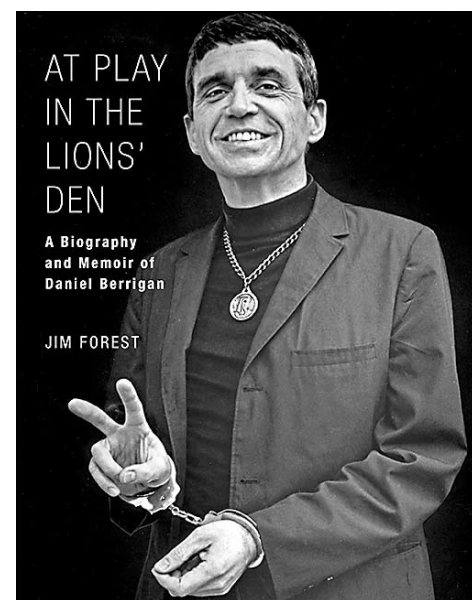
At Play in the Lions' Den

A Biography and Memoir of Daniel Berrigan

By Jim Forest

Orbis Books, 2017

Jim Forest is an internationally renowned peacemaker and spiritual writer. His many books include biographies of Dorothy Day (*All is Grace*) and Thomas Merton (*Living with Wisdom*). His most recent book is *The Root of War Is Fear: Thomas Merton's Advice to Peacemakers*. He lives in Alkmaar, the Netherlands.



shalt not kill," takes the high, pure road.

One of the members of the Catonsville 9, George Mische, who probably instigated this action, is harsh about the Berrigans, accusing them of egotism and of guilt tripping others into undesired jail time. But the media was going to focus on two handsome brothers, both Catholic priests. George can be a saint if he wants to. Dan is a saint, Phil is, Dorothy Day definitely and you know I could go on. Guilt can be a good thing!

Let the FBI write disparagements of Dan and Phil. We all have egos; we all have feet of clay! Let politicians squabble amongst each other; we in the peace movement have better things to do!

Dan was a poet and the author of some 50 books of poetry and prose. Here are a few excerpts from Dan's *Prison Poems*:

O Danbury* To What Shall I Compare Thee?

Like coming up against testy Charon, in a bad time
-or New York customs, en route from Hanoi, '68,
Notes stuffed in a paper bag,
Resolved, they'll have my life before
They have those words, scrawled in the shelters,
Under their besotted bombs.

Some moments you're willing to die for,
Die rather than have undone. . .
I scrawl this, lights out, a barred window.
Snow filigrees the April green.
Before they lay their cotton picking paws on them,
I'll eat these notes,
Alphabetize with good news
My prophetic guts.

*prison where Dan was held

I note the similarities to Gerald Manley Hopkins, Robert Lowell and Galway Kinnell. Dan's poetry can be obscure but even then is intriguing.

Another great poem of Dan's, "And the Risen Bread," was written after the suicide of a friend of his, Mitch Snyder. Snyder worked for the homeless in Washington for years, and was despondent at the callousness of the government in relation to people without homes.

And the Risen Bread

Some stood up once, and sat down.
Some walked a mile, and walked away.
Some stood up twice, then sat down.
"It's too much," they cried.
Some walked two miles, then walked away.
"I've had it," they cried,
Some stood and stood and stood.

They were taken for fools,
they were taken for being taken in.
Some walked and walked and walked —
they walked the earth,
they walked the waters,
they walked the air.
"Why do you stand?" they were asked, and
"Why do you walk?"
"Because of the children," they said, and
"Because of the heart, and
"Because of the bread,"
"Because the cause is
the heart's beat, and
the children born, and
the risen bread."

Dan's play "The Trial of the Catonsville 9" was made into a movie and Dan helped to rewrite the movie "The Mission," in which he had a role.

Dan paid his dues: 250 times arrested, cast out of the Jesuit residence by fellow Jesuits who did not agree, although later readmitted. The Biblical concept of suffering for redemption seems very absent today except at Catholic Worker addresses! The story of Dan's relations with his order is fascinating.

Sometimes people question the results of such actions by Phil and Dan such as the anti-draft action of the Catonsville 9 or the Plowshares anti-nuclear actions that followed. As a fellow poet and Berrigan friend, I am quoted in Forest's book: "People like to point to Dan's self-effacing and self-deprecating view that we do good for its own sake and we can forget about results. But Americans always want results and in fact there were results — for starters, we ended the draft. People question the results of these witness actions but you never know how your action may influence another. Dan Berrigan changed a lot of lives. I call that a result."

When the Milwaukee 14, of which Forest was a member, burned draft files, they sang "Ding dong, the wicked witch is dead" from "The Wizard of Oz." Jim Forest's book can help melt the shoes off of the military-industrial generals. Next to a life as lived by Dan Berrigan, the lives of war-makers are impoverished.

Jim's book should be in many classrooms — a textbook on life well lived and resistance to injustice. Ask yourself why it won't be. ♣

David Eberhardt has three books available from Amazon: two of poetry — *Blue Running Lights and Poems from the Website*, *Poetry in Baltimore and his latest, a prose peace movement memoir*; *For All the Saints, A Protest Primer*. Eberhardt was a member of the Baltimore 4. They poured blood on draft files to protest the Vietnam War in 1967. Eberhardt served 21 months in Lewisburg federal prison for the protest. He and Fr. Phil Berrigan were cellmates there.

The Death of Our Place

By Nathan Dorris

“There are no unsacred places; there are only sacred places and desecrated places.”

— Wendell Berry

Last month, the physical location of the Open Door Community in Atlanta — 910 Ponce de Leon Avenue — was torn down, reduced to a pile of rubble, swept up and taken God knows where. In case you're unfamiliar, the Open Door was a Catholic Worker community on the margins of Atlanta whose charism — or grace, gift and struggle — was living in deep, sincere, and embodied relationship with those experiencing or facing homelessness, imprisonment, poverty and execution, offering hospitality in the form of soup kitchens, showers, medical clinics, prison visitations, care packages for the condemned and so much more. Works of mercy and works of justice were practiced day in and day out for 35 years, alongside the imperative work of living into the trauma and pain of white supremacy and patriarchy, interracially striving to heal *with one another* from this diseased culture/filthy rotten system and cultivate practices and responses that are just, compassionate and honest. I was a part of this life and work directly for two years, but the work it began in me will never be finished; it will remain an active and guiding light as I perpetually strive to do justice and love mercy in varied and shifting contexts.

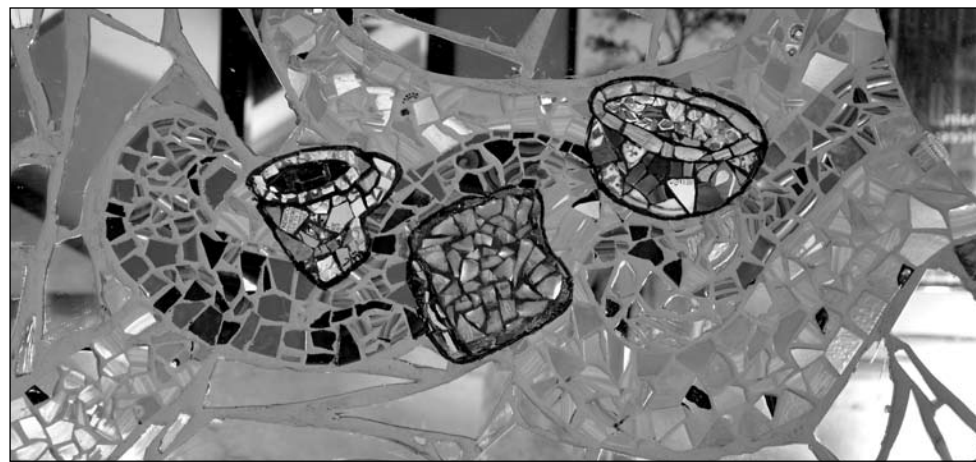
The pain felt at the loss of the building at 910 is amorphous and slippery, affecting those of us with connections to it in myriad ways. The pain I feel is not the same pain that volunteers of the community for twenty years feel, nor are those pains identical to those of the co-founders, who raised a daughter in that home. The countless men, women and children who will never again look upon that place as a sign of hope, as an oasis in the cruel desert of a heartless city, are an ocean of grief unto themselves; even those (and there are many, myself among them from time to time) who have complex, difficult, or negative feelings about the Open Door are certainly wrestling with emergent and complicated feelings at this newfound loss.

There are those, quick to comfort and with all good intention, who will say that the Open Door still exists. That it lives on primarily within the hearts, minds and lives of the people mentioned above, those affected by its life and work, moved by its spirit; but also concretely, in the continuity of work carried on by former members of the community in other parts of Georgia or Baltimore, where a small enclave of refugees from Atlanta have settled to keep the fire lit. There is much to commend such a response: It's true, all of it. But, at least for myself, there's something more going on in this pain that I want to sit with for just a moment, a small whimper that I feel the need to be still and listen to. It is, I think, the pain of desecration. Grief at the destruction of a place that was a living presence of its own.



Hanna Pernova

Rarely, if ever, do people within modern American society experience places as truly, deeply sacred. We may experience them as transcendently beautiful, or breath-taking, or important, but even those among us inclined to use the word “sacred” will most likely envision that sacredness as a quality that God (in a narrow and anthropomorphic sense) bestows upon things with no real animate life of their own; sacredness is a property of divinity, not the other way around. But I want to venture that the history of 910 is the history of a place becoming holy in some very real, mystical and elusive way. That land — those bricks, those trees, even that concrete — has for the last thirty-odd years been soaking every aspect of the life of that community into itself. There are actual drops of blood, sweat and tears in more than one place on those premises. It is holy ground, a bush alight.



Calvin Kimbrough

The Gift of Being Broken (mosaic mural - detail) by Nelia Kimbrough

Countless hours of laughter were constantly vibrating within and between those walls, drunk in through conversations between vast numbers of wildly diverse peoples. Atheists, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, Muslims; people of color, people of privilege, people of means, people of generational trauma and poverty. And not only laughter: anger, pain, rage, resentment — at class oppression, racial inequality, at our own failures to live into better ways of being together, at our faults and shortcomings, at

the bullshit of the local and national political machinery or the latest performance by the Atlanta Falcons — coursed through the stone veins of that place, stoking its passion and the passion of those who passed through for one night or two, two years or five. Water from showers offered and given freely to those otherwise denied a place to wash themselves ran across smooth tile, seeped into porous stone; coffee made with love (and mountains of sugar) poured out as libation upon earth and woodchips in the front yard. The thousands upon thousands of voices sharing their thoughts or feelings, singing loudly, poorly, earnestly, etching themselves into the leaves of the trees or the notches in the benches. My love, my uncertainty, my fear — all still linger there in some intangible but real way. Murals made of broken pottery, more beautiful than any I've seen in a museum, set into those walls like distinctive creases in the hands

of a loved one. I cannot but believe, after so many years of so much movement, so much faith and so much doubt and so much food, that that building had changed. It took into itself every thought expressed, every meal prepared, every dysfunction reenacted, and gave them back out in a continuous stream of becoming, a river of hospitality, insufficiency, shame and grace. Every single nook and cranny of that place — the concrete drive, the rickety wooden balconies, the soil out front and back, the bark of the trees surrounding

— was saturated in the countless acts of selflessness and selfishness, generosity and greed, hope and despair, that were enacted within its bounds over so, so many years by more people than can or will ever be known. There is a god in that place who has been destroyed at the hands of developers and gentrifiers, and it is a tragedy.

In sitting with this it's also important to me that I name the reality that there are many among us who know in far deeper, much more vivid detail and experience the pain of losing places sacred to them. Indigenous communities and nations have had their land and places taken much more forcefully and ruthlessly by more violent kin of those same forces that destroyed 910, but with effects whose depths I will never be able to probe or comprehend. Communities of color are losing their homes and communities to the steady onslaught of gentrification in every urban center in the United States. Our profits devour the living earth and her people. I don't say this to imply in *any* way that I know the pain of indigenous people, or the experience of disenfranchised people; I reflect because I believe there may be a small window between certain experiences, and there is a possibility that, if we look through that window with enough care, perhaps we can become more empathetic and just human beings. I want to allow the site at 910 Ponce de Leon Avenue the honor and respect of being holy ground, and to deal with that pain and loss authentically and carefully. And, in the spirit of that place, I want to name injustice as I see it and continue to work against it, without eschewing my own complicity in it.

The memory of the Open Door Community in Atlanta is a dangerous one, and one that I hope will push its keepers toward ever more health and beauty, which necessarily entails pain and struggle. But memory is not place; it is not rough in hand. I am unbearably saddened by the physical loss of that place, and I extend my heart to those who are also struggling and hurting in the wake of this reality. It is not just a building that was lost: It was a part of each of us, and it was a living, breathing, spirited Caretaker. I hope that, one day, I'm gifted to encounter that spirit again. Until then, mourning will be a part of living honestly with myself in whatever place(s) I find myself.

Thank you, 910, for your welcoming and darkened hallways; for your raining roof and the silent womb of your prayer room; for your rattling radiators and the twirling dances of your fans; for your abundance and joy; for your attitude of gratitude and your damned self-righteousness. Thank you for your body, broken as it was. We love you, and will miss you inconsolably. ♣

Nathan Dorris was a Resident Volunteer at the Open Door Community from 2012 to 2014. He currently lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and works at the locally-owned take-out restaurant Mesa. (nathanandrew2112@gmail.com)

Home, Streets and Prisons

By Eduard Loring

Wonderful friends, supporters, readers of *Hospitality*:

We have had a couple of wonderful visitors over the last month: Ray McGovern, former CIA analyst turned courageous Peace Maker, and Brian Terrell who lives at the Guests and Strangers Catholic Worker Farm in Maloy, Iowa. Brian milks Christian goats though he lives like a

sheep. When not on the farm, he is in Iraq, Afghanistan or Prison. Blessed are the Peace Makers for these shall be known as the daughters and sons of God. That sure is the way we know these two prophets of the Jesus Way. We have had a few attempts to bring strangers into our (and your) Christ Room. We have not yet been successful.

My work in the neighborhood increases as we live here longer. I am reminded of my joy over the years at Clifton Presbyterian, where I was a pastor to the neighborhood in addition to the church. We — through you — buy groceries and help with rent and transportation to the doctor or grocery store. And listen to the struggles of our working class friends.

Murphy went to the Louisville Institute where she received a generous grant to help her along with her book. Joyce Hollyday, well-known author, great friend and writer for *Hospitality*, met Murphy in Louisville to attend the gathering. Joyce is Murphy's editor and companion for this significant project of narrative theology and social analysis from Murphy's ongoing cancer journey. After 18 months of being unable to travel alone, Murphy said she felt like a free woman on this trip. I got very hungry while she was away, though Hannah sent over a care package.



David Payne

Left: Eduard Loring with a beautiful scarf over his head. The scarf came as a gift from Brian Terrell, Peace Maker par excellence. Brian and his wife Betsy Keenan live at Strangers and Guests Catholic Worker Farm. Brian milks the goats when he is not in Iraq and Afghanistan. His Beloved, Betsy, is a weaver and gardener. Brian got this splendid scarf at an Oasis between Baghdad and Amman, Jordan in 1998. In 2018 he gave the scarf to me. This morning while serving coffee and granola bars a Muslim came to me and began talking about faith and life. He said that the scarf made him feel welcomed to come and talk. The scarf for me is not only a symbol of my commitment to the Palestinian Liberation Movement but also a sign of opposition to the present state of Israel and its apartheid system.



Calvin Kimbrough

Above: Lunch during a Hardwick Prison Trip at the First Presbyterian Church in Milledgeville.

Wende Bellew is our staff person who coordinates the trip. What an important and joyful event, though sorrowful for too many, this Work of Mercy is. First Presbyterian Church in Milledgeville has been a Welcome Station for our guests over many, many years. Right Judge Duke, you evil old man.

Murphy and I write lots of letters to prisoners. I am just getting into sending emails to prisons after a time of resistance to the means. But like many temptations in the Land of Affluence and Power, the prisoner email is certainly convenient. (See Cornel West, *Democracy Matters* for an interpretation of convenience as a tool of the powers.)

We have two friends on Georgia's death row whose cases are winding down. The Republic-Libertarian Party is committed to the death of the poor as a means to centralize power among the rich and white. The Red State of Georgia has red blood on his/her/their hands. Why? Can we do something? Prayer is not enough. Saying no is not enough.

Right: Robert Butts is an excellent artist. He sits today on Death Row in Georgia. SCOTUS recently turned down Robert's appeal. He, Ed and Murphy are good friends.

We need sandwich makers in Baltimore. We love you and thank you all. And remember the prisoner as though you are in prison with them. Many of our readers are prisoners from a number of states inside the domination system named the United States of America.

Thank you for making our paper possible.

Love, Ed

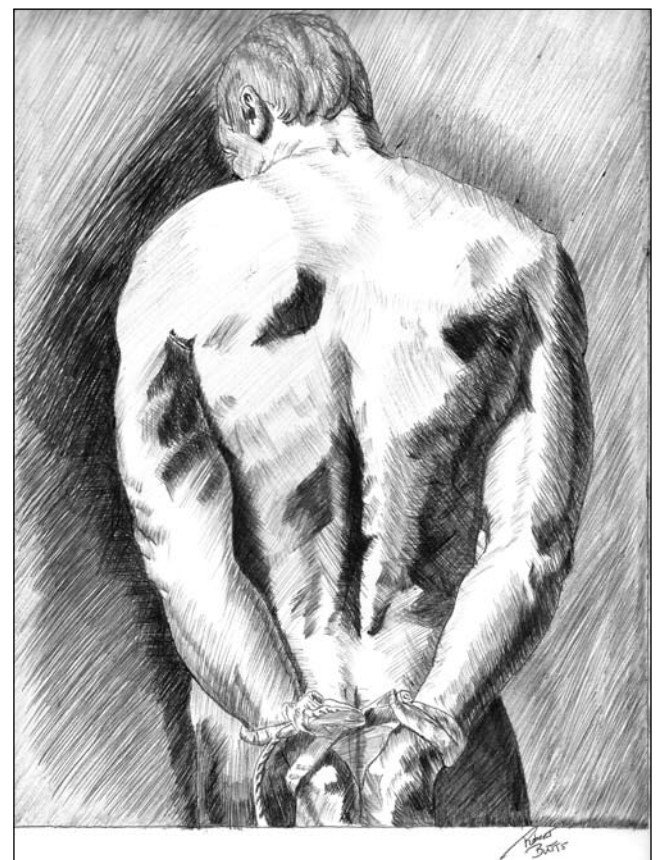


Eduard Loring

Above: David Payne, left, talks with others during breakfast at the Upton Subway Station on February 5.

David Payne and I serve on the streets two times a week. We serve in Sandtown and we work with Newborn Community of Faith, who provides several wonderful volunteers. I continue to seek out the streets for Jesus in the poor. This is slow going. I am not yet "connected" in Baltimore. I was warned that a new person, especially an old white man, would have a difficult time finding open doors. 'Tis true. 'Tis true.

The Hardwick Prison Trip rolls. Murphy; David; and Lee Carroll, Chair of our Board, will be on the April trip.



Fragments From a Fractured Beggar's Bowl

By Eduard Loring

Shard One: February 2018

Two days ago, 17 went down. Fifteen injured. A million experienced trauma. We know praying and talking isn't enough. Sure wasn't for Jesus.

After the initial shock and watching Amy Goodman's sensitive report, Murphy and I sat in silence. Today as I continued to hold the young folk in my heart and the event in my mind I began to think of Walt Disney's "Bambi," one of my favorite films. The film begins in Eden where all the animals love each other and do not eat each other. Yet, even in this Edenic forest the shadow of fear casts over the birds of the air, the beasts of the field and the frogs and turtles of land and lake. All goes well until the day The White Man comes. He does not come as friend. He comes as enemy. He carries a gun. He kills. Bambi's mother dies. Bambi is a motherless child, but he has a tough daddy. But once again, White Christian Nationalist is born again. White Man and gun. Thanks, Walt.



Shard Two

Inside the circles in which I dance, the Sermon on the Mount has been getting notice recently. I have been surprised how often Bible teachers miss the meaning of "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The first of the Beatitudes. At the Open Door Community, we most often paraphrase "for theirs is the Beloved Community." The question that comes down the corridors of time into the perplexities of today is: Who are the poor in spirit? What does it mean to be poor in spirit? Given the faith of Jesus, given Jesus' life and teaching, we can cut on the lights in the Bible Study room. The poor in spirit are the poor! To be poor is pure hell. The poor as individuals and as a class and as a culture are oppressed, depressed, repressed, hungry, landless, despised, humiliated, killed, imprisoned, ill, un/under-educated, marginalized. Jesus brought a gospel that is good news to the poor. Yes, even the poorest of the poor. To be poor in spirit is to be in despair, all but soul-dead, either passive or full of rage. Jesus' heart bursts for these folks and he goes about blessing them and working to change their social location toward community, economic justice and building radical disciples. The Beatitudes are not psychology or loving one's neediness. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" means in discipleship theology that the Beloved Community is coming on earth as it is in heaven. And according to the Sermon on the plain in Luke, those wealthy better jump into solidarity with the poor as soon as possible.



David Payne

ODC/Baltimore

Our Neighborhood



Shard Three: March 2018

Who am I? Who are you?

Who are we?

An apologetic with those soft ball disciples who believe Human Beings are basically good.

Thesis: We are both Good (the image of God) and Evil (the sin-shattered image of God)

We are:

Nikolas Cruz: The white racist killer of 17 and simultaneously Aaron Feis: The Trump-supporting coach who took multiple bullets to his body to save students' lives. The ultimate gift.

The man-for-others. Thank you.

We are simultaneously sinners and saints.

Martin Luther: "Simul iustus et peccator" — the heart of The Reformation Theology.

We are:

Martin Luther King: Democratic Socialist who gave his life to "redeem the soul of America."

We are:

President Andrew Jackson: Pro-slavery Presbyterian; the favorite president of Presbyterian, Pro-slavery Trump; slave-owner; human trafficker; death-march planner of the Trail of Tears: 5000 dead. Dead Cherokees.

Thomas Merton says he was "Born Dead." How may/can we be New Born? Even so: we are Good and Evil.

We are:

(male, female and they: Yes. Good and Evil all)

Ilse Koch: "The Witch of Buchenwald." A nymphomaniac torturer. A white supremacist Nazi. (Does her last name ring any bells?)

Ella Baker: One of the greatest civil rights leaders. Who shared the life force of Love and Justice with Diane Nash, Fannie Lou Hamer, Sojourner Truth, Septima Clark, Rosa Parks, Ida B. Wells and many others.

Some were white: Montgomery's white Martyr: Juliette Hampton Morgan, d. July 16, 1957.

We confess our sins during Lent and every day. But confession is not enough and often makes us passive. We must be transformed to mitigate our propensity to Evil and grow into righteousness. Finally to say: "Not I, but Christ in me." ✠

Eduard Nuessner Loring is an Activist/Advocate/Ally at the Open Door Community in Baltimore. (eduardloring@opendoorcommunity.org)

Out of the Shadows Into the Light of Life *continued from page 1*

get well. Now she's not only sick, she's poor — busted in more ways than one.

Well, one more time, so much for commercial health care. Shame on anybody who dares to make a profit off of the misery and illness of others. Shame. Then and now. Shame! This woman was poor because she had been exploited by a market-driven health care system. The doctors took all her money and she got worse. Once she was broke, suffering illness *and* poverty, the commercial system had nothing more for her and no responsibility for its failure to help. Once again, the for-profit system screwed her bad! Shame. All her money was gone; she was sicker than ever; they kicked her to the curb like so much garbage.

So she sees her chance. She reaches out for something that will cost her no money, but it could surely cost her all her remaining dignity and initiative. Maybe she had heard of the prophet who said, "Come, all you who have no money. Come and eat. It will cost you nothing. Why do you spend your money for that which does not satisfy? Come." (Isaiah 55)

She goes for it. She carries three strikes: she is a woman, sick and poor. All of these factors marginalize her, so she is triply marginalized. She is *nobody*.

The law in Leviticus 15:25-31 governs the expected behavior for a woman of her circumstances:

If a woman has a flow of blood for several days outside her monthly period or if her flow continued beyond her regular period, she remains unclean as long as the flow continues, just as she is during her monthly period. Any bed on which she lies and anything on which she sits during this time is unclean. Anyone who touches them is unclean and must wash his clothes and have a bath; he remains unclean until evening. After her flow stops, she must wait seven days, and then she will be ritually clean. On the eighth day she shall take two doves or two pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of the LORD's presence. The priest shall offer one of them as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering and in this way he will perform the ritual of purification for her.

The LORD told Moses to warn the people of Israel about their uncleanness, so that they would not defile the Tent of his presence, which was in the middle of the camp. If they did, they would be killed.

This woman surely knows the law, as does everyone in that crowd. So by her action, by, as they say, "engaging in risky behavior," she risks everything, even her very life.

By calling her out, Jesus frightens her nearly to death. But he is giving her an opportunity to move out of being *nobody* to

being *somebody*. She has remained anonymous to protect herself. Now Jesus strips her of her only protection. What is he doing? Setting her up for even more contempt? Additional punishment? As Vanessa often says around here, "Look at God! Watch what Jesus is doing!"

Jesus, of course, knew who had touched him, but he wanted her to use her own voice. Rather than showing us his power, *he is interested in her exercise of her own power, which she has already exercised in secret, surreptitiously reaching out.*

Now he wants her to seal the deal by identifying herself in the midst of a crowd that would happily and easily condemn her. Condemnation was easy for them. What Jesus wanted to show us — as he keeps showing us — is how to *welcome* the marginalized, how to invite and empower the marginalized to speak in their own voices, how to deepen our faith which is the basis for deep healing.

She trembles. She speaks. And gently, lovingly, he welcomes her and hears her voice. He, in fact, had already welcomed her touch — a touch that could have marginalized him as well, because when one who is unclean touches another, the other becomes unclean and must be marginalized for a time of purification. This would normally be seen as an inconvenience at least and a criminal matter at worst.

But he welcomes her and then goes on to affirm everything she has done. He could have said, "Well, I'm glad you recognized my power and yes, I healed you all right." But he says, "*Your* faith has made you well." You hold the responsibility for your own healing. You recognized the opportunity for your healing, and you are the one who made a decision and then acted on the promise. You reached out to take your healing. Now it is yours. Go in peace. You are not only well, you are restored to community. You are not only "clean," you are well — you have received the fullness of life. You will live in peace—shalom! The full life is now yours, sister.

The law says she should have gone straight to the priest, purchased two doves or, poor as she was, two pigeons, for a sin offering and a burnt offering. She spent all she had on doctors and got worse and now the purity code would require that she spend more on a ritual that would allow her to re-enter the community.

Jesus usurped the priest. Uh-oh, more trouble. He welcomed her, he called her *my daughter* as a way to say that she was a full member of the community and even a beloved member of the community, and then he told her to "go in peace." If she was stealing a miracle, maybe Jesus was stealing the blessing from the *only one authorized by the system* to dispense blessings and reconciliation. Only the priest as gatekeeper of the hierarchy and purity of the community was supposed to perform the purification ritual. Jesus says, *your faith* has made you well, and pure and whole.

She came with three strikes against her. She left with three blessings for her. She came as one who was a woman, sick and poor. She left, still a woman, still poor, but as a poor woman who was thrice blessed: She was healthy, and with the bleeding stopped she would get better and better as her anemia and weakness healed. She was walking in dignity — a poor Jewish woman walking with her head up, her shoulders back, walking in the fullness of human dignity. And she was restored to her own community — no longer condemned to the margins because she was "unclean," she was free to participate fully in the social and religious life of her community. This sister was empowered because she reached out for it and because Jesus blessed her faith and her initiative. Her own faith and the claim she made on the loving, healing power of Jesus gave her back her life in an even greater portion. She was healed — not just cured of her illness — healed! Restored. Resurrected from the death of oppression and marginalization. She was a heap of dry bones, and now she *lives!*

So this story, which is really two stories, is about Resurrection from start to finish. Jesus moves from the Resurrection of the

But Jesus says to Jairus and the child's mother, "*Don't be afraid. Have faith.*" Do you see, you need to learn from that bleeding woman who made us so late that your daughter died before we could get here. *You* need to be like *her*, you prominent, Jewish, male authority figure! You need to become like the poverty stricken, disgustingly unclean, excluded, segregated *woman* of no standing. There is the faith you should have. Blessed are the poor and blessed are the poor in spirit — the Beloved Community belongs to *them*.

No, said Jesus, she's just sleeping. He made it clear that not just anybody could come into that room. There wasn't room by the sickbed for the skeptics. The parents were capable of hoping against hope — of holding onto the faith that she could live again because of their great parental love. Peter, James and John had seen enough amazing and unbelievable events to be able to hold to the faith that Jesus knew what he was doing here. So these faithful ones were the only ones allowed into the sickroom. Healing, you know, requires a context of faith, hope and love. Unbelief only restricts and limits.

For Ralph to get better and breathe more easily; for Barbara to walk straighter; for

Clark to stay straight and clean; and Lord knows, for me to live thru eight rounds of cancer when I was supposed to be dead 23 years ago! All of these require being surrounded and saturated with a community of faith, hope, love and prayer. So all the skepticism and laughter were shut out, and I think he slammed the door. He took her by the hand. "*Talitha koum. Little girl, I tell you to get up.*" And she did. And she began to walk around. "Give her something to eat," he said.

The little girl was 12 years old. The woman had been bleeding for 12

years. Twelve — like the 12 tribes of Israel — the full community which was in dire need of a healing and a Resurrection. Ched Myers points out that right here Jesus is telling the whole community of the need to be re-born: to reject the old order with its rigid hierarchies, purity code and particular exclusions. The time is upon us to move into the New Social Order with equal status for all — the New Order that will liberate the outcast and can even "snatch the 'noble' from death." (Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, p. 203)

No, said Jesus, she's not dead. Give her something to eat. This time they didn't laugh. Dead folk don't eat. Eating food is for the living. That's what we do together. We eat together, just like we do around the Eucharist table. Just like we'll do after we sing the last song and pray the last prayer. It restores us to



Jairus' Daughter by Meinrad Craighead

Woman with the Issue on to the Resurrection of Jairus' daughter.

"She's dead," said the messengers of doom. "Don't trouble the Teacher any longer." But Jesus said, "Don't be afraid. She's not dead, she's just asleep." "Oh *Jee-zus!* There he goes again! Right, teacher. Right." I mean, it's like this: We held a mirror to her nose and there's no breath, see. She might be sleeping, but it's the sleep of death. I mean, we don't live in a culture that doesn't know death when we see it. In fact, we see it all the time. Our children die on a regular basis. We don't have enough food for an adequate diet. We don't have access to health care. We drink water that might or might not be contaminated. We do the best we can for our families and our children. But still, most of them die before they reach adulthood. Jesus, she's dead. And we know what we're talking about.

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health, restores us to our family — to our community. So the little girl was restored, not only to herself and her own life. She was restored to her community, her family, by the sharing of food. Like Jesus said to the discipleship community when they were faced with 10 - 15,000 hungry folks in the wilderness, “You yourselves give them something to eat.”

I will show you how to reach out with hope, how to act in faith. But *you must participate in the miracle!* There is always a part for us to play. There is something for all of us to do — each and every one of us. You, over there, give her something to eat! Hey, you in the back row! Give her something to eat.

Naw Jesus, she’s dead, and anyway, she was just a girl.

Give her something to eat! Tony, give her something to eat. James, come out of the crowd and tell us how you were healed. Jenny, give them something to eat. Calvin, did you touch the hem of his garment? What needs healing? Barbara, what is your story of healing?

And if you don’t believe in life coming from death, please get on out of this room while Jesus does his thing. Make room for Resurrection. Don’t crowd us with your skepticism and your conviction that it can’t be done!

Ah! But if you’ve *seen* the dry bones come together and receive the spirit and breathe and stand up! If you’ve seen the dead children get up! Then stick around. And hey, give them something to eat! Amen. ✠

This sermon was preached at the Open Door Community worship on July 12, 2009. Murphy Davis is an Activist Pastor and writer with the Open Door Community in Baltimore. (murphydavis@bellsouth.net)

Save Us! *continued from page 3*

things like exchanging language lessons and getting in place family emergency plans and powers of attorney related to the care of children — in the event that one of the undocumented mothers gets deported.

Fear has been running very high ever since Trump’s executive order about stepped-up actions against immigrants. And so these brave women, instead of lying low and shuddering in terror about the possibilities, decided that they wanted to meet with members of our county law enforcement to introduce themselves, tell their stories and ask questions. To our great surprise, the sheriff and half a dozen of his deputies, the chief of police, and the head of the university’s campus security showed up, along with several local pastors who were also invited.

The *mujeres* prepared an amazing feast of tamales, tacos, empanadas and flan. They were clearly nervous and scared at first. But they found their voices, asking questions and sharing their concerns and fears. Rosita, in tears, spoke about her beloved nephew who was kidnapped and murdered in Mexico. With her two-year-old son, Rafael, sitting in her lap, she voiced her terror about the possibility of being sent back to violence and poverty and being separated from her children.

The officials listened and responded in ways that made the women feel heard and safe. None of us can know what more is going to come down under the new administration, but the word we got on Thursday was that immigrants are welcome in our county and local law enforcement has no plans to cooperate in deportations. The sheriff pointed out that federal money isn’t exactly pouring into our rural pocket of North Carolina, and the U.S. government has little leverage here. We can’t know what the future will bring, but the fact that this meeting happened, and the open and gracious spirit that prevailed throughout it, felt downright miraculous to me.

So, friends, in a time of despair, when we weep along

Conversations on Holy Ground *continued from page 1*

a Jew, want me, a lowly Samaritan woman, to give you some water. Is that how this works?” In his response, it is difficult to tell if Black Jesus is getting testy himself, or if he is testing her, if he is inviting her into a deeper place in her life. He replies that if she knew who he was, she would be seeking the living water that he has to offer. Yet the feisty woman is not ready to yield. “Man, you don’t even have a bucket. How can you get that living water?” Jesus replies that he doesn’t need a bucket, because the living water that he offers will just gush up out of the ground like a flowing fountain. And now the woman’s interest is piqued. “Give me some of this stuff, so I won’t have to come back here to draw water.” No more serving of men!

Black Jesus then stings her. “Go get your husband and come back.” And again the woman refuses to yield or be defined by patriarchy. “I don’t have a husband; I don’t need to belong to a man to be somebody.” The Samaritan woman will not allow Jesus to define her as needing a man to receive this living water. Black Jesus has an opportunity now to dismiss her because she has misunderstood him so much. Yet he stays with her, and he invites her into her own life. He points out the patterns of her life. This strong sister doesn’t belong to any particular man, but her life reveals a pattern of needing to belong to men in general. She is strong, she is passionate, but she cannot break away from the world’s definition of her and of other women: they must belong to men in order to be somebody.

And the woman really begins to hear the invitation that Black Jesus is offering her. When Jesus reveals to her that she has had five husbands and is now living with another man, it is not news to Jesus, but it is news to this Samaritan woman. Jesus reveals her life to her, and she hears her life in a new

way. She is known in her captivity and in her pain and in her oppression, and she is not destroyed. This sister is stunned as she receives this revelation from the enemy.

Rather than being rejected as just another captive, she is welcomed as a sister into the new life. And she becomes a great witness for the Black Jew named Jesus. She goes back to her Samaritan town and tells everybody about him. She is the first evangelist in John’s Gospel.

It is no accident that this conversation takes place on holy ground. Once these two enemies — male and female, Jew and Samaritan — engage one another in a conversation about their fundamental identities, there are great dangers and great possibilities. The dangers are seen a few verses later when the male disciples return from town and are incredulous that Jesus is even speaking to a woman, especially a Samaritan woman. The possibilities are seen as this woman finds her true definition, not in the categories of the world, but in relation to the One who has come to set her free from those categories.

As I think about this conversation on holy ground, I am reminded of the many African Americans and other people of color who have engaged me in such conversations, willing to stay with me and seeking to help me find my true definition as a child of God. Just as this Samaritan woman was blessed by Black Jesus, who stayed with her and engaged her, so I have been blessed by Black Jesus in those who risked an engagement with me. It took me a long while to recognize that they risked a lot in staying with me and in engaging me, helping me to discern that I am more than a white male, that I am a child of God. It also took me a while to discern that my vocation after such an engagement was not to soak up the energy and life of those classified as Black, but rather to go back into my town, as did the Samaritan woman, to go back to my people. Like this Samaritan woman, I am asked to go back to those classified as white to testify about our captivity to race and about the liberating power of Black Jesus. That returns us to the seven steps for wrestling with the demonic power of race in our lives, and we will review those next time. ✠

Nibs Stroupe is a longtime friend of the Open Door; retired pastor and author of the recently published Deeper Waters: Sermons for a New Vision. He writes a weekly blog at www.nibsnotes.blogspot.com. (nibs.stroupe@gmail.com)

Did the Woman Say

Did the woman say
When she held him for the first time
In the dark dank of a stable
After the pain and the bleeding and the crying
This is my body, this is my blood.

Did the woman say
When she held him for the last time
In the dark rain on a hilltop
After the pain and the bleeding and the dying
This is my body, this is my blood.

Well that she said it to him then,
For dry old men,
Brocaded robes belying barrenness,
Ordain that she not say it for him now.

— Frances Croake Frank



with Jesus over all the suffering around us and across the globe, I say, “Create miracles.” Speak truth to power, like the bold *mujeres* of Madison County, and be vessels of transformation. We are, after all, people who believe in miracles.

We know that the Holy Week showdown is coming as Jesus and his disciples, and Pilate and his cronies, converge on Jerusalem. This week we move through a swirl of emotions — from tonight’s adoring parade through Thursday’s betrayal and Friday’s agony of the cross. But the parade and the cross are not as contradictory as they might seem at first glance. By choosing to enter Jerusalem carried by a donkey, Jesus was embracing the humility, submission and nonviolence that would carry him to the cross.

I confess that, if I had been in that beseeching crowd, I likely would have been with the many who hoped to catch a glimpse of a strong leader with the might to smash all oppressive power, to crush all who wield it and to bring peace on earth by force. I sometimes hope for that now. Seeing images of children burning and writhing in pain from a chemical attack can do that. I want to scream, “Save us!” at the top of my lungs and in the depths of my heart, and I want that salvation to come on my terms.

But God has a distinctly different strategy. And we are invited to be disciples and witnesses to that good news. The challenge for us, I believe, is to live neither in denial of the power of death, nor by giving it the last word. Because we know the ending of the story. Resurrection follows crucifixion. The miraculous happens. And it hasn’t stopped yet.

Amen. ✠

Joyce Hollyday is an author and founding co-pastor of Circle of Mercy church in Asheville, NC, where she is active with the immigrant community and the Sanctuary movement. She has been a friend of the Open Door for four decades. Her blog can be found at www.joycehollyday.com.

Remembering Gene Sharp

Nonviolent Visionary for JustPeace

By Weldon D. Nisly

One of the world's greatest visionaries of nonviolence, Gene Sharp, died on January 28, a week after his 90th birthday. Sharp devoted his life to sharpening the world's vision for the power and practice of nonviolence. For over a half-century he defined the discipline of nonviolent theory and inspired nonviolent practitioners around the world.

Gene Sharp, ¡Presente!

My one encounter with Gene Sharp taught me a formative lesson. When I was a Mennonite seminary peace studies student in 1976, we invited Sharp to give a lecture on nonviolent peacemaking. We were being formed in nonviolent love as The Way of Jesus. We were seeking to embody the politics and practice of nonviolent resistance in the world.

I had the honor of meeting Gene Sharp at the airport and hosting him for our peace lecture. On the way back to the seminary, I innocently asked him to teach us nonviolent alternatives *to* national defense. With a knowing smile, Sharp corrected me, "We seek nonviolent alternatives *for* national defense." Even as a pacifist Mennonite seminary student, I was blinded by the myth that the only national defense is military defense. The lie of war is that our security depends on a dominant military devoted to killing enemies.

Sharp taught nonviolent strategies for civilian-based defense as being more effective than militarized violence. I have mused that Gene Sharp's life work was to help me (us!) understand that one little word change makes all the difference in the world. It is the difference between violent militarized power and nonviolent people power.

Jesus gives us eyes of the heart to see and love our enemy until enemies become neighbors. It is seeing what the powers of violence strive mightily to keep us from seeing. Sharp helps us see that nonviolence is key to seeing with eyes of the heart.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of God." Jesus (Matthew 5:43-45).

Gene Sharp, Pioneer of People Power

To his dying day, Sharp was passionately committed to envisioning nonviolent strategies that promoted people power. The most formative theorist-practitioner of nonviolence since Gandhi, Sharp was nominated four times for the Nobel Peace Prize. He received numerous awards for developing nonviolent strategies and documenting nonviolent practices around the world. His works have been translated into over 50 languages. In 1983, Sharp founded the Albert Einstein Institute for "advancing freedom through nonviolent action" in Boston (<https://www.aeinstein.org/>).

Violence is pervasively held to be the ultimate or only alternative available. Sharp confronted that fallacy in his crowning work, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* (2005). In his preface, "Learning from a Century of Nonviolent Struggle," Sharp writes, "As we enter the twenty-first century, it is beginning to be more widely understood that there is in fact an alternative . . . not simply a moral injunction against the use of violence. This alternative is a means of struggle to apply power in acute conflicts. It is called nonviolent struggle."

Sharp presents 24 case studies of nonviolence from around the world. Otpor, the Serbian nonviolent resistance

against the 13-year reign of Slobodan Milosevic, illustrates Sharp's nonviolent strategy. Nonviolent resistance ended Milosevic's reign of terror where militarized violence failed.

Paying tribute to Sharp, Otpor resistance leader Srdja Popovic wrote that Sharp "inspired thousands of people around the globe to better learn how to fight for freedom, human rights and democracy. . . . [His] great loss will serve as a boost and inspiration to carry on the torch of nonviolent activism with even stronger commitment" (*Waging Nonviolence*, "Remembering Gene Sharp," (2/2/18).

A related influential work is *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation* (1993). Translated into 30 languages, its inspiration and impact are incalculable for confronting cruel leaders and their militarized violence.

Sharp's earliest defining work was *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1973). This three-volume set: *Power and Struggle*, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*, and *The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action*, is the bible of nonviolence.

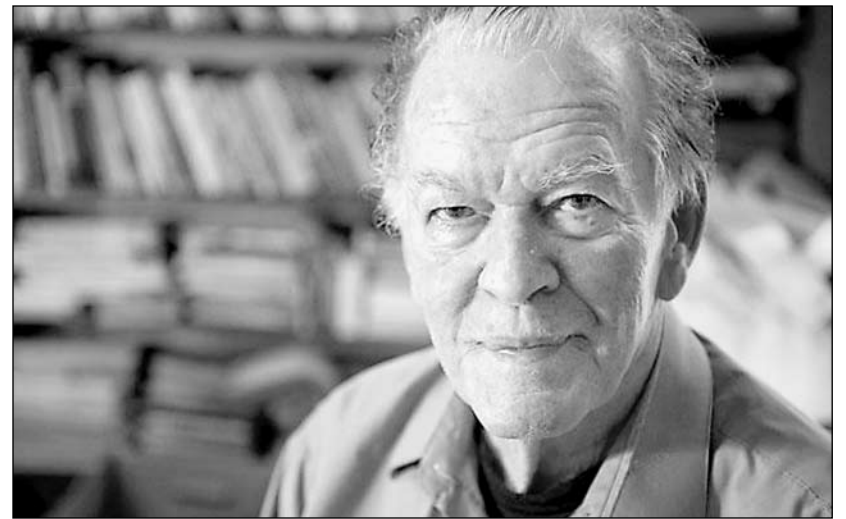
One of Sharp's most concise formulations is "198 Methods of Nonviolent Action." Nonviolent practitioners "have an entire arsenal of 'nonviolent weapons' at their disposal" (<http://www.aeinstein.org/nonviolentaction/198-methods-of-nonviolent-action/>).

Gene Sharp, May we keep your legacy alive.

Every U.S. citizen is confronted with a question. If the United States devoted all the human, intellectual, material and monetary resources for nonviolent peacemaking that we devote to our warring madness, does anyone honestly believe it wouldn't make a difference? Who among us is hard-headed and cold-hearted enough to believe that it wouldn't build a more nonviolent world of JustPeace?

From 9/11 to 2018, the U.S. cost of waging permanent war is \$5.6 trillion! Over 370,000 humans have been killed and 10 million have become war refugees (<http://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/>). No dollar amount can be put on the human cost of the terror, trauma, injury and death from war.

Yet the current president will spend even more for war



Mary Knox Merrill/Christian Science Monitor

to benefit the wealthy while making sharp cuts to efforts that benefit God's vulnerable people and creation. The proposed FY2019 budget for war is well over \$700 billion, more than the next eight countries combined!

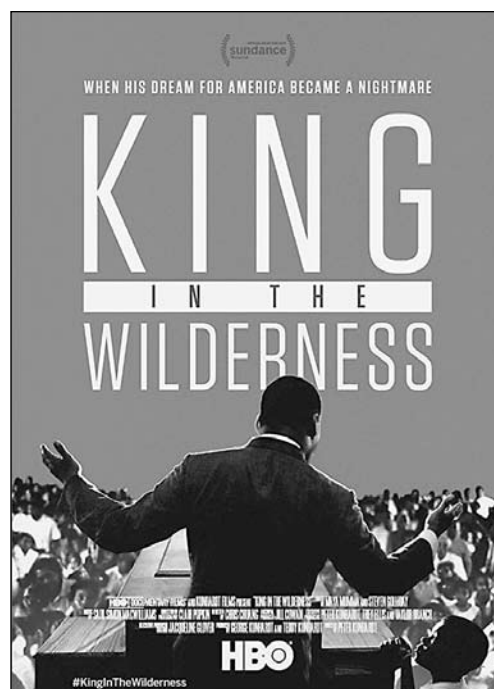
What happens to the soul of a country and church that prioritizes violence-war-death over nonviolence-peace-life? A half-century ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. named America's warring madness as spiritual death. He was killed for this prophetic proclamation. Two millennia ago, Jesus proclaimed, "What you do or don't do to the *least of these* you do or don't do to me." (Matt 25:31-46) He was killed for his prophetic proclamation.

We choose daily: God or empire. Christ or Caesar. Black Jesus or White Jesus. It makes all the difference in the world. It is a choice for nonviolence or violence, JustPeace or just war.

Gene Sharp, Rest in Peace

"Today, if understood accurately and applied intelligently, wisely, and courageously, this alternative type of struggle offers great hope for a better future for our world." Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* ✦

After 40 years of Mennonite Church ministry that included community, pastoral and peace ministries, Weldon Nisly currently devotes himself in "retirement" to Contemplative JustPeace building and work with Christian Peacemaker Teams. He is a Benedictine Oblate. His life is devoted to the abolition of war.



On HBO in April:

KING IN THE WILDERNESS

Drawing on stories from the people around him, this film follows Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the last years of his life, from the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 to his assassination in 1968. The documentary provides a clear window into King's character, showing him to be a man with an unshakeable commitment to nonviolence in the face of an increasingly unstable country. With the U.S. in one of the most divided periods in 50 years, King's words underscore why nonviolence is still vital today. Directed by Peter Kunhardt and produced by George and Teddy Kunhardt.

Grace and Peaces of Mail

Dear Ed,

I trust you and Murphy are in good spirits and feeling good today. I hope you have adapted to Baltimore. There is plenty of work to do in that town and state.

People are getting their brooms, mops and buckets of suds ready to clean up this mess Trump has caused in America. His days are numbered, and he is trying to wreck and destroy everything he can lay his hands on before he departs the White House. You never imagined such a beast would become president.

The Evangelical movement in America has been dealt a death blow by the preachers that supported the vile man in the White House. The church that supported Hitler was the Evangelical church. These Evangelicals have damaged the church, and we will see people leaving those churches except in the South. Southern Baptist churches invited Roy Moore to speak at church services all over Alabama. I am sure you read about the Senate race in Alabama with Roy Moore running on a racist and sexist platform. He wanted to take America back to the Dark Ages. He was licked, and he didn't like it.

Republicans could have rented a mule to do better than Trump. Trump is their baby, and they must deal with him. This is the year we will see Republicans leave Washington in droves. The sound of their departure will sound like a herd of horses running out of town. When the working men and women feel the effects of what Trump has already done, they are going to vote their senators and congress members out of office.

I have never read such ignorance by people as I read on Facebook. No wonder Trump got the votes he got. People are not aware what being poor is, and they have no sympathy for the poor. I wish people knew Jesus of Scripture. The man was a poor peasant that had no place to lay his head. He didn't even own a mule. People say they want to be like Jesus. They should read who and what Jesus was in the New Testament. He was rebuked and reviled. Isaiah's description of the coming king is not anybody church members want to be. They surely don't want to go the way of the cross. Living the life of Jesus leads to the cross.

The crazy tyrant in Arizona who was sheriff is now running for the U.S. Senate so he can help Trump. He is just another Roy Moore. I wish Barry Goldwater was alive today to see what Republicans have done to his party.

Historic Baptist principle has been separation of church and state, and Southern Baptists were the first leaders in the organization that promoted this issue. The fundamentalists have taken over Southern Baptists, and these weird preachers say that separation of church and state was hatched in hell. Southern Baptists are losing on every front today: offerings, membership, missionaries, property and common sense. Young people are not joining such a denomination.

You know the history of the Anabaptists in Europe, and they were dissenters. They would not serve in the armed forces, would not pledge allegiance to any flag or nation, and they stayed out of politics. Those principles were taught in the first Baptist churches in the colonies and early America. Ministers today do not know their roots. They don't even know who their fellow believers are or their history in other denominations.

Southern Baptist seminaries have become summer camps with tests. The study of theology has never been a mainstay in Baptist seminaries, and they don't know what theologians taught over the years. Young Southern Baptist ministers that wanted a good theological education went to Duke, Emory, Vanderbilt, Union, Yale and Princeton. When they went back to the South, the denomination held them suspect. Southern Baptists built a fence around themselves, and nothing leaves or enters their camp.

Take care and stay well. Be careful with bicycles. God bless you ever.

Your sincere friend,
Wendell Wentz
Rockwall, Texas

Dear Murphy and Ed,

The state's largesse in Christmas cards numbered three each this season. Glad you guys were able to relocate and keep on doing what the Lord has called you to do.

My big news remains small pickin's. After a 10-minute interview with a parole commission on the occasion of the 16th time up for parole consideration, I was told "Good luck" and got a handshake with the advice that I would hear something in 2-3 weeks. Notice of another parole denial was posted the following day on the state website. They were just going through the motions again. By the time we play this game again in 2020 I'll be 71 years into life and 43 years on Life. So it goes. I penned this little prayer a couple of days after that interview.

A Lifer's Prayer

Lord, I am here
and not there
where I long to be.
And you are everywhere.
Which means you are
here with me.
And if you are with me
then I have nothing to fear.
Amen

I am otherwise well. Still providing gospel/blues/rock music for the Catholic community here, which has grown exponentially in the past few years. A friend once warned me that "De Lawd has much planned for you!" And how.

Christ's peace,
a prisoner



Dear Ed,

I send you many greetings from the Czech Republic. I hope very much you and Murphy are doing well. I have been thinking often about you in the last month. You had so many health issues. I hope you have recovered well after your arm fracture and Murphy is doing better after the cancer surgery.

A little update from our life here: me and my longtime partner Kristyna married in August. We had a nice wedding on a small farm near the town where we live. Our 5-year-old daughter Mariana was with us. A lot of people came along and stayed overnight. We had live music with dancing and we met many old friends we hadn't seen for years.

I am still working in a small town in Germany called Zittau as a nephrologist (kidney specialist). I like my work, it gives some sense to my life and there is always an opportunity to improve your skills, knowledge and soul. My patients are old, some of them tell incredible stories from World War II and postwar times in East Germany. Unfortunately these people, who experienced war in their early lives, die slowly out. The new generations are not afraid of war anymore, because they never lived through it.

I wish you, Murphy and the whole community well and look forward to hear from you soon.

With love,
Zdenek Rossmann
Czech Republic

Dear Ed and Murphy,

It was at the MLK march that I met Mary Eastland. I hadn't seen her or you since Lewis' service at First Iconium. We spent a while catching up on things and then I read the message regarding Murphy and the cancer. I wanted to let you know how much you all have meant to me since the late '70s when Lewis took me over to Clifton. Your efforts on behalf of the marginalized, the homeless and those in prison are the light that helps us find our way in the darkness.

Thank you for the time you took out to visit me in the hospital about 25 years ago. I am healing from my latest injury inflicted by the stray dog I adopted. I'm pretty well healed.

Wishing you great peace, health and love.

All in Justice,
Mary Howard
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Ed & Murphy,

Last night I attended the regular weekly vigil down at the border in Douglas, Arizona. Mark Adams, the Presbyterian leader of Frontera de Cristo for the last 19 years, asked me if I knew you two. He said he had spent time in Atlanta volunteering with you around the mid- to late 1990s while he was in seminary. I told him that I have known you since 1979 and that we were all friends of Mitch Snyder.

The weekly vigil consists of bringing a couple of hundred crosses bearing the name and date that the remains of a migrant were found in the desert of Cochise County since 2002. Many are marked "unidentified."

Starting several blocks away from the border wall, we begin laying the crosses down along the curbing and when each name is called out, we all reply "Presente."

I hope your Christmas is blessed and filled with joy. My memories of you are filled with much love and respect as we have journeyed together trying to "find room in the inn" for our friends on the streets.

Mark Adams and his collaborators at Frontera de Cristo have had the same level of commitment for our migrant brothers and sisters the last couple of decades.

Yours in Christ and Francis,
David Buer, ofm
Tucson, Arizona

Thank you for all that you do in Atlanta and now in Baltimore. And especially your monthly news meditation paper, *Hospitality*. I visited with you in Atlanta, and I may get to Baltimore. The Presbyterian General Assembly is in Baltimore in 2020.

Rev. Richard Gibson
Lynnwood, Washington

Dear Murphy, Eduard, David,

I don't have eloquent words to express it and I truly desire that you would all know how deeply your witness for all that is moral, true, righteous and just has influenced my life and my faltering attempts to walk alongside what you educated me to understand: the Black Jesus and the vulnerable. I thank the Beloved Compassionate One beyond measure for you, and I continually hold you in prayer. All of your health in body and spirit is vital to all of us who learn from you. In the words of Howard Thurman "In this season of the heart, may you offer and find strength — affirm hope — remember grace — have your souls restored."

In gratitude,
Sandra John
Chico, California

Abolish the Death Penalty!

Our dear brother Dennis Davis and all the good folks who make up South Dakotans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty/South Dakotans Opposed to the Death Penalty have been hard at work. In October the group held a conference in Sioux Falls to highlight the issue of seriously mentally ill convicted murderers on death row across the U.S.

SDADP was successful in finding sponsors in the SD legislature to introduce a bill in the 2018 session that would exempt seriously mentally ill individuals from execution. South Dakota is one of seven states that will take up the issue.

To get educated on the issue, visit the Death Penalty Information Center at deathpenaltyinfo.org. Also, contact Dennis and visit the SDADP web site at sdadp.org. Please consider what you can do to help: Invite Dennis to present this issue to church and community groups (he's a totally sparky speaker). Write letters to the editor. As always, contacting legislators is effective in our small population state.

Pope Francis

The death penalty is inadmissible

This spring Pope Francis met with a delegation from the International Commission against the Death Penalty. Highlights from his message to that group include:

“The death penalty is inadmissible, no matter how serious the crime committed.”

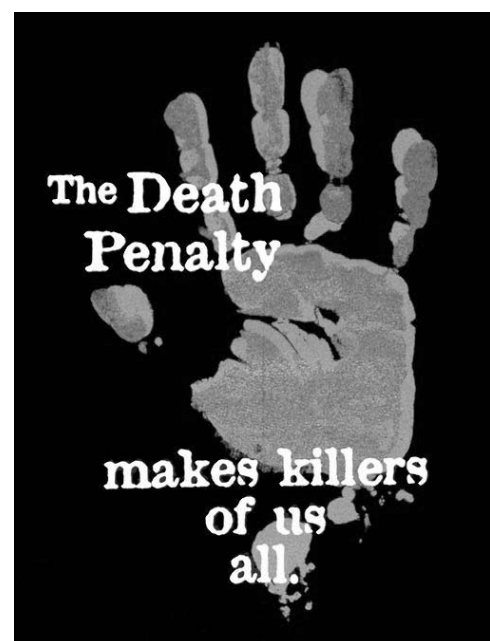
“For the rule of law, the death penalty represents a failure, as it obliges the state to kill in the name of justice.”

“With the application of the death penalty, the convict is denied . . . an encounter with God's merciful and healing justice.”

“There is discussion in some quarters about the method of killing as if it were possible to find ways of ‘getting it right.’ . . . But there is no humane way of killing another person.”

Francis' message concludes with, “Dear friends, I encourage you to continue with your work, as the world needs witnesses of God's mercy and tenderness, and may the Lord Jesus grant the gift of wisdom, so that the action taken against this cruel punishment may be successful and fruitful.”

Reprinted from *The Yankton Catholic Worker*



Georgia inmate Carlson Gary is scheduled to die by needle on March 15. Please pray and ACT.

poetry corner



Julie Lonneman

The Times They Are A-Changin'

Come gather 'round people wherever you roam
And admit that our country don't feel like our home
And that silence speaks louder than those who condone
If a tweet to you is worth favin'
Then lift up your voices and put down your phones
For the times they are a-changin'

Come women and men who hashtag MeToo
And believe me when I say that we believe you
For weak is the man who calls truth "fake news"
Time's up, our silence we're breaking
And even though Mel Gibson was in "Daddy's Home 2"
Well, the times they are a-changin'

Come athletes with platforms throughout the land
Who by taking a knee are taking a stand
And before you shout out that they should be banned
Listen to what they are saying
Perhaps they'd stand up if you reached out your hand
Well, the times they are a-changin'

Come journalists, writers who report the facts
And brandish your pen to fend off his attacks
Look past what he says and look at how he acts
The fire and fury is raging
For his words can hurt, but your words can fight back
New York Times, they aren't a-failin'

Come leaders who bully like internet trolls
We'll curse you with four-letter words "love" and "hope"
For we will go high even when you go low
The order is rearranging
For you have the power, but we have the vote
The times they are a-changin'

Jimmy Fallon hosts "The Tonight Show," and performed this piece on 2/4/2018.

Needs:

- Gloves, especially Extra Large
- Socks (Thank you Charlie King for the gloves and winter socks!)
- Scarves for women. We have had a number of requests.
- Belts
- Granola bars
- 2% milk: gallon size for coffee, and pint size for children
- Stamps to write prisoners
- Prisoner support and prisoner family support
- The Hardwick Prison Trip: hosts, drivers and vans in Atlanta area.



Beginning after Easter we plan to take bag meals to our sites. We will be asking for sandwiches on whole wheat bread, made with cheese and non-processed turkey/chicken/ham. Many thanks and much love. We spend your financial support well. We eat only two granola bars and four bananas from the Open Door Community larder per week.

Open Door Community | PO Box 10980 | Baltimore, Maryland 21234 | 404.304.1483 or 404.290.2047