

MANNA *in the wilderness*

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The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

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“DEATH HAS NO DOMINION!”

Daniel Berrigan, the Jesuit priest and acclaimed poet who for decades famously challenged U.S. Catholics to reject war and nuclear weapons, died on April 30 at the Murray-Weigel Jesuit Community in the Bronx, New York. He was 94. He was a Jesuit for 76 years and a priest for 63 years.

During his first teaching assignment, at St. Peter's Prep in Jersey City, N.J., in the late 1940s, Berrigan brought students across the Hudson to introduce them to the Catholic Worker. They often attended the “clarification of thought” meetings on Friday evenings, when speakers addressed topics of importance to the young Catholic movement. There he met Dorothy Day.

“Dorothy Day taught me more than all the theologians,” Berrigan told *The Nation* in 2008. “She awakened me to connections I had not thought of or been instructed in—the equation of human misery and poverty with warmaking. She had a basic hope that God created the world with enough for everyone, but there was not enough for everyone and warmaking.”

- excerpted from *America, The National Catholic Review*

On Friday, May 6, 2016, hundreds gathered at the Church of St. Francis Xavier in New York City for the funeral mass of Fr. Daniel Berrigan. What follows is the Gospel reading and homily reflection shared at this service.

The Gospel of John 11:32-43

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” he said.

“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always

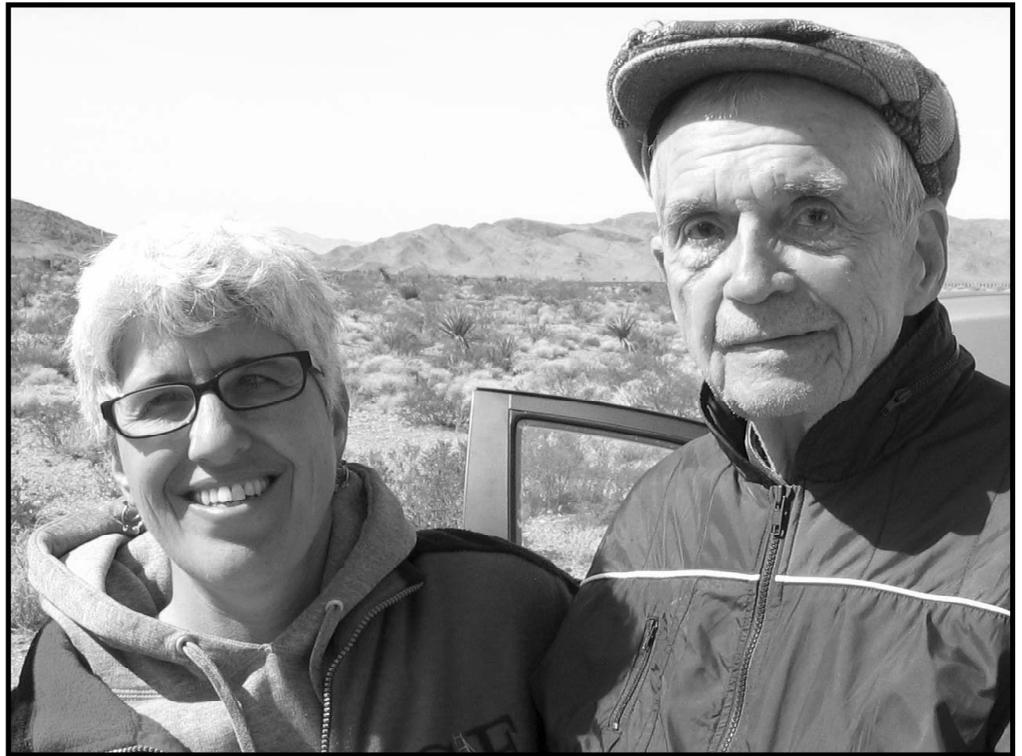
hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave

“You make your move, Nazarene, and you’ll take Lazarus’ place ... finding yourself in, behind the two-ton stone. And where will your apostles and your signs and works end up? Your important career dissolved in ignominy?”

We’re presented with a kairos moment of faith: a slat of light breaks the obscure camouflage, beaming into an otherwise



Julia Occhiogrosso and Dan Berrigan, S.J. at the Pacific Life Community gathering at the Nevada Test Site on March 3, 2007. PHOTO BY MARIO INTINO

clothes and let him go.”

Homily by Steve Kelly, S.J.

On behalf of family, friends, Jesuits from all over, we want to express our gratitude to Margaret Monahan, Fr. Tom Smith, and the aides, nursing and administration and staff of Murray-Weigel for the personal care given our brother, our friend, our uncle Daniel these years ...

Also, we may let members of the FBI assigned here today, validate that it is Daniel Berrigan’s funeral Mass of the Resurrection so they can complete and perhaps close their files ...

“Death has no Dominion!” quoting Daniel’s friend William Stringfellow.

John’s gospel, proclaimed today, retrospectively reveals the condition of humanity and anatomy of freedom to love. Spoiler alert: we are gifted with a ninety-five year running example. But let’s reflect. Seemingly, Jesus arrives late or too late. Humanity, doomed like Lazarus, is sealed under two tons of stone. Is this then an inspired picture of how God sees us? Even with our freedom? Humanity sealed up in death? Death taunting Jesus till Jesus has a visceral reaction? The hand of death moves the chesspiece towards check-mate,

dark hour ... is it really possible that God knows what it’s like to have death imminent, bearing down? Deluding? Threatening annihilation? A smeared reputation, dissolving the currency earned, the credibility of good signs ... all subject to the guile and calumny of non-truth masquerading as threat? The complexity of the lie goes: “Once you are dead, once afraid, how will God guide you?”

The immediacy of death threatens to cleave the relationship between Jesus and the one who sent him. How can one obey the guidance, dependence on the one who sent him, if afraid?

“Greater love has no one than to lay down one’s life for a friend.”

So God does know, as we see in John’s account of Jesus, what it’s like to encounter death’s whiplash scenario ... always, everywhere, each time, each encounter, risks are included. Okay, so God knows what it’s like, and now we know that God knows we know. So what’s God going to do? In John’s Gospel, in which we’re asked for faith— not its opposite— fear, will Jesus practice what he preaches? Will he put confidence in the father’s guidance? Will (see top of back page)

(continued from front page)

his love risk facing death as the father unmasks death? Lazarus was a friend. "Lazarus will live!" A pie in the sky? Jesus went the distance in this anguishing scene. To see him at work is to see life itself overcoming death, because he, as a human being, cooperated, obeyed the guidance of the one who sent him: He loved, he lays down his life.

"I will take your place, Lazarus? Come forth, I am not of the power that put you there."

Now there is a different moral power in town. God is going to crack death's veneer, a chink in the armor ... through Jesus' obedience the crumbling begins, and the hidden, insipid hold of death is broken.

Lazarus is on the brink of being brought back, he's got a way out from underneath the stone! What's needed? God is ready ... And just as Jesus' power over death reaches a peak in our story, there is one final quarter to be heard from, an assent is awaited. Jesus is asking for the nod from friends, our willingness to remove obstacles to faith, a hurdle to overtake: will the friends of Lazarus allow this? Will they roll away the stone? The first impediment holds up the scene: "You're gonna embarrass us all with a stench!?" Jesus insists, to put it mildly, "Believe, do not be ruled by fear, but faith."

I am going to break with funeral convention. I mentioned a ninety-five year running example illustrating the readings. Well that includes Daniel and the seventy-nine years of Philip. I want the witness joined as their lives were mutually enhancing.

Now the principalities dictate that it is strictly illegal, verboten for us to come back to life and very much on par with that and a capital crime, according to our Gospel, to unbind death's prisoners. Jesus asks others, conspiratorially, to do likewise. What of the faith of Daniel? Did he hear in his inner recesses to come forth? Did Philip his brother, another one who awakened to Christ's voice, help unbind him from the trappings, the ensnaring bonds, the lure of prestige, credibility? As I heard it expounded by Phil twenty-three years ago at the venue of that workshop of hell, Livermore Labs. He quoted quite aptly in application to our witness there with the powers casting the usual pall of retaliating backlash, the succinctness of the poet Julia Esquivel, "We are threatened with the resurrection" for acting on behalf of others. Daniel at Fordham in the beginning of the eighties, reached out with the experience of those embodying Plowshares, as in our first reading: "We want to test the resurrection in our bones. To see if we might live in hope ..." Daniel and Phil's lives asked in their respective ways: "Are we to remain in a catatonic stupor, asleep, drunk, unconscious or in flat-lined existence? In these United States of Amnesia? Will we arrive at perdition, dominion of death with our freedom never used, intact? What good is

it if paralyzed in fear? Liberated, but not loving."

In prophetic diagnosis, and in concert with many faiths, Daniel and Phil exposed the historical alliance of the religious leaders, those appointed pastors, colluding with structures of domination. Bomb-blessing has no place in Jesus' self-giving. The imperial power's of Pax Romana ran aground on the shoals of Christian steadfastness. But through the centuries what was an intimate circle of outcasts and martyrs dissembled and gained in ascendancy the power it was meant to resist. The power that had to be faced. Daniel and Phil untied, illegally those called forth from out of Power's captivity, power's confines. They risked the retaliation of those beholden to death's sway. They touched the idol of the state. Inspired, they, and other draft-board raiders retrieved the place and preeminence of the conscientious objector as imitating the love of Christ, averred by Vatican II's *Guadium et Spes* but kept a secret in local pastoral settings. In Gospel coloring, Phil and Daniel took the inductees' places. And I'll leave you with two things, the final one a poem of our beatnik poet, Jesuit friend, and this penultimate thought: As a traditional Catholic, I suppose we could speak of offering this Mass of the Resurrection for the repose of Daniel's soul, the forgiveness of his sins. Yet I leave it to your own assessment as to his holiness. I'm more interested in them as Doctors of the Church, as they retrieved for the people of God a move from preoccupation with orthodoxy

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS: June 2, July 7 & Sept. 8 for Christ the King Catholic Community Hot Dog Party at our morning Soup Line

**SOUP LINE CLOSED:
August 10 - 20, 2016**

Thanks to the Knights of Columbus for serving their monthly Pancake Breakfast for over 8 years. That's 64,000 pancakes!

PLEASE JOIN US:

Wednesday-Saturday, 6:00 a.m.: Morning prayer at Catholic Worker.

Wednesday-Saturday, 6:30 a.m.: Breakfast served to 150-200 poor & homeless people.

Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.: Hospitality Day, we invite 20 homeless men home for showers, to wash clothes and for a great lunch.

Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.: Vigil for Peace in front of Federal Courthouse, 333 Las Vegas Blvd. S.

Thursday, 10:30 a.m.: 50 lunches taken to the homeless.

Second Saturday of the month: Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast to the homeless.

Third Saturday of the month: Deliver food boxes to homes in need.

to orthopraxis. A great service to us, just sayin'.

These many beautiful days
cannot be lived again.
But they are compounded in my own
flesh and spirit.
And I take them in full measure
with me
toward whatever lies ahead.
- Dan Berrigan, S.J.

I BELIEVE

Composed by Nairobi Sailcat

• Sometimes in life, we never know what's going to happen. But if you look back on your past, think about the times you were stuck- didn't know what to do, didn't know how to get through.

But here we are, you did it! So next time you have doubts, just keep your head up.

"This thing we call life is just a school
I might be crazy, but I ain't no fool.
You know that old Reaper,
He don't care about your luck.
We're searching for the key,
but there is no lock."

I BELIEVE

• Faith, is taking that first step,
even when you can't see
the whole stairway.

"The question IS the answer
and it's hidden in plain sight.
Is your hunger for love
your strongest appetite?
Unhappiness is ignorance,
and fear is just a mistake.
Another chance given every time we wake.
The hardest things are plain to see.
But when it's all said and done,
UNITY is you and me.
Everything that is...
is ONE."

I BELIEVE

(from my head down to my toe)

• Sometimes you've just got to wait on it.
Give time, time.

I BELIEVE

• We've gotta
**Float more and steer less.
Love more and fear less.

I BELIEVE

• Recitative
* Martin Luther King Jr.
** John Halcyon Styn

Hear the entire song at:
<http://youtube/0Y8cduamQ5Q>

Nairobi is a regular volunteer at our morning soup line.