

the word made fresh

The Daniel Berrigan Collective Annual Journal

Issue 1, 2023

Uncle Dan by Madeline



Mission Statement

We propose an organization...

that will promote the person, thought, and legacy of activism of Daniel Berrigan, SJ.

that comes out of the tradition promoted by Berrigan in which contemplation, reflection, and study flow into and from community, activism, and resistance.

that will provide a space for dialogue between the writings of Daniel Berrigan and contemporary communities of resistance that share his concerns and expand them.

that will center the experiences and concerns of women, people of color, younger people, LGBTQ+ people, immigrants, the incarcerated, and those who have difficulty finding a voice in academic, religious, and social institutions.

that will be as accessible as possible and use a variety of media: writing, art, music, poetry, celebrations, social media.

**The Daniel Berrigan Collective for Contemplation,
Community and Resistance**



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“We were just sitting there talking...It was as casual as all that, I often think. It just came about. It just happened.” In these words Dorothy Day characterized the beginnings of the Catholic Worker. While making no pretensions to anywhere near equivalent significance, *The Daniel Berrigan Collective for Contemplation, Community, and Resistance* came about in much the same way—people sitting around talking. The talking was by ZOOM since the DBC was birthed during the era of COVID. We began by even more talking – ZOOM conversations with members of Dan’s family, fellow activists, young people who never knew Dan but were intrigued by his legacy. These conversations and reflections led to a name for our project: The Daniel Berrigan Collective for Community, Contemplation, and Resistance. More conversation led to our mission statement. Sister Donna Korba, IHM beautifully designed our logo, incorporating the fish medallion that Dan often wore. The idea of a “collective” was important to us. We dreamed of a group of people who wanted not just to study Dan’s impressive life and writings but who wanted to embody Dan’s values in the world. We’re still dreaming and still struggling to embody. In our first year we’ve established a social media presence with a webpage www.berrigancollective.org; a Facebook page with currently over 600 followers <https://www.facebook.com/Daniel-Berrigan-Collective-110084261312455/>; and a presence on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/p/CZj16HMLYEa>.

We’ve hosted a number of webinars, an Advent Political Vespers series, and a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the death of Philip Berrigan, Each webinar brought together people who were long-time collaborators with Dan and people who barely knew his name for a time of learning and rich sharing. And now on your screen, our latest effort: the first issue of *The Word Made Fresh: The Daniel Berrigan Collective Annual*. The Annual is not intended to be an academic journal but a vehicle for people to explore the significance of Daniel Berrigan and his concerns in a variety of ways. So we include essays, memoirs, art, poetry, drama, book and film reviews. Many thanks to all the contributors for generously sharing their work with us. And special thanks to Madeline Berrigan Sheehan-Gaumer, Dan’s great-niece, for her cover art of Dan as a boy, already looking wide-eyed and whimsically at the world. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Colleen Dulle who began the editorial process, Julia Cosacchi for her expert proof reading, and especially to Lucia Wylie-Eggert whose outstanding editorial skills have delivered this labor of love to you. We hope you find something here to ponder and enjoy. And please contact us and let us know what you like...and what you don’t berrigancollective@gmail.com. Consider how you’d like to be involved in promoting contemplation, community, and resistance in a world hungering for them all. We plan to keep sitting around talking and we’d love to have you in the conversation.

April 30, 2023

7th Anniversary of the Death of Daniel Berrigan, SJ



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A Transfusion of Hope

A conversation between Claire Hitchins, Grace Aheron and Daniel Cosacchi

The Daniel Berrigan Collective hosted its first event, a Zoom conversation between older and younger activists, on Dec. 2, 2021. The event, "A Transfusion of Hope," included a panel discussion between two friends and activists, Claire Hitchins and Grace Aheron, moderated by Berrigan Collective steering committee member Daniel Cosacchi. A brief excerpt of their conversation follows, which has been edited for length and clarity.

Dan Cosacchi: Could you each speak about how you've been inspired by Dan Berrigan?

Claire Hitchins: I think about the way in which I feel called to be a ritual leader and how leading ritual was so much a part of the ministry and activism of Dan Berrigan. I was born into the Catholic church and have inherited so much that in some ways is so nourishing and grounding to me, and in other ways is such a heavy weight of grief and confusion. But the ritual inheritance feels like a really deep well of gifts.

A lot of my time goes into connecting with other people. I think that's something Grace and I both really love, and these days a lot of my connecting is happening in what I call the fertile fringes of the Catholic church, and that work is happening for me right now in the context of Call to Action, which is a nonprofit that's been around since Vatican II. At this point, I feel really compelled to be part of weaving those connections and gathering people together who have been marginalized by the institutional church but still feel deeply connected to it, and in some way are inspired by it in their work for justice in the world.

When I think about what I know about Dan Berrigan, he was absolutely seeding change in the fringes of the Catholic church and bringing people together in those spaces. So I feel grateful for the space that Dan co-created with so many others. I feel like the space that Dan and many of his co-conspirators created is one of those essential pieces of why I can still be Catholic.

Grace Aheron: So, in college I was encountering for the first time queer and feminist Christian thinkers and black women and womanist theologians and communist Chilean sex workers who were writing about Jesus and liberation theology. These folks who were preaching from the margins of society and who spoke about God with this familiarity that made it so clear to me how people on the margins create an intimacy with God that can so often be obscured by privilege or by the church for being honest. And it really shaped how I understood who God was. God was allowed to become for me this unruly, sumptuous, bright, big, even sexy being. And it set me free to be a Christian in a new way.

It was right after this liberation theology awakening that I encountered Dan Berrigan and the "monk bros" like Merton and Stringfellow, through folks who had been mentored by them. And I know that I rolled my eyes or looked down my nose at this cadre of middle aged white dudes talking about the anti-war protests of yesteryear. And I thought to myself, what on earth could these people possibly teach me that I couldn't learn better from someone else? And yet, in spite of myself, I couldn't tear myself away from these communities, and I couldn't deny the fact that the way these guys spoke about sacrament and scripture made my heart set on fire and burn a little brighter. And as I fell into step with these radical disciples, these folks who drew lineages directly from Berrigan, Stringfellow, Merton, et cetera, there was no denying that they had something I wanted.



Claire Hitchins (left) and Grace Aheron (right) respond to a question at the Zoom webinar "A Transfusion of Hope" on Dec. 2, 2021.

I realized I needed to figure out who Dan Berrigan could be for me on my own terms, for me and who I am today. This work of locating myself in Dan's lineage is different and maybe a little harder than with the other folks I draw on in my spiritual practices or ritual mentors like Grace Lee Boggs or Ella Baker, women I have a lot more obviously in common with than Dan. In my looking deeper, I found that there were these special jewels of who he was that felt like they were made just for me to read today. I found someone who so obviously deeply loved queer people, someone who sat with dying AIDS victims, many of whom were people of color, and counted their theological insights as among the most critically important at the time. I saw that he didn't just want to stop the Vietnam war for stopping the war's sake. He wanted Asian people to no longer be treated as disposable, and he saw them as co-conspirators in that work. No one told me these things specifically about Dan, but it was such a special practice to get to find that on my own as I got to know him through his writing.

Dan Cosacchi: Grace, you and Claire are both very close friends. That is obviously a major similarity that this younger generation of activists shares with the older generation of activists, like Dan who got into the Catonsville action because he was best friends with his brother, Phil, who talked him into it. Maybe you could talk more about how friendship has sustained you

in activism, but then also, on the flip side, if there are some things about the older generation of activists that you're okay leaving behind.

Grace Aheron: When I think about the Dan gang, it's so obvious that it was an iron sharpens iron situation. And I see that so much in my friendship with Claire, politically too, starting in middle school when it was like, cool to bring your lunch in a paper bag. Claire was like, that just means you're throwing away a paper bag every day. So we began to be the lunchbox brigade. And then we were canvassing for President Obama every day after senior year of high school and feeling what it's like to be part of collective change for good.

When I look back on Dan's generation, it seems like they were going so hard all the time, for years and years. We went pretty hard here in Charlottesville for a few years, and now I find myself in a period of needing rest and wanting my life to be a little bit less intense. So many of the powerful voices in organizing these days are talking about the radical power of rest, and rest as an anticapitalist practice. The intensity and urgency of those folks in the past can feel hard to connect to.

The full video of "A Transfusion of Hope: A conversation between newer and older activists" can be found on the YouTube page of the Daniel Berrigan Collective.

Walking Where One's Word Leads

Daniel Berrigan and Discernment in Times of Crisis

By Daniel Cosacchi

The Daniel Berrigan Collective hosted a Zoom event on February 3 entitled "Walking where one's word leads: Daniel Berrigan and Discernment in Times of Crisis." Daniel Cosacchi and Edgar Rivera Colón presented reflections which are available to view on YouTube. What follows is the text of Daniel Cosacchi's presentation.

In her profile of Dan and Phil Berrigan in *Divine Disobedience*, Francine du Plessix Gray refers to Dan as a "typical Jesuit." And yet, what comes next in her description of Berrigan's life is anything but typical of the Jesuit order. For example, she writes that Dan

talked disconcertingly about adopting a child. It was part of his agitation against compulsory celibacy. He loved children, he said, he had always wanted a son, why should he be robbed of a joy which priests would have ten years from now? He delighted in expounding on all the embarrassments which such an adoption would cause to the Church.

I would submit that of all the words we might use to describe Dan Berrigan's more than three quarters of a century in the Society of Jesus, typical would be very near the bottom of the list.

In my presentation this evening, I'd like first to reflect together on the poem which gives the name to our gathering. The poem is entitled "September 27, 1971":

A Chinese ideogram / shows someone / standing
/ by his word. / Fidelity. Freedom / consequent / on
the accepted / necessity of / walking where / one's
word / leads. Wherever. / Hebrew prophets and
singers also / struck the theme; / bodies belong /
where words / lead / though the com- / mon run
of exper- / ience be / that stature / shrinks as / the
word / inflates. / The synthesis; / no matter what (or
/ better) never / the less

So, I'm going to break my reflections tonight into three parts based on Dan Berrigan's discernment. The first two parts he mentions explicitly right in this poem: fidelity and freedom. The third part was equally important in his own discernment throughout his life, and fortuitously it provides an alliterative completion here: friendship. These three elements, fidelity, freedom, and friendship, were essential for Berrigan, especially in his state of life as a Jesuit. Before diving into these topics, however, it will be helpful to consider what Ignatian discernment is in the first place. Only through the lens of Ignatius of Loyola and his Spiritual

Exercises should we evaluate any Jesuit's practice of discernment, regardless of how "typical" he might or might not have been.

The process of Ignatian discernment is at the very heart of the Spiritual Exercises. A common misapprehension concerning discernment is that the process entails making decisions between good and bad alternatives. In fact, Ignatian discernment is understood as a decision between two goods. In Berrigan's case, deciding to engage in nonviolent civil disobedience in Catonsville was a major decision, which I will refer to later in my presentation. Another Jesuit who utilized the gift of discernment that he had learned in his formation was Dean Brackley, S.J., who succeeded the Jesuits of the University of Central America in El Salvador after they were brutally murdered in 1989. Brackley explains,

Even though feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, and defending the weak are strict moral demands and not optional acts of 'charity,' we are not obliged to feed and house every hungry and homeless person within reach.

The art of discernment can lead to people being able to discover their vocation in life and so to act upon it. Absolutely essential in any authentic Ignatian discernment is the final step, whereby the individual follows through on their decision by taking action. Berrigan's discernment led him to accept gospel nonviolence as an absolute way of life. Furthermore, however, his discernment moved him to work for peace in a concrete way. In a letter dated April 10, 1970 to his brother Jesuits, Berrigan openly wonders whether he or they can place their trust in the leaders of the institutional church: "No, we must begin again, where we live. The real question of the times is not the conversion of cardinals and presidents, but the conversion of each of us." Part of Berrigan's reason for writing the letter is to report his decision to go "underground" and evade the FBI. In this scathing letter, Berrigan pulls no punches with the hierarchy or with his Jesuit brethren. Ignatian discernment played a role in all of these conclusions at which Berrigan arrived in his role as agitator par excellence. This role of agitator made him *persona non grata* at times among his Jesuit confreres. Therefore, his careful discernment, paradoxically, made it harder (in some ways) for him to be a Jesuit even as it resulted from his powerful embrace of Ignatian principles and the practice of praying through the Spiritual Exercises.

Berrigan sometimes clearly showed the signs of what Saint Ignatius called spiritual desolation. As he put it while attending a cast party for the film *The Mission*, "I decided that despite the world (or perhaps because of it) I would get in step with the others, though I must confess that the supply of the heart's helium is at a new low." Ignatius referred to this as "darkness of the soul, turmoil within it, an impulsive motion toward low and earthly things, or disquiet from

various agitations and temptations." Berrigan, once again, explains what this sensation is like:

The dominant mood, in public and private, in church and state, is something deeper than depression; a stupefaction. People go in circles, blank-faced. There are no maps. In consequence, many plod along in the old track, interminably. Or they go where they are forbidden to go. The old taboos fall in the name of freedom, sexual or psychological, a kind of mauve-scented slavery. And Big Bro grins his wolfish grin.

Frequently, in the last decades of his life, Berrigan was convinced that things had not been getting better, and indeed, were worse than ever. And yet, that was not, could not be the end of the story. As he remarked in a 2008 interview,

The mass of our people are victimized by politics and by the media...We are called to be sensible and realistic about the state of our world without being completely absorbed into it so that we have nothing to say about it, nothing to do about it...We must grapple with the questions of where do we go, what do we do, and what can be realistically expected given the world and given whom we are. I think, if we stop with just the analysis of how bad things are, we miss the point of the Gospel which is saying to us in various ways, in all sorts of ways, what is to be done.

The essence of authentic Ignatian discernment, then, is fidelity. It is to this virtue that I now turn.

Fidelity

In an almost obsessive way, fidelity was a cornerstone to Berrigan's life as a Jesuit and a person of faith. To be sure, he remained firm in his resolve to do what was right; in other words, he remained faithful to a particular cause, specifically the cause of peace and justice in the world. But more than that, he remained faithful to his calling as a Jesuit for his entire life, even during of times when he was unwanted and even exiled by the order. In this section I offer a reflection on two primary moments of discernment in Berrigan's life: to remain a Jesuit, and to become a part of the Catonsville Nine.

That Berrigan entered the Jesuits and remained one for the rest of his life was a matter of principle to him. As for his entering the order, most biographies, including Berrigan's own autobiography, indicate that he and his friend Jack St. George were drawn to the "underselling" that the Jesuit pamphlet presented to them. Murray Polner and Jim O'Grady call this a "flippant" explanation. After being introduced to the Jesuits by one of his father's sessions of reading aloud from a volume of Pioneer Priests of North America, "Dan read further on his own, and by the time those plain brown pamphlets arrived from the Jesuits, he was

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hooked.” Berrigan himself recounts being “awed and set to thinking.” Even before becoming initiated into the world of the Spiritual Exercises, Berrigan’s decision to join the order was discernment at work. But staying in the Jesuits was another matter. According to an early biography, there were two moments when he was seriously tempted to leave the order. First, when he was denied permission from his superiors to join a freedom ride to support civil rights in 1963, and second when he was exiled to Latin America in 1965 by his Jesuit superiors (even though at the time he mistakenly thought Cardinal Spellman had forced their hand).

Perhaps the most painful wound inflicted by the order in the long association between Berrigan and the Jesuits came on the what should have been

“A Chinese ideogram shows someone standing by his word. Fidelity. Freedom consequent on walking where one’s word leads.”

a happy day for Berrigan: his release from federal prison. In 1993, more than 25 years after he was the public face of a group of nine Catholic peace activists who burned draft files with homemade napalm in Catonsville, Maryland, Berrigan wrote in a letter to his brother Philip, “They [the Jesuits] almost kicked me into outer darkness after Catonsville.” Even if he was not dismissed outright from the Jesuits, he was unceremoniously evicted from his Jesuit residence on the very day he was released from federal prison in 1972: “[Berrigan] arrived late that night at his apartment at Fordham University, only to find that all his possessions had been removed and dumped in the hall and his door had been locked.” Nevertheless, in his later years he would claim that his decision to join the Jesuits was among the most important decisions of his life. When he was asked in 2009 what he was most grateful for in his life, he replied, “My Jesuit vocation.” He remained faithful to the Jesuits throughout his life, even when many of his contemporaries were leaving

the vowed life for a variety of reasons. He reflected on his decision to remain: “I had come of age in a church that, for all its shortcomings, honored vows and promises. In important matters...Christians were blessed with coherent moral guidance.”

In April 1968, only two months removed from making a harrowing journey to Vietnam with Howard Zinn, Berrigan received his brother Phil at his Cornell residence. Phil came with an offer to invite him to take part in the Catonsville action of burning the draft files. Dan explains the process of deciding to undertake this action:

In true Jesuit fashion, I said ‘Well give me a couple of days because I want to put down the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ and have some meditative time.’...I did my discernment, and much to my chagrin, the ‘pros’ outweighed the ‘cons.’...Though that kind of simplifies it that’s what happened.

Berrigan is noting another significant aspect of the Spiritual Exercises and the life of any Jesuit: the reality of the process of discernment in making any decision. Contrast Berrigan’s faithfulness to his own description of infidelity. He writes,

Infidelity: to indulge the hope of creating public order as the way of evading one’s inner disorder. A like infidelity: to stand guard over one’s inner order, to fear the ‘casting off into the deep’ implicit in a vocation to public order. The first is an evasion; the second, a slavery.

Berrigan’s life of fidelity was anything but a slavery, which is why fidelity is tied so closely to freedom, the second virtue I wish to mention today.

Freedom

“What really counts is a life which may or may not have a tragic ending, but which is lived under a sign of submission and of freedom.” It should come as no surprise to those who have read anything Berrigan wrote that he would also pen these words. But at the same time, reflecting on these words today is a deeply confusing practice. What does submission have to do with freedom? Our society today would regard these two states of being as totally opposed to one another. How can you submit to the will of another and simultaneously be free? This is indeed a paradox, perhaps even a mystery. As Berrigan writes, though,

A sense of mystery as contrasted with a devotion toward magic. Mystery is effected, according to Catholic belief, when a symbolic activity, quite modest and concrete, brings about a meeting of two freedoms: the divine and the human, and the opportunity of creative change in human life,

a climate of choice. Magic, on the other hand, announces an automatic possession of the divine by humans, and its manipulation toward human ends: the genie in the bottle.

When we consider Berrigan's understanding of freedom, I believe these two dimensions, the human and divine, must be held in tandem. The sacramental life of the church is so fundamental to Berrigan's ethical outlook. And yet, when we celebrate the sacraments, we submit to the ritual set forth by the church. I realize, even as I speak these words, that there are so many infamous stories of Berrigan's own departure from the prescribed ecclesial rubrics in celebrating this or that sacrament. And yet, recall whose the sacraments were on these occasions. I can't help but share one of the most oft-told of these anecdotes, from the recently departed Jim Forest. He recounted how Berrigan would often preside at an informal Eucharist with Forest and Tom Cornell; after some time, he was told to discontinue the practice immediately. Unable to proceed in their work without their eucharistic sustenance, Berrigan decided not to follow the ordinance: "Let the Lord make of this what he will." In one of his most profound reflections on the Eucharist, Berrigan once again considers Jesus's and the martyrs' destinies in this world:

I can only call theirs (and clumsily) a vanquishing freedom. It is a kind of dazzling moral consistency; it is verified at every turn and twist of life, goes its own way, speaks up and pays up, unmasking the seductive lie, keeps good humored under provocation; in fact, lives out broadly and concretely the formula of love in 1 Corinthians 13. But it is almost redundant to dwell on such things, we know the signs.

Berrigan characterized his decision to join the Catonsville action as one that brought about "a sense... of immense freedom. As though in choosing, I could now breathe deep, and call my life my own." I think our own experience tells us, though, that when Berrigan is talking about submission, he is not commending that to us all in a general sense, but rather in a very particular understanding of the word. Not all submission is equal. If we submit to this or that political party or political leader, or to the consumer society, or to sex, to money, or any other material thing, then we will, in fact, be enslaved to the thing or person to whom we submit. But if we submit to another in love, we know precisely how freeing that can be. Listen to Berrigan's commentary on Psalm 119: "It seems to me that love is obedient, ringed with a sense of limits, careful not to offend, conscious of taboos, creaturely in fact. It does not go its own way, 'do its own thing,' in a way precious to the romantic, the immature, the parasitic." All of us know what it is to love someone, and to be loved by someone. Love places boundaries on what we can do, but they are not burdensome. We know this in our

own experience. Spending the night without sleep is tiresome and a burden, but spending the night with a sick child or a dying parent or grandparent, even though we experience an exhausting lack of sleep, is not a burden. This submission in love is not servitude, but freedom. We do it not because we have to, but because that is precisely where the Holy Spirit is breathing life into us. Notice the difference between the Holy Spirit and the evil spirit according to St. Ignatius: "The enemy acts like a false lover, insofar as he tries to remain secret and undetected. For such a scoundrel, speaking with evil intent and trying to seduce...[us]... wants his words and solicitations to remain secret." The authentic lover, who is the mediator of freedom for the beloved, is open and honest, and truthful; the false lover is a liar. But how do we overcome that and ultimately make the right decision? Who helps us to freedom? Ignatius continues,

When the enemy of human nature turns his wiles and persuasions upon an upright person, he intends and desires them to be received and kept in secrecy. But when the person reveals them to his or her good confessor or some other spiritual person who understands the enemy's deceptions and malice, he is grievously disappointed. For he quickly sees that he cannot succeed in the malicious project he began, because his manifest deceptions have been detected.

Typical Jesuit that he was, then, it is no surprise that Berrigan would turn to so many trusted friends in his battle against this enemy. I now consider their role in his discernment.

Friendship

Friendship was not only among Berrigan's most integral personal characteristics but it was a theological foundation for him that served as a bedrock in his decision to remain a Jesuit. Moreover, what Saint Ignatius of Loyola called "mutual union" is an essential part of the Jesuit charism. Berrigan's deepest engagement with friendship appears in his book *Portraits of Those I Love*, which he describes as "a tribute to friendship." Interestingly, he also reflects on friendship specifically from his perspective as a priest: "friendship is also a chief delight of the celibate life." Furthermore, friendship is not something limited to this life. Of Peter Maurin, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, Berrigan writes of friendship with a man whom he never met. Though this is "a circumstance that may appear inhibiting to friendship," Berrigan reminds the reader that

most of us have yet to pass a time of incubating love with various admired mentors, peers, gurus, saviors, opposite numbers. Something still awaits, we are promised, under another sky, and we in a more

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serviceable frame than ‘the body of this death.’

Friendships with both Jesuit and not, ordained and lay, Catholic and not, gay and straight, family and enemy, are absolutely essential to Berrigan’s understanding of the religious life.

Friendship was a part of Berrigan’s life that is intertwined throughout every major act of discernment he carried out. The key friends to whom he turned time and again were his brothers Phil and Jerry, Dorothy Day, and Thomas Merton. Incidentally, it was Merton who convinced Berrigan to remain a Jesuit in the face of the two major moments that most tested his membership in the order, which I mentioned earlier. On both occasions, Merton counseled Berrigan to remain faithful to his vow of obedience, and more to the point, he encouraged Berrigan to put things in perspective. When Berrigan was upset that his Jesuit superiors would not allow him to take part in the freedom rides, Merton counseled, “A violent break with superiors would only tend to cast discredit on all the initiatives you have so far taken and render them all suspect as part of a dangerous process leading to radicalization and defection.” Again, when Berrigan was exiled to Latin America after preaching a homily at a memorial Mass for Roger LaPorte on November 11, 1965, Merton wrote, unsympathetically, offering a sense of perspective for Berrigan: “For one, I have never managed to get awful sorry for your going to Latin America...It is where everything is going to happen.” For his part, another of Berrigan’s confidants, Jim Forest, was on the same page as Merton. As Forest recalled, “No doubt Dan talked with others. His discipline was to do hard thinking in a communal context.” But where does that get us in our own times?

Discernment Today

“About practically everything in the world, there’s nothing you can do. This is Socratic wisdom, pressure on the fulcrum Archimedes never came on. However. About a few things you can do something. Do it, with a good heart.”

This quote comes from Berrigan’s *Ten Commandments for the Long Haul*. As this talk ends, I wish to return to Brackley’s admonition from the beginning of this presentation: we need to look at our own circumstances to determine what is most fitting for our own lives of resistance, service, and action in the world. Therefore, the conclusion of my thoughts is necessarily brief, because it is for each one of us to figure out what it is in our own lives that we can do. Then we must do it, and with a good heart. But how do we go about doing so? Based on the preceding three themes around which I organized my thoughts, I return to St. Ignatius on discernment. First, we must remain faithful. This means both individual and communal prayer, the likes of which Dan Berrigan made central

in his own life. I believe that three particular Ignatian rules are crucial here. First, “consider and reason out how many advantages or benefits accrue to myself from having the office or benefice proposed, all of them solely for the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul.” In other words, if we are discerning between two goods that can help us be active in the world, get out a piece of paper, write down pros and cons, and weight the relative strengths and weaknesses of each side, just as Berrigan did before deciding to accept Phil’s invitation to join the Catonsville Nine. Second, “I will consider, as if I were at the point of death, what procedure and norm I will at that time wish I had used in the present election. Then guiding myself by that norm, I should make my decision on the whole matter.” Finally, and even more overwhelmingly, Ignatius writes these words,

Imagining and considering in what condition I will find myself on judgment day, I will think how at that time I will wish I had decided in regard to the present matter. And the rule which I will then wish I had followed is what I shall apply now, in order that then I may be in complete contentment and joy.

This sort of discerning gets the heart pumping just a little bit faster in my experience, and yours too, I bet!

In short, we must heed Berrigan’s advice from his sermon from the underground of August 2, 1970. We must translate atrocities in our lives. He preached these words:

Perhaps we have no translation. Perhaps our lives are meant to go on as usual. Perhaps, for us, there will be no suffering...Perhaps we will continue to link our lives, not with the great people whose lives are commended to us today, but with obedient American Christians, with the good obedient German Christians under the Nazis...I do not know, because, regretfully, I do not know you.

Returning once again to Berrigan’s decision to join the Catonsville Nine, such a decision would have been impossible without Phil’s urging him in that direction. While further discernment clearly took place, Berrigan recalls, “There was only the force of friendship, and an offer.” So I can offer only one piece of final advice regardless of our states in life: let’s commit to being faithful friends to others, and open to faithful friends in our own lives. Then we are most free, and have the potential to translate the sufferings of others into our own lives, and be in solidarity with those who need it most.

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Politics of Vision

By Daniel Berrigan

Daniel Berrigan delivered this address at the tenth anniversary celebration of the Agape community, a lay Catholic residential community committed to nonviolence.

I want to reflect with you on this beautiful afternoon on the politics of vision. Something that is so dreadfully lacking in our public life and so profoundly present in the Agape folk. So that we can cling to the one and turn from the other especially in these times of hype, greed and violence masking itself in three-piece suits and great promises. This politics of vision is a biblical venture—dreams on one hand and nightmares on the other, and we can only really exorcise the nightmare by allowing the dream. I would like to tell you about a dream I had a few years ago. It occurred “between elections.”

It was remarkable in many ways. It had a first chapter of puzzlement and then an awakening. It appeared that I was standing in front of a very beautiful tower, which was railed in stone, a young man standing looking down on me and holding his young child. And the child was singing and the voice was absolutely enchanting. And I listened and listened and could not understand what the child was saying. At that point I awakened and then drifted back to sleep. I heard the child singing again. The only difference now was that there was an old man who appeared at my side. He asked me kindly what was the matter. I said “I can’t understand the words of the child.” He said “I will tell you.”

The child is singing this: “Let us sing of the things we will never see.” Let us sing of the things we will never see. I thought that had to do with us spending the day together, something to do with visionary politics as opposed to an absolutely deadly and anti-human one. Something also that has to do with casting a vote in one direction or another. This has nothing to do with a candidate and has everything to do with a life in community. I took it this way. I took it back to the Latin word—the language I am familiar with, I took it back to a word “voveo—”to vow.”

We need to take a very deep promise which renders one’s life in a certain direction as opposed to certain others. To vote is to pronounce a vow. I can understand totally from the context of religious life that to take a vow, to make a promise is to head one’s life in a very particular direction. And that began to resonate with my experience of the world, where certain people would beckon my life in a certain way. Great men and women would, in an almost forgotten way, cast a vote by way of pronouncing a vow. Issuing a vision from the very human and not from this very murky bottomless pit, the inhuman—represented by imperial culture. This real voice both beckoning and irresistible, not a command, but an invitation which heads us in a certain direction.

There are constellations of words that come from voveo—devoted, devotion, votary. We have a whole vocabulary of depth in the human. Then we have this whole other kind of nonsense where we cast a vote as though one were casting away one’s conscience, as though from that frivolous moment one could justify the inhuman. While the fate of children and the unborn, and those on death row and the poor, and the people dying in the next war is left to others. Casting a vote versus taking a vow. Now the people in the Agape Community and generally those in this room who gather around such people understand the difference. The human vow is a renunciation. Any great tradition that speaks of ourselves as responsible or responsive and spontaneous people who are capable of saying no to the enemies of life in order to say a resounding yes to life itself.

So, we celebrate on a day like today, ironically, those who have cast their vote for all eternity—for once and for all and we celebrate with them—we want to be in those ranks—a kind of understanding where grace is for ourselves.

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I thought of the prophet Isaiah as someone who has cast a vote in the sense that we are talking about today. Isaiah has this politics of vision. He offers a surgical analysis of the illness of empire. There is a kind of ethical ecology at work here—in this oracle in Chapter 19, one that rejects greed, lies, violence. It goes to the root of community, and the economy of ecology.

What happens to the idol of the empire when the truth is in the air? Yahweh comes to Egypt and the idols tremble before God. If the leadership of the minorities in society vote in a visionary way, it sets the idols trembling; the military idols, the sexist idols, all of those illnesses, all of which are terminal in our own country. The hearts of the Egyptians were holding on to the idols. Most of the people in our country are barely functioning with a kind of vague hope which is so inflated and so awfully deceptive as though better times can come. Hope won't come until structures have changed, our hearts have changed. "Egypt is going to be demoralized" says Isaiah, "while she continues to consult idols and wizards, mediums and sorcerers." It is like the magic of "the economy" during the election year which had become kind of an incantation, the magic of military might, the magic of being bigger than the human and having all the control at our fingertips. All this is magic.

Isaiah: "I mean to turn the Egyptians over to a hard master, a cruel ruler to stand over them. It is Yahweh who speaks." This verse is about domestic tyranny, it's about misery on the streets, it's about increasingly large numbers of people considered expendable in a kind of permanent triage. It's the sort of mentality that says, "Let them vanish between the cracks." I find it astonishing...I don't think I've ever seen a harsher "master" in my lifetime than we have been under this last decade, I mean domestically. They have succeeded in narrowing the understanding of our own people with regard to living humanly in this world. This will take many hours of reflection in trying to grasp this fact, I know...this diminution of humanity, of our own people.

There has been a terrifying fiction at work exemplified in the aftermath of the Gulf War. That is, that damage can be done in enormous measure and it will never ricochet. All of the deaths of the children, all of the sanctions, all of the suffering of the aged, all this will happen "over there." Within two months of the end of the war we had our children killing each other and then the uprising in Los Angeles, and we've been having a "war" with Iraq ever since. It's an extraordinary lesson, I think, that we can't wreak havoc on others without working against our own humanity in ways that are just devastating—devastating.

Isaiah goes immediately into the ecological damage of this kind of idolatry. In verse 5, he said, "The rivers will be parched and dry. All the vegetation will dry up and blow away and the fisherfolk will mourn and lament all who cast hooks in the Nile." Isaiah then began a diatribe against atrocious authority, preaching the likes of which we don't ordinarily hear

in the pulpit. Verse eleven reads: "The princes are utter fools," "Pharaoh's wisest counselors are stupid." I suppose if a preacher tried this, there would be a great walk-out! "How can you (he means the great advisors) say 'I am a disciple of bygone kinds'." It is kind of a marvelous deflation of this kind of absurd "voting." Isaiah invites us to a kind of skepticism of this.

Isaiah continues: "The princes of Zoan are fools, the princes of Noph, self-deceivers; Egypt is led astray by the governors of her provinces. On them Yahweh has poured out a spirit of giddiness. They have Egypt slithering in all she undertakes as a drunkard slithers in his vomit." (Is. 19:13-14) Oh, the preacher is in trouble now! An absolutely fantastic and shocking image. All this business about wisdom from on high and look, he is really a drunken man.

I don't offer all this as a downer on such an afternoon. Now let us remember that Isaiah 19 tells us that the oracle continued in the next generation. Evidently 50-100 years later someone said, hey, good things have happened since then and let's write that down and we need to incorporate that into the nineteenth chapter of Isaiah. And it was a very different version.

It was something like Eastern Europe frozen in 40 years of horror and then liberated. So that someone else gets to write a little chapter. Let me read it—it's a kind of P.S. It's a sign of hope.

"In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord at its border. It will be a sign and a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt; when they cry to the Lord because of the oppressors he will send them a savior and will defend and deliver them, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day and worship with sacrifice and burnt offering and they will make vows to the Lord and perform them."

And it ends with this inspiration: "In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth who the Lord of hosts has blessed saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands and Israel my heritage.'"

So there is hope—there is hope. We have to see that. Who would have predicted 15 years ago everything that happened in Eastern and Central Europe, Southern Africa and so many places in between. It really happened because so many good people were not enchanted and bought and sold at not having to see the outcome of their good work.

And there were so many people in prisons. So many of our friends were in prisons and there was seemingly no hope. My brother is in prison as we meet, during this election year, and there seems to be very little hope. But there is hope. There is. There is Agape and there is ourselves!

Daniel Berrigan was introduced before this speech as a "normative Christian," found guilty, wrote his own friend William Stringfellow, "of preaching the Resurrection."

Concentrating on the “Wholly Other”

By Suzanne Belote Shanley

On our way back from an exciting 350.org climate change protest in DC, billed as the largest demonstration ever to reverse the direction of climate change, or in the words of Bill McKibben and Jim Hansen –“Game Over,” Brayton had the spontaneous idea, as we were passing through the Bronx, to visit our friend, Daniel Berrigan. High on the energy of over 50,000 gathered on the Mall in DC, this seemed like a good finale to the rich experience, so we decided together, yes.

Over the past months, we had made several abortive attempts to visit Dan at his former Thompson St. address as well as recently, after joining Kathy Kelly, Cathy Breen and Martha Hennessey at the UN for an observance and fast encouraging immediate action on Afghanistan by the UN, realizing after many calls to the residence we had heard he was at (Murray-Weigel, the Jesuit infirmary on the campus of Fordham University), that we seemingly, would not be successful...phones not working, people not knowing Dan’s extension, etc. It was discouraging, and we felt perhaps that we would never see him again, with rumors of precipitous decline at age 92, as well as appearances, seemingly in contradiction to these augurs of decline, at various rallies, and even at the Catholic Worker.

As we were seemingly guided by angels, after losing the Fordham University sign for a bit

while traveling in the Bronx, Brayton, who was driving, looked left and right, and finally said: “This looks familiar, let’s try this” and there we were, on the very street we remembered having turned into with Jim Douglass and John Schuchardt, when we all went for a memorable ride to visit Dan in this very elder Jesuit residence several years before. We couldn’t believe our luck.

We had no previous phone calls into the residence, and wondered if Dan would even be there. Greeted by a lovely woman at the desk, we asked for Fr. Berrigan, and she said: “He’s here. He just had breakfast. I think he is in his room.” I could feel my heart lift. It wasn’t quite the energy of walking down an airport corridor to meet Dan’s brother Phil almost 34 years ago., but a sense of anticipation, of seeing an old friend, someone who, though we saw him only sporadically, seemed like family.

We were told where to go on the second floor to room 200, and so we proceeded. As we approached the door, we saw other elderly Jesuits sitting in their rooms, watching television, resting, and the sense of the community of care flashed through my mind. One can’t help, at age 67, approaching 68, thinking, “I wonder what my older age will be like?” We arrived at room 200, after passing room after room with names, many Irish, and the insignia SJ next to them, standing before the door with a name plate, “Daniel Berrigan SJ.”



Daniel Berrigan at a diner while on the run from the FBI, photographed by Bob Firtch (The Bob Fitch Photography Archive, Stanford University)

Before we knocked, I had a momentary and fleeting sense of the past, of Phil, summoning up his beautiful face and form, of our shared history with Dan and Phil, and here we were, Brayton and I, after then 34 years of relationship with both of these extraordinary, historic men, The Berrigan Brothers (the title of a book on our library shelf at Agape which houses at least 40 books by or about both of the brothers), about to see, once again, the mentor and friend who had been our ally for years.

Previous to this visit, Brayton had written to Daniel, asking him to endorse a book that Brayton had nearly completed for the publisher, Wipf and Stock. In rather weak hand, Daniel had written back that he was fading but that he would be happy to do this. We were delighted as always to receive any word from Dan, and had always found some literary gem in the frequent letters and post cards from him. In the past, for example, Daniel had encouraged Brayton's writing in *Servant Song*, our community newsletter, and, in fact, had paid us the ultimate compliment saying, in effect, that *Servant Song* was elegant and outstanding. No little encouragement for sure. After Daniel's initial yes, when we sent the manuscript, we got a return letter and a returned manuscript, saying that he could not read well and that he must decline to read the piece and that he had to now concentrate on "the Wholly

Other." This struck me when I read it as typical of what I had come to know of Dan in his writing: wisdom, surrender, breathless and dazzling displays of poetry and words that hummed. Concentrated on the "wholly other," I would say to myself, taking the phrase on in my walks in the Quabbin woods around Agape, using it as a mantra and a way of recalling our deep bonds with Dan, and for me, especially with Phil.

Back to the immediate moment. We knocked lightly on the door, and called in a loud whisper, "Daniel, are you there?" At first, not hearing anything, we thought he might not be there, but then, one of us called his name again, as we moved forward into the room, and we heard a faint voice, not recalling what it said, but we knew Dan was there.

We saw, as we moved forward, the thin frame of Father Daniel Berrigan, under a light blue, woven, slim blanket, tucked under his boney arms, with his slight, dear and veiny hands resting on this stomach, looking like a painting, with their delicacy, thinning fragility, the blue veins a map of years, nearly 93. I moved closer, seeing Dan's indelibly dear face, that handsome Irish-German heritage impressed there, Mother Frida, the German branch of the family tree, and father, John, the Irish. Dan's face reminded me of all of the pictures on the jacket covers of the numerous books I had in my possession, but there now was this refined and oddly

arresting look of a dying man, as Brayton and I later observed to each other.

Skin translucent, his face had the look of my mother's, the same glowing almost luminous, see-through quality of one close to death. On Dan's head, a knit winter cap, no hair visible. Just as we were entering, an aide was leaving, asking with some evident tenderness: "Is that all you need now Fr. Berrigan?" Daniel responded, "Fine. I'm fine." We moved closer to the bed, which did not seem to be a hospital bed, Brayton behind me. I moved close to look into Dan's eyes where I seemed to sense some recognition, and said, almost reverentially, because this is how I felt, reverent, awe-struck, quiet, in the presence of something profound, eternal, "Hi Dan. Brayton and Suzanne here. Do you remember us, Agape?"

His response, a bemused and tentative look of recognition and the words, "Of course I do," or something of that order, to be followed by Brayton and my realization, without even glancing at each other, that this might be our last visit with Daniel Berrigan. I knew it might delight him to know that we had just come from a protest, so I offered, "We're on our way back home from a DC protest 50,000 strong, and since we are driving right past the Bronx, decided to try to see you." This seemed to please him, and a wan smile full of dry lips and a barely audible voice, emerging to whisper "Terrific."

Brayton and I did almost all of the talking, which was similar to the last time we were there in the same room with Jim Douglass and John Schuchardt and Daniel was sitting up, but not too conversant, depending on us to supply the narrative, seemingly too tired to keep up the momentum. This time, we saw genuine love and even gratitude that we were there. We talked about the rally, and joked that Phil might not have liked it too much as there was no CD (Civil Disobedience), this almost eliciting a laugh, but most certainly a wide smile of recognition of a memory shared, of our friend and his brother. We observed that the hip-hop rally with Native women from Calgary, Canada, could have used a few references to nonviolence.

We moved into new territory with my observation about the trip in our "grease" car, and the recollection that we had taken many such trips with Tom Lewis, a member of The Catonsville Nine, and dear friend to both Dan and to Brayton and me. We joked about stopping at the Vince Lombardi rest stop which Tom always kidded about. On our way to DC when we stopped there, Brayton and I could really almost sense Tom's presence with us on our many trips to the Pentagon in the 70's and 80's. We shared this recollection with Dan, and because Dan wasn't saying much, we relied on what was now a genuine expression of sadness at Tom's passing, a look of some pain, and resigned acceptance of our memories.

Brayton and I moved to other topics, mentioning Liz McAlister, Dan's sister-in-law and Philip

Berrigan's wife, and her endorsement of Brayton's new book, which seemed to please Daniel. In the past, also, Daniel had always taken a big interest in Brayton's back ailments, so we connected there with mention of Brayton's new problem with hip pain... strands of memory, of commiseration, recalling old feelings of compassion. Daniel, after all, had offered us the use of his beloved Eschaton, the cottage on Block Island which belonged to his dear friend and fellow theologian and writer, William Stringfellow. Recipients of Dan's generosity, I mentioned Block Island as a point of connection, referencing a book that we had borrowed from Dan's shelf of abundant books, one by Roger Gottlieb, on the spirituality of resistance.

This memory of Block Island replayed later as I recalled several blissful summers there at Dan's invitation, once when I was quite ill, with an undiagnosed, seemingly serious condition of extreme fatigue and malaise (later diagnosed as severe B-12 deficiency), and the radiant pathway from the beaten-down porch with frayed, damaged and otherwise broken-down furniture, which led to breathtaking view of the ocean, among the smell of roses. I can picture now, that thrill of our first arrival at Block Island, but no more thrilling than opening the door to see Dan's writing desk, where I was aware that he had composed many poems on the Island. Later, and many times after, I sat down in the chair, at the desk, aware of Daniel's body and breath in this hard-backed chair, large wooden desk, plain, old, maybe even belonging to Stringfellow. Everything about the little cabin spoke of age, the rust-colored water in the toilet, the greasy stove grill, the rusty water out of the facet, and the breakdowns in all of these several times while we were there; the repair of which, Dan supervised by phone from afar, all of this while in his 80's.

I recall sitting at the desk one day, trying to summons up Dan's energy and spirit to help me write a recollection about Phil. I had wanted for years to write about my relationship to Phil, the centrality of its meaning and his effect on my life. I was paralyzed by fear, doubt and dread, those familiar haunters of any writing: "Who am I to presume that what I think about Phil Berrigan has any significance at all?" "What good would such writing do anyway, just a waste of time." "Who would read this?" "Who cares?" All of these demons of despair and paralysis haunted me for hours as I sat at the desk, with piles and piles of letters from Phil from jail, from Jonah House, ranging from comforting remarks about the failure of an adoption of a DSS child who was so disturbed she had to be removed from our home, to compelling analysis of the nuclear weapons scene, incisive, provocative comments on The Blight House, the lies, the deceit, all peppered appropriately with Scripture passages which fit the situation.

I poured over these letters, started several times to write my story, tell about my sustaining friendship with Phil, got to several pages, but gave up in despair, not ready I guess to tell the whole story, afraid of being

misperceived, without the right words. Fortunately, now I think I have both those words and the motivation to write them. Visiting Dan in the Bronx has given them to me. I thank Daniel for this gift, for if there is any Suzanne story to be told, it is of my out-sized love for Philip Berrigan, more than likely, the key father replacement for my alcoholic father, as influential in shaping my soul as is my husband, Brayton.

But, back to Daniel and the visit, after the Climate Change rally. Both Brayton and I were so aware of Dan's fatigue, which took the form of delayed nods to our observations, and some clearing of the throat, while trying to say a few words, while saving himself. His eyes made contact though, staying locked with mine when I talked and with Brayton's while he did. I felt some sense of awe in his presence as I have in the presence of other aging, dying people, knowing that at age 68, I had a ways to go, if I got that far, but relating to a lack of energy as I had not done in previous years, even as recently as five years ago.

Pallid, infirm, the dignity of my brother never faded, as we searched for a few more topics to allow us to stay for a few more moments as Daniel was not initiating and we were aware that this would not happen as he hadn't the last time we saw him. A light on a phone on the table next to him was a reminder of time passing, of the calls he would not take, like our repeated ones over the past months, of what the receptionist told us when we arrived a half-hour ago: "Father Berrigan doesn't answer his phone."

Not wanting to wear Daniel out or overstay our visit, both Brayton and I were aware that it was time to leave, and as we hemmed and hawed our way through words like "I guess we better leave." As we moved to leave, I mentioned poetry and Denise Levertov, whom Daniel had once called "our angel" and the new biography, he lit up a bit, and said, with a low almost indecipherable voice: "I have it. It's there on the table."

I asked Daniel if he was aware of Denise's last book of poems, "This Great Unknowing: Last Poems." I mentioned to Dan that the book had been given to me by Mike True, a peacemaker friend of both of ours of many years who had anthologized many of Dan's works. I have decided that I will send Daniel the book with a dedication in the front to me by Michael, as it seems fitting that I do so. Perfect in fact, as Michael was a close personal friend of Denise's and had written about her in numerous publications, as he has about Daniel, particularly in the illuminating and informative book, *An Energy Field More Intense Than War: The Nonviolent Tradition and American Literature*, where he comments on Dan Berrigan's participation in and writing a play about The Catonsville Nine of which Dan was a member, with a lengthier commentary on Dan's nonviolence and poetry, both of which are inextricably linked: "In 'Guns Don't Work,' Daniel Berrigan described that commitment (to nonviolence) much as his 'nonviolent ancestor' Elihu Burritt, had in 1854: 'No

political change is worth...a single drop of human blood!'

As we moved to leave, bending over towards the thinning, diaphanous hands, each of us touching one, Daniel lifting one or the other in mutual regard, I had the same feeling that I had had in the previous visit two years ago, which had been echoed by John Schuchardt and Jim Douglass: "This may be the last time." As we moved to leave, we realized that Daniel was trying to say something to us, and had to come back to the bed to understand what it was, leaning in once again, after what we thought was our final goodbye: "Take one of those books over there," he said, gesturing to another table-desk just a few feet away from the stack of books on the tray table. "The book of poetry," he whispered, trying, with exceedingly dry mouth, to say this louder.

After Brayton and I stepped over to the table, we saw the book, "Homage to Gerard Manley Hopkins," Brayton holding it up, asking: "This one," with Daniel nodding, "Yes." Since there were about ten or more of these books, it seemed that other visitors may have been similarly blessed to receive this gift. After taking the book, which Dan had previously given us and even inscribed, we thanked him, looked into his loving, receptive eyes, the trademark, longshoreman's cap on his head, and I said: "Thanks Dan. Thanks for everything. We love you." He nodded, smiled.

As I am completing this little piece, I pick up the book, "Homage to Gerard Manley Hopkins" by Daniel Berrigan SJ, open it to the last page, thinking that I had finished my reflection, not knowing exactly yet where I would use it or why, and read these words in a poem by Daniel about the last days of Gerard Manley Hopkins:

One day lacking death
a nemesis all in black
fed with massed papers
fires
where late
you sweetly breathed last.

What then was lost,
essence,
elixir of soul, taste, aftertaste—
never to know!
'Among firefolk, sitting in the air
count it all gain,' your counsel.
'Brooding, the Holy Ghost
has all by heart.'

Suzanne Belote Shanley is co-founder, with her husband Brayton Shanley, in 1982 of the *Agape Community*, a residential, lay Catholic Community in Hardwick, MA dedicated to prayer, voluntary simplicity, and gospel-centered nonviolent witness in the world. Together they authored *Loving Life on the Margins: The Story of the Agape Community*.

A Theology of Nonviolent Bloodshed

By Flora x. Tang

It seems almost scandalous to speak of my now-discolored menstrual cup using the same reverence normally reserved for the eucharistic chalice. The holy, golden, and adorned chalice, only to be held moments before the consecration by a priest and meticulously cleaned at the end of each liturgy. Because it is divine, they told me.

But is my blood divine? My crimson red—although sometimes chocolate brown—blood that drips warmly into a little silicone cup that catches all but a few drops. Unsanitary, they told me. And that’s why we call those pads “sanitary napkins,” and why we hide our tampons in our sleeves before sneaking off to the bathroom to change them. And that’s why, until the Middle Ages, bishops and theologians have insisted that menstruating women may under no circumstances receive communion or approach sanctuary spaces.

The paradox remains today: symbolic or liturgical blood is elevated and sanctified, while physical blood flowing from physical bodies that menstruate are viewed as defiling. In the many years that I have been taught theology of the body, I’ve pondered where, then, is the theology of my body, and of my blood?

And what if the real scandal (the Greek word for “stumbling block,” used by Saint Paul to describe stumbling blocks to the Christian faith), though, is not my brazen sacrilege to equate my menstrual blood

with eucharistic blood, but the near impossibility of the Christian imagination to picture blood outside the context of violence and sacrifice? “You redeem us by your blood,” our liturgical prayers read. “Your blood is washing us white as snow,” our contemporary Christian music sings. “Blood and water that flow from your side,” our image of divine mercy depicts. This imagery of bloodshed that lies at the center of our salvation theology ought to be jarring, weird, and stumbling: a stumbling block indeed in the path toward our imagination of a nonviolent and loving God.

In contemporary theology and spirituality, we increasingly speak of a nonviolent God—a God who does not require violent sacrifice to redeem humanity, a God who does not need Jesus’ blood (or our blood) to satisfy God’s wrath. But no matter how successful theologians are at conceptualizing a nonviolent God and a nonviolent redemption, this issue of violence returns at every liturgy when we proclaim that the Blood of Christ that we receive—blood that Jesus had shed during his torturous suffering on the cross—is somehow salvific. This liturgical imagery of blood ought to be uncomfortable to all those who seek to worship a loving God who does not require that the bloody sacrifice of God’s own son, crucified, be the instrument of our salvation.

The symbolic act of pouring human blood onto nuclear facilities has been a prominent imagery associated with the anti-nuclear activism of the

“This life-giving blood flows not from a lethal wound nor as a result of cruel violence, but from the female body: from its ability to give life, to create something out of nothing, to nourish, to nurture, to heal, and to birth newness in a broken world.”

Plowshares movement. Berrigan himself describes this act as one that holds theological significance, rather than an act that merely serves to shock its audience: “The blood could be seen as a surrogate for the blood of Christ, he envisioned, and its pouring could be interpreted as a symbolic act of Christian purification—a kind of echo of the sacrifice of the Mass,” he says. Megan Rice, a nun who was arrested in 2014 for pouring blood onto Tennessee’s Y-12 Nuclear Security Complex, too, speaks of this blood as a blood “for healing and pouring out our lives in service and love,” as well as an attempt to call to attention the horrific spilling of blood by nuclear weapons.

Blood of life, rather than the blood of victims, function in the Plowshares movement as a messy yet potent symbol of anti-violence, a symbol that produces life instead of beckoning more people to sacrifice and death. It beckons theology itself to consider the possibility of a nonviolent bloodshed. Under this light, the imagery of the life-giving blood from the womb of God—uterine blood, menstrual blood, or the blood of birthing—emerges as one of many necessary nonviolent metaphor of blood that nonetheless holds meaning and bears new life. This life-giving blood flows not from a lethal wound nor as a result of cruel violence, but from the female body: from its ability to give life, to create something out of nothing, to nourish, to nurture, to heal, and to birth newness in a broken world. This life-giving blood also flows from all bodies who seek to give rather than take away life, all bodies who toil, labor, and protest for the sake of those who society and countries easily sacrifice as collateral damage. This blood that the silicone chalice catches, just like the blood brimming in Sunday morning’s golden chalice, is ordinary, repetitive, predictable, yet immensely holy.

But this blood does not wash us white as snow. It stains us, stains our fingernails, our pants, our whitest bedsheets with red when we least expect it, leaving us unable to wash off the stains even if we try. Imagine our bodies then, stained too with eucharistic blood—the more likely outcome, realistically speaking, over being washed clean by this blood through some miraculous, metaphoric divine action. Imagine us propelled into the world, from the sanctuary, with stained fingers and a renewed openness to touch the messiness of this world, of the earth, and of our bodies. Imagine our laboring bodies, stained with blood and sweat, beating swords into plowshares to harvest food for the hungry. Imagine our bodies bearing the indelible mark of the blood from God’s motherly womb, staining us so permanently so that we, like Christ, may forever transgress the boundary between the messy and the clean, the unsanitary and the holy.

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The Silicone Chalice: An Instruction Manual

Flora x. Tang

you must bow down,
your body bending low in adoration,
before you reach for the holy cup.
you must come
with your hands purified
by the coursing water of deliverance and life
before you touch
the chalice of salvation.
but calm
your trembling fingers
and your breath be still
as the numinous within you lingers
lest the cup spill
lest the blood spill
and stain the holy ground.

so touch the flesh that first gave you life
the flesh that led you from primordial darkness into
muffled light
vulva. labia majora. labia minora. vagina.
until you feel the silicone chalice,
brimming with warm red wine.
you must pull and wrestle,
until your polished nails lose their shine
to behold the sacred vessel
of blood so divine.

you must remember
that the cup is filled
to become emptied again,
that your hands are cleansed,
to become tarnished again
that the blood is spilled
to become one with water again.
and when the chalice boils clean
no trace of blood to be seen,
you must remember--
and yes, you will remember
at the sight of your discolored hands
your browned nails
your cotton underwear marked with an indelible
bloodstain--
that your body, still, the chalice remain
your feet, the living altar on which it stands
and your life,
an oblation of love to be received,
and given again.

Priest & Fool

From Daniel Berrigan to Ken Feit

By Bill Wylie-Kellermann

"God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. We are fools for the sake of Christ..."

St. Paul (1 Corinthians 4: 9-10)

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."

Daniel Berrigan

In 1971 Ken Feit, a seminarian well into his Jesuit formation, visited Daniel Berrigan in federal prison (there for his part in burning draft files as a protest of the U.S. War in Vietnam). In the course of conversation, Feit confessed a growing call to a genuine vocation as a "fool." Berrigan encouraged the discernment and referred to him William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne, aficionados and interpreters of the circus, the two having travelled during the summer of 1966 as "theologians-in-residence" with the Clyde Beatty Circus through New England and parts of New York.

Stringfellow considered the circus an eschatological liturgy, displaying the splendor, scope, and diversity of creation reconciled in community. Under the circus tent he beheld Death as confronted, ridiculed, rebuked, and (by the ringmaster's apt proclamation) defied. In his observation...

The circus performer is the image of the eschatological person – emancipated from frailty and inhibition, exhilarant, militant, transcendent over death – neither confined nor conformed by the fear of death any more...

...the clown makes the parody more poignant and pointed in costume and pantomime; commenting, by presence and performance, on the absurdities inherent in what ordinary people take so seriously – themselves, their profits and losses, their successes

and failures, their adjustments and compromises – their conformity to the world.

Little wonder, Stringfellow and Towne promptly endorsed and funded Ken Feit’s application to the Ringling Bros./Barnum and Bailey Clown College in Venice, FL. He would eventually complete his formal training with a course in American Sign Language at a school for the hearing impaired – suited perfectly, I suppose, to the skills of a mime.

His vocation as a mendicant fool fully confirmed, Feit’s “business card” now read: “Ken the fool – clown, sound poet, storyteller, puppeteer, mime, musician, and jester.” Though he omitted mention of priest (and prophet), as he’d stepped back from institutional ordination, he nonetheless folded these gifts into his earlier calling. Berrigan recognized the conflated vocation. He honored it, recounting it in their once joint trip to Stringfellow’s Block Island home...

Here Ken Feit disported, who died later.
 Command performance, ferry crossing
 the children crowding round; a clown
 on the ferry! He mimed, cut paper unicorns,
 played on kazoos, combs, jews harp –
 coast to coast. In Stanford chapel, years gone, Feit
 and I
 made eucharist; he in white face, I in costume
 resplendent. The children ran together
 at his sweet antic tune.
 In wooden pews
 the moody regents muttered woodenly.
 At recessional this was heard:
 ‘Could Jesus have seen that, he’d have
 turned over in his grave!’

On the fool’s priestly calling, consider this collection of various sayings from Ken’s writing.

In the clown’s sacred freedom (urgency) to speak the truth and in the ensuing laughter lie the mystery of his priesthood. His clowning basically is a mirror to the people of their own ethic and identity. In laughing at him they laugh at themselves. In laughing at themselves they forgive themselves for they perceive their own frailty. God can forgive them when they have forgiven themselves, first by acknowledging their absurdity. Thus, the clown serves as a general confessor to the people, first by taking on their sins (absurdities, frailties, hypocrisies) in his clowning and then by absolving them through their own laughter. It is the mystery of crucifixion and resurrection reenacted.

The fool’s mass is the central act of my life now – creating sacred space and time, focusing community, celebrating wonder, mystery, and paradox, discerning pain and healing inner wounds, proclaiming new/old age of hope, and empowering others to discover and tell their stories...



At the Circus, from the Magic Changing Cards series (N223) issued by Kinney Tobacco Company, 1889, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Jefferson R. Burdick Collection, Gift of Jefferson R. Burdick

The “priestly fool” is that person...who is a proclaimer of truth (verbally and non-verbally); who is a servant and healer of the poor (powerless); and who resymbolizes, reritualizes, and remythologizes for the tribe.

According to the ancient conventions of make-up, when a clown “puts on whiteface” something magical happens, like the magic of the Eucharistic prayer. In whiteface the clown loses sexual identity, becoming neither male nor female, but assuming the guise of one or both. The clown also loses any personal history and is ageless, being neither old nor young but transcending time. As such, the clown belongs to no race or cultural grouping, but lives on the edge of all societies, defying containment by law, mores, and reason.

One of the tragedies of the Church is its humorlessness. It is too dead serious. Without humor there is very little hope, and we’re trying to engender new values. I guess I wouldn’t want to be part of a church and couldn’t dance.

Once joined his antic dance. Feit was an evangelical for the good news of foolishness, offering workshops (to train budding fools), including one I joined in the summer of ‘76. He wore a multicolored jacket with patches, pins and baubles from all the places he’d travelled while gathering his stories and great stash of fool’s wisdom. Should you point to one and inquire, a tale would be called forth. In the course of things, with various exercises, we each learned our clown walk, our clown voice, and of course our clown face as well. His own presence and voice somehow contributed to discovering the freedom and delight in each.

That weekend had two significant consequences.

A number of participants from that workshop, including my own brothers, formed a street theater troupe for the Labor Day walk across the Mackinaw Bridge which connects the two parts of our state, Michigan. At the time the Navy was pressing to build a grid antenna in the Upper Peninsula which would serve as the “trigger finger” for deep running Trident submarines. Our Governor, who always led the annual walk across the bridge, held a veto power over the project. We convened a street circus with Uncle Sam, a Specter of Death, The Trident Sea monster – in combat with the bumbling, death-defying clowns of life. We gathered surprisingly big crowds for leafleting, walked a Trident rope (two football fields long and tied with 408 rags representing its deliverable warheads) across the bridge, and got a face to (white) face conversation with the Governor himself. There was more to the campaign, but eventually he did, in fact, block the Navy’s project. Success for a fool’s bargain.

Another consequence: toward the end of the workshop, I got word that a friend of mine had been arrested for trash picking at a local grocery store. I

skipped out early and joined other Catholic Worker friends now leafleting folks entering the store. We were, in our turn, arrested as well and spent the remainder of the weekend in jail. At our arraignment Monday morning the media appeared and our courtroom photo was plastered on the front page of the Grand Rapids Press. Had I told the story just from memory, I’d have reported that by evening Kroger was making arrangements with the community to set aside its dated package and produce food for pick up by the Worker. However, I’ve found an interview with my friends recounting the arrest as just the opening throwdown of a protracted, months-long struggle that ended with the agreement. In any event, a second fool’s bargain was signed.

A footnote to that weekend. In a little collection of video footage of Ken performing (please watch if you’re able), I find a bit in which he rises out of dumpster having collected items with which he can perform his fool’s mass. The latter includes him turning a scrap of paper, with folds and cuts, into one of his signature paper unicorns. I used to find these little creatures in odd places at Stringfellow’s house and wondered if they’d been placed there by Bill, or even instead by Ken himself. But the wonderment here is whether his own dumpster dive had any inspired connection to our weekend arrest. Foolish wisdom gathered where it may be found.

Too soon, in 1981, declining to fly during the Air Controllers’ strike, Feit was driving cross country through the night and went off a desert road dozing. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. Instead of his multi-colored fool’s coat, he was buried by his family wearing a tuxedo. When Dan reported this to Stringfellow, he quipped, “Of course, another clown suit.”

What would we imagine? A funeral like that staged by Fellini in his film “The Clowns?” Coffin-makers fumbling with tools, whacking one another with the boards, and the rowdy pallbearers heaving-it-ho into the hearse with a carpenter still atop trying to hammer it shut. The team of two-suited horses organize a rebellion, turning the processional dirge into a galloping frenzy about the ring. By the time the fire truck clowns arrive to douse everyone but the burning hearse, it’s revealed to be a giant champagne bottle. The cork pops like a circus cannon and the once deceased soars round above the ring swimming in a rain of paper streamers. And everyone, the balling widow, the firefighters and horses, the aging clowns of Paris and Rome in their famous attire, dance – waltzes, pirouettes, and dosey does – tender with joy.

Suffice it to say, I’m in for the dance; let Ken soar in his many-storied coat. Thanks be to God.

Bill Wylie-Kellermann is a teacher, writer, nonviolent activist, retired pastor – and now a member of the *Berrigan Collective*. His most recent book is *Celebrant’s Flame: Daniel Berrigan in Memory and Reflection* (Cascade Press, 2021)



The nine anti-war activists in the Wilkens police station, Catonsville, Maryland, on May 17, 1968, photographed by Herald Argus newspaper reporter Jean Walsh soon after their arrest. Friends of the Catonsville Library, Baltimore County Public Library, Catonsville, Maryland. Image from *Fire and Faith: The Catonsville Nine File*, DigitalMaryland.org, Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center.

An excerpt from

Catonsville

a screenplay by Ryan Di Corpo

*I met Daniel Berrigan in November 2015, when I was a first-year undergraduate student at Fordham University in the Bronx. In the years following his death, I became both enthralled and obsessed with the extraordinary triumphs and trials of a radical cleric who refused to pay homage to the war machine. These pages are excerpted from my feature-length screenplay *Catonsville*, which chronicles Dan's transformation from a college academic to a nationally-recognized paragon of nonviolent action hunted by J. Edgar Hoover. In these scenes, Philip Berrigan, Dan's Josephite brother and a main architect of the Catonsville anti-draft action, tries to convince Dan to join their protest.*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DAN'S APARTMENT — EVENING

SUPER: May 12, 1968

Dan and Phil sit eating dinner. Phil, newly released from jail, is angry, as per usual.

PHIL BERRIGAN

So Cardinal Shehan -- you know, in sixty-six, he wrote about morally acceptable war --

DAN BERRIGAN

Oh, that guy.

PHIL BERRIGAN

Shehan tells me that I can't say Mass, I can't hear confessions. He does everything but laicize me. And his comment is that, Oh sure, Phil can say what he believes in jail --this sorta First Amendment patriotic bullshit -- but, youknow, he can't condone intimidating draft file clerks. File clerks -- that's his concern. What about the kids those good Catholic boys are setting aflame?

DAN BERRIGAN

At least you're out now.

PHIL BERRIGAN

Yeah but Tom and I got at least six years locked up. The judge, Northrup, you know what he gave Jim? He gave him eighteen years as a technicality but said they'd let him go if he went to see a shrink. Just so it's on record that if you mess with the war you must have a screw loose.

DAN BERRIGAN

What's the deal with David?

“Wars are not stopped by violence. They’re stopped by the people.”

PHIL BERRIGAN

They gave him three years but he posted bail. Seventy-five hundred dollars. So he's out now.

A pause in the conversation as the men continue eating.

PHIL BERRIGAN (CONT'D)

But we're thinking about doing it again.

Dan's stops eating.

DAN BERRIGAN

Doing what again?

Phil gets up and moves closer to Dan.

PHIL BERRIGAN

I've got a proposal for you.

DAN BERRIGAN

Why do all your visits include a proposal? We might as well be married.

PHIL BERRIGAN

Look, Tom and I have been talking. We think we ought to repeat the Baltimore action. We don't want what we did there to be just some flash in the pan. It's hard to sustain a revolution and even harder to win one.

DAN BERRIGAN

Whadya have in mind?

PHIL BERRIGAN

I've met with George Mische. He supported the Baltimore action and worked with the Maryknoll missionaries in Mexico. He's a veteran. Anyways, we've been looking at raiding another a draft board but not just pouring blood on the files or saying a prayer or holding some signs. I'm talking about something serious, something that will grab people's attention.

DAN BERRIGAN

What's wrong with those other ways of protesting?

PHIL BERRIGAN

They're exactly what the government wants us to do. They'll let us have our marches and wave our banners and deliver our homilies for as long as we want. It doesn't stop the troops from flooding into Vietnam. It doesn't stop the bombs from falling. The idea here isto take the power out of the hands of Rusk and Johnson and McNamara and give it to the resisters. Wars are not stopped by

violence. They're stopped by the people.

DAN BERRIGAN
Certainly true, but what's the plan?

PHIL BERRIGAN
There's a draft board --

We see QUICK STILL SHOTS of the draft board and Catonsville, Maryland as Phil speaks.

PHIL BERRIGAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
-- Local Board thirty-three in Catonsville, Maryland. It's a small town about nine miles west of Baltimore. The Selective Service Office is located on the second floor of the town's Knights of Columbus Hall.

Back to Dan's apartment.

DAN BERRIGAN
The draft files are in the Knights building?

PHIL BERRIGAN
That's right. So, a group of us will enter the draft board. We'll make it very clear that we have no intention of harming anyone. A few of us will then remove the one-A files.

DAN BERRIGAN
The files of the next kids to be drafted.

PHIL BERRIGAN
You're getting it. We'll put the files into metal baskets, take them outside to the parking lot, dump the files on the ground, and burn them with napalm.

DAN BERRIGAN
Did you say napalm?

PHIL BERRIGAN
Bill O'Connor and Dean Pappas -- you know Dean, the physics teacher? Well they got a recipe for napalm from the U.S. Special Forces handbook. So we thought, Garrison burned the Constitution, why not burn some paper?

DAN BERRIGAN
And you and Mische have thought all of this out?

PHIL BERRIGAN
And we've already got eight others on board.

DAN BERRIGAN
Who are the eight?

As Phil names the participants in his new

plan, we see QUICK STILL SHOTS of each person in the next scene.

PHIL BERRIGAN
Tom Lewis and I. Mische. Tom and Marjorie Melville. Tom was a priest and Marjorie was a nun. Now they're married. Then there's John Hogan, who was brought out Guatemala by the Maryknolls for supporting the guerillas. David Darst, a Christian Brother. And Mary Moylan. She worked as a nurse and midwife in Uganda.

DAN BERRIGAN
And you want me to make nine.

PHIL BERRIGAN
Well, yes. You're invited.

DAN BERRIGAN
I don't know, Phil. I mean, let's talk about you and Tom for a second. You've both just been sentenced to six years in prison. This next action could end you two.

PHIL BERRIGAN
This next action is necessary to continue what Tom and I and the others started in Baltimore.

DAN BERRIGAN
What did you start? A lifetime spent behind bars? Both you and I have had our share of prison experience. Yes, you have more than me. But that's just my point. Who says I would be able to withstand this?

PHIL BERRIGAN
Don't you want to make an impact here?

DAN BERRIGAN
Isn't that what I've been doing? I got back from Hanoi less than three months ago! Look, let's pause this for a little while.

PHIL BERRIGAN
Fine.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT -- LATER

SUPER: 4:00 a.m.

Dan and Phil, now halfway finished with a BOTTLE OF WHISKEY, continue their argument, which grows increasingly louder and more tense. We hear a THUNDERSTORM outside.

DAN BERRIGAN
I just don't think I'm cut out for it. You

28 DRAMA

served in the last war. I didn't. And what you're proposing carries a stiff penalty. We are talking about a federal crime here. Years in prison. And then what good are we? What good are we in a cell?

PHIL BERRIGAN

What good are we out here if we don't do anything but denounce the war in speeches and articles? What good are we as priests, as followers of Christ, to focus on ourselves and not the people being raped and --

DAN BERRIGAN

-- I am not only focusing on myself. I am weighing the options. Would this put us in a bad position with the Church? Yes. With the Jesuits? Totally. Would others in our movement, our friends, take umbrage with cooking up napalm and raiding another draft board? Surely some would. What would Merton think? What would Day think? What you're suggesting is really opposed to --

PHIL BERRIGAN

Not opposed to, but another step forward. After what I saw in the war, after what I did, how could I not stand up? You weren't there when I fired on Germans in Brest, in Lorient, in the Ardennes. A confirmed killer, I was! Philip the Bold. I was there amongst the wreckage, the bodies strewn about Münster and Düsseldorf and Dresden...

Phil notices that Dan has lost focus.

PHIL BERRIGAN (CONT'D)

Dan?

Dan turns, then falls silent for a few moments.

DAN BERRIGAN

I didn't kill anyone, no, not directly at least. But I'm not naïve. When I was with Howard in Hanoi, we were listening to some lecture. And the colonel was droning on and on about the Geneva Convention and the history of Indochina and this and that and suddenly the air raid sirens went out. So we crowded into this little shelter and there are three kids -- three small children -- just huddled in a corner. And we come up and there are just these bodies strewn about and debris and the stench of burning flesh. And then we went back to the hotel.

Dan pauses and looks at Phil.

PHIL BERRIGAN

Something serious.

DAN BERRIGAN

Give me some time to think about it. I'm tired and the whisky's gone.

Later that night, Dan is lying in bed in the pitch dark. He turns about and finally sits on the edge of the bed, STARING DIRECTLY AHEAD. He thinks to himself.

DAN BERRIGAN (V.O.)

The stench of burning flesh -- like Hanoi, like Ronald Brazee dying in that hospital bed. The command of Christ -- to love, to sheath one's sword, to confront violence with charity. Do not be afraid, he says. Well, I am. I am scared shitless but who am I to turn away? After what I've seen, what I know: that the war must stop now, not tomorrow, but right now. A little fire in the belly. A taunt to Mars. A faith in action.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Phil wakes up to find Dan sitting on the couch.

DAN BERRIGAN

I'm in.

Phil SMILES.

INT. BILL O'CONNOR'S HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT

ELEVEN PEOPLE mix and mingle while DEAN PAPPAS fashions the homemade NAPALM. MUSIC plays. The mood is light.

Present are BILL O'CONNOR, Dan, Phil, Tom Lewis, and the other six members of the Catonsville Nine: TOM and MARJORIE MELVILLE, GEORGE MISCHÉ, JOHN HOGAN, MARY MOYLAN and BROTHER DAVID DARST.

DEAN PAPPAS

(pouring the napalm into a white parcel)
Ivory soap chips and gasoline.

GEORGE MISCHÉ

Ninety-nine and forty-four one hundredths percent pure!

PHIL BERRIGAN

(chuckling)
How much are you making?

DEAN PAPPAS

Ten pounds.

"A little fire in the belly. A taunt to Mars. A faith in action."

Across the room, Dan TALKS with David Darst, 26, who wears glasses. He is tall and engaging.

DAVID DARST

You're from Syracuse, originally?

DAN BERRIGAN

Well, Phil and I were born in Minnesota, but the family moved when I was five to be closer to Pop's relatives in Syracuse. Where are you from?

DAVID DARST

I was born in Memphis but I've been teaching high school in Omaha.

DAN BERRIGAN

I suppose Baltimore's a change of speed.

DAVID DARST

I'm still adjusting.

David laughs.

DAN BERRIGAN

You've got time, you're still young. What are you, twenty-seven, right?

DAVID DARST

This December.

PHIL BERRIGAN

(to the crowd)

Alright, everyone!

The music dies down as Phil calls the group to his attention. George Mische, 30, shorter than Phil, mustache and goatee, stands besides

Phil.

PHIL BERRIGAN (CONT'D)

Can everyone hear me?

The group nods.

PHIL BERRIGAN (CONT'D)

Good. While our chemist-in-residence over here finishes mixing his final ton of napalm —

The crowd grins and claps for Dean. He gives an amused wave.

PHIL BERRIGAN (CONT'D)

-- I'm gonna let George go over the plans for Friday. George?

GEORGE MISCHE

Thanks, everyone. So I think some of you might know Grenville Whitman, who couldn't be with us tonight but he's helping us with the press. He's alerted some reporters and photographers about the action. Bill will be staying with a TV crew at a motel close to the draft board.

BILL O'CONNOR

The crew and I will be driven to the board before the action starts. I've made copies of the group statement to give out to the press.

GEORGE MISCHE

The core nine of us will arrive at the board about thirty minutes past noon. David will stand at the front entrance as a lookout in case the cops show up before we get out. Tom knows the layout of the place so he'll enter first with Mary and Marjorie. We'll take the files, walk down the stairs to the parking lot and light those goddamned papers ablaze. Questions?

DAN BERRIGAN

(sarcastically)

Should we wear matching outfits, like a traveling band?

PHIL BERRIGAN

We can do that in jail.

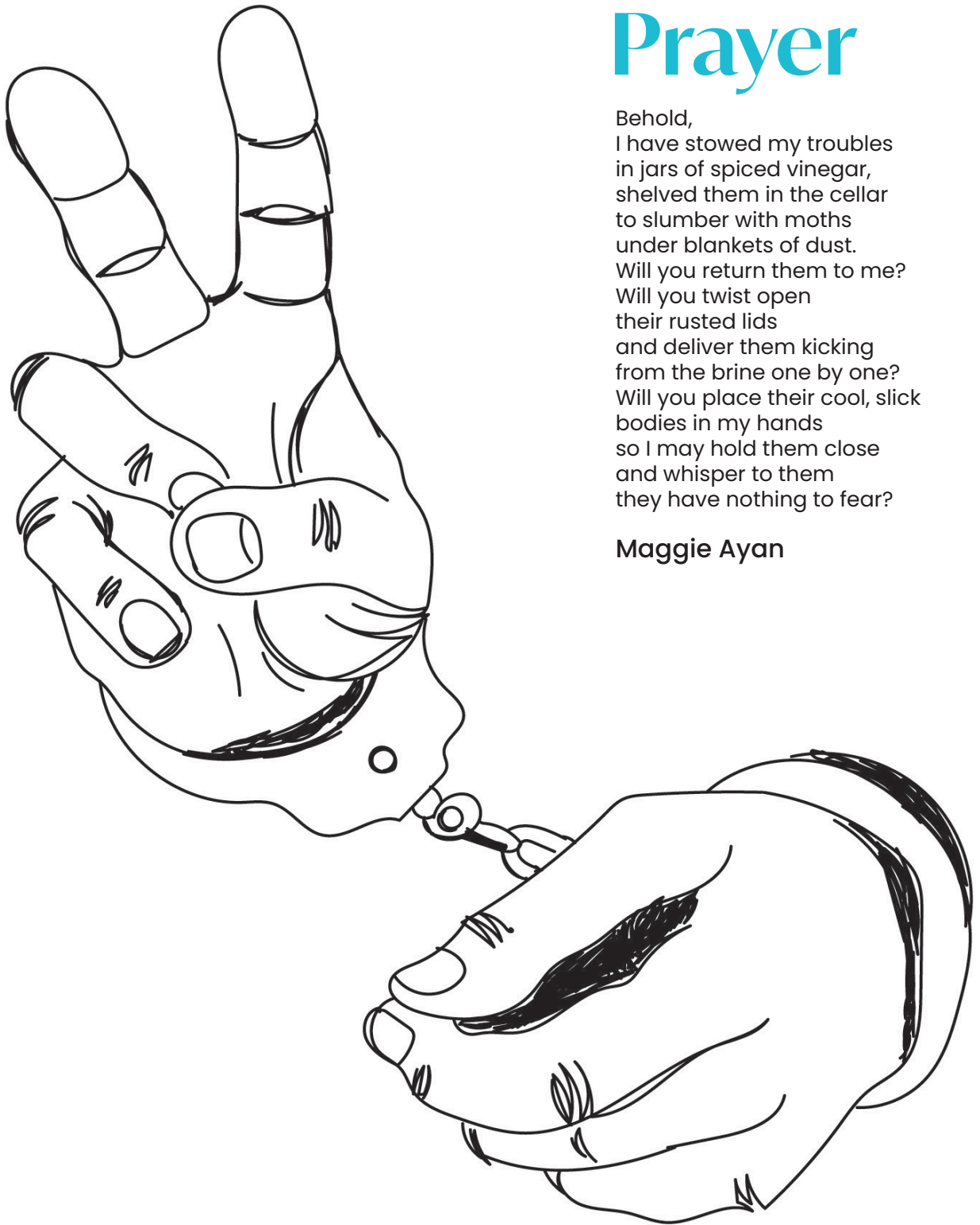
The crowd laughs.

Ryan Di Corpo, a graduate student at Northeastern University, is a freelance journalist whose work has appeared in America, Boston College Magazine, Peace Review, and The Washington Post. He received a B.A. in Film from Fordham University.

Prayer

Behold,
I have stowed my troubles
in jars of spiced vinegar,
shelved them in the cellar
to slumber with moths
under blankets of dust.
Will you return them to me?
Will you twist open
their rusted lids
and deliver them kicking
from the brine one by one?
Will you place their cool, slick
bodies in my hands
so I may hold them close
and whisper to them
they have nothing to fear?

Maggie Ayan



Members of the Same Body

Patrick Henry

For Daniel Berrigan with love and gratitude

We are all members of the same body.

I am the back
of the young Vietnamese girl
on whom the napalm burns,
who is running,
screaming,
begging,
for it to stop burning...

I am the hands
of three North Vietnamese children,
hands held in mine,
sheltered together
as American bombs
rain on Hanoi...

I am the ashes
of the vaporized children
of Hiroshima and Nagasaki...

the melted eyes of those
most unfortunate
who looked up at the flash,
their eye-sockets now hollow,
the fluid from their melted eyes
oozing down their cheeks...

I am the face of generations of
cancer victims
in Hanford, Washington
(where the plutonium monster
that obliterated Nagasaki
was constructed)

the watery eyes and diseased thyroid
of a young downwinder
winding down her life early,
at the age of 35.
Why?

Because those
who live by the sword
and
their
children
and
their children's children
die by the sword.

We are all members of the same body.

A broken body,
a dismembered body,
a body that must be mended.

We are the vines.
The branches.
The sources of renewal.

My hour has come.

I am the mouth
of one
crying out in the desert.
I will pay
no lip service
to our Nuclear Shrines.

Sick at heart,
I stand in protest.

In the name of humanity,
I keep a vigil for all life
at the door of our factories of death.

This is my body,
which has been given up for you.

story in vein and bone

Eric Martin

for Dan Berrigan

these hands
etched as they are
with slow discipline

these hands that have clasped
in prayer as Jonah
in a belligerent beast

that grasped their pen
scrawling words of one
who kissed Isaiah's flaming coal
at the altar

these hands
conducted joyous song
when instruments were broken
and lovely psalm
when praise was felony

these hands
have done
and stood by what they did

these hands
kneaded manna in our desert
and planted seeds
like raving fools in arid soil
sensing against sense
heavy clouds of promise
in approaching horizons

these hands remembered children

they smeared divine spittle across
the thick collective canvas
of unseeing eyes
molding mud with

the blessed rage of Jesus

these hands hammered war
and unfurled the patient
detonation of grace

these hands
(if we hold them)
electrify our guts

they pulse out cosmic breath
feeling as though they belong to one
who has peeked behind the rent curtain
and glimpsed death's death

these hands
(if we behold them)
point towards a shore
and open up to form a raft

they set loose the cannibal's lunch

these hands
unbothered as they are
by the steel of law

r e s u r r e c t

Birthday

for Daniel Berrigan at the age of eighty-five

Just less my father's age
how young you both were, without our knowing.
Now that dying generation
leaving us to fend.
Always short of despair.
Discontented.
Recused.
Only to imagine your own griefs quiet—
the angel's assurance at the door
of the tomb.

Stephen Vincent Kobasa

Their Images Must Not Shine but Burn

Eric Martin

for the Kings Bay Plowshares Seven

there is a building
where they place death on a readied spring
just in case

they rouse him and give him smelling salts and
slap him in the face
to make sure he's ready to go in the blink of an eye
just in case

they raid the pockets of the kid with no lunchbox
and give him the last coins
just in case

because you never know
when you'll need to launch the cosmic catapult and
kill everything

you never know
when you'll want to replace the sunrise with atomic
lightning
or trade manna for raining guillotines
or proclaim heaven by hurling hell

you never know
in that jackboot base
where death crouches
and salivates
I saw a people
they brought blood
and I thought it might be mine

I thought it might be TrayvonMartinKing's
or Gaza's
or Hibakusha's

I thought it might be the future's
or Abel's
or any bird's that sings

they brought blood
and declared no
they wouldn't
dine on human flesh
or fling gas chambers at newlyweds
no

they brought blood that splashed revelation
on a trident cross saying this has been (will be)
our splattered nuclear canvas

it dripped rivulets of hope
a painted pattern
Isaiah's ancient dream
that steel would only till soil and
no
no more shadows on the rock

I looked and saw a people
brushing by socratic gadflies with the prophet's
hammer
cradling the memory of a tomorrow

I saw a people
processing into the pit of ten billion readied tombs
while the vultures gasped
and the gravediggers howled and beat their
shovels into dust
when they spotted death's empty coffin
aflame in unearthed promise

To Philip Berrigan

"Love responsibility. Say: 'It is my duty and mine alone, to save the earth. If it is not saved, then I alone am to blame.'"

— Nikos Kazantzakis, *Saviors of God*

I am trying
(and failing)
to do my duty
without delay,
waiting
for the voice of God,
the gift of prophecy,
some sudden sign.

Easily daunted,
my faith, too fine a filament
flickers,
and I am left
shivering and damp with dread.

Your eyes,
when last I saw them,
before the jail door closed,
were not the iridescent gems
of earlier, emerald days--
those expectant eyes,
their sudden, sunspot rage,
the glare of high beams
on a country road,
exposing, like car-fogged lovers,
the idle, irksome,
self-deceived.

Your eyes,
when last I saw them,

before the jail door closed,
were tired, resigned
to moonless nights,
to airless, sun-stripped days.

Yet, persistent as a planet,
God-propelled,
you orbit,
in your absence
our complacency.

Defiant, dignified,
your spirit spirals,
and we often forget
the plenitude of pain
in your career celestial.

Your eyes
when last I saw them
like a magnifying glass
burned around the edges
of my emptiness evasion.

Sapphire-sad,
your eyes,
when last I saw them,
were dying stars
their light
eclipsed by walls,
only memory climbs.

Suzanne Belote Shanley

Art & Activism

An interview with Jackie Allen-Doucot, by Terrence J. Moran

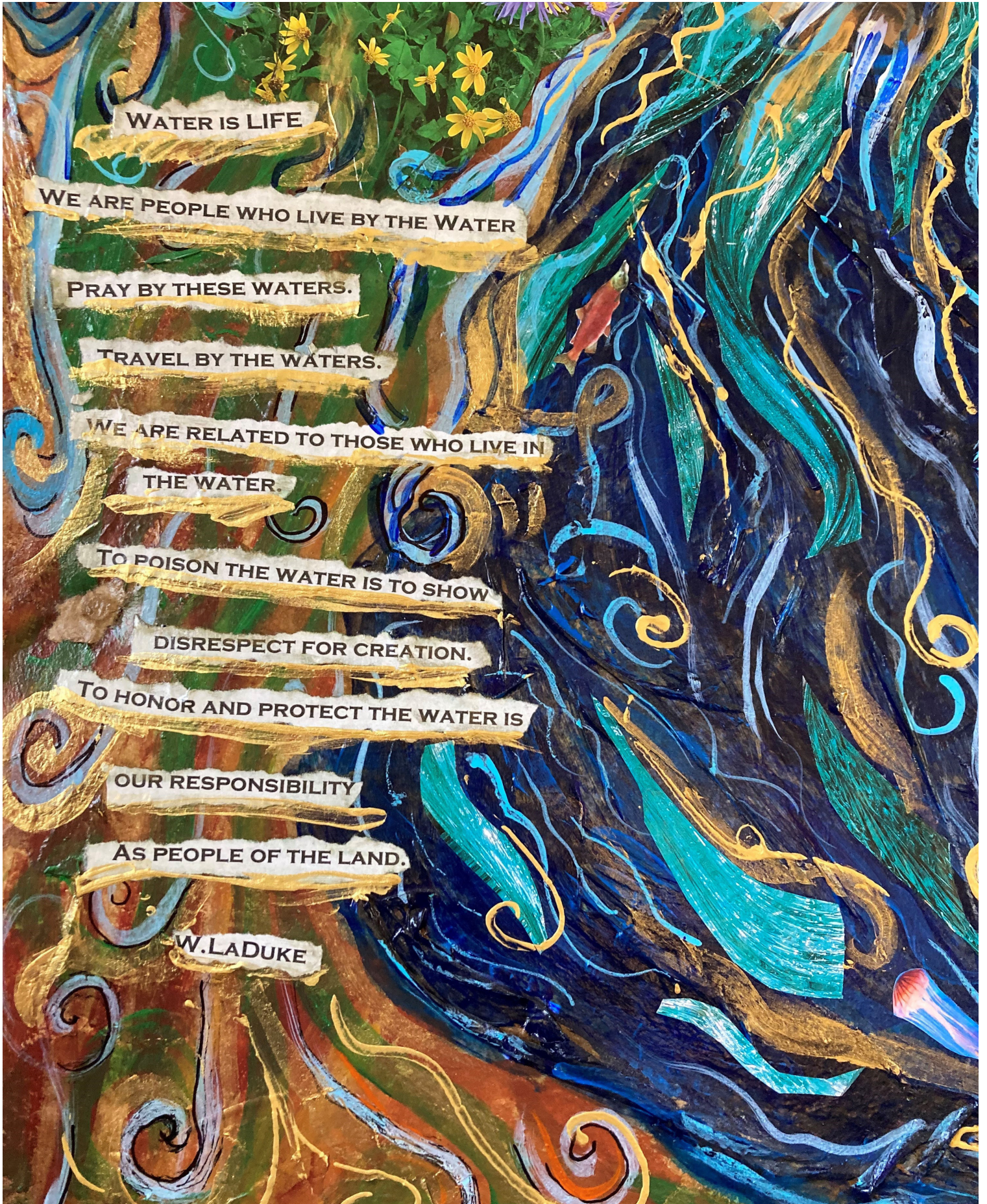
Jackie Allen-Doucot, a native of Hartford, CT, is a founder, with her husband Chris Doucot and Brian Kavanaugh, of the Hartford Catholic Worker. She is a Plowshares activist, an artist, mother and a longtime friend and collaborator with Daniel Berrigan, Philip Berrigan, and Liz McAlister. She often joins Liz in New London to paint together. This interview was conducted on March 9, 2022. The transcript was edited for length and clarity.

First of all, just say something about how you met Dan Berrigan and what role would you say Dan played in your own commitment to activism and your own conception of yourself an activist.

I met Dan at the beginning of the trial for the Griffiths Plowshares. I had met Jerry and Phil and Liz of course and Dan came up to go to the trial. That was the first time I met him. I was twenty and pretty new at activism. I had read his books and I really admired him a lot. I was trying to be funny and when I first met him, like 2 minutes after being introduced, I made some comment that was kind of fresh and I remember him turning back to look at me like, "Oh dear God," and I just thought, "Oh yeah, you put your foot in it already." But the look was a cross between a smile and a smirk. I knew right away that Dan had a playful spirit and an appreciation for humor. As time went on his love of art was definitely an inspiration for me. I loved how his art was just seamlessly a part of who he was. It wasn't like he was an artist and then he was an activist. I felt like the Holy Spirit kind of shined this gift out of him into everything he did. You know if you ever got a letter from Dan it was a work of art. His handwriting was beautiful. He didn't just write; his letters always had amazing little phrases, something that you would picture in your mind or you could pray with or stay with, or some funny story. It was a treasure. I always thought of him as an artist first even though he was the ultimate activist. He was an incredible soul his entire life right up until the very end. Even though everything was kind of put out there for public consumption he was also a very private person. His poetry could only have come from some solitude and contemplation. Both of those things are vital to the artist. Both are things he grew in me. He was a very contemplative spirit and I think that was something in him that I

didn't find in a lot of other activists. His poetry was always like an invitation to pray and go deeper with things you were super familiar with like the psalms or your favorite scripture passage. He had a way of sort of turning images and words around and pulling them out for praying with. I think it was like he painted with his words. I could really resonate with that and so that kind of helped me to put a contemplative side into my activism and my art. Anyone who knows me knows that I appear to be a high extrovert and a maniac personality. The truth is I am an introvert. I need serious quiet to recharge myself. I didn't have a lot of strength in that dimension and that's something I really needed. I think Dan showed how to fulfill that need for a lot of us activists. I remember at his funeral, Jerry [his nephew, Jerome Berrigan] said something that has always stuck with me. "Uncle Dan lived in the heart of God and sent messages out to the rest of us." That was just such a perfect kind of thing because it was so true. He really was so gentle but so powerful. That was really good for me too. I grew up with a dad who was a WWII vet, a Lieutenant Colonel in the army and he was a pretty big, macho, tough guy. But my dad was also a very moral and spiritual person and very strong. But Dan modeled this completely other kind of strength, nonviolent and loving. Dan had such wholeness and health in him. It wasn't just sort of the male energy and the male God and all the male stuff; he had a very sort of feminist way of being in and looking at the world that was inclusive of male and female and anima and animus and all of that stuff that is vital to be whole and healed spiritually. That was incredibly healing for me to be a young person growing up with him as one of my mentors.

Could you say some more about how for Dan art and activism weren't two separate and opposite things but



Standing Rock 2, by Jackie Allen-Doucot. Used with artist's permission.

things that mutually reinforced each other?

If you ever entered any of Dan's spaces, rooms he lived in, they looked like a museum. You could spend hours walking around reading and looking at the pictures and the words on the wall! You come in the door and you see this incredible statue of Franz Jägerstätter. It wasn't like he was an activist that wrote poetry or a poet that did activism. Those two parts of himself were so well integrated. He would go to Vietnam and then come back and write something like, "Our apologies, good friends, for the fracture of good order, the burning of paper instead of children." I think this is what an artist really is supposed to do. He would translate spiritual things into images that people could use. I forget who said it but there's a saying, "The job of the artist is to make revolution irresistible." I think Dan did that because he spoke with passion and his poetry was filled with beautiful images and he could name the powers and proclaim what was wrong and evil and bad. But like a true prophet he also energized people by showing the whole and the good and what a healed world would look like. So look at the idea of a Plowshares action. Who had ever made swords into plowshares before? It had to be visualized first. Then they made it become a real thing. It was something you could see and it was real. I think that's what his activism was kind of about. It was making real and making concrete things that before then had been mostly spiritual or only available intellectually or in the imagination. He was concretizing the gospel and I think that's amazing as a function of activism.

How do you see Plowshares actions as works of art?

I hope that in the actions we are making visible and concrete that which has not yet been seen. I think in particular of the Griffiths Plowshares. I brought the hammer my brother-in-law Tim had used at his Trident Plowshares action. The first swing I took on the B52 bomb bay doors, the head flew off. I looked around like, "Oh no! Oh crap," and then I realized OK I'm going to do this other part. So I spent the rest of the time and I think we had like an hour and a half. There was no one around we ended up having to call security. I ended up making an artistic graffiti piece out of the side of the B52. The first thing I did was to open a baby bottle on which I had pasted photos of children killed in war. We had brought these baby bottles of our own blood to pour over the weapon. I put my hands into the blood and I marked the doors and let the blood run down from my handprint. I was a nursery school teacher so I pasted up pictures of the kids that I worked with. I glued pictures on the side of the bomb bay doors of what it looked like when the bombs landed; there were some pictures from Hiroshima, pictures of the tests on the Bikini Islands, things like that. I then took the indictment we had written and glued it page by page onto the side of the plane. I had to make sure that these things were presented in court in case

they didn't allow certain things into evidence (like the international laws and treaties being violated by first strike weapons). Lastly, I spraypainted "320 Hiroshima's" which was the payload of this particular plane being retrofitted for cruise missiles. I really wanted the people who came and saw that airplane to not only see what a disarmed bomber plane would look like but also to see what the end result of their work was. I hoped when they were scrubbing off the paint they could read the part that said, "45 thousand children die every day of preventable causes." I ended up feeling like the Holy Spirit may have messed up my hammer so I could do that part because it was just as important as the hammering. It might have been the most beautiful thing I will ever create.

It seems like art and activism are pretty seamless for you too. Say a little bit about how you've started in this way that how art and activism are mutually reinforcing in your own life and particularly about how you think being in the Catholic Worker all these many years has influenced you as an artist.

I grew up in a house where my mom was a very big social justice person. When I was in high school I remember they launched the first Trident submarine and I went to Electric Boat [General Dynamic Electric Boat, New London, CT is the location of an engineering building for the design of nuclear submarines for the US Navy] with her to do leafleting. I was still in high school and she was part of Pax Christi and Women of Faith. They would do civil disobedience every Good Friday at the sub base. I considered myself an activist but I didn't think that was going to be my vocation. I learned a lot from my brother-in-law Tim who was a Plowshares activist. During his Plowshares trial my mom and I went to hear Phil [Berrigan] and Liz [McAlister] give a talk in New Haven. I remember my mom and I both coming out of the church. Liz was having a cigarette and we went over and had a cigarette with her and when we got in the car we looked at each other and said we will never be the same. That really was something that was transformative for me. In 7th grade at St Augustine School in Hartford, a nun taught about MAD [Mutually Assured Destruction]. It was a shock to me and no adult could explain it to me in a way where it was not completely insane. After dropping out of college I moved more towards activism and away from my dream of being an art therapist. When I became more active, I used my art to make banners and posters and stencils. Activism made me get back into feeling like I could be an artist. That spiraled into ending up at the Catholic Worker and doing art with kids. I ended up taking some art lessons with one of the kids in our program. I had to drive him to the class and I ended up taking it myself. I feel like the Catholic Worker fed the art and the art fed the Catholic Worker. Then I started seeing gaps where a lot of art represented white people so I wanted to be consciously making art

that represented Indigenous people, immigrants, and people of color. I think my lens has shifted a lot from being a Catholic Worker and living in the North End of Hartford.

What's it like for you to be an artist outside of the world of professional art, being a popular artist and an activist artist?

It's a little bit hard because sometimes I wish I could do art all the time and I can't. That's not the reality of my life right now. There is definitely a part of me that is ok with that because art, like a lot of other institutions in our country, is for the rich; it's made for the rich; the rich buy it, they collect it, they rarely share it when they are alive. A whole lot of art in museums and galleries here until very recently excluded people of color, women and LBGQTQIA. That's not the way it's supposed to be. I love the Bread and Puppet [The Bread and Puppet Theater (often known simply as Bread & Puppet) is a politically radical puppet theater, active since the 1960s, based in Vermont. The theater was co-founded by Elka and Peter Schumann.] poster that art should be cheap like bread and free and it should be the soul and it should be accessible and available to everyone. So in that sense, I'm proud to not be a fine artist with museums and all that business. That sort of feeds into an elitist mode that doesn't resonate with why I feel the Holy Spirit put art in me. To me, one of the most horrible things about the education system in this country is that education isn't about finding out what people are made for. We do not look at a child and say what can we do to find the gifts in this child? We don't want people to be taught critical thought processes. We do not want to teach the truth about our history of colonialism and racism that white people today still profit from. We do not include enough art and music and philosophy. A lot of people are talented in art and music they never get to feel like they're good at things because maybe they have ADHD, maybe they have a reading disability, maybe math is hard for them or they're dyslexic so they don't do well. I think one of the best things we do at the Catholic Worker is just doing art with kids. Everyone's a good artist when they're a kid and as you get older it kind of gets beaten out of you. People criticize or critique or you don't get encouraged so you don't do it. I love doing art with kids. It's such good therapy. Sometimes they'll come in and they're mad and they'll do crazy paintings that help them get over it and they'll get up and leave and they're OK. Sometimes they make beautiful things. We talk about beautiful mistakes; making something good out of a thing you don't like. They can just really relax and enjoy it. We play music they enjoy and we talk and there's lots of sharing and art becomes a tool to sort of equalize the stuff they're not getting in school. It's very sad to me that they don't have art classes every day and they don't do music and they don't have yoga. We had one young friend that couldn't manage school so he dropped out and then he tried to go back

to get a GED. It took him several years to graduate from high school. But he's a genius; he builds his own computers, he paints murals, he's a fabulous illustrator. Our education system has no place for neurodiversity. It judges and labels and it wastes so much talent and intelligence and beauty. We also had another kid that had a horrible time and barely made it through high school. We brought him to Bread and Puppet one summer and he ended up being on 12-foot stilts with Peter Schumann and with 20,000 people watching him, clapping for him in a show. It totally changed how he thought about himself and his place in the world. Art does that. He felt fantastic. There was something he was excellent at. Don't we all want to feel ourselves be excellent?

You mentioned Liz McAlister before. Could we go back to her for a minute? Dan was certainly an artist of the word but Liz is a visual artist and a teacher of art history. Could you say something about her influence on you as an artist?

Liz has always been an amazing artist. I know she taught art history when she was a nun. She is certainly another person that always has been able to incorporate art into her activism and into her life. In her older years, she is finding art a really beautiful way to kind of refill her own well. I remember when we were in Alderson [Federal prison camp in West Virginia] and she made a beautiful Advent calendar for her kids. Every week she would do this beautiful page with art and the readings. She would send them home and the kids put them all together into a book. Because she was doing that we all did more art because she would sit at a table and work on stuff and we would talk and so she was always encouraging everyone with their own art. I had a sense that Liz sacrificed her art because she felt such urgency about disarmament that she did not allow herself the time or materials until she was in her early 70's. She has such an eye for beauty. When you think about Jonah House [an intentional resistance community in Baltimore founded by Liz and her husband Philip Berrigan] and how beautiful it looked, even though they lived in voluntary poverty. They always had beautiful art and beautiful posters and pottery that were gifted to them by folks who loved them for all they gave to the world peace movement. I think that Liz understood that people have to have some beauty in their life to be nourished and she taught that. When the new Jonah House was built, Liz was the designer. She did an amazing job! I still love to paint and do art with Liz. It's one of the ways we get to spend time together now and that's really special to me.

I'd like now to talk with you a bit about some particular paintings of your and how they exemplify your commitment to art as activism. Let's begin with the Guantanamo painting.



Guantanamo, by Jackie Allen-Doucot. Used with artist's permission.

In December 2005, I went with a group of Catholic Workers to challenge the prison/torture camp at Guantanamo. The action was called Witness Against Torture Guantanamo. We went and fasted and prayed and walked about 20 kilometers a day to witness at the gate of the American-occupied area where prisoners for “the war on terror” were being held. Part of the process of going and meeting together was reading about some of the different people that were imprisoned there and hearing things their lawyers were able to smuggle out about that experience. These writings helped to humanize them and our government didn’t want them out because they did not want these people to be humanized. To be able to torture them you have to dehumanize them. When I returned home I wanted to make a piece of art that could resist that dehumanization. So that piece I did has an image of a prisoner with his hand through the prison gates with a beautiful growing kind of flower. The writing is a line from a poem written by Guantanamo poet Abdullah: “Praise God who has planted a garden and an orchard in my bosom so they may be with me always.” I thought that if someone read that and read that it was a Guantanamo prisoner, they would immediately be able to see the beautiful humanity of the person that wrote that and they would not feel be able to feel OK about what we have done to those people.

The image of the prisoner is grotesque and barely human-looking. There’s scarcely a face and the body and rib cage of the prisoner is the same color and form as the bars of the cell. But at the center, there is still a brilliant red heart dripping blood. But there’s also this beautiful gorgeous flowering plant. It does communicate so powerfully the human attempt to remain human, to keep that beauty in the bosom, even when the most powerful empire in the world is hell-bent on crushing you.

When I started to do that painting I knew I wanted to do something but I didn’t know what I wanted to do, When I read that poem something came to me and by the time that painting was done I feel like my soul and that prisoner’s soul had connected in a way that only comes from God. We can only connect like that because that part of God in him and the part of God in me were able to meet. I hope that people get a little tiny bit of a taste of that when they see that painting. It’s so painful to me that there are still people suffering there so many years later. The Witness Against Torture has been doing direct action in D.C. for about 17 years. It is hard to hope it will end. Another wonderful thing about Dan Berrigan is that he has made it very clear that you do the thing because it’s right and good you don’t do it because it’s going to be effective or have results. If your hope is pinned on results you’re going to give in, you’re going to give up and you’re not going to be able to hold on for the long haul; which is what transformation to a world without torture requires. Our hope is in God and God works through us within that

loooooooooong arc of justice. Hope in action at least helps so that the darkness doesn’t overwhelm, I pray that we can keep resisting even though it feels like it’s been so long and when will it end?

Let’s look at your piece on Standing Rock now. Say a little bit about what drew you to Standing Rock and then how that experience resulted in that beautiful work that I am so privileged to have on my wall.

Some friends from the Atlantic Life Community [an informal community of peace activists in the east coast of the US that meets twice a year for retreats and mutual support] had called me after spending some time at Standing Rock. They were already planning to go back. Around the same time, I listened to interviews on Democracy Now. I was feeling the calling of the Holy Spirit to go to Standing Rock. Then Brian [Kavanaugh], my community member, just came up to me out of the blue and said hey I think we should go to Standing Rock. We met up with some folks from Code Pink driving a trailer there. We traveled straight through in 2 days. The day after we got there we took part in an action at the Federal building and some people went to the governor’s residence and some people went to the government offices and sat down and wouldn’t leave. We ended up being arrested. Six of us spent a week in jail. I was fasting and, on release, I decided to continue to fast and pray. Spent a week in jail because we were non-cooperating and I continued to fast and pray. I was able to spend two more weeks in the camp learning about community and peace and trying to be silent and center Native voices. I worked in the art tent all day and made banners that went all over the world. At night I was fasting and so I didn’t go eat meals with people. I had a tent right on the river that was absolutely beautiful and I spent a lot of time praying and reading and it was a really incredible experience. The sense of community and family and wholeness was absolutely amazing. Every morning I would go to the water blessing where the women go down and bless the water and sing together and it was so powerful; it felt like the most beautiful church I had ever been in. The community was amazing so when I left there I felt like I tore part of my heart out and left it there. I think my Celtic soul resonated so much with the love of land and water. I have felt like, and hope I have acted like, a water protector ever since. When I came back home I wanted to do a piece of art about my experience so that’s where this art piece comes from. It has a little bit about what was happening about the resistance. It has some images of how unequal the power being used there was. There’s the power of the military backing up the corporations, huge tanks and guns and fire water hoses, tear gas and noise grenades. They had these high-powered lights at night that they would try to make it so it was hard to sleep. But the spiritual power that they were met with was so much more powerful and intense and beautiful. I wanted the art to reflect that. That’s the power that will

win or that overcomes the dark and the deadly and the greedy; the corporate greed that's basically poisoning the water for all of us. I hope that that's what that piece reflects. I put a huge sun at the top because I feel like Standing Rock is such a sign of hope to me and so the sun is a symbol of light and power and beauty and it's a sign of where we could really get our energy from if we were committed to that. It's a sign of a way to have energy without raping and pillaging the earth and to respect and understand that water is life!

Let's talk about the Decolonial Christ.

I received some information about a call for art and it was called "Decolonize the Christ" and it really resonated with me. I wanted to do something that spoke to the weirdness of blonde-haired blue-eyed Jesus and the strangeness of the museums and galleries that are just filled with all these images of Jesus that don't look anything like a Jewish man from Palestine. I wanted to have an image of a brown Jesus but I also wanted to put in a lot of symbols of colonialism and empire and how destructive and anti-gospel those energies are. I wanted to speak the spiritual power that can overcome that kind of bad energy, the colonialist energy. So I wanted to incorporate Holy Spirit images like Berta Cáceres and the freedom fighters. I think if Jesus were walking around today (Dan Berrigan would probably yell at me because he always said Jesus IS walking around today), if Jesus literally were here he would definitely be turning tables so I wanted there to be a flipped over table.

What are you working on now?

I've been really feeling horrible about things going on [the interview took place during the second week of the Russian invasion of Ukraine] and all of this sort of war drumming and the just warriors sort of getting all excited about a nice clean justifiable war. So I am working on a piece right now. It's a mixed media piece and the body of it is an old clock that looks almost like a house. I'm using different images of Hiroshima victims, dead Native Americans, civil war pictures, refugees during World War II, Auschwitz images. It's sort of layered; it goes from the people and the victims and refugees and then there's a lot of bombed buildings and then the top is helicopters and B52's and airplanes dropping bombs. That's all the inside and the outside of the house has bomb holes and marks in it and it's got flames and I'm gonna call it "War is a home no one can live in."

What do you think Dan would say to what we're going through now?

He probably would say it's the same old same old. The arms merchants will continue to profit as they always do. The gas companies making more money than

ever and the people that will die will be poor people and soldiers and children and women and people of color. And I think there's also the underlying threat of the nuclear umbrella over the top of all of this. Dan talked a lot about chickens coming home to roost in terms of the violence that has been happening in the United States; the schools and school shootings and the gun violence that's literally every day. It happens so frequently they don't even put it on the news anymore. He always talked about that being the chickens come home to roost. The ultimate chicken coming home to roost is if this situation ends up in a nuclear war because some of these people are crazy. So I think he would just say it's the same thing coming back again and it has to be resisted. For people like me that have worked in inner cities, nuclear weapons have already killed lots of people in this country because they have stolen health care and food and medicine and shelter and they have caused there to be no beds for people seeking to help with addiction. Nuclear weapons are killing us and we just have such poverty of the imagination we can't even imagine what our country would look like without them. Mark Colville [Catholic Worker and Plowshares activist in New Haven, CT] says for people in my neighborhood the bomb has already gone off.

Dan is always a great model to me. If you were sitting around having a drink with him he would bring up all how about these folks that are buying all the Airbnb rooms so there's hospitality space for refugees. He would look and pick out the things even in the darkest times that were the little symbols of the Holy Spirit and God being alive and working in a situation. I do think a lot about what he and Phil would have to say about this particular war on this particular ground and these particular players. I just read a thing the other night that when they were on the way back from picking up the prisoners in Vietnam, he and Howard Zinn made them all promise that they would leave the military and not fight anymore and they did. That's pretty amazing. I'm just very grateful that my activism brought me back to my art and I'm very grateful that my art can be used in the service of God's cause. Dreamwork and art are the ways I try to find fluency in the language of the Soul. That feels like the legacy of Daniel in my life. Dan dreamed of disarmament and made that dream come true; visible, symbolized, enfolded. He modeled for us that God's presence that was so central in his life could be central in all of our lives, and that was how he grew us all into the Beloved Community.

Terrence J. Moran is a priest, a member of the NYC-based Kairos Peace Community, co-founded by Daniel Berrigan, and works as the Director of the Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity for the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth in New Jersey.

Celebrant's Flame

Daniel Berrigan in Memory and Reflection

By Bill Wylie-Kellermann, reviewed by Dennis Jacobsen

Bill Wylie-Kellermann was called to radical discipleship by Dan Berrigan. Audibly. Recently released from Danbury Federal Prison, Dan was teaching a course on John's Apocalypse at Union Theological Seminary in the fall of 1972. Bill was a student in that class and felt his inner foundations shaken by Dan's radical, poetic, prophetic instruction. "I walked around dumb and silent. Berrigan noticed. The moment he called my name down a basement hallway at Union, I consider my summons to discipleship." A scotch at first but then weekly conversations over mint tea with Dan sharing the writings of Thomas Merton on the Desert Monks and of Dorothy Day on the pilgrimage of poverty. Thus began Bill's own pilgrimage with Dan as spiritual director then mentor, dear friend, co-conspirator.

Celebrant's Flame: Daniel Berrigan in Memory and Reflection is a masterful weaving of the fabric of Dan's remarkable life as priest, teacher, poet, peace activist, prophet, contemplative, servant of the poor, mentor, and friend. The book is also an intimate insight into how Dan's flame inspired a flame in Bill's soul – and the souls of countless others.

Full disclosure here. I am not a cool observer. I am blessed to be a friend and admirer of Bill starting with our sharing a jail cell overnight in 1976. And I also was called to radical discipleship by Dan. Audibly. In the fall of 1973, I was a campus pastor at SUNY Plattsburgh where I started a local Defense Committee to free Martin Sostre, a political prisoner at Clinton Correctional Facility in nearby Dannemora. One afternoon I got a phone call out of the blue from Dan asking about the efforts on behalf of Sostre. A few weeks later, Dan invited me to meet him at a Jesuit house in Montreal. The relationship that followed has

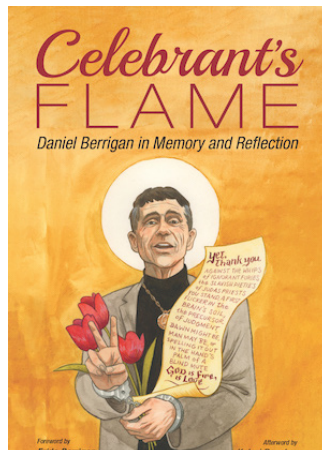
deeply and mercifully shaken and transformed my life, my view of the world, and my Christian faith.

The spotlight of *Celebrant's Flame* is on Dan Berrigan. The book also gives the reader some sense of how Dan guided and influenced Bill's own journey into faithful discipleship. But Bill is quite modest as usual. He is, I am convinced, the leading living theologian exposing and confronting the principalities and powers. He is a gifted author, a talented poet, a courageous activist, a devoted pastor, a truth-teller in an age of prevarication. One of those rare

clergy who takes a stand and pays the cost. Jailed repeatedly for direct actions against nuclear weapons, Bill's journey turned increasingly towards his "place-based vocation" as an urban pastor in Detroit engaged in ongoing resistance to principalities and powers, oppressive banking systems, racist gentrification, and the commodification of water. So many activists turn sour, cynical, exhausted, and turn away. Bill Wylie-Kellermann has been in the struggle for decades and is an inspiration to countless others. Berrigan motivated Wylie-Kellermann to see the world in a certain way, to see faith in a certain way, to see the summons on one's

life in a certain way. Such seeing has gotten Wylie-Kellermann into good trouble. Good for him.

Dan Berrigan as priest. Bill captures this central identity of Dan with tenderness and truth. The truth is that Mother Church was hard on Dan. In 1961 Dan's superior denied his request to join one of the Freedom Rides in Mississippi. The tension between Church hierarchy and Dan became an enduring wound: exile to Latin America, consideration of removing Dan from the Jesuit order, Dan locked out of his residence at Fordham University shortly after his release from Danbury prison, Dan's thinking of leaving the



priesthood (Thomas Merton talked him out of this: "We must stay with our community even though it is absurd, makes no sense, and causes great suffering.") Through it all Dan was a faithful priest. Dan tended to the basic needs of those dying of cancer at St. Rose's hospice and to those dying of AIDS. He prepared meals for young men suffering from AIDS, washed the shit and blood out of their clothes. Dan was a sacramental officiant of the movement: baptizing babies, celebrating weddings, burying the dead – often for those unrecognized by the Church. A highlight of the weekly meetings of the Kairos community was Dan celebrating the eucharist. He widened our small circle by including in his prayer those crushed by the world's cruel heel. At the end of his life, Dan was a resident with other Jesuits at Fordham's Murray-Weigel Hall. Bill recalls pushing him in a wheelchair to the infirmary's small chapel where aged Jesuits concelebrated the Mass. Dan's hands among those of a room full of Jesuits lifted towards the host in blessing and then in partaking. "A priest indeed, always and to the end."

Bill writes of Dan as poet of the Word incarnate. He shares with us a paper written for a class at Union Theological Seminary in which he reflects deeply on Dan's "A Letter to Vietnamese Prisoners" ("For my money his best poem from prison . . ."). The paper is an important read. Dan's poem is long and gripping. A sample:

In a time of sanctioned
insanity, sane conduct
is an indictable crime.
In a time of omniscient
violence, compassion
is officially intolerable.
In a time that celebrates
the apotheosis of Mars
Christ will languish
on ice for the duration.

Dan as prophet? Bill reports Dan's disinterest in this label which so easily takes the rest of us ordinary sorts off the hook. When Gary Wills published an article in *The Baltimore Sun* on Dan and Phil, entitled "Modern Prophets?" Dan enclosed a copy in a letter to Bill with a scribbled note: "Best thing about the idiot headline is the ?" The biblical prophets? Dan brought them to life in his life and in his remarkable commentaries on Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Amos, Obadiah, Hosea, Micah, Jonah. Dan felt about them as Abraham Heschel did: "Prophecy is the voice that God gives to the silent agony, a voice to the plundered poor . . . God is raging in the prophet's word." A fire that burns within. A flame that enflames the soul.

To the power brokers, the war profiteers, the idiot sycophants of the imperial state, Dan was viewed as a threat, a dangerous mobilizer of some crazy religious movement of anti-war activists. But as Bill points out, "He wasn't a recruiter for any cause,

however needed or noble. Nor was he fixed on making his purpose your purpose." A word of wisdom I heard Dan say repeatedly was "Keep it small." He was suspicious of movements, an anarchist at heart. He was hard on the principalities and powers and easy on friends. Knowing I was afraid of prison, Dan never pressured or challenged me to go beyond my limits. I chose misdemeanor civil disobedience actions. Dan never suggested that I should become a felon. This was at a time of hierarchy in the religious peace movement when actions and actors were measured on the basis of how "serious" they were. Serious meant prison time.

Bill is planning with friends an Easter vigil at an airbase. The plan is to light a paschal candle, cut the barbed wire fence, and process several miles down the runway to the open gates of the deadly-force high-security area filled with B52's loaded with cruise missiles.

A hard question: should they use hammers as in the Plowshares actions which bring to life the prophecy of Isaiah to beat swords into plowshares? In a deadly-force zone would this be an invitation to violence from the armed soldiers? Bill seeks advice from Dan. Dan responds in a letter that reveals his own refusal to conformity of action, to lock step in the movement: "I guess it could be sed, Phil peddles hardware, I peddle software. . . I agree with all my heart that the best thing we can do in such places as you describe, is to celebrate eucharist – as long as there is accompanying c.d. of some sort. This latter (as 2 tactics) is relatively indifferent to me. It's enuf to say: I prayed where prayer was forbidden because death is in charge. . . I might as well say it, hammers appear to me in such circumstance as you describe, just too flatfooted, literal, a kind of alternative weapon to the nukes themselves, and therefore exciting the worst in the death urges of those guarding."

At this point it should be obvious: I hope every reader of this review will read Bill's book. It offers rare insight into Dan from a dear friend who knew him intimately and was enflamed by Dan's flame. Will that flame continue in others? Bill and I were among the throngs filling the church of St. Francis Xavier in New York City for Dan's funeral. As Dan's casket was borne out of the sanctuary, someone in the front cried out: "Daniel Berrigan! Presente!" In moments the great collective of the several thousand joined the cry with repeated acclamation: "Daniel Berrigan! Presente!" until the casket was no longer in sight. Daniel Berrigan! Presente! Indeed.

Dennis Jacobsen was privileged to be a member of the Kairos Community from its beginnings and headed the Plowshares 8 Defense Committee. He is the author of *Doing Justice: congregations and community organizing* (Fortress Press: 2001, 2017) and *A Spirituality for Doing Justice* (Fortress Press: 2021).

Wrestling with Angels: A Spiritual Memoir of a Political LifePaul Mayer
Wipf and Stock, 2021

The history of the Catholic Left is full of improbable stories. None more improbable perhaps is that of Paul Mayer. Born in 1931 to a Jewish family in Germany, Mayer and his family escaped Nazi Germany in 1938, making a life in New York City. Converting to Catholicism at age 16, Mayer found in the Church “a true garden of delight;” so much so that he entered a Benedictine monastery in New Jersey and was ordained a priest. Responding to the call of Martin Luther King for clergy to come to Selma, Mayer became immersed in a life of social activism. An invitation to co-lead a retreat with Daniel Berrigan, SJ, resulted in a close, lifelong friendship. “Our friendship was a great treasure found in a Church that had little use for the likes of us.” Berrigan formed a close relationship as well with Mayer’s cultured parents, tolerant but understandably bemused by the direction their son’s life had taken. Dan planted a tree at his cottage on Block Island and dedicated a poem to Mrs. Mayer on her death. Discontent with his conservative monastery led Mayer to volunteer for a mission in Panama where he was to meet his wife, Naomi Lambert, then a Medical Mission Sister. Though they married in 1968 and Mayer formally left the priesthood, for the rest of his life he considered himself a priest and often wore the Roman collar and priestly stole at demonstrations. Berrigan supported his freelance ministry, “Everything in your life leads to more life. Full speed ahead!” Mayer was invited by the Catonsville 9 to head their Defense Committee. He would go on to participate in the Harrisburg Defense Committee as well and was charged by Hoover as an unindicted coconspirator of that action. Mayer was active in the draft resistance movement and participated in one draft board raid, the 1970 “Hoover

Vacuum Conspiracy” in Elizabeth, NJ. Berrigan unleashed a storm of controversy in 1973, when, in an address to the Association of Arab University Graduates, he denounced the state of Israel as a “nightmare military-industrial complex . . . the creation of millionaires, generals, and entrepreneurs.” Mayer supported Berrigan although he recognized the intemperate nature of some of Berrigan’s rhetoric. He later accompanied Berrigan on a trip to Israel and Palestine. Although their friendship was life-long, Berrigan disappears from Mayer’s narrative after this trip. Mayer would spend the rest of his life in peace and environmental activism, taking special delight in the Occupy Wall Street movement. Mayer died in 2013 and his memoir was published posthumously. His book is an engaging, first-hand narrative of central events and characters in the Catholic Left of the ‘60’s and 70’s. Those interested in the Berrigans might have wished from Mayer a fuller account of their friendship after those crucial years.

Choosing the Hard Path: A Personal History and MemoirJim Wilson
High Peaks Publishing, 2021

Jim Wilson (1946–2021) grew up in comfortable surroundings in New Jersey in a supportive family; attended Catholic schools and even did a short stint in the Maryknoll Seminary. While at St. Anselm’s College in New Hampshire, the horrific news footage of Bloody Sunday impelled him to leave school and go to Selma. For Wilson, as for many of his generation, the civil rights movement was the doorway into a life of political activism. Reading some copies of *The Catholic Worker* while recuperating from pneumonia on his return from the South resulted in joining the *Catholic Worker* in New York where he was both inspired by Dorothy Day’s strength and fearlessness and put off by her often-prickly personality. Wilson makes a

Paul Mayer

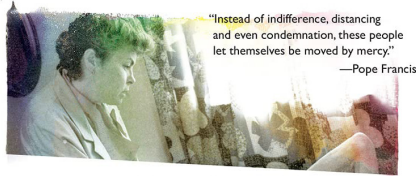
**WRESTLING**
with **ANGELS**

A Spiritual Memoir of a Political Life

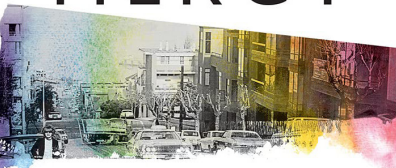
CHOOSING
THE HARD PATHA Personal History and Memoir
by Jim Wilson

convincing case that a character in the Batman comic series, Dr. Leslie Thompkins, is based on Day. Wilson also participated in the iconic draft card burning in Union Square in November of 1965—the only one of the five participants who was himself classified as 1-A and eligible for the draft. Wilson gives new perspective to the self-immolation of Roger La Porte in 1965; an

MICHAEL J. O'LOUGHLIN



HIDDEN MERCY



AIDS, CATHOLICS, AND THE UNTOLD STORIES
OF COMPASSION IN THE FACE OF FEAR

CAROLE SARGENT

TRANSFORM NOW PLOWSHARES



Megan Rice,
Gregory Boertje-Obed,
and Michael Walli

into La Porte's personality and motivation. He devotes a chapter to Daniel and Philip Berrigan. He notes how much they were influenced by the young people who joined the Catholic Worker, how attentive they were to their concerns and perspectives. When Wilson served a prison sentence for his draft card burning, Daniel Berrigan visited him frequently and financially supported his wife. Wilson eventually settled in upstate New York and spent 34 years working in organizations that supported people with intellectual and physical disabilities. His final years were a struggle with a progressive and debilitating lung disease. He was pleased to see his memoir published a short time before his death. Wilson's memoir is an understated account of "choosing the hard path;" of a man who took the gospel seriously and walked its path perseveringly.

Hidden Mercy: AIDS, Catholics, and the Untold Stories of Compassion in the Face of Fear

Michael J. O'Loughlin
Broadleaf Books, 2021

O'Loughlin, in this beautiful and heartfelt book, traces the story of the response of the Catholic Church to the AIDS crisis in the United States in the 1980's and 90's. As a journalist, O'Loughlin chooses to focus on interviews with people still living and their response, often heroic, to the height of the AIDS epidemic. These stories, while compelling, exclude the exceptional AIDS ministry of Daniel Berrigan. The book's epigram comes from Berrigan's 1988 autobiography *To Dwell in Peace*, "Evil crushes the lives of countless humans; there are few to intervene." One of the central stories in the book is the AIDS ministry in New York of Fr. William Hart McNichols, then a Jesuit and now a renowned iconographer. O'Loughlin briefly mentions Berrigan and McNichols' friendship. It's unfortunate that O'Loughlin doesn't focus more directly on Berrigan's ministry to people with AIDS. Berrigan's 2009 memoir, *Sorrow*

Built a Bridge: Friendship and AIDS is the most extensive text written by an American Catholic priest who accompanied people with AIDS. This fine volume would have been enriched by including Berrigan's ministry. And this crucial aspect of Berrigan's life awaits deeper study.

Transform Now Plowshares: Megan Rice, Gregory Boertje-Obed, and Michael Walli

Carol Sargent
Liturgical Press, 2021

Sargent's book, begun as a biography of Sister of the Holy Child, Megan Rice, expanded into an account of Rice and her companions Gregory Boertje-Obed and Michael Walli, and their 2012 Transform Now Plowshares action at the federal nuclear facility in Oak Ridge, TN; the largest breach in history of such a facility. Daniel and Philip Berrigan were founders of the Plowshares movement and participated in the first Plowshares action in King of Prussia, PA in 1980. The Berrigans weave in and out of the stories of each of these Plowshare activists. All three lived with Philip Berrigan and Elizabeth McAlister at Jonah House in Baltimore, though each at different times. Boertje-Obed took courses with Daniel Berrigan at Loyola University in New Orleans. Besides being an engaging narrative of a Plowshares action: discernment and planning, enactment, and aftermath, Sargent's book also provides a glimpse into the spirituality underlying the action. The book included numerous pieces called "Plowshare's Sacraments" that reflect on the symbolic objects and gestures that reveal the heart of the Plowshares event: hammers, blood, crime scene tape, flowers, candles, bread. Rice died a short time before the book's publication. Sargent offers a captivating and inspiring narrative of how three lives came together to answer the questions, "If not nuclear weapons, what? If not now, when? And if not us, who?"

Book notices by Terrence Moran

important event in the life of Daniel Berrigan since Berrigan's preaching at a memorial mass for La Porte irked New York's Francis Cardinal Spellman and was the precipitating cause of Berrigan's exile to South America. Most published accounts of the incident are by people who barely knew La Porte. Wilson worked closely with La Porte at the Catholic Worker and gives unique insight

The Berrigans: *Devout and Dangerous*

Directed by Susan Hagedorn, reviewed by Daniel Cosacchi

When I enter my office each day, one of the first sights that greets me is a framed copy of the cover of the infamous January 25, 1971 issue of Time magazine. Gracing the cover are Daniel and Philip Berrigan, next to the headline, “Rebel Priests: The Curious Case of the Berrigans.” They were once front-page news and household names. Today, however, they have been long forgotten by many who once admired them, and nearly an entire generation of Catholics, much less secular Americans, can no longer identify the men in the picture. One of the many wonderful blessings of *The Berrigans: Devout and Dangerous* is that Susan Hagedorn and her team have been able to introduce, or re-introduce, these historic figures, and Elizabeth McAlister, to us anew.

There are so many rich things packed into this 80-minute film that one scarcely knows where to begin singing its praises. After a brief introduction to the three protagonists by Frida Berrigan (eldest child of Phil and Liz, and niece to Dan), the viewer gets an appetizer sampler of the types of actions that made these individuals notorious. Near the end of the film, we return to Frida who recalls a eulogy delivered at Dan’s wake in 2016 (it was given by his friend Joe Cosgrove), in which Dan is remembered as having reflected, “All these faces that I walk by every day, I hold them and meditate on them like they are the Rosary.” In between these moments, there is so much on which to feast. Right away, one can see the most incredible part of this film: the archival footage. On this note, the archival team deserves praise: Mattie Akers (Archival Producer), Sarah Kuck, and Danielle Chu. They did such remarkable work in tracking down interviews with the Berrigans (and others) as well as footage of major events in their public lives. The documentary would simply not have been possible without these many incredible scenes. Some of these materials even devoted “Berriganistas” will learn of for the first time. Having spent nearly two

decades focusing on the Berrigans in my own research and in my personal life, I have never been able to track down many of these materials. What a gift that they have been uncovered in this film!

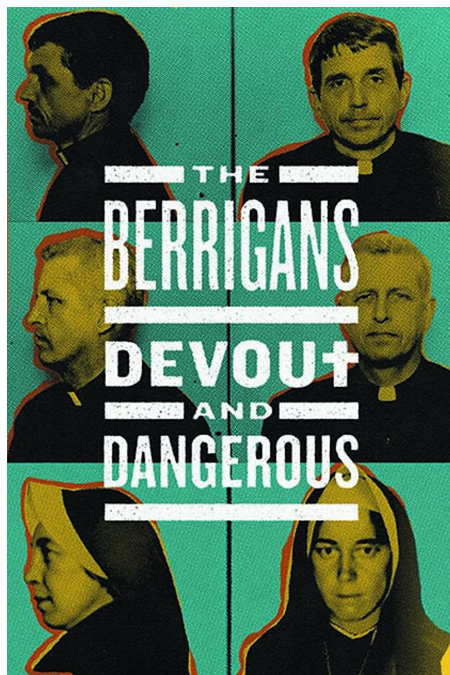
Interspersed throughout archival footage are readings from writings by Dan and Phil; these are narrated by Hollywood mainstays Liam Neeson (Dan) and Bill Pullman (Phil). Dan had appeared alongside

Neeson decades earlier in *The Mission*, so the latter’s voice would have immediately struck a chord with avid followers of the Berrigans and casual followers of film alike. Hagedorn seamlessly weaves these excerpts from the Berrigans’ writings throughout the film at moments that are equally clarifying and challenging for the viewer.

In the introductory segment of the film, Liz poses a rhetorical question that sets the scene for the remainder of the project, in reacting to her own sentencing as a “violent criminal”: “Who has committed the crimes of violence?” Throughout the film, Hagedorn reiterates a foundational aspect of the Berrigans’ activism: the state is constantly carrying out violence, and some objects simply do not have the right to exist. At the heart of this argument is a

philosophical debate about the very nature of violence. The Berrigans and McAlister have come down on the side of there being a decidedly significant difference between violence towards human beings and acts of force against weapons, draft files, or the vessels that contain them. “If the state is locking up some of its best citizens,” Phil wonders, “what does that say about the state?”

Lest the reader of this review worry that the filmmakers were guilty of pedestalizing its subjects, it is also down to earth in the way it presents the Berrigans as members of a real family, with real problems and real graces. The documentary, produced by Willie and Jim Reale and Richard Dresser, is really a story



about family, broadly construed. We learn about the Berrigan and Berrigan/McAlister families, as well as other communities including those gathered at Jonah House, the Catholic Worker, the Jesuits, and the Plowshares movement. Throughout the film, we see how these families are shaped. Viewers will find particularly intriguing how the Catonsville Nine came together to bring their strongly-held beliefs to fruition. Their community inspired other activists to raid draft boards throughout the country (for more on this phenomenon, viewers should consult the excellent 2013 document *Hit and Stay*). This was one large family. Or as Dan explained to the thousands of college students – and government agents – who turned out to see him speak on April 17, 1970 at Cornell's "America is Hard to Find" festival, held in his honor, "The evening belongs to this community; it doesn't belong to the FBI." Berrigan, on the run from the authorities, then dodged arresting agents in a spectacularly cheeky escape.

In the five years that Hagedorn spent bringing the film into its final shape, she conducted many interviews about the historical importance of the Berrigans. These interviews are enlightening. As Daniel Ellsberg put it, "Daniel Berrigan changed my life...I consciously imitated Dan when I was doing civil disobedience." Dan's unique nature was perhaps best summed up by their brother Jerry, who recounted Dan's fraught relationship with their father, Tom: "[Dan] was forced into an interior role...Dan had a pretty rough time with Pop...It's a mark of Dan's greatness that in my father's last days while he was ill and dying, Dan was, of all of us, the most solicitous and the most attentive. That's just the way Dan is."

In reflecting further on this film, I am particularly moved by the parallels in the way Dan was drawn to the Jesuits and Phil and Liz were drawn into their marriage and the creation of Jonah House. In both instances, they tell us, community was at the heart of the matter. As a parent, though, I was most touched by the reflections from Phil and Liz's children on time spent away from one or both parents when they were incarcerated. "It's not prolonged contact," Phil mused, "It's that your parents stand for something." But those words could give the impression that the separation was easy on all involved. Liz begs to differ, in the midst of one of Phil's many years in prison: "This is a particularly difficult year. Our oldest just graduated from college, and her brother is graduating this year. And that's not easy." These moments of the film left me most uncomfortable. Many viewers of this film, like Phil and Liz, no doubt cherish time spent with loved ones. And yet, these peacemakers felt called to time away from them. One certainly senses an appreciation for the example of their parents, yet we see that Frida, Jerry, and Kate Berrigan have not followed the same path of time away from their families while being imprisoned. Perhaps that issue would have been an interesting follow-up question in their interviews.

Even though this is one of the most beautiful documentaries I have ever seen, it was also not

perfect. First, the film could have more rigorously addressed conflict within the movement. At one moment, Dan's biographer Jim Forest says, "I think that Phil was jealous of his brother." From editing the two brothers' correspondence a number of years ago, I would tend to agree; however, that thread is never followed up. That point notwithstanding, Dan, Phil, and Jerry were obviously best friends in this life. Frida explains this dynamic well, noting that for all of her father's asceticism, "Dan was the person who could get Phil Berrigan to take it down a notch." However, very little is mentioned of their three older brothers, Tom, Jr., James, and John. But for a two-second mention in an archived interview with Dan, the viewer would not know they existed. This documentary would have been the perfect moment to explore the conflict that clearly existed between the three older brothers and their three younger brothers.

Moreover, one viewing this film could mistakenly be led to believe that the major players were radical leftists. This is not uniformly true. I would have loved to learn more about Dan's 1989 involvement in being arrested outside a Rochester, NY Planned Parenthood. Also unresolved are persistent questions about how these three remarkable activists maintained their membership in the Catholic Church despite so fervently disagreeing with that body's stance on war, gay rights, and women. I would also have loved to have learned more about Liz's background in a similar way that Hagedorn covered the brothers' upbringing. Of course, there is only so much one film can cover.

My only real disappointment with this film is the lack of women's voices. Of the 17 people whose interviews appear in this film, only three were women, and none of them were from outside of the family. I must confess this was an unwelcome oversight.

In the closing paragraph of their magisterial biography of Dan and Phil, *Disarmed and Dangerous*, Murray Polner and Jim O'Grady write, "When they finally pass from this life, we will need a new generation of Berrigan brothers to remind us once more, if we need any reminder at all, that they tried to do as beckoned by the prophet Amos (5:14): 'Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; And so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say, Hate evil and love the good, And establish justice in the gate'" (352). Thankfully, we have received a new generation of "Berrigan brothers" in the form of Hagedorn and all responsible for this riveting film. We did, in fact, need the reminder. Hopefully this film is picked up by PBS or some other major media outlet and meets the widest distribution possible. Everyone needs to know these stories. Now, for those of us who do know the narrative, we must pray the Rosary as they did, meditating on the faces of all those we meet, and establish justice in the gate.

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Rebel Hearts

Directed by Pedro Kos, reviewed by Timothy J. Dulle, Jr.

Is this the first documentary about women religious for which Patti Smith's raucous cover of The Who's "My Generation" makes a perfect addition to the soundtrack? These aren't regular nuns, we're assured, these are cool nuns.

Rebel Hearts tells the story of the California-based Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, their evolution as an order through the 1950s and '60s, and the eventual emergence of the Immaculate Heart Community after most of their membership requested dispensation from their vows as women religious. Throughout this outstanding documentary, time and again, the film's aesthetic choices and visual language establish who is on which side of the conflict, what they're all about, and what's at stake for the future of Catholicism after Vatican II. Through these choices, *Rebel Hearts* makes excellent use of the documentary medium. Archive junkies among us will be thoroughly delighted with how the film's fresh animations and its flair for timing weave together older film footage and

interviews from subsequent decades—improbably, even newspaper headlines, official letters, and church documents come alive.

Viewers will have no difficulty figuring out whose side the filmmakers are on in the clash between the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles as led by James Francis Cardinal McIntyre. One effective device the film uses to move between settings and through time is a series of cartoon animations. The IHMs are represented by warm and friendly graphics that announce, in vivid color, that these women represent the spirit of the 1960s, all rounded edges and smoothly flowing imagery. In one vivid scene, the cartoon figures of habited nuns are lined up and mirrored on the screen's bottom half by the figures of women in trendy attire. To signal that these nuns "flipped the script," so to speak, the screen simply spins on its central axis, putting the more modern figures on top. The shady figures of the cartoon archdiocesan chancery, in

contrast, are throughout the film rendered almost exclusively in black clothing, their (quite literally) spikey fingers, angular clothing, and menacing demeanors resembling Tim Burton's *Nightmare Before Christmas* more than anything. My main critique of *Rebel Hearts* is most visible here: that it often slides into caricature in drawing its battle lines.

The film is similarly straightforward about what these groups represent, and here, relying more solidly on historical material, the presentation is less about caricature than establishing a clear contrast which heightens the narrative stakes. In interviews and sound bites, a sort of word cloud emerges around the IHMs: "modern," "dynamic," "critical thinking." They are at one point referred to as "kickass and kind of subversive." The word "trouble" is used multiple times, but in the spirit of the late John Lewis, this means good trouble. In a clip that personifies the sisters' charming poise, Patricia Reif is asked if she has ever been arrested while protesting for social justice. She laughs and says "Yes," laughs again, and smiles, "A lot of times." In contrast, a word cloud for McIntyre's archdiocesan machine would swirl around terms related to business, order, and authority. Anita Caspary, one of the film's undoubted stars, at one point uses the words "subservience" and "conformity." Tellingly, these descriptors are not merely lobbed by detractors. In one interview, legendary archdiocesan archivist Monsignor Francis J. Weber, author of a complimentary two volume biography of McIntyre, declares that "the one thing people hate is change." He notes that the sisters "drifted away from authority, and then you're really in trouble."

The order's most famous member, Corita Kent, contributes much to this visual language. Repeatedly, her acclaimed silkscreen prints appear in the background of interviews and are used to mark transitions. Functioning in something like their natural spiritual habitat, they convey clear messages that let viewers know who they're dealing with. Pope John XXIII, accompanied by the text "Let the sunshine in;" "Stop the Bombing" in Vietnam; and "Get with the Action" are just a few such messages. In a larger sense, though, the film is saturated with Corita Kent's style. Anyone familiar with her vast body of work will recognize her in the way words jump off the pages of faded letters, the animations which beg to be described as groovy, and, an innovation which would surely delight her, the splicing of film footage into the front page of newspapers from the period. This smart technique, enhancing archival material with twenty-first century media savvy, encapsulates the technical strategy which makes *Rebel Hearts* a joy.

The stakes are likewise clear in the film's depiction of the Immaculate Heart Community, which emerged after hundreds of sisters received dispensation from their vows. In one audio recording from an IHM meeting, a sisters asks "What if what we want is really larger than the structure [of the Catholic

church]?" Anita Caspary, appearing on a talk show, describes their group as "a new kind of community which may in fact revive religious life." Lenore Dowling, whose participation in contemporary protests bookends the film and gives viewers an immediate way of placing the IHC in today's political debates, at one point sums up the community's driving ethos. She says they believed that "as women religious we could determine our own destiny." In all instances, viewers are immersed not only in the mission of the Immaculate Hearts, but in their distinctive style.

Rebel Hearts will be valuable in a number of different contexts. For those in religious life who lived through the 1960s and the longer post-Vatican II period, this film will certainly take you back. For those unfamiliar with this story, or who have only read about in scholarly books, this film will serve as an informative and entertaining introduction. Similarly, because it uses so many strategies to convey its central thesis, blends solid historical background with social justice sensibilities, and offers so many narrative and aesthetic hooks which effectively draw viewers in, *Rebel Hearts* should become essential viewing in any class covering US Catholicism or American religion in the 1960s. Though my major critique of the film is that it sometimes caricatures Cardinal McIntyre and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, this should actually work well a classroom setting where it can be useful to establish these clear distinctions and bright lines before introducing more nuance during discussion.

Further, while the primary "popular" audience for most readers of this journal will likely be the students in our classes, *Rebel Hearts* is undoubtedly the slickest documentary on a Catholic subject this Millennial has ever seen. With a soundtrack featuring original compositions by indie rock luminaries Rufus Wainwright and Sharon Van Etten, and an unapologetic focus on "kickass and kind of subversive" women, the film easily taps into the cultural channels which should allow younger viewers to see something of their own searching for social justice, community, and authenticity in their 1960s forebears. This is not merely a function of the high production values or the carefully curated soundtrack, though, as the filmmakers are careful to introduce scenes highlighting, for instance, how surviving members of the Immaculate Heart Community engage in today's protests just as they did in the 1960s, or featuring Rosa Manriquez, a Roman Catholic Womanpriest, appearing in a well-known Ben Wildflower t-shirt and later shown leading a celebration of the Eucharist. The message is clear that director Pedro Kos and the *Rebel Hearts* team see Anita Caspary, Corita Kent, and the Immaculate Heart Community as not merely compelling historical subjects, but important sources of inspiration for the present.

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