



PENIEL

December 2002

WHERE JACOB WRESTLED WITH GOD AND SURVIVED

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As Jesus walked by Lake Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake. . . He said to them, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fish for people. At once they left their nets and followed him." Mt. 4:18-22

There were shepherds camping in the countryside, taking turns to watch over their flocks by night. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to them... As they were terrified the angel said to them: "Don't be afraid, I am here to give you good news of great joy... Today a Savior has been born to you in David's town..." Luke 2:8ff

November 30, 2002

On this Feast of St. Andrew the words of Jesus calling him carry me back to a campfire in the hills of Missouri, when I was 13 years old and those words were spoken to me. It was a beautiful night in the foothills of the Ozarks and there were singing, skits, and finally the Eucharist. As I received the elements of the body and blood I remember the flicker of the flames as I found my heart strangely warmed. I knew without a doubt that there was One calling me, saying to me: "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." There was a sense of knowing that, come what may, all would be well. As the years passed the words "follow me" have summoned me through them. I reflect on the difficult adolescent years, the death of my parents, and the struggle through seminary. I remember the years of struggle with my sexuality, and all through them the voice has remained strong: "Follow me." I have been praised, condemned, and rejected, but always the words "Follow me" continue to be a summons. My dreams of large churches and of the episcopacy have come down to sitting tonight on the couch with 23 year-old Daniel, whom I have

known since he was 15. Daniel has floated in and out of my life these years, always a connection. Tonight he has been using heroin, talking of his death. All I can say is: "Daniel I have loved you as long as I can remember, and will love you always, and if something happens a part of me will die as well." He smiles with tears in his eyes, leans over and kisses me on my cheek, and says: "Don't worry, I will be alright," and he leaves. This is where that call so long ago has lead me, to the streets of San Francisco, with a group of rag tag kids, in whom I find Jesus. For tonight on my couch sat Jesus in the flesh, in all of his pain and crucifixion.

One of the fears that many professionals have of me is that I let myself be vulnerable to others by my availability, and horror of horrors, I teach my interns, be they seminarians or social workers, the same thing. And what is odd is that Dorothy Day and every pastor who has been an influence on me have taught the same thing. We in the Catholic Worker call this "gentle personalism," pastors call it "pastoral care." Our fears of accusations, of disease, of emotional pain or physical harm have brought us into an age of

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“corporate compassion”. A “compassion” that is predicated on seeing a person as a client, someone to move through the system, to be a name on a form. Corporate compassion objectifies our care and that person ceases to be a flesh and blood human. And so we have artificial boundaries of non-touch, of it being inappropriate to sit down to a meal with a person, and of not showing emotion. Tonight I cried with Daniel. I cry, fight with, and share my emotions with those I serve. I share my humanity; they share theirs.

That is the good news of Christmas: God in Christ shares our humanity. Christ touched, argued, cried, fed, got his hands dirty and was abused unto death. For God came to know us as what we are: fragile, suffering humans; and only in being so available can we be brought into relationship with God.

The Angel tells us to *Fear Not; I bring you good news of great joy*. And Jesus says: *follow me and I will make you fish for people*.

This Advent and Christmas season I invite you to hear those words of Jesus, to follow him. To follow him, not in fear, but in trust, into the lives of people, knowing that all will be well. Amen.

CIRCLE OF PEACE

December 21 - Noon

Temenos will join with other Catholic Workers across the nation on December 21, 2002 at noon in a National Mobilization Against the War. We will meet at the center of **Union Square**. There are four goals:

- 1 To make the connection between American Over-Consumption and the global violence that allows us to do it.
- 2 Force Christmas shoppers to take seriously the death that our military will cause during the Christmas season.
- 3 Reclaim our right to freedom of speech in public gathering places regardless of shopping mall’s property claims.
- 4 Show the government, in the first national anti-war action since the election, that resistance to their war burns strong.

At noon you are invited to join Fr. River in a Circle of Peace, praying for peace, concluding with the Eucharist. For more info, call or email Fr. River.



===== We Are Beggars =====

We are beggars, pure and simple. We do not twist arms, we do not seek government money, but we present our ministry and invite others to share that ministry with us. We work and add our earned money to that giving. Donations have been down, but we continue to work. So now we invite you, we beg you to share in the ministry that in the past two months has touched the lives of 954 people through the giving of

- 5000 meals
 - 1100 pairs of socks
 - 220 blankets
 - 6503 needles
 - 2000 condoms
 - 22 hospital visits
 - 16 jail visits
- and our presence day in, day out.

BUDGET REPORT

Donations: October – November	
Sale of Donated Car	\$ 700.00
Individual Donations	\$4201.53
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Total Donations:	\$4901.53
Expenses:	
Balance On Hand Nov 30:	\$ 172.01

PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

by Joan Chittister

Great God who has told us "Vengeance is mine," save us from ourselves, save us from the vengeance in our hearts and the acid in our souls. Save us from our desire to hurt as we have been hurt, to punish as we have been punished, to terrorize as we have been terrorized.

Give us the strength it takes to listen rather than judge, to trust rather than fear, to try again and again, to make peace even when peace alludes us.

We ask, O God, for the grace to be our best selves. We ask for the vision to be builders of the human community rather than its destroyers. We ask for the humility as a people to understand the fears and hopes of other peoples. We ask for the love it takes to bequeath to the children of the world to come more than the failures of our own making. We ask for the heart it takes to care for all peoples of Afghanistan and Iraq, of Palestine and Israel as well as ourselves.

Give us the depth of soul, O God, to constrain our might, to resist the temptations of power, to refuse to attack the attackable, to understand that vengeance begets violence, and to bring peace - not war - wherever we go.

For you, O God, have been merciful to us. For You, O God, have been patient with us. For You O God have been gracious to us.

And so may we be merciful and patient and gracious and trusting with these others whom you also love.

This we ask through Jesus, the one without vengeance in his heart. This we ask forever and ever. Amen.

Suggestion:

Use this in your daily prayer and in public prayer.
Enclose it in your correspondence.

Get the Word Out

If you know of anyone who you feel might like to participate in our ministry and receive our newsletter please email Fr. River, send the names in envelope, or call.



*May Christ our Savior
bring life and light into the
darkness of this world, and
to us, as we wait for his
coming.*

WAR TOY DEMONSTRATION

**December 16th
4 pm - 7 p.m
corner of Powell and Market**

War toys and violent video games teach children the best way to solve conflicts is to eliminate the people they are having conflicts with. This form of entertainment teaches players conquest, murder, and contempt for enemies--early "training" that fuels a cycle of violence, not only desensitizing people to violence and aggression, but also habituating them to the "high" of an adrenaline rush. Finally, most of them are created as "boy toys"--teaching sexism by treating girls and women as objects and rewards. War means suffering and death, not rewards.

Come join the War Resisters League and Temenos Catholic Worker in a day of demonstration and education against war toys. Come to Powell and Market on December 16, at 4:00 p.m. by the Bank of America.

Peace begins
when the hungry
are fed.

Dorothy Day