

# THE New Wine PRESS

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Volume 28 No. 10 • June 2020





# Let Me Sing God's Song and Dance God's Dance

by Fr. Dave Kelly, C.P.P.S., PBMR Director

Each morning I am on the phone, with other community-based organizations, the deputy mayor for public safety, and the violence prevention coordinator for the city. We go through the previous day and night shootings and then each of us reports out about those shootings that happened in our area.

While there is value in collaborating on techniques and strategies as to how to end the violence, the litany of shootings and deaths can be, at times, overwhelming. As hard as we try, we can't seem to get ahead of the violence. There are many reasons, too many to get into here, but at the very core is the generational poverty, racism, trauma, and disproportionate lack of resources. These are societal issues that have plagued our community here in Back of the Yards Chicago for generations.

While the spirituality of the Precious Blood does not shield us from the stress and strain of life, it can however offer us a lens through which to see the world around us differently. We are not called to merely bear the weight of suffering in the world but are called to place the suffering and the pain, the disappointment and failures, within a spirituality that challenges us to remain faithful to the end—to Resurrection!

I had a family Zoom Mass last week, and as my family were connecting to Zoom, they began to talk about these surprise gifts that had appeared on their doorsteps—no one seemed to know anything about them. The next day I told Sr. Donna the story and she jumped right on it, preparing colorful Mother's Day gift bags for 30 Mothers in our neighborhood. I said I would be happy to be "Driving Miss Donna." So away we went down 51<sup>st</sup> to May Street, to Bishop, to Aberdeen—dropping off tokens of our love. The next day, the journey continued with other staff, Karlyn and Kaiyah, dropping off gift baskets to the young Mothers. And finally, the following day, Miss (Sr.) Donna got a new driver, Fred. Again the van went cruising down through the neighborhood dropping off the gifts. Mothers who were feeling lonely and stressed by the COVID-19 stay-at-home directives, traumatized by death and violence all around them, came to the

door, smiling when they saw Fred and Raphael with "Miss Donna" bringing a gift with a "Happy Mother's Day" shout out! Their stress and trauma did not go away but was interrupted—if only for the moment. For that moment time stopped and they felt loved, special, and not forgotten. Life sprung from that simple gesture. That day, as with other days, we strove to sing God's song and dance God's dance.

Fred, who spent decades in prison and now directs our mentoring program, returned from the "Driving Miss Donna" experience with a grin that lit up the room. He was immersed in the love and care that happened as they went from house to house. Fr. Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries fame calls that kinship; Bryan Stevenson (author of *Just Mercy*) calls it proximity. Whatever we call it, it is the heart of our ministry of hospitality, hope, and healing!

So, amidst the violence, the COVID-19 losses, we hold on to hope, to living our Precious Blood Spirituality—love! ✚

*The title for this article is taken from **Daily Reader for Contemplative Living** by Thomas Keating.*

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to unbox and find a spot in the garden for the stone I was given that reads, "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." It's springtime and time to plant more seeds in the garden. I can't wait to see what beautiful things will unfold this summer. ✚

## 2020 Joint Provincial Assembly RESCHEDULED!

**October 19-22, 2020**

Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel

2544 Executive Drive

Indianapolis, IN 46241-5013

*Registration confirmation info  
will be sent out in July via email.*