

Daniel Berrigan--Poet, Prophet, and Peacemaker:

An Introduction

By John Dear

"We have assumed the name of peacemakers," Daniel Berrigan wrote famously at the height of the Vietnam war in his classic work, *No Bars to Manhood*, "but we have been, by and large, unwilling to pay any significant price. And because we want the peace with half a heart and half a life and will, the war, of course, continues, because the waging of war, by its nature, is total--but the waging of peace, by our own cowardice, is partial. So a whole will and a whole heart and a whole national life bent toward war prevail over the velleities of peace. There is no peace because there are no peacemakers. There are no makers of peace because the making of peace is at least as costly as the making of war, at least as exigent, at least as disruptive, at least as liable to bring disgrace and prison and death in its wake."(1)

With such pointed observations, my friend and Jesuit brother Daniel Berrigan staked out the cost of Gospel peacemaking and set a new course for the North American Church, if the faithful would only join the campaign. With his brother Philip, Dan waged peace with a whole heart, will and life, and paid the cost. Time and time again, he has been denounced and exiled, arrested and imprisoned, and yet he stands at the center of the culture of war with the good news of Christ the peacemaker, and in doing so, he makes peace possible at home and abroad. Through his poetry, journals, essays, and scripture studies--and a lifetime of committed action--he invites us beyond war to the new life of peace.

And so Daniel Berrigan remains one of this century's leading voices for peace and disarmament, in a rare pantheon with Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Merton, Mairead Maguire, Cesar Chavez, Dom Helder Camara, Hildegard Goss Mayr, Archbishop Tutu, Mohandas Gandhi and Thich Nhat Hanh. He has come to embody the Christian insistence on peace and disarmament in a world of war, empire and nuclear weapons.

Dan exemplifies a Christianity that works for peace, speaks for peace, and welcomes Christ's resurrection gift of peace, first of all to the poor and the enemy. Through word and deed, he sheds new light on the Gospel of Jesus, pointing us toward a new world of nonviolence, a new future of peace if we but welcome the gift. His life work, he would say, is modest, but the cumulative effect of his writings and actions, I suggest, show us what the church might look like, what a Christian looks like in such times, indeed, what a human response looks like in an inhuman world. An amazing gift.

Dan knows by heart that God does not bless war, justify war, or create war. He points to a nonviolent Jesus who blesses peacemakers, not warmakers; who calls us to love enemies, not kill them; who commands us to take up the cross of nonviolent resistance to empire--not put others on the cross.

From the days of the "war on communism" to the our even darker days of the "war on terror," from Nixon's doctrine of "Mutually Assured Destruction" to Bush's "surge" in Iraq, Dan has kept vigilant. Across these tortured decades, against the odds, Dan has stood his ground and said "No" to war, empire and nuclear weapons. Through his poetry, books, retreats and talks, he has also offered an affirming "Yes" to the God of life and peace. Dan's genius is the combination of the two. You can't have one without

the other, as many attempt to do.

This collection includes selections from his poems, journals, seminal essays on peacework and resistance, and ground-breaking scripture commentaries. I culled these essential writings from his fifty books and countless articles and poems and from the massive archives of letters and original manuscripts at Cornell University library. I placed these selections by and large in chronological order, to show how his thought and spirit evolved as his peacemaking path unfolded.

To my mind, Dan's writings are best understood as the fruit of his nonviolent actions and resistance, and as such, they stand within the tradition of resistance literature. But more, they join a legacy of spiritual writing that stretches from the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of St. Paul through the poetry of St. Francis to the sermons of Archbishop Romero and Dr. King. Dan's writings fit in both categories: as resistance literature and spiritual writing. For Daniel Berrigan, they are one and the same. All spiritual writing is political for it resists the culture of war and injustice by its very nature. All political writing for peace and justice is therefore quintessentially spiritual, for it points us toward the reign of God. This, I suggest, is the mark of a true spiritual master.

In this introduction, I shall review the facts of Dan's life and then look at his message from three angles--as a poet of peace, a prophet of peace and a peacemaker at work in the belly of the American empire. These remarks are offered as a way of preparing us to read Dan's words in a prayerful, reflective manner, so that we might understand his message, take it to heart, and deepen our own journey toward the God of peace and a new world of peace.

A Life of Peace in a World of War

As a member of the Society of Jesus, Dan lives the Jesuit mission to promote a universal faith that serves those in need, points others to the peacemaking Christ and welcomes God's reign of peace on earth here and now with all its glorious social, economic and political implications. He has tried many avenues to spread the Gospel of peace, from his poetry and books, to his retreats and lectures, to his civil disobedience and periodic imprisonments. A prize-winning poet, an acclaimed Broadway playwright, a best-selling memoirist, a theologian, a professor, an actor, a social critic, a radical resister, a fugitive, an ex-con, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, and in the words of "Democracy Now's" Amy Goodman, "a national treasure," Dan remains a beacon of hope to peace-loving people everywhere.

By the late 1960s and 1970s, Dan's deeds were featured regularly on the front page of the *New York Times*; he even appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine. His actions were followed, monitored and debated by people everywhere. But what the media and the masses missed was the spiritual commitment underneath his witness. It is that spiritual base, that openness to the God of peace, that makes all the difference in Dan's life and message.

Born on May 9, 1921, in Virginia, Minnesota, the fifth of six boys to Frida and Thomas Berrigan, Dan grew up in Syracuse, New York. When his childhood friend Jack St. George announced he was going to enter the Society of Jesus in 1939, Dan followed him into the novitiate at St. Andrew's on the Hudson, next door to Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's mansion near Poughkeepsie, New York. Three weeks later, World War II began.

After philosophy studies in Woodstock, Maryland, high school teaching in Brooklyn, and theology studies at Weston in Massachusetts, Dan was at last ordained a priest on June 21, 1952. He was, by his own admission, quite “conventional,” wearing the black Jesuit robes and beret. But his 1953 Jesuit sabbatical year, known as “tertianship,” opened a new world for him. He studied in France and encountered the Worker Priest movement, a controversial experiment in which priests, who usually stood above the fray, entered factories and worked alongside low-skilled workers and, on their behalf, advocated for reasonable hours and decent pay. Years of high school and then undergraduate teaching at LeMoyne College in Syracuse followed, but a spirit of new possibility was percolating within him.

Throughout those years, Dan wrote poetry, an interest that grew from his father’s frustrating efforts to memorize and write poems. In the mid-1950s, Dan showed a collection of his poems to a publisher, who in turn passed them on to renown poet Marianne Moore, who took to them instantly. His first book, *Time Without Number*, published in 1957, won the prestigious Lamont Poetry Award. By the early 1960s, he was a widely read poet, much in demand speaker, and one of the nation’s most prominent priests. He grew close to church activists and writers Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and William Stringfellow. After another sabbatical year in France and travels to South Africa, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, he marched in Selma with his brother Philip, then turned his attention toward U.S. warmaking and co-founded both the Catholic Peace Fellowship and Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam.

As the U.S. escalated its horrific bombing campaigns over Vietnam, Dan started to speak out against the war, a first for a U.S. Catholic priest. After Roger LaPorte, a

young Catholic Worker, burned himself to death in protest in front of the United Nations, Dan presided at a Mass for him and spoke of compassion and forgiveness. His Jesuit superiors immediately ordered him to leave the country--indefinitely. Off he went on a six month tour of Latin America. Public outrage, including a full page ad in the *New York Times*, forced his embarrassed Jesuit superiors to let him return. When he did, Dan took a new assignment as a teacher and chaplain at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. The poverty he witnessed throughout Latin America only fueled his passion for justice and peace.

In January, 1968, Dan flew to Hanoi on a peace mission with historian Howard Zinn. There they suffered in shelters during a U.S. bombing raid and eventually brought back several U.S. prisoners of war. The shock of this experience, along with the April 4th assassination of Dr. King, led Dan to join his brother Phil and others friends of the Catonsville Nine on May 19, 1968 to burn draft files with homemade napalm near Baltimore, Maryland. Their action attracted enormous media coverage across the country and shocked the nation, inspiring millions more to speak out and act against the U.S. war. It dramatically challenged pro-war Catholics and Christians with the anti-war Gospel message of universal, nonviolent love, and the image of rebellious priests disturbing the so-called peace of the status quo.

“Our apologies, good friends,” Dan wrote in their statement, “for the fracture of good order, the burning of paper instead of children, the angering of the orderlies in the front parlor of the charnel house. We could not, so help us God, do otherwise.”(2)

For their creative nonviolence, Dan was tried, convicted and sentenced to several years in prison. While awaiting sentencing, Dan took the court transcripts of their trial

and turned them into a play, *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, which was later performed on Broadway. It continues to be produced and inspire audiences around the world. It led folksinger Dar Williams, for example, to write a moving tribute to Dan called, "I Had No Right."

Instead of turning himself into the authorities, Dan went underground in April 1970 to carry on his public protest against the war. He eluded the FBI, traveled throughout the Northeast, and spoke out periodically in the media against the ever-escalating war. His action again drew national media interest to his antiwar message, as well as the wrath of J. Edgar Hoover, President Nixon and the FBI. He was finally arrested on August 11, 1970, and imprisoned in Danbury, Connecticut until February 1972. While in prison, he nearly died during a routine dental exam, when novacaine was accidentally shot into a blood vessel.

Throughout the 1970s, Dan continued to write and speak out against war, with increasing focus on the global specter of nuclear weapons. On September 9, 1980, again with his brother Philip, he participated in the first Plowshares disarmament action, a protest at the General Electric Plant at King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, where they hammered on an unarmed nuclear warhead. As they told their judge, they were simply trying to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy to "beat swords into plowshares." He faced ten years in prison, but was eventually sentenced to time served.

Over the years, Dan traversed the war zones of the world, was arrested in hundreds of acts of civil disobedience, and consistently held aloft the Gospel vision of peace with justice. Again and again he finds himself with friends before some judge or sitting on ice in some dismal holding cell because he dared question the nation's

warmaking. I have joined him many times, in dozens of such protests--at New York city's Riverside Research Institute, Time Square's Armed Forces Recruiting Station and the U.S.S. Intrepid War Museum, as well as at the Nevada Nuclear Weapons Test Site. In each instance, his good humor and gentle wit kept our spirits high, as we were led around in handcuffs, sometimes even in chains. He transformed each dreadful episode into a blessing of peace.

Along the way, Dan has worked in New York at St. Rose's Home for the Dying and later on, at St. Vincent's hospital with people with AIDS. For decades, he could be found teaching for a semester or a summer session at campuses across the country, from Yale to U.C. Berkeley, Loyola New Orleans to Fordham. He meets with a steady stream of daily visitors, including family and friends, students and young people, journalists and activists, Catholic Workers and celebrities. He works every day, writing in the morning, walking in the afternoons, and meeting people in the evenings--a peaceful contemplative in downtown New York City, keeping watch with one eye on the warring world, a second eye on friends and those in need, and a third eye on the spiritual realm of peace breaking through the darkness.

Since the early 1970s, Dan has lived in New York City with a group of twenty other Jesuits who teach and serve throughout the city. He attends regular meetings of his local peace group, *Kairos*, every other week, to pray over scripture, discuss some social issue, and plan some public action. He has given a thousand lectures, led hundreds of retreats, and been arrested every year for protests against war, injustice and nuclear weapons. He has stood with those on death row, in soup kitchens and homeless shelters, with the dying in Northern Ireland and El Salvador, Nicaragua and South Africa.

Throughout this past decade, he has been a fearless opponent of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now at age 88, he remains faithful to his vocation and vision of peace, calling us to do the same--whether we're successful or not. The focus, he teaches, is on the God of peace, and so, "the outcome is in better hands than ours." With that, he insists, we can live in hope. And struggle on.

Keeper of the Word: A Poet Who Imagines Peace

Dan's first book of poetry, *Time Without Number*, attracted enormous interest, especially from noteworthy poets. After that first book, Dan took up writing as a natural response to his love of the Word of God. He has published a book a year, including some eighteen books of poetry, winning a wide readership and respect. His journals, essays, plays and scripture studies all bear the hallmark of a surpassing poetic mind, brimming with freedom, creativity, lucidity and possibility.

"Daniel Berrigan is evidently incapable of writing a prosaic sentence," biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann once observed. "He imitates his Creator with his generative word...that bewilders, dazzles, and summons the reader." "For me, Father Daniel Berrigan is Jesus as a poet," Kurt Vonnegut wrote.

Dan's poems are the fruit of his long pursuit of peace and justice, indeed of the God of peace and justice. Recently, he recorded a cd of his best poems, *The Trouble With Our State*, where he explains that they are mainly about war and the culture of perpetual war. As I wrote in the liner notes, I think they also concern peace, and the hope and life and vision of nonviolence.(3) Reading and hearing his poems confronts, inspires, uplifts,

and heals. They offer a word of hope to those struggling with cultural despair. That for me is the best clue to understanding his poetry. Dan invites us to hope. He insists on hope. Despite all. And he can do this because he is perennially hopeful. He keeps a long haul view toward resurrection.

And thus we hear about the "the slight edge of life over death." We read about a "strictly illegal" way of seeing the world, about "not letting blood." We "learn to put on like glasses" Dan's "second sight" and "see washed ashore the last hour of the world, the murdered clock of Hiroshima." Here we reclaim our "natural powers" and join those who "deceive no one, curse no one, kill no one," "because the cause is the heart's beat and the children born and the risen bread." Dan's poems help us look anew at our broken world, to get beyond our anger and grief, and step into a different realm of nonviolence.

In this collection, I have included some of Dan's greatest poems, such as "*Peacemaking Is Hard*," "*Less Than*," "*The Trouble With Our state*," "*Prophecy*," "*Some*," and "*Zen Poem*." When I edited the massive anthology of Dan's poems, *And the Risen Bread: Selected Poems, 1957-1997*, I studied all his poems, starting with the early poems that caught the attention of critics, such as "*Credentials*" and "*Each Day Writes*," through the mid-1960s collections, *Encounters*, *The World for Wedding Ring*, *No One Walks Waters*, and *Love, Love at the End*, with their biblical themes of creation, saints, and scripture.⁽⁴⁾ With *False Gods, Real Men*, his poems, like his life, took a turn into full blown nonviolent resistance to war. The poetry of *Night Flight to Hanoi*, *Trial Poems*, *The Dark Night of Resistance*, *America Is Hard to Find* and *Prison Poems* emerged from his journeys to Vietnam, Catonsville, court and prison.

In the 1970s and 1980s, his poetry integrated that earlier love of life with his

public confrontation with death as he wrote about the psalms, Dante's *Purgatorio*, the filming of the movie, "*The Mission*," the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Plowshares movement. Much of his poetry over the last two decades involves his groundbreaking work with the Hebrew bible.

Dan uses the language of poetry to help us break through the cultural mindset to reclaim our imaginations for peace. In this nuclear age, few can imagine a world without war or weapons--much less a nonviolent God--but Dan's gift of language helps us hear the good news in a new way. Like a Zen master, he offers koans of peace that enlighten and open us to the gift of peace. It is this gift of unpacking the Word of God that led to his prophetic ministry--announcing God's word of peace to the culture of war.

Prophet of Peace to the World of War

Dan's astonishing gift of language combined with his keen critique of the culture of war make for a unique contribution to American history and Catholic spirituality. His vision of "the human," coupled with his public resistance toward inhumanity, has led many to call him a prophet.

Does it go too far in suggesting that Dan has earned his place among the venerable prophets? I think not. A prophet, says Dan, is nothing more than "a truth teller, who says it and pays up."⁽⁵⁾ Under this definition, Dan surely qualifies. He has spent his life listening to the truth of God, sharing it widely--often with people inhospitably disposed--and paying a hefty price.

Dan's contemplative rhythm of listening and going public puts him in the tradition of the towering prophets--Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel--who

notwithstanding the vast distance in time, have become Dan's mentors and models. Like them, he denounces war, weapons, arms races, corrupt regimes, miscarriages of justice, assaults on human rights, and threats to widows and orphans, the unborn and prisoners. What makes Dan's critique so unique, according to one of his biographers, Francine du Plessix Gray, is his "startling" use of language. Even his opponents sit up and take note.

For Dan, the spiritual life demands our encounter with the world, and thus, nonviolent resistance to its violence, in the tradition of the peacemaking Jesus. His early poems were, in his words, "sacramental," but his later poems took on the world and its wars and suffering, he says, because he himself began to taste some of its suffering. And so, Dan teaches not a comfortable spirituality--with its private relationship to God--but an uncomfortable spirituality that finds God in the poor, in the marginalized, and in the enemy and evokes loving action on their behalf.

"Some people today argue that equanimity achieved through inner spiritual work is a necessary condition for sustaining one's ethical and political commitments," Dan writes. "But to the prophets of the Bible, this would have been an absolutely foreign language and a foreign view of the human. The notion that one has to achieve peace of mind before stretching out one's hand to one's neighbor is a distortion of our human experience, and ultimately a dodge of our responsibility. Life is a rollercoaster and one had better buckle one's belt and take the trip. This focus on equanimity is actually a narrow-minded, selfish approach to reality dressed up within the language of spirituality."(6)

"I know that the prophetic vision is not popular today in some spiritual circles," he continues. "But our task is not to be popular or to be seen as having an impact, but to

“speak the deepest truths that we know. We need to live our lives in accord with the deepest truths we know, even if doing so does not produce immediate results in the world.”(7)

Dan finds the wherewithal to set his face against the tide of war in large part because of his daily Bible study. Indeed, like his brother Philip, Dan is a rare biblical person, one who wrestles with the Word of God day and night and tries to live according to that troublesome, peacemaking Word. “Open up the book of Jeremiah and you do not find a person looking for inner peace,” Dan notes. Jeremiah cries out against injustice, then rejoices in the fulfillment of God’s justice, he observes. “Jeremiah goes through mountains and valleys. That kind of richness I find very appealing, whereas the kind of spirituality that looks for a flat emotional landscape brought on by the endless search for inner peace and equanimity I find disturbing, a quest that goes nowhere.”(8)

“I draw from the prophets a very strong bias in favor of the victim and a very strong sense of judgment of evil structures and those who run them,” Dan says. The prophets and Christ talk “about the God who stands at the bottom with the victims and with the ‘widows and orphans’ and witnesses with them in the world, from that terrifying vantage point which is like the bottom of the dry well that Jeremiah was thrown in. That vantage point defines the crime and sin; that point of view of the victim indicts the unjust, the oppressor, the killer, the warmaker. And the message is very clear. It’s a very clear indictment of every superpower from Babylon to Washington.”(9)

Dan reaches such unlikely conclusions because he is thoroughly immersed in the text and the praxis which the text demands. He dares think that God can be taken at God’s Word, most notably, in the Gospel message of Jesus. “I’ve been maintaining a new

discipline,” he told me casually a few years ago, at the height of Bush’s war on Iraq. “First, I get as little of the bad news as possible. I only look at the *New York Times* once a week, if that, and occasionally the BBC. Second, I spend more time than ever with the good news, reading and meditating on the Gospel every morning, to be with Jesus.”

That, to my mind, is the job description of the modern day biblical prophet--aware of the world, immersed in the Word of God, a kind of Barthian recipe for readying oneself to announce the Gospel in word and deed. Deed especially. It is Dan’s nonviolent direct action which gives Dan’s words such vigor and power. But it is his words that unpack his deeds and vision and inspire so many others.

“The Word of God is spoken for the sake of today,” Dan writes in his latest book, *The Kings and Their Gods*, “for ourselves. If not, it lies dead on the page. Lift the Word from the page, then--take it to heart. Make of it the very beat of the heart. Then the Word comes alive--it speaks to commonality and praxis. Do it---do the Word.”(10) This is the advice of a post-modern spiritual master. And it rings true because it’s ancient wisdom was first tested by the early saints and martyrs.

His message has been a consistent Gospel word--“Do not kill. Do not support the culture of killing. Do all you can to stop the killing.” He put it succinctly in an influential open letter to the Weathermen: “The death of a single human being is too heavy a price to pay for the vindication of any principle, however sacred.”

Dan summed up his prophetic message of peace during his 1981 trial for his Plowshares action. These words, offered in the face of a ten year prison sentence, challenge all of us to pursue God’s reign of nonviolence as the main task of the spiritual life.

The only message I have to the world is: we are not allowed to kill innocent people. We are not allowed to be complicit in murder. We are not allowed to be silent while preparations for mass murder proceed in our name, with our money, secretly.... It's terrible for me to live in a time where I have nothing to say to human beings except, "Stop killing." There are other beautiful things that I would love to be saying to people. There are other projects I could be very helpful at. And I can't do them. I cannot. Because everything is endangered. Everything is up for grabs. Ours is a kind of primitive situation, even though we would call ourselves sophisticated. Our plight is very primitive from a Christian point of view. We are back where we started. Thou shalt not kill; we are not allowed to kill. Everything today comes down to that—everything.(11)

The Christian Peacemaker in a Warmaking Culture

In 1984, after I first met Daniel Berrigan, I asked him for a piece of advice. "Make your story fit into the story of Jesus," he told me. "Ask yourself: does your life make sense in light of the life of Jesus? All we have to do is close our eyes to the culture and open them to our friends. We have enough to go on. We can't afford the luxury of despair." His words were enormously helpful and encouraging to a young Jesuit and would-be peacemaker. Later, he put it another way for a group: "The best way to be hopeful is to do hopeful things."

Over the next twenty five years, I watched Dan practice his own teaching. Because he took public risks to fit his life into the story of Jesus, he became the first

priest to go to jail for opposing war, and one of the most consistent anti-war priests in church history. He broke new ground by his peacemaking activity in a world of total war. In the process, he showed us not just what every priest, minister and bishop should say and do, but how all of us can follow Jesus in these difficult times. He encourages us to become mature Christians who do not run from the Gospel's risky, political message of justice for the poor and peace for all.

“As a priest who is attempting to be faithful to the gospel,” Dan told one interviewer, “I think that Christians, according to our testament, are not allowed to kill. It is boldly stated in the Sermon on the Mount and in the behavior of Jesus before his execution. I proceed on that assumption--‘Love your enemies and do good to those who do bad to you.’ That’s a political gift that the church can offer to an aggrieved and tormented public.”(12)

“Dorothy Day taught me more than all the theologians,” Dan continues. “She awakened me to connections I had not thought of or been instructed in, the equation of human misery and poverty with warmaking. She had a basic hope that God created the world with enough for everyone, but there was not enough for everyone *and* warmaking.”(13)

Dan took up Dorothy's mantle and carried on her work for peace. From his journeys in the American South with Civil Rights movement, to South Africa at the height of apartheid, to the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc at the height of the Cold War, to Vietnam, Palestine and Central America, Dan tried to bring the Gospel to life. He attempted to love enemies, make peace and seek God's reign of justice. But his bold witness at Catonsville, his trial, months underground, imprisonment, subsequent

Plowshares actions, and repeated smaller civil disobedience actions took Dan deeper into the story of Jesus. It broke new ground by showing us that if we want to follow the peacemaking Jesus here in the U.S. empire, we have to take up the cross as active nonviolent resistance to imperial warfare and risk the consequences.

What's more, Dan has stayed faithful to that Gospel journey. He keeps on walking the road to peace, one mindful step at a time, whether others do or not. Whether the media is interested or not. Whether the church agrees or not. "We walk our hope and that's the only way of keeping it going," he says. "We've got faith, we've got one another, we've got religious discipline and we've got some access that goes beyond the official wall."(14) In that spirit, Dan keeps at it.

"Peacemaking is tough, unfinished, blood-ridden," he told one interviewer not long ago. "Everything is worse now than when I started, but I'm at peace. I don't have to prove my life. I just have to live."(15) In the end, the point for Dan is to be faithful to the God of peace and Gospel of Jesus.

"Nobody can sustain him or herself in the struggle for a nonviolent world on the basis of the criterion of immediate success," Dan writes. "The Bible gives us a long view rather than the expectation of a quick fix. All of us are in grave danger of being infected by this American ethos that good work brings quick change, rather than the older spiritual notion that good work is its own justification and that the outcome is in other hands besides ours."(16)

Today, Dan continues to live in community, spend several hours a day studying the scriptures, meet with people and give lectures and retreats. He calls us to be human in inhuman times, to be peacemakers in a warmaking culture, and to resist death and the

metaphors of death, like Jesus, with our very lives.

“The good is to be done because it is good, not because it goes somewhere,” he insists. “I believe if it is done in that spirit it will go somewhere, but I don’t know where. I don’t think the Bible grants us to know where it goes, in what direction. I have never been seriously interested in the outcome. I was interested in trying to do it humanly and carefully and nonviolently and let it go.”(17)

Concluding Notes

As with my book *Mohandas Gandhi: Essential Writings*, this collection has taken many years of reading, research and collating. For these essential writings, I gathered some of Daniel Berrigan’s classic texts from bestsellers like *No Bars to Manhood* and *To Dwell In Peace*, as well as *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine* and *The Dark Night of Resistance*, sprinkled his poems throughout, and concluded with excerpts from his many recent scripture commentaries, the major work of his last twenty years. Several selections are published here for the first time, such as his homily at the memorial Mass for Roger LaPorte, remarks which led to his exile in Latin America.

I encourage readers to share these writings with friends, neighbors, activists and other church workers, and to get the other collections of Dan’s writings that I have edited: *And the Risen Bread: The Selected Poems of Daniel Berrigan, 1957-1997* (Fordham Univ. Press, 1998); *Testimony: The Word Made Fresh*, (Orbis) and *Apostle of Peace: Essays in Honor of Daniel Berrigan*, (Orbis, 1996). A great new cd, *The Trouble With Our State*, features Dan reading his best poetry and is available at www.yellowbikepress.com. Also, Wipf and Stock Publishers have just republished over a

dozen of Dan's classic works, in a new series which I edited, available at:
www.wipfandstock.com.

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And I thank Father Daniel Berrigan, friend and brother, for holding aloft this Gospel vision of peace and disarmament, and showing us, through faith and courage, friendship and hope, word and deed, that on such a vision, we can stake our lives.

May these essential writings of Daniel Berrigan help us all, like Dan, to follow the nonviolent Jesus on the road of peace in pursuit of a new world without war, poverty and nuclear weapons, "because the cause is the heart's beat and the children born and the risen bread," that we might fulfill our vocations as sons and daughters of the God of peace and become Gospel peacemakers.

--John Dear, S.J.

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