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

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

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

- excerpted from America, The National Catholic Review

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

The Gospel of John 11:32-43

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

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

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied. Jesus wept.

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

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

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

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

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

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

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

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Homily by Steve Kelly, S.J.

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

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

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

John’s gospel, proclaimed today, retrospectively reveals the condition of humanity and anatomy of freedom to love. Spoiler alert: we are gifted with a ninety-five year running example. But let’s reflect. Seemingly, Jesus arrives late or too late. Humanity, doomed like Lazarus, is sealed under two tons of stone. Is this then an inspired picture of how God sees us? Even with our freedom? Humanity sealed up in death? Death taunting Jesus till Jesus has a visceral reaction? The hand of death moves the chesspiece towards check-mate, dark hour … is it really possible that God knows what it’s like to have death imminent, bearing down? Deluding? Threatening annihilation? A smeared reputation, dissolving the currency earned, the credibility of good signs … all subject to the guile and calumny of non-truth masquerading as threat? The complexity of the lie goes: “Once you are dead, once afraid, how will God guide you?”

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

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

So God does know, as we see in John’s account of Jesus, what it’s like to encounter death’s whirlwind scenario … always, everywhere, each time, each encounter, risks are included. Okay, so God knows what it’s like, and now we know that God knows we know. So what’s God going to do? In John’s Gospel, in which we’re asked for faith—not its opposite—fear, will Jesus practice what he preaches? Will he put confidence in the father’s guidance? Will (see top of back page)
his love risk facing death as the father unmasking death? Lazarus was a friend. "Lazarus will live!" A pie in the sky? Jesus went the distance in this anguish scene. To see him at work is to see life itself overcoming death, because he, as a human being, cooperated, obeyed the guidance of the one who sent him: He loved, he lays down his life.

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

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

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

Now the principalities dictate that it is strictly illegal, verboten for us to come back to life and very much on par with that and a capital crime, according to our Gospel, to unbind death's prisoners. Jesus asks others, conspiratorially, to do likewise. What of the faith of Daniel? Did he hear in his inner recesses to come forth? Did Philip his brother, another one who awakened to Christ's voice, help unbind him from the trappings, the ensnaring bonds, the lure of prestige, credibility? As I heard it exposited the powers casting the conscientious objector as imitating the love of Christ, revered by Vatican II's Guadium et Spes but kept a secret in local pastoral settings. In Gospel coloring, Phil and Daniel took the inductees' places. And I'll leave you with two things, the final one a poem of our beatnik poet, Jesuit friend, and this penultimate thought: As a traditional Catholic, I suppose we could speak of offering this Mass of the Resurrection for the repose of Daniel's soul, the forgiveness of his sins. Yet I leave it to your own assessment as to his holiness. I'm more interested in them as Doctors of the Church, as they retrieved for the people of God a move from preoccupation with orthodoxy to orthopraxis. A great service to us, just sayin'.

These many beautiful days cannot be lived again. But they are compounded in my own flesh and spirit.

And I take them in full measure with me toward whatever lies ahead. - Dan Berrigan, S.J.

I BELIEVE

Composed by Nairobi Sailcat

• Sometimes in life, we never know what's going to happen. But if you look back on your past, think about the times you were stuck- didn't know what to do, didn't know how to get through. But here we are, you did it! So next time you have doubts, just keep your head up.

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

I BELIEVE

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

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

I BELIEVE

(from my head down to my toe)

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

I BELIEVE

**Float more and steer less.** Love more and fear less.

I BELIEVE

- Recitative

* Martin Luther King Jr.

** John Halcyon Styn

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

Nairobi is a regular volunteer at our morning soup line.