



BROTHERS and SISTERS of Love

2907 S.Wabash Chicago, IL 60616

Lent 2017

Brothers and Sisters of Love
2907 S. Wabash
Chicago, IL 60616

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Brothers and Sisters of Love
C/O St. James Church
2907 S. Wabash
Chicago, IL 60616

(N. B. - the Brothers and Sisters of Love is a not-for-profit corporation, registered with the IRS)

*May Lent be a time of
Renewal and Blessings*



It is Better to Light a Candle than to Curse the Darkness

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven...” (Lk. 6:37– A Lenten Gospel).

1) Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in, Genesis the Book of Beginnings, (section on violence) writes, “The greatest weapon of mass killings is the human heart.” Sacks also writes in, Leviticus: The Book of Holiness, “The fundamental issue addressed by the Tora (the first five books of the bible) is violence and the misuse of power,” Sacks sounds a lot like Jesus.

2) A Catholic Theologian presenting on Pope Francis’ call for Mercy stated that indifference by good people led to the worst tragedies in the world. I asked if lack of Mercy and Indifference were related to “Hardness of Heart.” He brushed off “Hardness of Heart” being a biblical term. I disagree, “Hardness of Heart” is the central human condition warned against in the bible. Pope Francis is addressing this.

3) Concerning the closing of Public Housing, author Ben Austen writes as the buildings were coming down, “The Chicago Housing Authority was surprised to learn how many people in the buildings had mental or physical difficulties, suffered from trauma, or abused alcohol or drugs. These families needed the help of a social worker, not a relocation counselor” (**High Risers p.263**).

Poverty hides problems that will not be acknowledged publicly. Poverty breeds insecurity, suspicion, and violence. Trust is often given, in desperation, to the wrong people . Bad choices become the norm.

In some Chicago schools, almost half the students are officially homeless. Many move from a shelter, to grandma’s, to an aunt’s, and back again. They wear out their welcome and move on and on. Mothers and grandmothers have removed their children from school fearing investigations by the school or the Department of Children and Family Services will take their children away.

Law Enforcement often involves itself violently. Even when necessary, arrests, evictions, and removal of children can become violent acts. When death or injury occurs during police interventions, they are not seen as protectors. Instead, they are seen as abusers, even by law abiding residents. This divide is the price of perpetuating violence instead of tempering violence in our cities.

The gang response to their problems is vigilance and resistance. They show vigilance, not in listening, but in watching the actions of others– i.e. the neighborhood, rivals, the police, churches, schools, job training programs, politicians, artists and responding accordingly. They show resistance in refusing external guidance, especially from authority. They do what they want and attend to matters violently, following the values of the street.

Luke’s Gospel, Pope Francis, and Rabbi Sacks resonate with me. We are a light in the world, being a light requires forgiveness, mercy, love, and withholding judgment. It is acting in ways that bring healing and hope.

This week I traveled to a building unknown to me looking for a young man whose life is heading in a bad direction. The place was run down and seedy. Two young men I barely recognized greeted me warmly. They too were concerned about our friend. On the way out they asked me to bring them a bible. I told them I would. Let our lives be a candle lit in the darkness

The way of the Church is precisely to leave her four walls behind and to go out in search of those who are distant, those on the outskirts of life.
-Pope Francis

Br. Jim



Online giving is the fastest growing way to give to BSL. Are you part of the trend? Donate today or set up a recurring plan via PayPal at www.brothersandsistersoflove.com or through your bank: Brothers and Sisters of Love

**2907 S. Wabash
Chicago, IL 60616**

Brothers and Sisters	Of Love 2016	Financial 2017	Update Change
Summary:			
BS/L Revenue	\$81,157.11	\$64,975.28	(\$16,181.83)
BS/L Total Expenses	\$70,812.29	\$70,217.68	(\$ 594.61)
Income(Loss)	\$10,344.82	(\$ 5,242.40)	(\$15,568.22)
Specific Expenses:			
Payroll/Benefits	\$54,366.13	\$53,407.72	(\$958.41)
Operational Expenses	\$ 5,291.50	\$ 5805.99	(\$ 514.49)
Ministry Expenses	\$11,154.86	\$11,426.21	(\$ 271.35)



Amazon is tripling the donation amount to 1.5% when customers make their first eligible smile.amazon.com purchase from March 12 - 31.

Good Friday Walk March 30, 2018

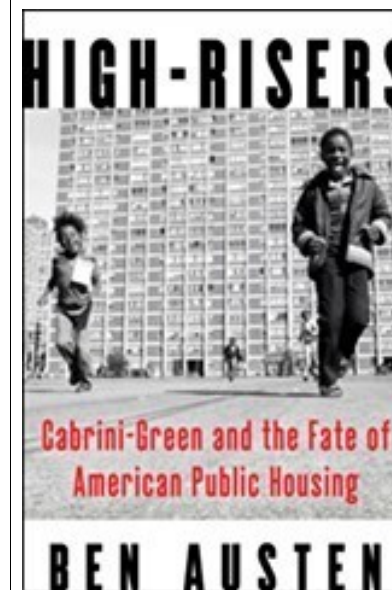
Since 1985 Brothers and Sisters of Love and the Near North Ministry Alliance have sponsored the Stations of the Cross in Cabrini Green. The Original Walk commemorated sites where young men had been killed in the neighborhood. With the murder rate dropping so significantly ministers from the neighborhood join in an outdoor march remembering the day Jesus carried his cross

to his death. Ministers from the various churches will give reflections on the 14 scriptural stations of Jesus' journey. It is a prayerful and moving way to prepare for the resurrection on Easter. The time and meeting place is set for 3:00 pm at Seward Park on the corner of Division and Orleans in Chicago. Walk takes about 2 1/2 hours, but many come late and leave early. Anyone who would like to attend please call Br. Jim 312-209-1452.



Love of Neighbor Award Cruise

For 11 years Brothers and Sisters of Love have acknowledged people who show extraordinary love in service to Chicago with our annual Love of Neighbor Award. This year's award recipients are Willie JR Fleming and Ben Austin.



I have known JR since he was a teenager running the streets. He is one of the most creative individuals that I have met in navigating the worlds of Cabrini Green, the criminal justice system, and Chicago politics. His networking has encompassed grassroots organizations and academic institutions. He has taken his ideas nationally and is one story featured in the book High Risers. He takes practical and creative action in searching for just solutions to the problems of homelessness, evictions, and abandoned properties. His efforts have attracted acclaim from the media, cooperation with banks in efforts to use foreclosed properties to house the homeless, and even gained attention from the White House. His resourcefulness in addressing problems of homelessness and poverty inspire me and fill me with hope that just solutions will continue to be found.

11th Annual Love of Neighbor Cruise Chicago From the Lake

505 E. Illinois St. (River East Plaza)
Vessel: Fort Dearborn on North Pier
Saturday September 8th 7-10pm
Boarding at 6:50 pm
Recipients:
Ben Austen- Author
JR Willie Fleming- Anti Eviction Campaign
\$65.00/person, \$120.00/couple



Ben Austen's powerful book, High Risers, provides deep insights into the disturbing realities of poverty, housing, and racism in our city and nation's efforts to care for the poor. I must confess that I often had to put the book down, because in reliving situations I was filled with emotion or because of anger at the waste, greed, and incompetence that worsened the lives of so many. At times it truly broke my heart. While I was interviewed for the book, pointed Ben to people who could give him insight for his narrative, and appreciate his depiction of me in the book. My role was minimal.

Jesus reminds us that we are called to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, welcome the stranger, and care for the ill. Yet, there is still debate in our country over whether housing, food, and health care are human rights. Where do we stand in eyes of Christ over this?



One day, "Jesus will sit on his glorious throne, (with) all the nations ... before him" (Matt 25:30), if we live as JR and Ben, with conviction, clarity of vision, and love filled hearts, then we can rest knowing we have done our duty, helping our neighbor in the eyes of God.