

A close-up photograph of a hand pouring water over a small green seedling growing from dark, rich soil. The water is captured mid-pour, creating a clear stream that falls onto the plant. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The lighting is warm, highlighting the textures of the soil, the leaves of the plant, and the skin of the hand.

BAPTIZED *for* THIS MOMENT

Rediscovering Grace
All Around Us

STEPHEN PAUL BOUMAN

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by Stacy Martin

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FOREWORD

AN INCARNATIONAL LENS



“Don’t open that,” I heard my eldest daughter’s whispered warning in another room.

“Why not?” her little sister pled.

“That,” came the stern reply, “is where Mom keeps her God clothes.”

The “God clothes” appear on occasions that are as imaginative and mysterious as any tales spun by C.S. Lewis himself. They’re worn while serving bread and wine at a table where Christ is both host and guest, while welcoming children into the ancient covenant of Beloved Community, while celebrating the unity of two lives knit together in solidarity and equality, while acknowledging the saintly and sinner within each of us during Sunday morning confession, and while honoring the blessedness of life at the grave. These occasions are at once mystical and mundane, sacred and scary. Above all, perhaps, enchanted. Imbued with power and meaning through our connection with our own improbable history.

I had been ordained a good ten years before considering in earnest the logic behind clergy vestments. And, to be honest, I wouldn’t have considered them with any degree of seriousness had it not been for my daughters. Children’s innocent fascination leads to questions. Lots of them. The best question one of them offered during their God clothes fascination phase

was in response to the cursory answer I gave to one of their many, “Why?” questions. I’d offered—for the hundredth time and in a bit of exasperation—that pastors wear collars and funny robes to be a symbol of God’s love in the world. I explained that it is easy for people to see and understand a clergy collar or a cassock as representing the unfolding presence of God’s love in the world. My youngest daughter, our most prying, begged the question and rejoined, “That doesn’t make sense. Shouldn’t it be the other way around?”

“How do you mean?” I asked, all of a sudden genuinely interested in the conversation.

“Well, shouldn’t they bring the world into church?” She remarked in an imperative tone.

Her question gave me pause. It’s a question I’ve wrestled with ever since, and it’s the question that lies at the heart of what Bishop Stephen Bouman invites us to consider in *Baptized for this Moment: Rediscovering Grace All Around Us*.

The incarnation is Christianity’s great gift to the world’s faith traditions. It opens our collective imagination when we read of the boundlessness of God’s love through an incarnational lens. That we were invited, as humans, to care for God-in-flesh as infant and to accompany God-in-flesh as outcast—all the way to execution—is also the great paradox of our Christian faith. Typically, we tend to confuse the role of divine caregiver with the divine itself. In other words, we often assume our role as the faithful to be that of wearing God, or at least God’s love, into the world, whether we are adorned with the proper trappings or not.

I tried to be careful in teaching my daughters not to conflate the church building with God’s dwelling, repeating this call-and-response on Sundays:

Call: “Where does God live?”

Response: “Everywhere!”

Call: “Is church God’s house?”

Response: “No. God lives everywhere!”

We do, indeed, find grace, all around us, if only we are willing to see it. But my explanation about “God clothes” trounced all previous attempts at proper theological pedagogy. In explaining that special clothes are needed to express God’s love in the world, I had cast God squarely within the confines of someplace other than the everywhere of the whole wide world, namely the church building. That, just as the “God clothes” themselves cloister in a closet, we may errantly cloister our living God within church buildings, to be paraded around on Sundays and special occasions, as long as the right costume is worn by God’s legitimized representatives.

It’s not that we really believe that God resides in church buildings. We know better. But our actions often imply that the world has no place in church. The world is too messy and an hour on Sunday doesn’t leave us enough time to clean things up. This might not be a problem were it not for the theological conundrum of Christ’s incarnation. As Bishop Bouman outlines in the pages that follow, we’ve spent so much time trying to figure out how to get the church out into the world, we’ve forgotten to invite the world in to our churches.

We, as mainline Protestants, find ourselves a faithful remnant of sorts at a point in history in which one might legitimately argue things have never been so good for humanity. More people have access to clean water, education, and basic needs than at any time in history. In places like China, rates of poverty have dramatically diminished in the last few generations. We still have so far to go, but, my, how far we’ve come. Yet on the church front, headlines about the progressive Christian landscape aren’t as heartening. Every mainline denomination in the U.S. faces aging congregations, declining membership rolls, and waning financial support. It’s an almost Dickensian condition, then, that we mainline Protestants find ourselves in: it’s at once the best of times and the worst of times.

In what follows, Bishop Bouman invites us to consider a life of faith free of cynicism. He invites us not to shelter from public calamities—terrorist attacks, natural disasters, acts of horror in our communities, insidious racism, violence on our streets, our own powerlessness in the face of

both man-made and natural forces beyond our control—but to engage with others in responding to them in the light of our rich religious heritage, as a community that understands that, amidst our sorrow and anger and fear and lamentations, grace abides. He invites us to consider a faithful life as one that is measured by our willingness to question rather than by the orthodoxy of our answers. And he invites us to consider what our congregational lives might be if, instead of worrying about how to get the word out to the world, we opt to simply invite the world in.

In offering a pastoral dispatch grounded in the breadth and depth of his ministry experience, coupled with his abiding love of the Church, Bishop Bouman paints a spiritual landscape for those of us who long for renewal but require vision. It's intentionally provocative and at times disarming, a bit like moving the "God clothes" from the depths of the closet to the front room mantel. He gently reminds us that a heart unprovoked may too easily become a heart that is closed. I encourage you to explore this book and apply its insights and inquiries to your own spiritual community. May you find in its pages the profound challenge and the great comfort that comes with choosing a life of faith.

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CHAPTER ONE

GRACE



New York: September 11, 2001

A Beautiful Fall Morning

On September 10, 2001 our daughter Rachel moved into a Manhattan apartment on 61st Street in the shadow of the Queensboro Bridge, with three guys from Dublin, a guy from Paris, and a woman from Omaha—strangers all. On the morning of September 11 she was to go to work downtown at Lutheran Social Services, around the corner from the World Trade Center.

On the morning of September 11 my wife Janet headed into New York City from our home in Rockland County, about twenty miles north of the city. She was going to a meeting, also at Lutheran Social Services downtown.

On the morning of September 11 our son Jeremy rose in Jersey City to pack for a noon flight from Kennedy Airport to Nairobi, Kenya. He was going to visit our son Timothy and daughter-in-law Erin, who were teachers in Bukoba, Tanzania, on Lake Victoria.

On the morning of September 11 Timothy and Erin woke up to teach

their classes at the Kibeta English Medium School. They were anticipating Jeremy's visit, which was to include a climb up Mount Kilimanjaro.

I remember driving across the George Washington Bridge early on the morning of September 11 because the sky was so unusually blue, the air warm and clear, the view of the buildings stunning in the bright sunlight. The skyline was moored by the downtown twin towers and I smiled looking at them from the car, as I always did upon entering the city I have loved for so many years.

A few hours later I was sitting in my office on the 16th floor of the Interchurch Center at 120th Street and Riverside Drive, with windows facing south. I was meeting with two of my staff. At a little after nine I noticed black smoke rising in the distance. "Jersey," I remembered thinking and gave it no more thought. We had lived for eleven years in New Jersey and were familiar with the dirty-socks smell of the Turnpike near the airport, and of all the lousy Jersey jokes told by all the world. The smoke continued to rise in the background as we met. I was getting a little curious when my administrative assistant rushed into my office. I will never forget the stricken look on her face. "Turn on your radio. Look at the computer. There's been an attack downtown." We all bolted to the window. The towers were wreathed in smoke, black clouds hovering over the harbor, cutting through the perfect autumn blue. And so it began.

Like the rest of the world we began to seek out family. One of our staff was trying to reach a nephew who was a waiter in the towers, working a breakfast on a high floor. I could not get a call through to Lutheran Social Services but was able to reach a leader in our synod whose law office overlooks New York Harbor downtown. There was no answer at the office of Lars Qualben, a vice president for Marsh McLennan, whose office was on the ninety-second floor of Tower Two. My wife called. She was stopped at the George Washington Bridge and was able to make a U-turn and get back home. No word from Rachel or Jeremy. A second plane roared down the Hudson, past our office. Our air force scrambling, I thought, not knowing the plane was headed toward the World Trade Center. Someone watching

on his computer came in and told us it had been flown into the second tower.

We watched the buildings fall, the downtown skyline obliterated in smoky ash, enveloping everything.

At noon we met to pray in the chapel of the Interchurch Center. Hundreds gathered. My part was simple. I said the Twenty-third Psalm from memory. I invited people as our prayer to name the names before God of those downtown about whom we were worried, whose fate was unknown

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to us. My life changed in hearing the names come at me through clenched teeth, strained voices, sobs, shouts. “Rachel, Jeremy, Lars,” I muttered, adding my own names.

I called our churches in Manhattan. They were starting to receive refugees from the carnage. I encouraged and prayed with the pastors who were meeting the horror with cold water, open sanctuaries, and a simple listening embrace. The time of lamentations in New York had begun. People began calling to tell their stories of rescue, loss, worry. They gave me names to pray over. Plans for communal prayer, participation in rescue, and disaster response began to be formed.

Sometimes the phones worked, sometimes not. Cell phones were especially unreliable. Maybe that’s why I haven’t heard from Rachel, I prayed. At one point President David Benke of the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod—my partner as Lutheran leader in New York and a dear friend—called. He was stuck in Brooklyn and wanted to know where I could use him. No one could get into Manhattan. I asked him to go to Lutheran Medical Center in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, designated as a primary trauma center. He stayed there into the evening, through the initial rush of wounded, then through the long waiting as only a few more came and the scale of the horror revealed itself. In mid-afternoon I spoke to Anthony Harris, the director of Lutheran Social Services. The engine of

the first plane had fallen through the roof of the building of LSS on Park Row around the corner from the towers and ignited a fire. They had to evacuate everyone from the building: staff, foster children, other clients. They went north, joining the soot-covered retreat, and arrived safely at St. John's Lutheran Church at Christopher Street in Greenwich Village. I still did not know if our daughter had gone to her meeting in that building which was now burning.

Jeremy called. His trip, of course, had been canceled. It would be days before any flights entered or left the city. Jeremy and his fiancée had walked the few blocks to the river and watched the inferno from the Jersey side of the harbor. They helped those who escaped by boat and then made their way back to Jersey City.

Janet called. Rachel had slept in. She was safe. It would be another day before we could get a call through to Tanzania. Timothy told us that Bishop Buberwa and some others had come to their home and prayed with them for their beleaguered city. For days people stopped them on the streets: "*Poli sana*," they said. In Swahili: "We are so sorry."

My urge to get home was overwhelming, but I spent the rest of the afternoon and early evening on the phone, getting a sense of what was happening downtown, checking in with many people, formulating the beginning of plans that would evolve into Lutheran Disaster Response New York. As the sun descended I just wanted to hold my wife. At the entrance ramp for the George Washington Bridge I waited in a line of snarling traffic. A bomb scare had closed the bridge. I saw for the first time what would become a familiar sight: People with guns looking into cars. I drove on the shoulder, showed my clerical collar to someone with a gun, and received permission to make a U-turn back into the city. In the smoky evening I was the only car traveling south on the east side FDR expressway. I got off at 96th Street and drove through empty streets to our apartment, where we usually stayed during the week, at 88th and Lexington.

I walked out to get a slice of pizza and looked down Lexington. Downtown was shrouded in a pillar of smoke and fire of biblical proportions.

Weary people were trudging home, eyes glazed. People greeted one another in muted tones. Dazed New Yorkers began telling stories. It was somber. My collar seemed an invitation. People asked for prayer. “Father, will you pray for Vinnie? I don’t think he made it.” It took me an hour and a half to walk the two blocks back to our apartment.

The walls of the apartment closed in on me. After talking to each stateside member of my family, I went to the car and tried to get out again. I wanted to be with Janet. The bridge was free. I couldn’t look downtown. All along the Palisades as I traveled north was the sound of sirens as fire, police, and rescue vehicles rushed south from Hudson Valley cities and towns toward Ground Zero. We were one connected village in the sprawling New York metropolis that night. Ground Zero was a hole fifty feet deep, but it was symbolically fifty miles wide. It would be Wednesday before I was able to return to the city. Shortly after I crossed the George Washington Bridge the authorities shut down all the bridges and tunnels and locked Manhattan down.

Home. Tears and embraces. Janet and I watched coverage long into the night. We called our pastor and arranged for a prayer service at our church for the next morning. We poured a drink. We prayed. We were but one family in New York near the end of a long day, repeating what millions around the world experience in natural and human-made disasters. This book is about how congregations can respond, compassionately yet effectively, to such tragic events.

Endless Day

That long day did not seem to end. In fact, the many weeks and months ahead would seem like a single endless day, as losses were accounted for, life as we knew it changed irrevocably, and certain war loomed. Endless day as we learned of the forty-seven children in our Lutheran schools who lost parents. Endless day as we lived through the memorial and burial season, remembering the dead. Endless day as terror changed the landscape of our metropolis. Endless day as the residue of trauma, depression, an-

ger, grief, sadness, and doubt bore through the initial adrenalin rush of response and courage and deep faith, leading to spiritual enervation, despite an overweening sense of hopelessness. Endless day as the stranger among us became hunted and blamed, as the economic migrants and the poor plunged into deeper poverty in the ruined economic landscape. Endless day as initial global solidarity was lost in the run up to pending wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. How we longed for the night and true rest.

But my memories are also about spiritual rest, communal prayer, countless acts of solidarity, kindness, and compassion. Rest and refreshment came in hearing the words of the Bible as if for the first time. As we read the old, old story into our unfolding narrative, Scripture came alive.

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It carried us. Isaiah 62 reminded us that we would be called “a city not forgotten.” In Isaiah 58 we grasped our vocation to be “healers of the breach, restorers of streets to live in.” Baptism took on new meaning when we heard how one of our Lutheran chaplains, William Wrede, had run across the Brooklyn Bridge to the towers the morning of the attacks and anointed with oil the brave fire and rescue personnel who asked for this baptismal reminder as they rushed into the towers and up the smoky stairs. We came at last to understand that we were baptized for this moment. We rested in telling our stories and speaking our pain, encouraged by the opening words of Lamentations: “How lonely sits the city....” We saw the heroes in the towers as angels ascending and descending on Jacob’s ladder. For a brief time our houses of worship were the most important places in the community and the Bible was a living document of drama encompassing our own.

In the weeks after 9/11, I would visit each of the eighteen conferences of our synod with only one question: How is your soul? The stories which unfolded were a part of the lamentations, which must come before the beginnings of healing. The week after September 11, President Benke and I had formed Lutheran Disaster Response New York with some fifteen-mil-

lion dollars sent to us from Lutherans and others around the country and around the world. Through LDRNY we walked with the victims of 9/11 and their families, accompanied the economic victims of this tragedy, provided respite for pastors and teachers, and counseling for children, and pursued many other opportunities for comfort and renewal. We formed a bridge with many partners—public, interfaith, ecumenical, private—and nurtured and supported associations for victim’s families, “unmet needs tables,” and more. I traveled around the country and to other countries, bringing a perspective from the ground in New York to the altered landscape of our world. That altered landscape, and our response to it as congregations and denominations, is the subject and purpose of this book.

Interfaith dialogue, communal worship, presence in the firehouses, conducting memorials and funerals, deep conversations about faith and doubt and the presence of God, explaining life on the ground to friends around the corner and around the world, became part of the fabric of every parish and pastor in our synod.

Several days after the tragedy almost every Lutheran pastor and many lay members of our congregations in our metropolis gathered with our national leaders at Holy Trinity on the West Side. After coming back from Ground Zero with our national leaders I told those assembled: We have been baptized for this moment.

Grace

After the attacks on 9/11, we continue to witness many ground zeros: Katrina, Sandy Hook, Ferguson, Paris, San Bernardino, Syria, Orlando, even the daily violence in the mean streets of America’s broken cities. Natural disasters, often exacerbated by human failure, have struck as well: hurricanes, tsunamis, drought, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes. We in North America have experienced firsthand the fear, helplessness, and vulnerability many in the world experience every day. Every one of these crises has jolted me back to that beautiful September day, and every one of them stirs up in my heart the great longing people felt to be near us, to stand

with us, to do something tangible. In my longing to make a difference—and to ensure that my church makes a difference—in so many lives torn apart in places of hurt and hope around the corner and across the globe, I have realized deeply my own gratitude for the many ways love and grace closed the distance between us in the days after September 11.

Five years after the attacks, I wrote a book about the first chapters in this saga, *Grace All Around Us*, which explored my experience at the time, and honored my long love story with New York City. Until I moved back to Chicago to lead the domestic ministries of my communion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), I had lived in the New York metropolis my entire ministry. My first call in 1973 was to two congregations in Woodside, Queens, where I learned a little Spanish and directed youth ministry. I was called to a congregation in Jackson Heights, Queens in 1974 and served there for eight years. During my time in Jackson Heights we grew a church of many different ethnic groups, in many ways a typical New York story. Those were the years that my leadership became rooted in the discipline and arts of community organizing. In the 1980s I served a parish in Bergen County, New Jersey, while also serving as a consultant to community organizing efforts across the greater New York metropolitan area. For twelve years I served as bishop of the Metropolitan New York Synod of the ELCA, with over two hundred congregations throughout Long Island, the city of New York, and the Hudson Valley, who collectively worship in over twenty languages. My family has lived in Queens, in Manhattan apartments on the Upper East Side, in Union Square downtown and uptown in Harlem. I have always loved the city, but since September 11 that love continues to move me in ways I can hardly bring to words. In Scripture God's promises are made real in turf, God's faithfulness is expressed on the ground, in places of hurt and hope. The passion emanating from Ground Zero in New York has made it, for me, a kind of Holy Land. In Chicago, a city I love and embrace, my heart still burns with New York fire, especially every September as I remember that day.

One of my favorite books is Georges Bernanos' *Diary of a Country*

Priest. It records the thoughts of an ordinary parish priest, his struggles with the mundane, his relevance to the rhythm of life in his rural parish, his attempts to pray, his wrestling with faith and doubt. In it he faces his own death, even as he has helped others face their own living and dying. The priest loves his turf, even while seeing clearly its folly and faults. He loves the people he encounters, even those who vex and irritate him. *Grace All Around Us* was a kind of “diary of an urban bishop,” looking at September 11 and its rippling effects through the eyes of a pastor called to be a bishop. It documented my own struggle between doubt and faith, the difficult effort to find a voice in which to pray in the shadow of Ground Zero. It was a journal of awe and respect for the many people whose faith and compassion have left their mark on me. At Ground Zero we learned from others who had gone through tragedy before us, and I pray that some insights we have gained may be helpful to others, and relevant at any moment of tragedy.

This book’s title, *Baptized for This Moment*, is rooted in the shared experience of Christian congregations of many denominations as our world is constantly challenged and changed. This new book is about today, about living into that altered landscape, about the mission of the Church and its baptized disciples in God’s movement of reconciliation and restoration through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Both books have been offered in the spirit of the last words of Bernanos’ compelling novel. A parishioner records the last words of the dying priest: “He said, ‘Does it matter? Grace is all around us.’”

Public Faith, Public Church

For many of us who were directly involved, the events of September 11 re-framed our theology and reinvigorated our practice of ministry. Yet as a society, we Americans seem to have moved from lamentations and grief to hardened anger. This visceral, communal anger has come to define the discourse in the common spaces remaining in the public square. How does the grace of faithful people and institutions enter space so permeated with

fear and anger? This present book is a call to do just that, to re-engage the soul of faith (and in particular the Abrahamic faiths—Jewish, Christian, Islam) in the public arena, to encourage congregations to accompany public society with the most graceful and irenic and communal commitments of our traditions. Religion is today sometimes being used to exclude, attack, judge, discriminate, dominate, denigrate. The towers fell by an act of

those invoking the name of God. This book is a call, in the name of God, for congregations and other religious institutions to offer hospitality in an often alien world, to accept invitations to tables we have not set. The communal anger and fear around issues of inter-faith presence, immigration, refugees, war and peace, race, justice, and poverty can only be faced with grace and courage in nascent relationships, at new communal tables, by growing in understanding and mutual respect. Faith can help frame and inspire these conversations, faith which goes public as we figure out how we must spend our energy, not inviting “in” but learning how to be invited “out.” Our faith must lead us out into the world where people who are hurting need our help.

Our faith must lead us out into the world where people who are hurting need our help.

In *Grace All Around Us* I wrote about the ways grief—personal and collective—drives us to seek the healing that liturgy and fellowship offer. The stakes are now higher. Acts of terrorism are no longer an exception. Climate change stirs devastating natural disasters. Unspeakable acts of violence erupt across America with disturbing frequency. Crises arise every day, everywhere. Our fearful reaction may cause us to lose our sense of hospitality, vote against our best interests, justify overt racism, collude in surrendering our civil liberties, and favor diverting dollars to war and incarceration instead of funding social safety nets. We are reluctant to admit that our way of life is causing damage to our planet that may not be fixable at any cost. Largely absent in our public discourse are the values that lie at the heart of our Abrahamic faith; finding the language and having the

vision to embrace the poor and vulnerable, prioritizing peace and justice over security, seeking understanding, and giving way to Christ's radical call to love one another.

We find enormous strength and resilience within our collective faith heritages. But we must redefine, and refine, our respective theologies. I speak from within my Lutheran communion, in solidarity with Protestant mainline denominations and the western Roman Catholic tradition. For mainline denominations, this means coming to terms with how invested our institutions are in the status quo and looking for ways to articulate a broad, inclusive, mainline Christian polity that supersedes the increasingly petty denominational constructs we cling to. As we go forward together, can we build bridges with all who share our Abrahamic faith, bearing witness to the grace we find all around us?

I am sounding a practical call to everyone everywhere. How can pastors and the lay disciples in their congregations summon the courage to tackle uncomfortable conversations and confront difficult situations with the love and peace and faith we feel in God's graceful presence? Can we learn that politeness and true peace are two different things? How do we step out into wider worlds as a Church seeking hospitality and offering hospitality in turn to all, no matter what their religion, gender, ethnic background, economic circumstances or sexual orientation? How do we build public spaces and set new tables where everyone's gifts are needed and welcomed? What tools will help us ask the right questions, and to prefer meaningful questions over pat answers? How can we escape the cycle of anger, fear and scarcity thinking that ensnares us?

This book will take us from that archetypal event, 9/11, through natural disasters, through our sorry string of man-made catastrophes, to today, from numbness and anger and despair to understanding, acceptance, and fruitful collective action.

The bottom line of grace is abundant life. Christians experience tragedy through the lens of the ground zero of the paschal mystery: the death and resurrection of Jesus. The final chapter in this book offers the bottom

line of *resurrection*. The grace all around us is the presence and promise of our Risen Lord. We Christians already know the end of the story, etched out in the details of our public struggle for the soul of the world. The grace all around us is eternal, accessible, and sufficient.



POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- 1. Where were you, and what were you feeling on September 11, 2001? How did that day shape your world view? In what ways do you carry any feelings about that event with you?*
- 2. What other local, national or world events have caused similar feelings?*
- 3. In what ways do you recognize grace all around you? In what ways do you hinder or help grace in its work in the world? Give specific examples.*
- 4. In response to traumatic events, whether experienced first-hand or not, how does your faith inform your reactions and how you process such events?*

A CONGREGATIONAL GUIDE TO LAMENTATION AND RESPONSE

How can congregations best respond to the overwhelming number of public crises that confront us today—mass shootings, terrorist attacks, hurricanes, flood, wildfires, tornadoes, even the debilitating effects of chronic and deep-rooted problems like racism and community violence? In *Baptized for This Moment*, Lutheran Bishop Steven Bouman offers a Christian alternative to the cynicism and division that drive today's public discourse and describes in practical detail ways congregations can create spaces to lament, develop living liturgies, build public mission tables, and engage with others in discovering the transformative power of the grace that is always all around us.

Excerpts from *Baptized for This Moment*:

- Everyone who draws breath has ground zeros in their lives.
- How easily our lamentation may turn to anger, to xenophobia, to talk of walls, to racial and religious profiling.
- The church is constantly called to persevere in Hebrews 10: 24-25: "Let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another."
- We Christians cannot avert our eyes from desolation, nor let the short attention span of today's culture move us on too quickly from the small and large disasters that traumatize our fragile world.
- Our lamentations are not the isolation and depression of wounded entitlement or private grief, but the community at the foot of the cross moving outward in solidarity and love toward the sorrow of the world.
- Here must be the first response of the Church in the face of any of the tragedies we now find afflicting us: Show up. Listen. Tell stories. Pray.

Religion/Congregations



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