

# Sacred acts inspired by love

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Civilization rests on faith not technology. Faith leads to the belief in human goodness and equality, to trust in our neighbor, a sense of the common good rather than just selfish advantage, a passion for justice and a courage for compassion extended to the vulnerable. It empowers forgiveness and patience in times of betrayal and conflict.

Civilization also rests upon sustained faith in the future, believing that there is a point to it all, that we have not achieved perfection but we're not going to give up. [ . . . . ] Civilized society rests on the belief born of faith that we have something worthwhile to leave for the next generation to perfect better than we were able to.

Meditation begins and ends in faith. It expresses the unity of all in the spirit, as do indeed all sacred acts inspired by love or compassion.

After meditation: "Terry Berrigan" by Anne Porter in *LIVING THINGS: Collected Poems* (Hanover, NH: Steerforth Press, 2006), pp. 31-33.

## **Terry Berrigan**

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The seven years we lived

On 52nd Street

We had a neighbor

Terry Berrigan  
Who was the playmate  
Of our youngest son  
Terry was one of eight  
Most of them boys  
Who ran all through  
The neighborhood  
Dodging trucks  
And scattering sparrows  
Gap-toothed and freckle-faced  
With ears  
A size too big  
Terry was little  
For a boy of seven  
His Irish mother told him  
Terry you're so small  
That if the devil  
Should ever catch you  
He'd throw you back  
For sure  
He's got no use at all  
For little minnows  
In my last year  
On 52nd Street  
When all the world around us  
Was steeped in war  
Terry and I

Each had a war at home  
For Terry had  
His drunken father  
And my own house was filled  
With anger and confusion  
And Terry understood  
I was in trouble  
One day he brought me  
A child-size plastic medal  
On a scrap of ribbon  
And in his husky brogue  
He said it was the nuns  
Had got it for him  
He said it had a blessing on it  
And I should keep it always  
And that was all he said  
After we moved away  
From 52nd Street  
I had no news of Terry  
But I kept his medal  
In a cracked saucer  
On a pantry shelf  
One day I picked it up  
And looked at it  
Intently in a way  
I hadn't looked before  
And there in front of me

Was Terry's Mary

And her wide-open hands

That streamed with blessings.

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