



WHERE GOD SPEAKS

by DEACON JOHN GREEN

I will never forget the sound of suicide.

Falling from the top of the Port Authority Bus Terminal at the corner of 42nd Street and 8th Avenue in midtown Manhattan, his body must have been moving close to fifty miles per hour. The slap as he hit the unforgiving concrete pierced through the 2 a.m. clamor of Times Square.

People screamed.

A passing cop blew his whistle.

Sirens soon wailed in the distance.

I sat in a light blue outreach van at a light not more than ten feet from where he landed. My eyes caught the blur of his falling body just before I heard that sickening sound. I recognized him as a homeless man from the neighborhood. But I didn't know him. I didn't know his story. But I knew how it had ended: he had made his way to the top of the Port Authority Bus Terminal, stripped off all his clothes, and jumped.

Why?

I have no idea.

But it changed my life.

My story, at the time, was fairly succinct. All my life I had been the “good boy.” I grew up in a good home in a wealthy neighborhood. I had good parents and a great family that instilled solid Midwestern, American values in me to the core. I was an altar boy at Mass. I was active in the parish youth group. I went to a Christian college. So why on earth was I driving an outreach van through the gritty streets of New York at two in the morning? That's a story for another time. ([GO](#))

When that the homeless man jumped from the top of the Port Authority Bus Terminal, Wilfredo, my outreach partner and I scrambled out of our van and ran to his body, but there was nothing we could do.

We finished our overnight shift at 7 a.m. and I went to the chapel to pray with the Catholic Faith Community I was a part of. During the psalms and readings of Morning Prayer, I couldn't get the sound of his body hitting the sidewalk out of my head. After prayers, everyone else

went up to breakfast. I made sure all the chapel doors were closed and then approached the cross.

In front of our chapel stood a mural called “The Crucifixion on 8th Avenue,” which depicted the story of Christ in a gritty, urban way. Jesus hung on the cross, one arm held up by a pimp, the other by a street kid who was piercing his side with a broken bottle. On both sides and under the cross were character scenes of the neighborhood: a cop on a horse talking into his radio, a young man handing out porno literature to commuters, an addict curled up on the sidewalk with drug needles around her, a pimp hustling some young kids, and many more.

I gazed at this mural and began to see street kids I couldn't reach: prostitutes I knew were out there, street people who were dying. I yelled at God. I demanded He do something about this mess. I cursed and cried and finally slumped into the front pew, spent and drained.

God was silent.

No visions, no voices of comfort, no feelings of peace—just the awesome silence of God. For a couple of days, I lived in a funk of despair and faithlessness. I felt abandoned. Then at Morning Prayer, on the third day, I listened to the words of the prophet Micah 6:8:

*He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?*

To act justly

and to love mercy

and to walk humbly with your God.

The paradigm shifted. God spoke to me. I realized that all my life my values were based upon typical middle-class American values: hard work, doing good, living well, owning things, following the rules, and being the best that I could be. There is certainly some good in those things but I heard God clearly say, “Those are not my values. I value justice, mercy, and humility. Those are my values.”

From that day forward, I started asking three questions in my spiritual life: Lord, how can I live justly? To whom do I show mercy? And how may I walk humbly with You?

Seeking answers to these questions has helped me live deeply in a shallow world.

PLEASE JOIN US for our next BELIEF & BEVERAGES NIGHT Thursday, July 15, 6:30P featuring Deacon John Green. Limited seating: [Register free here](#).



DEACON JOHN & CAROLYN GREEN

have been married 28 years and have four children. They are parishioners at Holy Family Church in Stow, Ohio. Deacon John is an author, speaker and leader with Evangelical

Catholic and owner of Cafe O'Play. Carolyn is a Nutrition, Fitness, and Fitness Business Coach at "Fit With Carolyn."

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Our world is pining for good news. God's supply is *you*. Your short, moving story of "God with us" will make a big difference in someone's life.

Right now you can think of at least one moving moment in your life. An example of "God with us." Please take a moment now to simply email me the possible subject of your story. If you're motivated, sure, write it out (no more than 500 words). We'll help you land it. Many will be blessed. We want to feature a new story every week.

Thank you in advance!

So blessed to be united in building the Kingdom,



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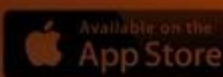
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