



ST. LUKE'S
Episcopal Church

BUFFALO,
Wyoming

Today, August 14, is the Feast of Jonathan Myrick Daniels. If you've never heard of him, don't worry, I hadn't heard of him either until I attended seminary.

Jonathan was a seminarian attending the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, MA, in the early '60's. In 1965 he answered Martin Luther King, Jr.'s plea to come to Selma and help secure voting rights for all citizens. He was arrested and jailed on August 14 for joining a picket line, and then was unexpectedly released. As he and his companions approached a store, a white man with a shotgun accosted 16-year-old Ruby Sales. Jonathan moved between the two to protect her from the attack, whereby he was shot and killed.

Almost 60 years later, this country is still racked by acts of racism, both overt and covert, and with the ghosts and sins of slavery and a war fought over the right to own other human beings. People of color face more societal obstacles than do white people. Women have their own unique challenges. Certain groups of people are working to disallow other groups of people from voting. Attacks on people "not like us," both in word and deed, seem to be on the rise.

Jonathan Daniels understood that following God meant opposing certain acts and policies of man. He said he knew he had to go to Selma when the words of the Magnificat filled his soul: "He has put down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things."

In one paper he wrote before his death, he says, "I began to know in my bones . . . that all life . . . [is] indelibly one."

When we are faced with hatreds of all kinds wrapped up as patriotism or as Christian values, may we remember the courage of Jonathan Myrick Daniels who sacrificed himself for the protection of another human being. And let us also work to renounce evil powers bent on destroying the creatures of God while also striving for justice and peace among all people.

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