



# VOICES FROM PRISON AND *THE EDGE*

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*I want the Church to take to the streets--Pope Francis*

## BELLY OF THE BEAST

DEAR FRIENDS OF ADEODATUS—*GIFT OF GOD*,

AS YOU CAN SEE, WE ARE NOW ADDING THE *TRANSLATION* OF ADEODATUS (“GIFT OF GOD”) WHEN WE REFER TO OURSELVES. IT WILL HELP US TO BE RECOGNIZED WITHOUT THE CONSTANT NEED TO TRANSLATE. AS YOU MAY KNOW, ADEODATUS/GIFT OF GOD WAS THE NAME OF ST. AUGUSTINE’S SON. IT IS HOW WE DESIRE TO TREAT EACH PERSON WHOM WE SERVE IN THIS MINISTRY—A GIFT OF GOD. AND YOU TOO, OF COURSE.

“THE BELLY OF THE BEAST” IS A STREET NAME FOR THE KENSINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE. THE REMARKS ARE FROM ED ZAMPITELLA, A CATHOLIC LAYMAN WHO IS A “STREET MINISTER” THERE. AWAKENED BY CHRIST FROM A DEAD-END PATH HIMSELF, ED IS PUTTING INTO PRACTICE POPE FRANCIS’ RECENT CHALLENGE TO CATHOLICS: “I WANT THE CHURCH TO TAKE TO THE STREETS.” THE INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE AT “THE LAST STOP,” A DROP-IN CENTER THAT ED FOUNDED THERE. MORE SPECIFICALLY, IT IS IN A RECLAIMED PATCH OF LAND BEHIND THE CLUBHOUSE, NOW A GARDEN WITH SUNFLOWERS AND TOMATOES AND A STATUE OF JESUS CHRIST WITH A BARBED WIRE CROWN AROUND HIS HEAD.



### THE INTERVIEW

*ED, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE “THE LAST STOP?” WHAT IS IT?*

*FIRST OFF THE LAST STOP IS AN AA & NA CLUBHOUSE. THAT’S FIRST, OK. IT’S MOSTLY PEOPLE WHO ARE SERIOUSLY BANKRUPT WHO COME IN AND DON’T BELIEVE IN GOD AND WERE RAPED, MOLESTED... KIDS THAT THEIR MOTHER’S TAUGHT THEM HOW TO SHOOT DOPE, OUT THERE PROSTITUTING. AND THEY COME INTO OUR PLACE, FOR SOME REASON GOD LEADS THEM HERE AND WE TRY TO SHOW THEM FIRST OF ALL KINDNESS. A CUP OF COFFEE. A CIGARETTE. THEN FROM THERE, BECAUSE THEY’RE LEERY, EVERYTHING HAS A MOTIVE OF WHAT YOU WANT. WHY YOU BEING NICE TO ME, WHAT DO YOU WANT—to TAKE PICTURES OF ME? AND THE THING IS, HOPEFULLY WITH GOD’S HELP, AND HE ALWAYS DOES, WE SHOW KINDNESS. THE FIRST THING THAT THEY MAY SAY IS THEY DON’T HAVE AN ID. WE JUST KIND OF SIT AND WAIT, RELAX. AND WE TRY TO MAKE THIS INTO A SAFE HAVEN. IF PEOPLE COME IN HERE SELLING DRUGS, WE TELL THEM TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE. VIOLENCE? WE HAVE OUR SHARE OF BULLCRAP IN HERE, TRUST ME. PEOPLE SNAPPING OUT... ONE OF THE THINGS WE MIGHT ASK THEM IS IF THEY WANT TO TAKE A SHOWER, AND THEY SAY “OOHH THAT’S WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO, YOU WANT ME TO TAKE A SHOWER.” SO WHAT WE DO IS WAIT UNTIL THE HOUSE IS CLOSED AND WE SAY TO THEM YOU DON’T NEED TO TAKE A SHOWER WITH EVERYBODY. JUST TO GO THAT EXTRA MILE. GOD IS DEFINITELY HERE. THEY FEEL A SAFENESS AND A CALMNESS TO SEE ALL THE DIFFERENT PEOPLE LIKE THEM. THE THING IS THE MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE THAT COME INTO THE CLUBHOUSE, AGAIN WITH NO MONEY, NO ID, SPIRITUALLY BROKE, BACKS AGAINST THE WALL... YOU HEAR THEM SAY, “SOMETHING TOLD ME TO GO TO THE LAST STOP.”*

*I TELL PEOPLE THAT WITHOUT CHRIST AND AA IN MY LIFE I COULDN'T HAVE DONE NOTHING. A LOT OF THESE REHAB PLACES, IF YOU DON'T HAVE ID, NO MONEY, NO WELFARE, NO INCOME, THEY DON'T TAKE YOU. SO I GOT THE IDEA TO BUILD THIS PLACE, TO BRING GUYS IN WHO HAVE NOTHING. I FIGURE WE'LL WORK EVERYTHING ELSE OUT LATER. I HAD ONE GUY HERE FOR TWO YEARS WITH NO INCOME, NONE. BUT THE THING IS, HE HELPED CLEAN AND HE WASN'T A PROBLEM. IT'S SAD BECAUSE A LOT OF THESE GUYS GET SOCIAL SECURITY AND IT'S NOT GOOD FOR THEM. THEY DON'T GET IT THAT THEY DON'T HAVE A PURPOSE. IF A MAN DON'T HAVE A PURPOSE, HE MUST BE LIKE HE'S DEAD, SERIOUSLY. LIKE I SAID IT'S LIKE THE LOST COIN. THE GUYS WITH ALL THE MONEY AND THE ONE GUY BURIED IT, IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO UNDERSTAND THIS. BUT THE THING IS, I HOPE WHATEVER WE DO HERE KEEPS US STRAIGHT. BECAUSE THE TEMPTATIONS COME—LUST, MONEY, BEING AFRAID. I'M THAT GUY ON THE BOAT WHEN THERE'S A STORM, I'M WAKING CHRIST UP, "GET UP! I'M GONNA DIE." I'M NOT WORRYING ABOUT EVERYBODY ELSE, BUT TELLING CHRIST TO GET UP. BUT I'M NOT SEEING. LOOK, IF GOD'S SLEEPING THROUGH A STORM, HE'S PROBABLY TELLING YOU, "YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE WRONG THING. KEEP YOUR EYES ON ME." THE THING IS, I KNOW CHRIST LOVES US, EVEN THE PEOPLE WHO BEAT HIM. IT'S SAD BECAUSE A COUPLE OF THINGS I CAN'T EVEN TALK ABOUT IT. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING, WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT THAT. I KNOW THAT I WAS A WRETCH AND HE FIXED ME TO HELP OTHERS. YEAH, THAT'S IT. CHRIST IS DEFINITELY HERE WITH US. COME ANYTIME...*



**THE LAST STOP.** THE VERY NAME CONJURES UP SOMETHING BOTH DESPERATE AND HOPEFUL. SOMETIMES WE NEED TO ARRIVE AT THE LAST STOP BEFORE WE BEGIN TO FIND A NEW DIRECTION. "ED Z" AS HE IS KNOWN, SAYS "I'M NOT ONLY THE PRESIDENT, I'M ALSO A CLIENT." WITH UNABASHED FAITH, HE HAS CREATED THIS SAFE SPACE IN THE "BELLY OF THE BEAST" OF KENSINGTON FOR THOSE WHO "HAVE NOTHING," AS HE SAYS. IT "RECYCLES" DISCARDED AND ABANDONED BUILDINGS, BATHTUBS, STATUES AND MOST OF ALL, HUMAN BEINGS. IT IS A PLACE OF TRUST FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST ALL TRUST. IF YOU VISIT IT, IT STUNS YOU WITH ITS RAW PRESENCE OF NEED. YOU COME AWAY FEELING CHRIST IS THERE, NOT REALLY KNOWING HOW. YOU WANT TO RETURN BECAUSE UNDER THE EL, ALONGSIDE A MYRIAD OF OTHER STREET MINISTRIES, IT IS THE GOSPEL LIVING IN THE STREETS. IT SURVIVES ON DONATIONS.

**ADEODATUS—GIFT OF GOD** IS BEGINNING TO COLLABORATE WITH THE LAST STOP. OUR FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH MEETING WILL BE A JOINT MEETING OF LAST STOP PEOPLE AND OUR REGULAR MEMBERSHIP AT THE BEVILACQUA CENTER. OUR ADEODATUS SUPPORT GROUP—FOR EX-INMATES AND ANYONE WHO CARES ABOUT THEIR REINTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY—MEETS ON THURSDAY NIGHTS (7:30 TO 9:00 P.M.). ON THE FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH, WE MEET AT THE BEVILACQUA CENTER AT KENSINGTON AND LEHIGH AVES, PHILADELPHIA. ON ALL OTHER THURSDAYS WE MEET AT ST. RITA OF CASCIA RECTORY, 1166 S. BROAD STREET, PHILADELPHIA. THROUGH PRAYER, THE GOSPEL AND CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP WE OFFER STRENGTH TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE IN THIS WORLD.

**DON'T FORGET NOW.** JUMP INTO OUR CONVERSATION ON THIS TOPIC. GO TO [WWW.FACEBOOK/ADEODATUSMINISTRY.COM](http://WWW.FACEBOOK/ADEODATUSMINISTRY.COM) AND SAY A WORD OR TWO. WE NEED YOUR VOICE FROM "THE EDGE." WE DISTRIBUTE THE NEWSLETTER TO 12 PARISHES AND 20 REHAB CENTERS IN PHILADELPHIA. A DONATION OF \$5 OR \$10 DOLLARS WOULD GREATLY HELP THIS MISSION. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO ADROP/ADEODATUS AND SEND TO: ADEODATUS PRISON MINISTRY, 259 N. LAWRENCE ST., PHILA. PA 19106. OR, GO TO [WWW.RIGHTSOFTHEPOOR.ORG](http://WWW.RIGHTSOFTHEPOOR.ORG) AND PRESS "DONATE" BUTTON. FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS FROM THERE.

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.  
FR. PAUL MORRISSEY OSA**