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“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

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MONICA J. FOSTER
Seattle Office Coordinator

JULIE KEEFE
SUSAN FRIED
Photographers



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415 N. Killingsworth St.
P.O. Box 5455
Portland, OR 97228

Telephone (503) 285-5555
Fax: (503) 285-2900

E-mail: info@theskanner.com

www.TheSkanner.com

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Pope's Message of Compassion

“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me...I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” – Matthew 25:35-36,40

Like power, with compassion comes great responsibility. So much more than a feeling, the person with compassion is compelled to transform their compassion into intent, and most importantly, action. To be compassionate is to see, to feel and to do something.

The recent arrival of Pope Francis on our shores has rekindled our national conversation over how we will protect and care for our marginalized, provide access to our disenfranchised communities and promote justice for all.

Francis, the spiritual leader of more than a billion Catholics, the world over, has placed the poor and the treatment of the poor at the center of his papacy. But his message of mercy, compassion and service as the engines of much-needed change is not solely limited to the Catholic faithful. It is a message that can transcend boundaries of faith, gender, political cultures or borders. It is a message that can transform the entire world for the benefit of the common good.

While calls for societal change



Marc H. Morial
National Urban League

precede the pope, his papacy and his status as a respected global leader, gives added voice to the voiceless and the oppressed, and encourages the men and women who have decided they would no longer observe (or suffer) injustice from the sidelines – instead they would advocate, and when necessary, agitate for a more just society for the excluded and marginalized among us.

From Moses to the man registering students to vote, or the woman fighting for environmental justice in an impoverished community today, for as long as inequality has plagued society, people have always appeared in the pages of history to carry the heavy and unavoidable banner of change. For Francis, this call to action is motivated by God's presence, which he said in his final homily in Cuba, “never leaves us tranquil: it always pushes to do something. When God comes, He always calls us out of our house. We are visited so that we can visit others; we are encountered so as to encounter others; we receive love in order to give love.”

For more than 100 years, the National Urban League has dedicated itself to loving, visiting and

encountering people and communities in their times of need. Our mission—like the mission of so many people of faith dedicated to changing lives and reforming the structures that compromise the quality of life of the most vulnerable – is to establish mechanisms and policies aimed at economic empowerment in order to elevate the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities. This cross-section of compassion and social justice has

‘When God comes, He always calls us out of our house’

been, and continues to be, a defining element of our existence and struggle across a range of social justice movements.

The pope is visiting the United States at a pivotal time in our history, when justice and equality is facing challenges on many fronts. We face challenges in the constitutional right of citizens to vote; we are experiencing a rash of deaths of Black men at the hands of police officers who are rarely held accountable; equity in funding and resources for public school education remains a distant reality; and the economic gap that exist between the rich and the poor only continues to widen.

The National Urban League continues to tackle these ever-present

issues with programs and policy recommendations that not only benefit communities of color, but our nation as a whole. Our education programs, like Project Ready, support academic achievement, civic involvement and the physical and emotional development of our young people. But it doesn't end there, we also challenge our states and federal government to develop formulas to distribute resources to schools in a fair manner that does not discriminate based on what community you live in. Our workforce development programs deliver jobs and valuable employment services to the people who need it the most and encourage economic self-sufficiency. We have fought, and continue to fight, on the frontline of the battles to rid our nation of pervasive criminal justice abuses.

The gospel of compassion has guided many into service beyond their own lives and self-interests. The gospel of compassion: to see, to feel and to do something, is a driver of change that pays no regard to differences in gender, color, community or faith. It is a call to minister and serve those who find themselves on the margins of any given society. We may all come from different traditions and cultures, but we should all be able to agree on our broader duty to provide access to a decent standard of living, protect the poor and promote justice. It is the message of the Francis and his Church, and I hope that it is a message that will continue to reach many more ears – and hearts.

No Due Process for ‘Standing While Black’

Is Patrick Lynch, president of the New York Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, obliged to defend his members even when they are wrong? The open letter posted on the PBA website and printed in the New York Daily News lacks credibility and contributes to the fractured state of police-community relations. He has cautioned the media, and others, about rushing to judgment of James Frascatore, the walking assault machine that tackled former tennis star James Blake, put his knee to Blake's back, and then cuffed him. This was captured by a security camera; the footage is ubiquitous online. Lynch says, “No one should ever jump to an uninformed conclusion based on a few seconds of video.”

Lynch makes every excuse that he can for Frascatore, and chides “pundits and editorial writers” because “they have never faced the dangers that police officers routinely do.” Comments about Blake's false arrest and further cover-up are “irresponsible, unjust, and un-American.” Lynch says Frascatore deserves “due process, not summary professional execution called for by editorial writers.”

Due process is the legal requirement that the state must respect all the legal rights due to a person. When did James Blake get due process? Frascatore tackled Blake with neither provocation nor even



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

conversation. Either Lynch didn't watch the video or he doesn't care that there is a pugilistic police officer that has no regard for due process when he interacts with the public.

Frascatore should have been history in the NYPD some time ago. He has only been part of the NYPD for four years, yet five complaints against him have been filed with the Civilian Complaint

Review Board (CCRB). All of these complaints involve the excessive use of force. Frascatore is fast with his fists (he is accused of punching people in the head, the mouth, and in the torso); tragedy would be compounded if he were using a gun. For all of Frascatore's abuse of power, it took his assault of Blake to get him desk duty. Blake has very reasonably called for Frascatore's firing. But loud-

mouth Lynch (consider his comments in the wake of Eric Garner's murder) has talked himself onto a limb with his passionate, but baseless defense of a police “officer.” If there were due process, Frascatore would have been arrested for assaulting Blake. But police officers accused of wrongdoing hide behind their uniforms and rarely pay for their crimes. If there were due process, a man with five complaints before the CCRB would have been put on desk duty, if not suspended or fired, some time ago.

The New York Daily News reported on a 2013 incident where Frascatore and two others followed bicyclist Warren Diggs home. Once there, they demanded identification from him but proceeded to punch in the head and

vilian Complaint Review Board found inconsistencies between Frascatore's statements and the recording Hines made. It recommended “retraining” Frascatore. Hines also sued the city for false arrest and settled out of court. Warren Diggs still has a federal civil rights lawsuit against the city.

The Diggs case reveals Frascatore as an accomplished liar who doesn't mind breaking the rules. Just as there was an attempt to cover up the Blake arrest, there was also an attempt to justify the brutal assault of Warren Diggs and the false arrest of Nafeesah Hines. Due process, Patrick Lynch?

As Blake has so gracefully said, all police officers are not like Frascatore. He declined to accuse the NYPD, just the out-of-control officer. He accepted the apologies of the police commissioner and the mayor. But he insists that something must be done about excessive force, and he has indicated that he might pursue a lawsuit otherwise.

The NYPD says they have spent millions on training and retraining. Did Frascatore ever get the training the CCRB recommended? Why not monitor those officers who have been “retrained” to see if they have changed their ways? Why not prioritize investigation of those with repeat complaints so that bad apples like Frascatore are terminated before they do more damage?

Frascatore tackled Blake with neither provocation nor even conversation

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pummel his body – before he could retrieve his ID. Diggs' significant other, Nafeesah Hines, saw part of the fracas and began recording it. She asked officers for their names and badge numbers; two complied but Frascatore refused.

When Hines went to move Diggs' bicycle from the sidewalk and into their home, she was told that she was tampering with evidence and was arrested. The Ci-