Daniel Berrigan, anti-war priest, dies at 94

by [David Gibson](#) and [Christian Century staff](#)

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Daniel Berrigan, a Jesuit priest and herald of the Catholic social justice movement, died April 30 at age 94.

Berrigan gained worldwide attention in May 1968 when he and his younger brother, Philip, who was a Josephite priest, along with seven other Catholics seized draft records from a Selective Service office in Catonsville, Maryland. The group doused the files with homemade napalm in a parking lot outside of the draft office and torched them while joining hands in prayer.

The Berrigan brothers were convicted in a federal trial and released on their own recognizance in 1970. They then went into hiding. Berrigan was eventually arrested by the FBI and sent to federal prison. He was released in 1972.

In a 1970 *Christian Century* article, "Life at the edge," Daniel Berrigan called his and his brother's time as fugitives a time of contemplation.

"I am convinced that contemplation, including the common worship of believing men, is a political act of the highest value, implying the riskiest of consequences to those taking part," he wrote. "One startling sign of the rightness of a course of action may be the initial sharp outcry against it, in church and state alike."

Berrigan protested subsequent U.S. military interventions, ministered to AIDS patients, and opposed abortion and capital punishment—espousing what would come to be known as a consistent ethic of life.

At 92, he took part in the Occupy Wall Street movement in New York's Zuccotti Park.

Berrigan was the author of more than 50 books and 15 volumes of poetry. In later life he wrote biblical commentaries, especially on the prophets.

Asked in an interview with the Jesuit magazine *America* for an inscription for his gravestone, Berrigan said: "It was never dull. Alleluia."

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