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Interview with Father Dominic Grassi

Paul Brennan
Columbia College Chicago

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1 **TRANSCRIPTION**

2 Interview with Father Dominic Grassi

3 Paul Brennan: So, this is (--) an interview regarding the Democratic 1968 Convention.
4 My name is Paul Brennan. I am the interviewer. Your name is?

5 Dominic Grassi: Dominic Grassi.

6 PB: And the date of this interview is (--) April 24, 2015. (--) We are at St. Gertrude's Parish in
7 Chicago, Illinois. And how many years did you work as an activist?

8 DG: You know, I never used that term. I was a seminary student and so, it was just a part of who
9 I was. It was a time in the world where you, in the country where you showed what you believed
10 and how you felt, so if we were on the streets, the hard hats waved at us with their American
11 flags, it was just people felt they were doing what they needed to do, so I never (--) when you
12 use the word activist, I smile because I've never been called that before.

13 PB: Okay. What would you call yourself?

14 DG: I'd call myself a Christian, a priest, an American, (--) and it was an interesting time
15 because that was '65 was early in the sixties. The sixties really didn't start till about that time and
16 then they ran into the early seventies. That's really the period of time when a lot of this happened
17 and so, it was something that we were all new to.

18 PB: Mm-hmm.

19 DG: We had grown a little bit out of the civil rights movement and marches, and (--) that was
20 happening when I was in high school, and I can remember being involved, again, in the
21 periphery of some of those things. You know, going to different gatherings in old town Chicago.
22 (--) Meeting people, wearing the (--) button that preceded the antiwar button, it was the
23 antiracism button, that kind of thing. It was almost for some of us white folk (--) a training
24 ground for what would happen later about Vietnam.

25 PB: Great. (--) That's great. So, (--) let's just start with some general questions. (--)
26 Preceding the sixties. (--) So, as far as how many years you worked, you know, just in protests
27 and things, how many years would you say?

28 DG: You know, I didn't do much before the Vietnam War came, like I said, so I was busy being
29 a high school student, a college student and then I think my first awareness would be when one
30 of my classmates (--) left high school, graduated, did not go on to college, to take care of his
31 mother, got drafted and got killed in Vietnam. That's when it started to become real.

32 PB: Great. So, what year were you born?

33 DG: 1947.

34 PB: And where were you born?

35 DG: Chicago, Illinois.

36 PB: And where were you raised?

37 DG: Chicago, Illinois. North side.

38 PB: And, (--) who was your father?

39 DG: My dad's name was Rufino Grassi. He was an immigrant from Southern Italy. He and his
40 brother's opened a grocery store, another grocery store, a little bigger grocery store and by the
41 time I was born, the year I was born, they opened up the fourth largest grocery store in the North
42 side of the city, one of the first self-service stores. Two immigrant brothers without much
43 education, took a big chance and (--) That was where I grew up in the sense of learning how to
44 deal with people, the customer's always right, learning the work ethic, watching my dad (--) get
45 grief because he welcomed (--) down the street there was a factory that had mostly African-
46 American employees and my dad welcomed them to shop and had items that had been stuff that
47 were bought in those days that weren't common in those days that we see in grocery stores all
48 the time now, like hot sauce and chitlins and things like that. He sold that because there were
49 customers buying it and some of the neighbors were upset with him and I remember him turning
50 and saying "Money isn't black or white. It's green. And I'd be a fool not to (--) invite them in
51 the shop." Very pragmatic, very practical, but in a sense very courageous, too, in what he did.

52 PB: Mm-hmm. And where was he born?

53 DG: He was born in a town called Carrejo. It's a farming village down the hill from a larger
54 town called the Baribello in South Central Italy, in the region of Puglia. If you're Italian and you
55 say you're from Bari, everybody goes "Testa Dura" Hard-headed, and that would be my family
56 and I would be representative of that as well. A kind of a sense that we dig our heels in if we feel
57 something is right.

58 PB: Mm-hmm. And who was your mother?

59 DG: My mom's name was Imaculatta Martolata, "mouthful". Tiny woman of great
60 stature. Mother of five. Came to this country with her father, to take care of him at the age of ten,
61 so he could make enough money to bring the rest of his family here; it's a common story. Adfgd
62 ghjd She worked in a shoe factory, doing piece work, took care of him. He was going to bring his
63 wife and other children back, the stock market crashed. He lost everything, started over, got
64 enough and brought the rest of his family here. My mom and dad lived in a town in New York
65 State.

66 PB: And where was she born?

67 DG: She was born in the town up the hill from Kinnego in Barabello.

68 PB: (Laughs)

69 DG: Both beautiful places. I've visited them.

70 PB: And, what were some of your pastime interests as a child?

71 DG: Uh, let's see. Well, my brother used to take slides. The first slide he took was me
72 dressed as Hopalong Cassidy. I'm being stabbed and my brother playing an Indian. Um, I grew
73 up with everything little kids liked. Davy Crockett was a big thing; I had my coonskin cap like
74 everybody else did. TV was just kind of coming into its own. We had an empty lot next to the
75 house; we played fast-pitching baseball and all that other stuff. Somewhere in there I learned to
76 like to read. There was a big public library right next door to our school, and reading became an
77 important thing for me as well, so, just the normal stuff. Go down to the lakefront; we'd fish.
78 We'd go to the beach. It was a good life. A good urban life.

79 PB: What kind of problems at the time were you able to ascertain?

80 DG: I probably would identify with. Being the youngest, I watched a lot of things. I saw
81 prejudice against Italians by some of the Irish priests. And one in particular, my brothers as
82 adults, we talk about it and can identify it now. But we didn't see that as much. We just didn't
83 understand it as kids, as most kids wouldn't. When we saw some of that, you know, being called
84 the wop, dago. You know, didn't quite know what that meant and why we should even be upset
85 by that. You know, uh, but we were. We saw the need to really get an education. My dad didn't
86 have an education either, and he said "Any college you want, as long as it's a Catholic school,
87 we'll pay for it." He really, he wanted us to have an education.

88 PB: Mm-hmm. And how did you learn to show tolerance to the people who disagreed
89 with you?

90 DG: Well, tolerance came in a couple of ways. I'm probably not as tolerant as I should
91 be, so I don't always do well with people who disagree with me. But because of all the sewing of
92 leather my mom did as a child, she had some real problems with her hands and she had to have
93 some serious surgery. While we were not anywhere near a wealthy family, we'd be considered
94 part of the emerging postwar middle-class family. My mom needed help, and when I grew up,
95 there was an African American woman that came and did the heavy stuff my mom's hands just
96 couldn't do. Her name was Lucille. And she ate at the table with us. She was one of us. There
97 was no thing about her being black or white. At the same time, right across the alley from me,
98 my first girlfriend Merle. We met when we were about five or six years old and one of the early
99 slides is with her head on my shoulder. She was Jewish. And so I had Jewish friends and
100 neighbors. We were the only Italians in the neighborhood out down on Broadway where we
101 were. So, it was a great melting pot, and in that process we learned to treat people for who they
102 were. There was a rabbi and his family that lived across the alley and if she, if the mother had
103 not, if Mrs. Davis had not turned off the stove when it got dark on the Sabbath, she'd call me and
104 I'd turn off the stove. I had to open the tin myself to get the great sugar cookies she laid out. (--)
105 It was just, that's how we learned, by the openness that was there. But I do remember feeling,
106 you know, an Irish priest took me off of an assignment of serving the mass for one of our
107 teachers getting married. I remember feeling that was unjust. And I think maybe that's a
108 hindsight, I remember that. Somewhere along there I began to realize that people are people like
109 my dad would say, so I just didn't sense that it should be any different.

110 PB: How was religion observed in your house?

111 DG: We were traditional Southern Italian. I call it the “peasant spirituality”, peasant
112 religiosity. The tradition of the hometown saints prominent on the wall. My family always sent
113 some money back to the hometown for town feast day processions, so members of our family
114 still there would have the privilege of carrying the statues part of the way. We went to Catholic
115 grammar school, we were taught by an incredible group of nuns, the sisters of mercy. And they
116 were bright, they were compassionate, and they were challenging, and they not just taught us the
117 academics; they taught us to be Christians as well. And, there are a few of them still alive that I
118 still know and am in relationship with them, and I honor them in their old age. They’re just
119 really, incredible, incredible women. So, that’s really where it came from. And you know, my
120 mom, if we were altar servers and I’d get up and serve the early mass at six thirty, mom made
121 sure we were there. I watched my mom and dad volunteer in the parish, my dad not so much
122 ‘cause of work hours, but my mom was always there and always helping out, and taught us that
123 we had to do that as well. Plus, my (--) the oldest of my siblings, the only girl, died ten months
124 before I was born at the age of seven of the polio epidemics of the time. And, you know, I grew
125 up as kind of the replacement child. I saw the grief. I saw the faith necessary to deal with that
126 grief, and the solace that religion could offer in those difficult times. And then, the last thing was
127 there were really incredibly priests assigned to our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, that were
128 really, really, good role models to work with, with not just kids, but with families and teens, and
129 they were one of the reasons I decided to go into the seminary and become a priest.

130 (The interviewer paused the interview to check on the equipment)

131 PB: Okay. (--) So, what was your attitude toward school during your early education?

132 DG: It was drummed into us that we needed a good education. It was really important;
133 we were expected to go to college. We were expected to do the best we could, and to excel
134 where we could excel and do as well as we could in everything else. So, I liked school, it wasn’t
135 (--) I did well enough; I wasn’t the brightest kid in class, but I did well, and I enjoyed it. And
136 again, the teachers, for the most part, there were one or two across the nine years of grammar
137 school that made it a little bit tough. They were a little bit, you know, different, but by and large,
138 it was really good.

139 PB: How did your relationship to religion change during high school?

140 DG: Like everything else, you start to grow up, and I began, because it was a seminary
141 high school, it was a little different. We went to school on Saturdays and had Thursdays off. That
142 was to keep us away from the girls. So, you developed a lot of friends. They were from all the
143 different parishes. So, I got to know the city a little bit more. I had friends in this parish even
144 though I was at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. And in that process, you were expected to do
145 service, so, a group of us would go down to the Cabrini Green Projects, and work there with the
146 nuns, taking the kids when they came out of the public schools and bringing them over to Saint
147 Joseph Parish for religious classes on Thursdays, and we were there with them then. And I got to
148 meet again with some incredible women who worked really hard in the project, and I just got an
149 opening to a different part of the world, so we did that and other things happened that we did
150 then that the seminary allowed us to become involved. The whole idea was not just kneel on your
151 knees and pray, but helping people. And that’s really what hit me in high school more than
152 anything else. I liked helping people, and this was getting the opportunity to do that.

153 PB: What were your aspirations when you graduated from high school in 1965?

154 The choice had to be made to just go to college or go to a college seminary and continue
155 the studies for the priesthood. My three older brothers were all in the seminary before me. One
156 left after his fourth year of high school; one left after his third year of high school, and then the
157 one, Tommy just older than me went one year to the college seminary and then he left. So, it was
158 time for me to make a decision. I decided to go to the college seminary, which was Niles
159 College. It was originally a junior college. By the time I graduated, it had affiliated with Loyola.

160 PB: Mm-hmm.

161 DG: So it was Niles College of Loyola University. That's where I got my undergraduate degree
162 in Literature. At that point we could either get just philosophy or literature, it used to be only
163 philosophy and when they affiliated there wasn't time to do much else, but I didn't want to do
164 philosophy, so I did literature.

165 PB: Okay. When did you know you wanted to be a priest?

166 DG: (--) Depends on how I wake up every morning of my life. Been that way then, still
167 that way today, you got to decide when you get up today if you're going to do it or not, and in
168 terms of sticking out the training and studying, I just, you just didn't know when. You know, you
169 saw guys leaving all the time. Once you decided you didn't want to be a priest, there was no
170 reason to stay. You went on, finished up at Loyola or () school. So, I mean I do remember in my,
171 in the middle of second year there, I filled out an application for the Peace Corps, signed it,
172 stamped it, put it on the side of my desk and said I'll mail it tomorrow, mail it tomorrow, and
173 tomorrow never came.

174 PB: Mm-hmm.

175 DG: I decided to keep going. And there were times when, you know, man, this is really what I
176 want to do and there are times when, do I really want to do this? But I kept scratching the itch.

177 PB: So, what were your religious convictions like before your training?

178 DG: Well, you got to remember, I was in training from freshman year of High School and
179 on up, so I didn't have much before then.

180 PB: (Laughs)

181 By the years though, I kind of grew to a realization that I didn't, you know, the priests I knew
182 were great guys. They made people smile and laugh. They preached well. The kids liked to hang
183 around them, you know. That was my first image, just to be a well-liked popular person and help
184 people. As I went on, I began to, like everybody else, mature and understand the complexities of
185 our world; the issues, the concerns. And how did I want to deal with those in my life? I could
186 have been a teacher; I knew that. I could have gone into psychology in some way; I knew that.
187 My brothers were all going to business world, with kind of a people bent, human resources,
188 things like that. I could have done that. A lot of ways I could have worked with people. I thought
189 about being a doctor. Again, I, I never bothered to pursue it to point of saying, "Could I handle

190 blood”, things like that. But then I began to realize from going to Cabrini Green and the projects,
191 and getting involved in other ministries, (--) that being a priest unlocked a lot of doors for me,
192 in people’s lives. It was on a level that was for me, deeper and more profound than any of those
193 other things I could be doing. And that fascinated me; the human person fascinated me, and their
194 needs, and their concerns, and their relationship with God, and their issues. That fascination has
195 never left me. I wasn’t an overly religious guy. I didn’t pray anywhere near as much as my
196 classmates did. I wasn’t all excited about the rubrics of the liturgy and how to say mass, as much
197 as other people. What excited me was the people of God, you know, just being a part of their
198 lives. And thinking I could make a difference with this in my life.

199 (The interviewer paused the interview to check the equipment)

200 PB: So, who was your favorite mentor during your religious training and why?

201 DG: Early on, there was a priest at Our Lady of Mount Carmel; his name was Father
202 Gene Faucher. He was a resident priest there, so he was assigned just to live there, and had a full
203 time job as teaching in the High School seminary. And I got to know him, with the other guys
204 that were in the seminary from the parish. He was a (--) Looking at him then, he was just a neat
205 guy. And he didn’t try to be cool like some of the young priests did. He was truly himself, and he
206 was kind, he was gentle, he was strong, he was helpful, a couple of times when I got into trouble
207 in the seminary he was always there for me, you know, and (--) just a really good guy. And I
208 think (--) I wanted to be like him, and over the years, you know, as I grew in my training in the
209 preparation for the priesthood, I always said I’d like to be a priest like Father Gene Faucher. (--)
210 And there were other priests after that, that add to that list.

211 PB: Mm-hmm. Would you like to name some of them or-

212 DG: Well, you know a lot of it didn’t happen till after ordination. And if I look at the real
213 mentors in my life, what it means to be a pastor. Father Bill (--) what I mean, to be involved in
214 the mission, the social mission of the church, certainly Monsignor Jack Egan whose statue is
215 outside of DePaul University. He’s a really incredible human being. Taught me a lot.

216 PB: That was later, correct?

217 DG: (--) Later.

218 PB: We’ll get to that. Let’s see.

219 So, what was a typical day like in the seminary?

220 DG: The seminary was undergoing an incredible amount of change. Four years of high
221 school, we were a traditional high school seminary, like I said. School on Saturday, no school on
222 Thursday; expected to pay a visit in the chapel between classes, expected to be prayerful,
223 expected to go to mass every day, expected to go to confession once a week. That was a
224 traditional seminary. We got to the college seminary, it started out that way. We were there the
225 two years, and then affiliated with Loyola, and so the last two years, they didn’t have room for us
226 there, so you know, (--) morning prayer, evening prayer, the great silence, couldn’t talk after
227 9:30 at night, you know, things like that, very regimented, very dictated. Then we went up to the

228 major seminary, St. Mary of the Lake, the seminary in Mundelein, Illinois, and we were for the
229 last two years, the young class finishing up college before going to the four years of theological
230 study. And that was when the Second Vatican Council was happening, and everything was
231 exploding. The seminary was changing; a lot of the faculty were leaving the priesthood and
232 getting married. The academic picture was changing when, (--) I was looking to having to take
233 all my classes in Latin, and panicking about that. But by the time I started the theological study
234 that was all gone. When we were up there, you couldn't have cars. Then we were able to bring
235 our cars there. It was just, it was a very changing kind of thing. And, so, in the six years I was
236 there I went from the very old school seminary to where there are very few structures. We had a
237 great rector, you know the guy in charge of the place, Monsignor Jack Gorman, who really rolled
238 with all the punches. He really trusted us and believed us. The beautiful thing that came out of
239 that was, he was trying to bring in the best professors to teach the stuff of the Second Vatican
240 Council and things. But he also was allowing us to learn how to learn, and to be self-starters.
241 And I look at classes like mine, that, we made the best priests, because we learned how to do it
242 ourselves, to be self-starters. You, know other guys worked real hard, but (garbled) we need a
243 team program will do that. Not coming to the parish and saying, "We got to do something with
244 the teens" if you want to look at the start of activism, that was that where you learned, you know,
245 that you (--) took charge to control things, to do, and the seminary, just by going through all
246 these changes, that's what it taught us to do.

247 PB: So, do you think the church was changing with the times, or (--)?

248 DG: Oh, yes. You know, it was (--) Pope John XXIII, the (--) opening up the windows and
249 letting a new era in. Unless you lived through the old, and into the new, it's hard to imagine how
250 radical, it was a different way of looking at church and looking at God, and looking at what it
251 meant to be the people of God. The documents at the Second Vatican Council. Gaudium et Spes,
252 the church in the modern world, was a landmark document that talked about the people of God,
253 the joys, the hopes, the dreams of the people of God, and what it meant then, to be church with
254 them, what it meant to minister to them. Those were, incredible, incredible times. And those
255 times coalesced right with everything happening in Vietnam, the convergence of everything.
256 (Car drives past) John XXIII only wrote like two encyclicals, John Paul II wrote many more than
257 that. But his encyclical Pacem In Terris was an incredible document: Peace on Earth, right as
258 Vietnam was hitting and everything. He got up and said, you know, "No", and his successor Paul
259 VI, first Pope to get in front of the UN, he looked at every delegate and said "No more war. War
260 no more." Those were incredible and fascinating times, as my training and my vision of church
261 and vocation of ministry, and what was happening in the world, Vietnam and everything else,
262 kind of dissect or crossed paths, and it was almost a tsunami kind of thing, everything coming
263 together at one time.

264 PB: So, what were your feelings about being in school while conflict like the Vietnam
265 War was happening?

266 DG: Really complex, because (--) beginning of the Vietnam War, you had a student
267 deferment. And then when that deferment went away, it was the point that larger American
268 society decided the war was not a good thing, 'cause their children were not getting deferments.
269 They were fighting and dying. We continued to get deferments; it was technically wasn't a
270 deferment, because we were student ministers, so we were exempt because we were minister,

271 'cause we were student ministers. And so, when guys would leave, they decided not to be priests,
272 you didn't stay in the seminary, some of them got picked right up and when right into the
273 military. Some of them got injured, maimed for life; some died. There was some guilt there. (--)
274 Just making sure I'm not hiding here, there was some of that. There was also a point, the moment
275 where we could see there was something truly wrong, immoral, evil about the Vietnam War.
276 When Walter Cronkite, the most trusted man in the United States, came out against the war, you
277 really had to stop and think, "What is going on here?" and "What can we do here?" and "What
278 needs to be done here?" and it was, it was an incredible, incredible time. It was. Hard to describe
279 if you didn't live through it, but it was fascinating, and when Bobby Kennedy ran for president.
280 We can talk about that, how I nearly left the seminary to work on his campaign, Gene McCarthy,
281 because Bobby, the much more viable candidate, was shot and killed obviously, so, just
282 incredible things that happened. One after another, after another, listening to Bobby Kennedy the
283 night that Martin Luther King was shot, to the people in Indiana, "Don't riot", watching it on TV
284 up at the seminary, watching the streets of Chicago burn when King was rioting, and my brother
285 was in the National Guard. King had just come out against the war; it wasn't just civil rights
286 anymore. He realized that the war was affecting everybody's civil rights. Just so much going on,
287 so much happening, that you know, the feelings ran deep, and you also had the countercultural,
288 the hippies, things like that. I grew my first set of sideburns, my first set of bell-bottom pants. I
289 let my hair grow, like everybody else did. Those were just incredible days. They really were.
290 They're almost cliché-ish now. But they were honest, incredible days. People talk about baby
291 boomers, you know, reminiscing about the good old days, the sixties. They were good, they were
292 tough, they (--) We grew. We grew.

293 (The interviewer paused the interview to check the equipment)

294 PB: So, why did you decide not to belong to any particular group? Or activist group?

295 DG: The lines were pretty blurred there. In terms of civil rights, there were groups; there
296 was, you know (SNICK) and the NAACP, and Congress of Racial Equality. (--) The war, (--)
297 the protesting was coming from lots of different directions. And I was in one of the directions it
298 was coming from. [There was an element in the church that really started speaking out against
299 the war. The immorality of it, and what it was doing to the heart and soul of the country. So, we
300 marched as priests, as seminarians. I remember, there was a march of priest and seminarians,
301 back when there were a lot more seminarians, a lot more priests, downtown to the Holy Name
302 Cathedral, and the TV Stations filmed it, and evidently did a close-up of my face, you know, just
303 one of the shots, and I wasn't picking my nose, so it made it on the news that evening, and within
304 a week, my draft board called me in. And they challenged my status as a seminary student. First
305 of many, many times that I had to present the case that I was in the seminary and should not be
306 classed by this 1A and draftable.] And this kept happening all the way until I was ordained a
307 deacon, in which I was a real minister, not just a student minister, and there's no way they would
308 draft you then. I remember I started joking on the forms, you know. "Describe your work." "The
309 work of the lord," "Whose your boss?" "God." You know, because by this time, nothing was
310 going to happen, but it wasn't (--). There wasn't a need to join a particular group or
311 organization, in that sense. By that time society, it was a groundswell. And, you know, it got
312 polarized. Nixon did a great job, you know, the moral majority. "These are a bunch of long-
313 haired hippies that don't speak for the country, we're the moral majority." But the tide, that time,
314 had turned.

315 PB: So, what was your reason for becoming an activist?

316 DG: I just believed that the war was immoral. I felt that Lyndon Johnson had lost the mandate he
317 got being elected because JFK was killed. I waited for Bobby Kennedy, and sweated over the
318 fact that I thought he could beat LBJ and thought then that he could win the election. Bobby
319 Kennedy had really been bringing everybody together. You know, we know the stories about his
320 issues and things after his death. But at that time, you knew that he could bring the races
321 together. He was able to do that. And he could bring blue collar whites and blacks together. He
322 had something about him that his brother didn't have. A passion, maybe. His brother was the
323 consummate politician. Bobby was a little wilder, a little bit looser. And an incredible passion.
324 And another thing, he was very human, you knew he grew. The death of his brother, he grew
325 with that. The pain in life and everything, and so when he announced he was running, I went
326 downtown, 'cause he had money, he opened up a campaign office, in Chicago, and in the
327 summer, I'm thinking, I just may not go back to the seminary. I may just go out and campaign
328 for him. And I remember the clock radio going off in the morning and hearing he had been shot.
329 And, just said, "Where the hell is this world coming to?" And so, that's just how everything
330 started to happen and just, you just felt (--) Now, I had a brother who was in the National
331 Guard, which made it all very interesting. And, that particular summer, my brother was head of
332 the (--) Headstart Program for the Archdiocese of Chicago. And I was hired to deliver supplies
333 to the Headstart classrooms with a classmate of mine. So we're driving through the inner city,
334 there's that element to everything in our lives, with carload supplies for the kids in the
335 community, and so my brother's my boss, and he gets called up by the guard for the Convention,
336 and I plan on going to the convention, and then he basically, I don't know how joking he was.
337 (The end) But I got a different perspective of it from him. The movement wasn't one thing.
338 There were some that were much more militant than others; people were really (--) there were
339 militants and then there were peace activists, and they were different; they were much more
340 pacifistic, in their activism. And so, there are all these different mentalities and mindsets there. It
341 was fascinating. Just fascinating. And, I just wanted to make (--) there was a sense for the first
342 time after with Kennedy, tied up into a bow fifties, everything in a neat package, that things
343 could get messy, and you could make a difference. You could make a difference. And it was
344 taken very seriously. That a difference could be made.

345 PB: So, what was your first experience as an activist?

346 DG: (--) I can't remember the first march. But one that sticks out in my mind was, we
347 were seminary students at Mundelein, and we were holding a march. Might have been a day
348 when there was going to be marches everywhere. From the seminary to a park, Kracklauer Park
349 in Mundelein. And we made the signs, and we invited anybody in the community that wanted to
350 join with us. And as we marched out of the seminary, we marched past a (--) strip mall, and in
351 this strip mall there was a little liquor store where we used to buy all our beer and booze from in
352 the seminary. And they were, on the other side, was where they had all these American flags, and
353 you know, saying that we were being anti-patriotic and everything. After that we boycotted that
354 liquor store. And it went out of business. (Laughs) We must have been buying a lot of beer and
355 booze. We were marching to the park, and a little old lady had come out of the grocery store. I
356 can still remember, it was a Piggly-Wiggly grocery store. And she had her two little shopping
357 bags, and she looked at the signs. She was walking toward us; she looked at the other sign,
358 looked at the third sign, turned around and started marching with us.

359 PB: Oh.

360 DG: And I just remember taking her two bags, and walking them, so she wouldn't have to carry
361 the bags. Said hello to her, she said hello to me, (--) she never told me her name, I never told
362 her mine, marched to the park, and then asked her if she needed help getting home, she said no.
363 That was just a moment that hearts and souls can change, and there are voices out there that need
364 to be heard. So, that may have been the first time, but it was probably the first time it did
365 something in my heart to me that really made me believe that we can make a difference.
366 Something I would learn a lot later in life, with Monsignor Jack Egan.

367 PB: So, how did the manifestation of 1968, sort of begin for you?

368 DG: It was such a crazy year. You didn't want to turn on the news, but you had to turn on
369 the news. I mean, the body count in Vietnam was like the baseball scores at the end of the day,
370 and we always, we always killed off more than our guys died. You know, it was goofy, and like I
371 said, Walter Cronkite changed his mind. I don't know if it was 68, he changed his mind, but that
372 was incredibly meaningful. And all these things were just starting to happen, and you know, I
373 remember we couldn't have TVs in the seminary; we had one TV in the rec room, and we had
374 just had a talk. A peace activist came and talked to us at the seminary. And he came down to
375 watch with us when LBJ announced that he wasn't going to run. And this guy jumped up and
376 screamed out "Oh, that's great, you son of a bitch." And I was so conflicted. You know, here
377 was a guy that could have been a superb president, you know, with what he did with race and
378 everything, got caught in this quagmire. Yes, he lied about things and yes he escalated things.
379 But there was a part of me that said, "It ain't going to get much better quickly." You know, and
380 so that was the time when we got to start doing something. You got to start doing something. So,
381 many years later, at a conference, there were a bunch of priests that were in the seminary with
382 me at the same time, and one of them got up, and said, "You know, I watched those guys in my
383 class go downtown to those marches. I'm thinking I'm going to be a priest. I shouldn't be doing
384 that. I go to chapel and pray for peace." He sat down very self-righteously. And usually with
385 that, you want to be a gentleman; you don't want to argue with him, but it ticked me off, and I
386 just got up and said, "What makes you think we didn't do both? What makes you think that
387 prayer wasn't an integral part of what we're doing? What makes you think when we were
388 marching, we weren't praying. What makes you think there weren't times that we were kind of
389 scared? When we, the day we marched in Kracklauer Park and I was handing out leaflets on the
390 street, and the Mundelein Police said 'You're going to be arrested if you don't go on the
391 sidewalk. It's the law.'" And the director of the seminary, he said, "Oh, you should have been
392 arrested; it would have coalesced us all around you guys." I said, "No, no, that's okay." So, it
393 was interesting times.

394 PB: You've answered a lot, let's see. (Ruffling of paper) So, how did you feel about
395 Johnson's resignation?

396 DG: (--) I was confused. Something like that never happened before. He was a guy who
397 I was proud of in signing the Voting Rights Act and things like that into law. He was a
398 consummate politician. You kind of sensed JFK would have never gotten those bills passed.
399 LBJ, you know, just knew how to get stuff from the congress, and, you know, who was going to
400 replace him then? The country, there was a strong divide in the country. And the only guy I

401 could think of was Bobby Kennedy. I just knew that Gene McCarthy couldn't win, even though
402 he had the college students, "Clean for Gene", you know, cut your hair, get your beard cut and
403 trimmed, dress good and go door to door, in the states, and get some votes for the primary; he
404 was never going to be able to win. But I thought Bobby Kennedy could, and of course, the other
405 side, you knew it was going to be Nixon and even, that scared us even then. You know, so it was
406 kind of Shakespearean. Kind of "King Lear," the fall. You know, he was blinded to what he was
407 doing, the fact that he had to win an unwinnable war. And everybody knew people who were
408 dead because of Vietnam. It was incredible. You know, and some of the parents were angry at us
409 for protesting. They thought it was disloyal to their sons. And others joined with us in the
410 protests. And you had brother against brother, and mother against son. It was, these were, they
411 were tough times. They were. And you wondered if the country was going to pull through. You
412 know, it was really turning into a military state or whatever.

413 PB: So, was it strictly the Vietnam War that changed your mind about Johnson, or (--)?

414 DG: (Brief pause) Yes. I would have to say yes. You know, you read, retrospective history's
415 always interesting. And you read, the different things now and you see the way he's portrayed in
416 different movies and things, and you know, the tapes that are released after a certain number of
417 years. It's all fascinating. We tend to lionize our politicians. Turn them into bigger-than-life, and
418 then we see that they're human beings with their own pettiness, their own fears. But I have a
419 feeling that as the years go on, history will treat him better than they did, that he found himself in
420 a situation he probably couldn't get out of. And the country wasn't really ready for the country to
421 get out of at that moment, so I think the protests really brought the country around. (--) You
422 remember at that time, the US Bishops were all supporting the war.

423 PB: Mm-hmm.

424 DG: You know, Cardinal (Spelman), who was the one in charge of the military; he would do six
425 midnight masses on Christmas, one time zone after another, and the patriotism of the American
426 Catholic is very important, because the American, you know, some people thought Catholics
427 were (--) The pope was the leader, and a foreign one. So, we had to show our Americanism and
428 our patriotism, so, protesting like that went against the grain for a lot of Americans and a lot of
429 church leaders.

430 PB: Mm-hmm. So, what was your first reaction to Martin Luther King's Assassination?

431 DG: Again, I remember watching it on the TV, in one of the priest's rooms in the
432 seminary. And staring at the screen, and seeing Chicago go up in flames, the west side.
433 Roosevelt Road, I remember, and feeling totally powerless and helpless, and so I got up, and
434 they said "Where are you going?" I said "I'm going to chapel. I don't know what else to do, so
435 I'm going to pray." And everybody followed me. I mean, there was nothing else to do. I couldn't
436 watch anymore. We couldn't have phones; there were no cell phones, obviously, we couldn't
437 have phones in our room. There was one payphone in the rec room, and at least now you could
438 use it. Before you had to have permission to make calls. I called home, and my mother was just
439 sobbing, because my brother had been called up in the National Guard.

440 PB: Mm-hmm.

441 DG: And she was watching on TV the city burning. And she just, she was scared out of her
442 mind. So, all of a sudden, it hits close to home. I didn't know he was in the army, so, you know,
443 he never got called out, and he was mad that he was stuck there, and he told some funny stories
444 about that. But, it was (--) Here's a guy who won the Nobel Peace Prize, and he's killed, in a
445 Southern city, by a white man. It's everything that could be wrong. Because we've heard his
446 speeches a million times on TV, the electricity of when he first spoke, you know, just incredible
447 to have had that experience. To see the march on Washington, to, you know, to gather with
448 people and just realize that this man was a man of God. He's right up there with Gandhi, you
449 know, and this is how we treated him. It was a time where it was really easy to lose some hope. It
450 really was. And then you drive through the city afterwards in Chicago, it was like a war zone.

451 PB: So, along with prayer, how else did you try to reconcile the tragedy?

452 DG: We did some workshops in the seminary; (--) I recommitted myself to working at Saint
453 Joseph's parish at Cabrini Green. We went down there and we continued to help in that parish,
454 with the kids and the Cabrini Green projects. I was also helping out at old St. Pat's Parish, now
455 the big Irish gentrified parish. There was a small African American community there. And one
456 summer, I spent the mornings in old Saint Joes and the afternoons at old Saint Pat's, working
457 with the kids, just saying we got to do something for these kids, and so, that's what you did, you
458 did what was available for you to be able to do.

459 PB: So, what fueled you, exactly, to work for Bobby Kennedy's campaign?

460 DG: (--) His passion was just incredible. Many years later, when Ted Kennedy had this
461 run for presidency, Ethel Kennedy came to where I was teaching. I was already a priest, teaching
462 at Quigley South, came to talk to the student body. And I had a chance to go up to her afterwards
463 and talk to her, and I told her, I said, and it just kind of came out, I said, "I (--) base," or "I do
464 what I do, a lot of what I do as a priest, based on what your husband was and did as a man. He
465 had that kind of impact on me. That sense of integrity, what I want to do, what I want to be, what
466 I want to say." And she stopped dead in her tracks and said, "Nobody's ever said anything like
467 that before." It was really true. He made that kind of difference for me. Passion. Passion was the
468 word.

469 PB: So, how far did you get working on his campaign?

470 DG: I just, you know, he died shortly after his office was open in Chicago. I had buttons, I had
471 materials, I had signed up for one mailing thing we did at the office, that's all. (--) Everybody
472 was talking about how they were taking off from school. I still wasn't ready to make a
473 commitment to leave the seminary; that was a really big step. And I knew my family wouldn't
474 understand that at all. And one I left, I wouldn't be able to go back; they wouldn't take you back,
475 "Make your decision" kind of thing. So, before I made any final decision, the decision was made
476 by a gun. Sirhan Sirhan's gun.

477 PB: What was your first reaction?

478 DG: It was total disbelief in the sense that the world was coming to an end. You know, Jack
479 Kennedy is dead, and Martin Luther King is dead, and now Bobby Kennedy is dead. And the
480 war's escalating, and the country's more divided than ever. What the hell is going on? It was

481 beyond belief. I got used to seeing rioting in the streets when Kennedy was president and
482 Johnson for Civil Rights. Rioting in the streets when King was shot, rioting in the street when
483 some of the antiwar marches were getting pretty violent. And there were now, just the start of
484 things like the Black Panther Party, and the antiwar stuff getting mixed up with Black Power,
485 and all sorts of other things going on. It was an incredible time. It proves the strength of our
486 country that we survived all that.

487 PB: So, now that Kennedy had, you saw Kennedy as a great hope, what did you think was going
488 to happen next (--) now that Kennedy was gone?

489 DG: There was a little bit of hope that the democrats could still nominate somebody that could, (
490 --) carry the peace banner. And Humphrey came out and supported all of Johnson's policies.
491 And you knew, in his heart, he didn't believe that. He knew that was the only way he was going
492 to get the nomination. You saw the sadness in his eyes, in his acceptance speech. There wasn't,
493 you know, that heart in it. And you knew at that point (--) and by this time Grant Park is burned
494 and Mayor Daley is saying the F-bomb to (Large car drives past) Stuart Simonton the senator,
495 saying the young are being murdered in the streets, and that was the day, we were on our way to
496 Grant Park. My brother was in the National Guard, got called up for that, and we saw it on TV
497 and we said, "You're not going. This is a riot. You're not going to go to a riot." And it turned
498 into what the Kerner Commission called the "Police Riot." The police did the riot; they took off
499 their badges and their nametags, so you couldn't tell who they were, and beat the crap out of all
500 the protestors. It was a mess. And the protestors, some of them got violent in response. It served
501 no good purpose, and everybody chanting in the street, the whole world is watching, 'cause the
502 cameras went from the convention to that. And you then knew the democrats had lost their
503 chance. A month later, the Republican Convention, there's Richard Nixon with other, pretty,
504 little blonde-haired girl and guys in their blazers looking All-American and not looking like
505 Hippies, with signs that said, "Bring us together." You know, that was going to be his motto, and
506 he was going to run away with the election. And he did. He didn't run away with it, but he beat
507 Humphrey, really close actually, but he set the stage for really trouncing McGovern and
508 everything else.

509 PB: So, how did you continue your activism? What were your goals after?

510 DG: I think, like a lot of people, the goals were just to be heard. There's a growing sense
511 of, "This may not work." You know, the hope of, the euphoria of thinking you're making a
512 difference, changed into much more of a sense of, "This is going to go on for a long, long, long
513 time." (--) And you got to decide if you're in it for the long haul or not. (--) The other thing
514 that happened, by 1973 now, we're ordained priests, so we got our ministry to do with the
515 parishes and things like that. We're new at it, we're learning on the job, and we're altogether at
516 the seminary, so we got spread out and things changed.

517 PB: Mm-hmm.

518 DG: They really did.

519 PB: So, tell me your story of what you experienced during the Democratic National
520 Convention.

521 DG: Well, (--) you know, you look at it now and you've got cable TV, and you've got
522 the Internet and stuff. Take that out of the equation. You've got the major stations, you know,
523 NBC, ABC, CBS. Most people are watching CBS because of Walter Cronkite. And the news
524 came to us that way. And (--) there was a sense of (--) detachment. Protestors, these were the
525 big names, these were, the, you know, the Chicago, Seven, was it? I forget the number, and they
526 eventually went to trial, and, it was one of my classmates from the seminary, who left the
527 seminary and (--) became a cop and went undercover, as a spy, and testified against them at the
528 trial. You know, Abbie Hoffman and Tom Hayden and those guys. They were the professional
529 protestors. You know, they really were. That was what was there then, and that would change as
530 the war wore on, and the years wore on, we started getting more, what we call soccer moms,
531 families, because it had touched so many lives. At that point, it was still a pretty radical thing.
532 And the (Brief pause) radicalism, it was tough, it was tough to wrap around, yourself around. I
533 mean it was so tied-in with the counter culture, tied in somewhat to the drugs, tied in to the
534 music of the times; it was very different than anything I've experienced since, so it was a matter
535 of just kind of saying, "Okay, let's see what comes next." For me, unlike some of those real
536 activists who threw their heart and soul into it, they were activists. We were re-activists. We
537 would react. Something would happen, we decided if we wanted to join a march about it or
538 something like that. That's about as far as I got; that's all that I unfortunately had the ability to
539 do.

540 PB: So, what were you doing during the summer?

541 DG: During the summers, there were two things; you needed to make money 'cause you
542 couldn't work when you were in the seminary, so you had to have the money to live on, and I
543 wasn't going to ask my dad for it. My dad felt you weren't a man until you were on your own
544 financially. So, here I am, college and post-college trying to make as much money as I can in the
545 summers, so, there were always summer jobs. By this time, the family grocery store had closed,
546 so I couldn't work for them, so I did everything in the summer from road construction to
547 unloading stuff from the docks, but we also did a lot of work in the streets, and things. So, right
548 before (nation), we, four of us lived off-campus and had a teen drop-in center in Waukegan, and
549 a place to come and pray, talk about the war and other things as well. There was a lot going on.
550 But primarily, I was just trying to make enough money to get by, and then again, like I said
551 (horn), I'm not sure I'm proud of it, but we reacted. If we heard there was going to be a gathering
552 here, or a march here, a demonstration there, we would then decide to join it. We were the ones
553 who assured them they had the numbers they wanted or needed rather than be the leaders. That
554 changed a little bit under Monsignor (--) Jack Egan, and that changed as time went on. He
555 taught us to be more real activists.

556 PB: So, to the extent of your participation, what was your greatest fear?

557 My greatest fear was, was this going to bring about the changes necessary? An end to a war, and
558 end to the slaughter, the killing, and then (--) I mean, then all of a sudden, it's Nixon bombing
559 Cambodia on Christmas Eve. You know, it's just getting worse and worse. Is what we're doing
560 going to bring about change or is it just going to divide the country, weaken the company, so
561 factions like that, you know, the war factions can stay in control? It was a great fear. And then
562 the violence in the streets, the neighborhoods, who else is going to be killed? It was not good.

563 PB: So, in regard to the convention, what did you think of Daley's behavior?

564 DG: Daley's behavior was (--) he showed his true colors. A boss, a bully, a bigot who
565 was used to being in control, having everything his way, who would then appear with his wife
566 and children at mass on Easter Sunday, as polite as he could be. He was progressive in some of
567 his politics, but on the war, and things like that, not so much, because it all got tied in race. Of
568 course this was when Jesse Jackson was just starting up as well and, they're going to have an
569 alternative delegation, at one of the conventions eventually. It was a mess. It was an
570 embarrassment. He was an embarrassment to the city, an embarrassment to me as a Catholic. An
571 embarrassment to lots of boys. He wore his Catholicism, on Ash Wednesday, he would have a
572 news conference, even if there was nothing to say, so everybody could see ashes on his forehead.
573 You know, he used that, so that's another reason it was an embarrassment, and all his political
574 cronies hanging around to, you know, decree his favor, and things like that. (--) It was not good.

575 PB: So, how were your own goals different from the general consensus of the protestors?

576 DG: (--) Probably differed in intensity. Because of being in the seminary, and the
577 strictures in the seminary, and the fact, you know, I was tied to it, if I left it, I left it. I had to do
578 whatever I did within those strictures, and I didn't feel I wanted to move out of that, 'cause I
579 would lose the opportunity to be a priest. So, I think it held me back a bit, or maybe that was an
580 excuse, I'm not sure, I'll be honest. But it (--) but it also, it was part of the whole training thing
581 we did. You know, we were searching to find a way of communicating what we believed, and
582 that's what priests do. So, we had turned an old science lab in the seminary into a coffee house,
583 named George, after George Cardinal of Mundelein, and we would have poetry readings, we'd
584 invite the girls from the other college, it was nice to have girls on the seminary campus and
585 things like that. And we would do different things, and we did a seminar on Vietnam, and I got
586 some of my classmates so mad. We did a thing where we made it sound like, in the middle of it,
587 when we were having this heady discussion about war, somebody knocked on the door and
588 called one of the guys out who came back sobbing, saying he just word his brother died in
589 Vietnam. Which wasn't true. It was just a terribly manipulative thing to get the group to realize
590 the immediacy and the reality of the issues. And it was pretty juvenile; people got really, really
591 ticked at us. But, it made a point. So we were searching to see how we tie all this in to what our
592 vocation and our calling was going to be. And it wasn't all of us up there; there were some guys
593 up there that didn't buy into what we were thinking about the war at all. So, even with our own
594 little isolated world there were differences.

595 PB: So, you didn't have as much a role in the protests.

596 DG: No.

597 PB: What were you doing while the protests were happening?

598 DG: I was going to school; I was getting the master's degree in Theology. And, if it fit into the
599 timeline, I mean, most of the protests happened downtown Chicago. When we finally could get
600 cars, we could drive down there; if we didn't have cars, there was no way of getting down there
601 anyway, 'cause you had to be back at campus at a certain time, you had to sign in and sign out,
602 and then those restrictions fell, like I said early on, all these changes were happening, that

603 allowed us the freedom to do some of these things.

604 PB: So, how did you witness the protests and the convention?

605 DG: Pretty much on TV.

606 PB: Mm-hmm.

607 DG: Yes, pretty much on TV. With the other group of people that decided not to go, downtown,
608 in front of the Congress or the Hilton Hotel. That's pretty much where we saw it. My brother was
609 also in touch with me, saying, "You don't want to come down here. This is out of control."

610 PB: Mm-hmm.

611 DG: "At any second, it could really explode." And my brother knew that. The National Guard
612 were not professional soldiers. They were people like my brother, business people, and people
613 that got into the guard so they would not have to go to Vietnam. We had a contact who worked
614 for the VA, that got my brother into the National Guard, and got my oldest brother into the Air
615 Force Reserves, so he wouldn't have to go, and fortunately he was done before all the Vietnam
616 stuff started, but my brother Phil got out of active duty by getting into the Guard. At that point
617 the guard had only been called up for floods and things in Illinois for the last ten years. Now, you
618 get called up during the King Riots as they called it, and got called up for the anti-Vietnam stuff,
619 and these are guys holding rifles (Mumblin) And he said, it got bad. There were bottles being
620 thrown at them, bags of crap being thrown at them, by the peace protestors and things. Like any
621 protestors, you get some crazies in there that want to turn the protest into something else. You
622 see that today even in Ferguson, you know. (Church bells chime) People using the time to start
623 shooting guns off and stuff; it's always the problem with these kind of things. So (--) We tried
624 to have some study days at the seminary, we certainly did a part of our life in prayer, we'd go to
625 events, but that was about as far as we could get through. We also had to be a little bit careful,
626 because, Cardinal Cody was the guy who was going to ordain us and we didn't want to get him
627 riled about anything. If we did anything in the seminary that looked bad, we'd have to be careful.
628 That was part of the reality of it.

629 PB: So, what kind of resentment did you have with your brother being in the National Guard and
630 sort of, being on sort of a side of (--)

631 DG: Yes, I didn't really have any resentment, because he didn't want to be there. He had no
632 choice. He didn't know when he got into the guard this was going to happen. And that was the
633 case with a lot of these guys. And so, the image of all these guys with their guns drawn, they're
634 following orders. You know, they were in a bad place as well. Were some of them gung-ho about
635 it, oh, I'm sure there were, but he wasn't. He had strong feelings about the war, too, but what's
636 he going to do?

637 PB: So, what do you think was the perception of the policemen? Do you think that they were
638 happy about (--) I mean, do you think that they were more fueled to do what they were told?

639 DG: I think the police in Chicago at the time were very blue-collar, you know, many of them
640 were ex-military, they supported the war. People saw the protestors as a bunch of long-haired,

641 dirty hippies, who are shacking up together and smoking up, the stereotypes. And, they wanted
642 their city to look good, and they were upset with what was going on, and they were let loose.
643 They didn't have to wear nametags; they were let loose. And it got pretty vicious. You've seen
644 the pictures, the films. Guys, you know, lying limp and just being plummeted with the night
645 sticks and things like that. A lot of that stuff happened. And it was out of control. Was it every
646 cop, no. Was it too many cops; one would have been too many. Yes it was. And it some ways, in
647 a very strange way, you can see they were victims too, they were put in a position where they
648 were almost goaded to act that way. I mean, they were told to get the people out of the park,
649 because the park had a law that it closed at eleven pm. That law was never enforced; people stay
650 up all night in Lincoln Park and Grant Park. But Daley found this old, obscure law, in there and
651 started cleaning them out. And, you know, people didn't stand for it and it got crazy. Got crazy.

652 PB: So, how did your religious convictions affect your behavior around that time?

653 DG: Well, I started reading a lot of Thomas Merton, who was very much a peace activist
654 monk. (Horn honks) He didn't have the full blown reputation he had now, he has now of being
655 one of the most incredible writers and his take on society, he was meeting with people who were
656 antiwar and dealing with these things. When you read his writing now, it's incredible, but
657 starting to read his stuff then and seeing what was going on. Seeing that Gene McCarthy was a
658 committed Catholic, and just seeing that end. But there were Catholics now who were saying,
659 "Yes, Catholics can be conscientious objectors." And beginning to try to define what that meant.
660 Conscientious objectors of all wars, the government didn't allow for conscientious objectors for
661 a particular war, you had to be one or not. That was just starting form, just starting to happen.
662 And as I was doing the rest of my theological studies, I was just beginning to realize that certain
663 things were not compatible with the Gospel. And when we turn patriotism into a religion, a
664 religion into patriotism. That's really dangerous.

665 PB: So, how did you feel about the way these events were being depicted in the media?

666 DG: Media was very different in those days. The most trusted American during those
667 times was Walter Cronkite (--) Like I said, when he went up against the war, that was the
668 turning point. That really was. You know, we listened to them, we believed what they were
669 saying. We believed what the newspapers were saying. In some ways, things were a little bit
670 more nuanced. You know, It wasn't MSNBC versus Fox, and you know when you watch those,
671 what you're getting , what particular point of view you're getting. It was still, you still had the
672 honest newsmen that had grown up in the Second World War, you know that knew how to tell
673 the real story, and hadn't gotten too old or died off yet, so they did an incredible job of reporting.

674 (The interviewer paused the interview to check the equipment)

675 PB: So, what was the most turbulent memory, oh, I'm sorry.

676 DG: The most turbulent memory.

677 PB: Of the Democratic Convention.

678 DG: (--) All these images are popping to mind. One was my brother looking at me as we were
679 both leaving work, saying, "I had a date this weekend; you're ruining my weekend. If I see you

680 down at the park, I'm going to bayonet you." I just wasn't sure if he was kidding. (Laughs) He
681 was. I wasn't sure at that moment. The other was, again, they're images we see so often now that
682 they don't surprise us. But seeing cops beat up on people. Another image that comes to mind.
683 One image is seeing Michigan Avenue, with the guard and the police here, (--) protestor here,
684 and realizing, there's not going to be room when they meet and that's when people were falling
685 through the windows in the Conrad Hilton Hotel and things like that. And the delegates looking
686 out their windows of their room, seeing this happen. I felt bad for my city at that moment.
687 Hearing Peter, Paul, and Mary there sitting, I think they were there live, I don't think it was a
688 tape, and I love Peter, Paul and Mary, but I was thinking, "Is this doing any good at this point."
689 Part of me was saying, I didn't know what the best tactic was, to see people get beat up or to just
690 (Doorbell rings) be bigger than that. I don't know, I don't know. So, a lot of confusion, a lot of
691 sadness that it's come to this. You know, this is a democratic country, where we freely elect our
692 leaders, and instead we're rioting in the streets. (Conversation outside of the room) And I mean, I
693 don't mean, the protestors, the rioters, there was rioting going on by the police, and just too
694 much happening, and, you know, Dan Rather got beat up at the convention, you know, a great
695 moment where the Chicago delegates pushed him around and pushed him out.

696 PB: Mm-hmm.

697 DG: You know, just interesting. (Knock on door) There's a profound sadness. I found in life,
698 that's kind of my normal reaction to a lot of things. I get so sad that things have to be the way
699 they are sometimes.

700 PB: So, what was a moment that gave you the most hope?

701 DG: (--) At that time, or as time progressed?

702 PB: At that time.

703 At that time, not much.

704 PB: Mm-hmm.

705 DG: Not much. There was a (--) I had, as I let my hair start to grow, and people would (--) "F
706 you, hippie" You know, antiwar, there was just a lot of anger. So, there wasn't a lot of hope at
707 that moment in history. There really wasn't. You know, I began to realize while all this
708 happening here, people were still dying in Vietnam, and then people would come home from
709 Vietnam, and if they wore their uniform, they were treated like crap., You know, like "Why did
710 you go?" People had no choice when they went. But it was, you know (--) You were stuck. If
711 you were fighting in the war, and you didn't the support the military, now like today, there's a
712 difference. We may be protesting the war in Afghanistan, but you don't take it out on the soldiers
713 that are there. We took it out on the soldiers. And there was something intrinsically not good
714 about that. And, (--) that made it even more complex and difficult. I worry if anybody who tries
715 to come with easy (--) images, easy (--) words, easy (--) pictures. It was a really complex
716 time. so, I'd like to say, "Oh, this gave me hope" or "This made sense for me" or "This was the
717 issue for me"; It was way more complex than that.

718 PB: What did the turning point look like?

719 DG: Didn't even see a turning point at that point. There was no turning point. And the election
720 was (--) it was a sad thing; there wasn't any passion there at all. The "moral majority" and the
721 "hard hats," the "silent majority"; the moral majority was the (--) the religious ones like Jerry
722 Falwell, rather than the silent majority. It was just, it was not a hopeful time. Again, you know,
723 in the background, there were bombs dropping in Vietnam and in Cambodia. The numbers were
724 escalating and going up. We would start seeing headlines saying about massacres and Tet
725 offenses, it was just, the news was filled with (--) it was not good. It was not, there was no
726 turning point, if anything, it was "Dig your heels in for a long fight."

727 PB: So, who do you believe was the victor?

728 DG: Everybody lost. I can say that without hesitating. Everybody lost. The political process lost
729 big time, because there was a reaction to open up the conventions a little bit more, so it wouldn't
730 be the bosses who ran things. But that led in to the special interests. And the kind of, you know,
731 Iowa caucuses determined who going to be the champion (--) There numbers more near
732 carrying the weight of who they side. (--) There was still going to be tens of thousands of
733 American men and women who were dying in Vietnam. We never did anything for those Vets
734 like we should have when they came home. And over my years, it breaks my heart as a priest
735 when somebody comes to the door, homeless and hungry, and sure enough, they're a Vietnam
736 Vet. Now, (--) for my age, they're getting older, a lot of them are dead, they were scarred,
737 scarred for life. The police in Chicago (--) Chicago would never be the same, and maybe it
738 shouldn't have been; maybe it needed to be brought to light. The protestors, you know, (--) the
739 movement lost its innocence, lost its purity, became (--) much more violent in some ways. If
740 not in action, at least in words, and things like that. (--) And it splintered, and you know, some (--)
741 liberation army, what the hell was that? (Doorbell rings) (--) People were dying, it was just
742 a mess. And, (--) so, nothing, nothing. Nothing good came out of that I don't think.

743 PB: How did you try to reconcile all this?

744 DG: (--) Like some, I stepped back a little bit, turned inward, said okay. You're going to be a
745 priest, what are you going to do as a priest. What values are you going to bring? My first
746 assignment as a priest was the African American community. My choice, that I wanted to make a
747 difference, I wanted to be part of the community, do some things as a priest that I couldn't do
748 before I was priest. I (--) then went into teaching and wanted to teach the generations, for all of
749 us, that activism is good thing. (--) That there is power in numbers, you have to make sure that
750 the power is utilized as effectively and the best way it can be like any power should be. And (--)
751 you know, that's what happened. (--) I subsequently met Monsignor Jack Egan, when I became
752 a pastor, this is fast-forwarding twenty years later. Jack Egan had been an activist for social
753 justice in Chicago, and went down to Notre Dame to work with Monsignor Ted Esberg, Esberg
754 and Cardinal Cody took his job away from here, and he came back to Chicago and he gathered
755 some us young pastors round, and started teaching us what it meant, (--) so the seed that was
756 planted took decades to germinate, and part of it was going to training for the Industrial Areas
757 Foundation, Saul Alinsky's group, and the social justice issues there, and learning what it meant
758 to be an activist, so it really fast forwards up to this last election, when all of a sudden the
759 community organizer was a dirty word.

760 PB: Mm-hmm.

761 DG: I would laugh. (--) There was a reason not to vote for Barack Obama, 'cause he was a
762 community organizer, but community organizing is the backbone of a lot, a lot of this. A lot of
763 people protest moved kind of seamlessly into that, but Saul Alinsky and Ed Chambers and the
764 guys who ran it, they knew how to take the idealism, the (--) energy, and train it into doing it
765 right. So, it wasn't just people yelling and screaming, you had an agenda, you practiced, you
766 trained, you'd do what you were going to do. We had the discipline, the value, the action
767 afterwards. I wish we had that in the sixties. We didn't. Maybe we couldn't; maybe it was just
768 such terrible times, such different times, that it couldn't have happened, but it would have been
769 nice.

770 PB: So, (--) what did your work with Ed Chambers and Jack Egan consist of?

771 DG: Well, Jack Egan brought the Industrial Areas Foundation (--) back to Chicago,
772 that's where they started, with the (--) organization, and back in Irish neighborhood, in Our
773 Nation of the Southwest. (--) Saul Alinsky left Chicago kind of just fed up with everything.
774 And, (--) Jack Egan knew, back with community organizing are the churches; they're the
775 biggest institutions in the neighborhood, and we can make a difference. And there was a really,
776 you know, (--) Harold Washington had been elected and died and things started to change again
777 in Chicago, and we needed to have (--) the training, the ability to learn how to do these things.
778 And that's what he brought to us. And so, we, (--) at the same time, we, the young pastors, were
779 saying, "Problems are getting too big in Chicago, we can't handle them parochially." And a
780 group of young African American ministers were saying the same thing in the black community.
781 And so Jack Egan brought Ed Chambers in and said, "You know" (--) and he gave a talk and I
782 was thinking "What's he talking to us for," you know, "We're not Brooklyn" (--) I lived in a
783 gentrified neighborhood. I didn't get it at first, and then it began to sink in on me, this is (--) we
784 need to get together and form (--) an organization for organizations, and we need to be trained
785 to do that. And then Jack, through the (--) and the (--) if you wanted Ed Chambers, you got to
786 do what he asked, and Ed Chambers said, "I want you to get eighty Catholic Pastors to support
787 this before I do anything. We got to have eighty pastors." And he said, "You got to get me two
788 million dollars from Cardinal Bernadine so we can start organizing." And then Cardinal
789 Bernadine, Saul went to this and he's going to ask religious leaders from other denominations,
790 and we're going to do this. We did it. How did we do it, because (--) the men who trained us,
791 trained me, how to make the (--) with Cardinal Bernadine. You know, that was (--) he brought
792 in one of his assistants and we turned the chairs away from him. We're here to talk to Bernadine.
793 And I couldn't leave the room till we got a yes from him; we got a yes from him. And then we
794 had to make the presentation to other religious leaders. They sat me right in his line of vision just
795 to cross my arms and stare at him, remind him he's got to say what we wanted him to say, and he
796 did. It was incredible. And we had other skills to learn. You know, I was watching Rahm
797 Immanuel, you know, and his campaign, and all I could think of was when he was our
798 congressman, and we wanted to meet with him about some issues, and (--) we had a two o'
799 clock appointment with him. And at 2:20, he wasn't there, so I went up to the desk and said, "We
800 are leaving" She says, "You can't. He's on his way here." "Yes we can, our time is as valuable
801 as his and we only give twenty minute waiting time, and tell him we will call him back and set
802 up another meeting" and as we left, he started walking, he said, "I'll meet with you now" I said,
803 "No, we're leaving. You were supposed to be here twenty-five minutes ago." "I'm busy." "No
804 busier than we are." It's all a power thing. And we walked out, and I'm thinking, "He'll never
805 meet with us again" and he did. Didn't like us, but he listened to us. (--) You learned things like

806 that, you learned to evaluate (--) that you did. And I just saw this stuff, it was really wonderful.
807 I couldn't have done that, had I not been around in the sixties. I wish I had that in the sixties. It
808 would have been so valuable. On so many levels. But I'm one of the (--) I'm not one of the
809 leaders, obviously, (--) but I'm one of the foot soldiers, that there were tens of hundreds of
810 millions around our country that did this, that could not do it or chose not to do it full time, but
811 was still a part of it. Maybe if we'd all done it full time, it would have ended earlier. That's in
812 hindsight, but we did only what we were allowed to do in that particular time in history. But it
813 changed us, and we wonder what's happening in the generations that follow us. And now these
814 pop-up rallies and pop-up marches, they're going on, and traffic gets blocked and stuff like that.
815 I sit there and I think "This is good". And they thought it all out, they understand the
816 implications of what they're doing. I guess my attitude is, yes, it's gotten a little less passionate
817 and a little bit more pragmatic.

818 (The interviewer paused the interview to check the equipment)

819 PB: And the last few questions are reflection questions.

820 DG: Okay.

821 PB: (--) What lessons did you learn that helped you most with your religious
822 conviction?

823 DG: (--) I learned not to be quite as judgmental as I used to be. That, when you start
824 judging people, and putting them in boxes, categories (--) communication stops. Not everybody
825 that doesn't agree with me is evil. (--) That I'm not always right. That ultimately, the gospel
826 that I read is a gospel that says, no matter what, we have to be kind. And how hard that is when
827 you're passionate about something, and you really feel you're right. I believe that (--) there is a
828 need to gather, that there is power in numbers, you know God's presence works through that.
829 That we need to share convictions, that we need to be in community, we need to be in
830 relationships when the issues rise. Then we can be there, so saying theologically, that's why we
831 gather around the table. That why we share in the Eucharist. That's why we share the banquet of
832 the lord, so we need the strength, and we need the hope, and we need the vision. It's there, and
833 naturally, we are in relationship, we are in communion with one another, and then we can bring
834 this to where we need to bring it, to be where it needs to be brought, because the opposite of that
835 is the anarchy of isolation, of loneliness, of separateness, of brokenness, of emptiness, and that's
836 what we're fighting, and that's the battle we fight in the world, and communion, which is our
837 relationship with God, the isolation, which is the relationship with evil. In our world, and the
838 forces of evil will do everything in their power to drive wedges between us, so we have to look
839 for what we have in common, and emphasize what we share, the common values, rather than the
840 things we differ in. You know, by dividing us, people take away our strength and our (--)
841 vision, and our resolve when we need to come together with some things and hold those things
842 together.

843 PB: How did the conflict of 1968 reflect previous movements in your life?

844 DG: (--) Made me grow up, I was just a kid before then, I didn't take anything too
845 seriously, I (--) talked a good talk, I (--) I didn't realize that there are people who put their

846 lives on the line for what they believe. And people give up everything for what they believe. And
847 that's pretty darn powerful. Challenging.

848 PB: What conviction rose above every other that led to the majority of your actions?

849 DG: (--) I would see the pictures of my contemporaries, dead, you know, not how they
850 died, but their military pictures, their family pictures. And I would look at them and say "A
851 whole life worth of dreams will not be dreamt. Whole lives worth of hope will not be fulfilled.
852 What children would there have been, what love would there have been." All that has been
853 squashed, By death and a war we shouldn't have been in, and the extreme value of life that we're
854 not just statistics, we're not just casualties of war, we're not just numbers any more than the
855 Vietnamese and the Viet Cong were. These were all human beings with hopes and dreams and
856 fears and visions of life and they're all gone, they're all gone, and the incredible waste that is,
857 and can't there be a better way to respond to every issue we have with war, and can't we learn
858 from it, and I guess the answer is no, because we're still doing it, we're still doing it. (--)
859 Channel surfing the other day, and some channel was flashing faces of people who died, and our
860 conflicts the last ten years, and where they were from and, you know, wrote their little bios and
861 you see those pictures now and they're kids to me. They were my contemporaries, and it's just
862 too much of a loss. And all the lives were affected by it. There's got to be a better way, got to be
863 a better way. (Car drives past) You know, if we're going to police the world, which our country's
864 been thinking we should be doing, then the absolute youth and vitality and vigor of our society,
865 these young men and women are going to just bleed away, and what will be left with?

866 PB: So, what were some periods in the movement when you relied on your faith to get
867 through?

868 DG: Almost every time. (--) A lot of our marches were to a place of worship, or started
869 in a place of worship. We were done with prayer, we identified as seminarians or clergy, for
870 peace, it was part of our identity. We always wanted to keep, keep that part of it, (--) not just a
871 political thing, because it wasn't particularly (--) well, politics had a part to play in it, it was our
872 religious belief what was motivating us, it was the gospel of Jesus, saying, you know, and the
873 challenge of that Gospel, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will inherit the earth." And to
874 really make that a reality in our lives.

875 PB: So, what did the movement do to change or enhance any belief you had?

876 DG: Well, I think it helped my belief in God to grow, it helped me to see the complexity
877 of the world in which I lived, so the complexity of God that created that world. Taught me to
878 realize that while we struggle with evil, it's not just black and white, there's a lot of gray in there
879 as well, and how we respond to things, the choice that we make when we respond, really says a
880 lot more than we realize sometimes.

881 PB: How did the events of 1968 change you?

882 DG: (--) I don't know. Would I be here today, probably, but maybe not here, being a
883 priest, I don't know, would I be here or out in the suburbs somewhere, or something else, I think
884 what '68 did was led me to believe that there are absolute heroes and martyrs in our world,
885 people want to give up their lives because of their passion, and if I could have just one tiny bit of

886 that passion in our ministry and in my life, it'd be a good thing. I've always worked for that,
887 worked for that. It's something I believe.

888 PB: So, what are you most proud of as an activist?

889 DG: (--) Nothing I'm really proud of; I'm saddened that we had to do that. I'm saddened
890 that things got so divisive. I'm saddened that it had to continue so long. I'm saddened that (--)
891 there was more demagoguery than there was honesty. I'm saddened for the times there wasn't
892 the integrity that was necessary to be totally honest. I'm saddened by why we had to keep doing
893 it, and the lives kept dying. (--) I'm saddened that I didn't do more, I'm saddened that I (--)
894 sometimes (--) was in thought, and as violent as some of the people whose violence I abhorred
895 (--) I guess it had to be, but nothing there, nothing there that I can say "Boy, I'm glad that
896 happened."

897 PB: What parallels do you see between 1968 and now?

898 DG: That's an incredible question. (--) I see (--) a fatigue that wasn't there then; there
899 was a freshness still there then. A fatigue brought out by instant communication, but you know,
900 we see it happening, or two seconds later, throughout the world. A fatigue of trying to separate
901 fact from opinion, the media. Fatigue of, you know, ask the man on the street, "Who are we
902 fighting right now? Where are our troops?" Will they know the answer? "Where are our
903 airplanes striking?" Will they know the answer? You know, "How much money is our country
904 spending on this? How many total lives have been lost in this so far? How many people are in
905 VA hospitals with mental and physical conditions?" I mean, people live longer now than ever
906 before, so you got people, multiple handicapped people, with limbs missing, that would have
907 died in Vietnam, but they're sewn together, but their lives are, are torn apart. So, you turn on the
908 TV and Dancing with Stars, there's a guy there without an arm and a leg, he's dancing and he's a
909 vet and everybody is applauding him for what he did for his country, and that's nice and good,
910 and I give him credit, but for every one of him, there's got to be hundreds of VA hospitals that
911 are (--) with lives that have been torn apart, and our VA hospitals don't even do a good job of
912 protecting them, so I just see (--) there's almost overload. The circuit breakers are popping,
913 there's just so much going on. How do we get a handle on it? I don't know, because you know,
914 what do you want to march for today? Do I want to march to get us out of Afghanistan, do I want
915 to march for (--) that our planes don't fly over Iran. Do I want to march because people of color
916 are being killed on the street? Do I want to march because people are separated from their family
917 because their illegal, but their children aren't? Do I want (--) where do we begin? And so,
918 things have gotten so fractured now. And I think it's very hard. And I had great hopes that an
919 Obama presidency (--) could have brought us all together, (--) I don't think it's through any
920 (doorbell rings) fault of his own, but through the way the political system has evolved, that
921 hasn't happened. You know, I think anybody could do that now, there's too much, anybody can
922 do, can keep things divisive politically, that's to their advantage, and so what do we do? What do
923 we do, do we have term limits, do we kick the bums out, what do we do? Who do we believe;
924 who's the honest one? You know, in any of this, you know, how many more Aldermen need to
925 go to jail before we can really make a difference in Chicago? How many more people need to get
926 killed on the streets of Chicago? And you know, "Chi-raq", we get upset when Spike Lee wants
927 to make a movie with that name, (--) but, in fact, you know, live on the west side, live on the
928 south side, and you realize the (--) even parts of this neighborhood, if you're black, it's a scary

929 part of the world to be. Where do we begin with all of this stuff? Where do our energies go,
930 where does our time go? With the economy tanked, (door shuts) do people even have time or the
931 energy to do any of these things? You know, I don't know. So, without trying to sound too
932 pessimistic, these are different times. We're going to need some charismatic leaders to bring us
933 together, and not just in politics, but in church, and in life, in literature, everywhere, we need
934 people to really challenge us and bring us together.

935 PB: Do you think protests and things of the nature of '68 protests, do you think they have an
936 effect?

937 DG: Yes, I think they can. You got to be careful, you know that, the message, so (--) when there
938 was a march in this area, after a shooting, it began to sound more and more like an antipolice
939 march. I know a lot of police officers in this parish that are really good, good Christian people.
940 Are there bad cops, sure. Is every cop bad, no. Are there some people that shouldn't be shot, oh,
941 yes. Are there people that are shot, so the police can protect themselves, yes to that to, but, it,
942 you know I chose not to go to that protest because I had to make a choice, yes I believe that's
943 something we have to deal with, but it just turned into an anti-police thing, it's not a good idea,
944 and then to block a street just for the sake of blocking a street, no, I don't think that does the job,
945 unless you're trying to make a bigger point there somewhere. I think protests are necessary, but
946 they've got to be focused, and the message very clear, on what you're protesting and what the
947 issues are, and then what the solutions can be. And that's not always easy to come to, nor was is
948 easy in '68, and did we always have that, no, but now, more than ever, we need to have those
949 things answered.

950 PB: What do you think was the most regrettable consequence of the convention?

951 DG: (--) I think (--) our country lost some of its innocence, the realization that people
952 can be bullied and beaten. That's really sad. (Doorbell rings) The saddest thing is that we weren't
953 able to find the right person to carry the banner. So, that could've made a difference, and we
954 ended up putting Richard Nixon into power, and we're still dealing with the effects of that.

955 PB: What is the most positive consequence?

956 DG: (--) I think people learned not to be so naïve, that this wasn't fun and games. There were
957 repercussions; for every action there is a reaction. You got to be ready for it, aware of it, deal
958 with it, and embrace it, or reject it as we see as necessary, but not just be surprised by it.

959 PB: What was your greatest contribution?

960 DG: (Long pause) Carrying the two bags for the little old lady walking in the park.

961 PB: And, how has your purpose in life changed since that year?

962 DG: (--) Well, it's changed a lot, that was a long time ago, and a lot of water under the
963 bridge and a lot of blessed life, being able to be part of people's lives in my ministry, in time.
964 And I think, if anything, I've learned that when all the dust settles, we're going to be
965 remembered for how kind we've been, and how we've treated others with kindness, and how
966 we've kindly demanded kindness from others. Without that, the world spins out of control. And,

967 there's the belief, you have to believe that it's the most powerful thing we have, to be kind, and
968 that's not always easy to believe. (--) And, it's really not alive in our political sphere, it's not
969 alive in our church discussions, it's not alive socially, it, not alive in the sports scene, it's not
970 alive in our literature, in our music, in anything. You know, listen to the lyrics of some of the rap
971 music, and listen to the lyrics in some of the country songs, it's a very different world, and we've
972 got to regain a sense of being kind to ourselves, being kind to our loved ones, being kind to the
973 stranger on the street, being kind to our enemies, being kind to people we don't know, being kind
974 to our planet, the earth, being kind to just everything, all of God's creatures. That's what makes a
975 difference ultimately. I think I know that just from seeing how things evolved from those times,
976 and I see what happened. Just sometimes, most of the time being on the sideline, being an
977 observer.

978 PB: Those are all my questions. Do you have anything else to say?

979 DG: No, it's, I just (--) I hope history doesn't choose to trivialize '68, or stereotype it. It
980 was so complex, so challenging, so invigorating, so disheartening, so alive, so deadening, it just
981 a mix of things. One of those pivotal years that we remember like 1492 and 1066, and things like
982 that, and at least we're Americans and some of us gets one of those kind of pivotal times.

983 PB: Well, I think with voices like yours, who were there, it will be impossible to
984 trivialize.

985 DG: I hope. And then also I would hope that you would, however this plays out, realize I
986 wasn't a major player, just one of the foot soldiers, of many, many, many. And then, you know
987 one looks back in hindsight, yes, there's a lot more I could have done, should have done. But you
988 lived in the moment.

989 PB: All you can do you do is document it now.

990 DG: Great.

991 PB: Thank you very much.