

Dear Folks,

Thank you for your contributions to the Midnight Run. Last Saturday's Run felt a little odd, stops that weren't usually busy were busy and stops that were usually crowded lacked crowds. We fed the hungry and clothed the naked, but at the end of the evening we were left with more food than I am comfortable taking home. We were able to give some bags of sandwiches to regular clients who said they would deliver them during their travels that night. One guy laughed at the idea of being an "ambassador" for us. This was Yahim, who has been serving as our photographer for our end of the evening group photos. Another knew exactly where he would take the sandwiches. The latter fellow may be a success story, because in the past he had been a difficult customer.

What strikes me about this Run was a brief conversation I had with Ellyn, who regularly makes soup for the Run. We talked about how each of us was becoming more politically active and felt not entirely comfortable with it. But the Run felt like a form of political action itself, one we were comfortable with.

It feels like long ago during the pandemic when I started telling stories about the Run, that I said that in the middle of a dark time for our country I was more aware of kindness in the world than ever before. The kindness of the people who contribute and volunteer for the Run and the kindness I saw among the people on the street. That feels truer today than ever, though the times seem darker. A man who spewed hateful rhetoric is being canonized as a Christian martyr, and we have a president who brags about hating his enemies, while eulogizing the first. And the targets of the hate are often the people we meet on the street.

I believe that the demonstrating, the postcard and letter writing, the political meetings we attend, the phone calls we make, and of course the voting we do are important, but that the love we share on the street is a potent political force. If nothing else, it keeps the light shining in the dark.

I keep on thinking of the poem by WH Auden, September 1 1939:

*Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:
May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.*