

## **Fr. Dan Brandt's Corner...**

Thanks to all who attended the **Blue Mass at St. Barnabas Parish** earlier this month. It was a great opportunity to offer praise and thanks alongside brothers and sisters in the fire service.

The **Department of Justice** report that was rushed through just before last month's change of presidential administration has brought about some discussion. Educated readers question if the study is worth the paper it was prematurely printed on. But I like to look at the positive: IF the report offers just *one* insight that might help CPD do its job even better than it already is, then we've profited.

The only item I took from the report is its reference to the number of suicides among CPD members. Suicide is an unfortunate reality that affects all of us. The DOJ states that Chicago suffers over 60% more police suicides than the national average (see page 123 of the report: "Officer Wellness and Safety"). Even if there is a hint of accuracy to this assertion, then it's something worth looking into seriously.

We HAVE, for many years, been doing *exactly* that. In fact, the Chaplains Section and a committee of CPD bosses--with the support of the **Chicago Police Memorial Foundation**--host annual **Police Suicide Awareness and Prevention seminars** featuring nationally-known experts. Additionally, available to our members 24/7 are your full-time **CPD chaplains**, the **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**--our professional counselors, **CPD Peer Support**, and the **Chicago Police Survivors**. In the DOJ's haste to push the report through, they failed to mention all these other resources available to our officers in need of help. I have learned in my communications with police chaplains from around the country, some of these resources are unique to Chicago.

But perhaps the greatest resource we have is each other. Please don't EVER hesitate to pick up the phone if you observe something in a coworker that alarms you. See also our website's "Resources and Outreaches" pages for more information on this difficult subject.

The DOJ report, despite its questionable legitimacy, prompted the difficult topic of police suicide to be written about here. So there's *one* positive that came from its premature release!

*Planning ahead...* Thursday, 16 FEB, 6:00 – 11:00 p.m., the **CPD Survivors** will host their fourth annual "Phoenix Rising" event at the FOP Hall. Come check out the many resources offered to department members and support the Survivors, who continue to help officers involved in critical incidents. Food, beverages, live music, and fun for all. For more information, please visit their website: [www.ChicagoPoliceSurvivors.com](http://www.ChicagoPoliceSurvivors.com).

On Saturday, 18 FEB, 3:00 - 8:00 p.m., the **Emerald Society** is hosting a fundraiser at 115 Bourbon Street. Tickets cost \$25 and are available from any band member or by calling 773-410-9779.

**Ash Wednesday** is 01 MAR. In time-honored tradition, department chaplains will distribute blessed ashes at various police facilities throughout the city. The schedule will be posted in the Daily Bulletin and on our website.

A benefit is planned to assist several officers whose financial situations are affected as a result of their service to the community and some severe scrutiny that followed. More details forthcoming, but mark your calendar for **Back the Blue**, scheduled for Sunday, 19 MAR, 1-6 p.m. at 115 Bourbon Street.

God bless you and your God-ordained work,

*Fr. Dan Brandt, CPD Chaplain*

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