

PILLARS OF FAITH

A monthly series about a Black Catholic in the Diocese of Providence.

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Dimky Edouard



A Messenger of Providence and Peace

“Nonviolence is for courageous people. IT IS A WAY OF LIFE.”
The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“If you don’t put your heart into a job you won’t succeed. We are dealing with human lives out here. These kids need a helping hand. Many of them have single mothers or their dads are dead or locked up.”
Dimky Edouard, street worker for The Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence.

Dimky Edouard fosters a message of love and peace along with other street workers for The Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence throughout South Providence and the city’s West End. Where some people see blight and despair, Dimky sees a blueprint to fuel love and responsibility within teenagers and young adults.

A crowded lunchroom at the Gilbert Stuart Middle School in the city’s West End, which is filled with seventh and eighth graders, breeds an opportunity for Dimky to share a message of peace and hope. “I love these kids and I love helping kids the most. I’ve seen so many people shot on these streets including my brother and I decided I needed to do something about it,” said Dimky.

Many of the students, including a young girl who doesn’t know her father and another young girl who is repeating eighth grade lean on Dimky for advice and trust him.

One of the young girls remarks how she hit another student because “she was acting like a crack head and an alien.” Instead of yelling at her and turning her away Dimky says, “You need to live a peaceful life and don’t you want to live in peace.”

The young girl begins to cry and Dimky makes it a point to follow up with her.

Dimky, who was born in Carrefour, Haiti and moved to Providence in 1989 at 14 years old with his three brothers — Jean, Dulf and Pierre Jean — and two sisters — Valentina and Violenne — plays the role of a loving parent and older brother for the children. He builds inroads into the children’s lives at home and finds out why they may not be attending school and cutting class. “I want to listen to you; I talk to you like my own kid. I know your pain (Dimky tells a seventh-grade girl) you need to communicate with your mom.”

Dimky has a deep faith in God, was raised Catholic in Haiti and attends Mass at St. Michael the Archangel Church on Oxford Street with his children. He takes pride in saying that his two children, De Jhan Walker Edouard and Nyla-Monet Walker Edouard were both baptized at St. Michael. Dimky, 34 years old, mentions that he is now working on First Communion with Nyla.

He mentions his love for De Jhan, 11, and Nyla, 9, and says he doesn’t want them to get caught up with any pitfalls on the streets. “You can’t be selfish and I have to remember that God put me on Earth to help people and help anybody. I give thanks to God for what I have and I don’t like to be a failure,” said Dimky as he walks into Rhode Island Hospital to visit a young man who was shot in the stomach in January at a Chinese restaurant on Broad Street.

Donique Jordan, 19, has been in the hospital since January, the bullet went into his two main aortas and he has undergone 10 operations and is scheduled for an 11th one. Donique sounds upbeat and smiles when Dimky offers words of encouragement to him.

A brown rosary hangs prominently around Donique’s neck along with a Bible next to his bed and he mentions how his faith in God will pull him through his ordeal.

As he stands outside Gilbert Stuart School with wicked New England fall winds giving birth to a cruel late-October chill, Dimky mentions that his main job is to prevent shootings and steer children away from gangs. He recalls how there were about 30 homicides in the summer of 1996 and how the grass-roots work of the street workers brought that number down to four this past summer.

Dimky lived as a teen with his parents on Public Street in South Providence and recalls when his “little brother” was shot and how it transformed his life from negativity to positivity. Many of the streets in the West End and South Providence are filled with boarded-up houses—due to foreclosures—and liquor stores, which provide an incubator for crime, the street pharmaceutical industry and gangs.

And Dimky mentions how easy it is for kids to get guns and have storage spots for them.

But hope is on the horizon, because of people such as Dimky.

Dimky graduated from Central High School in 1994 and has been a street worker for eight months. “I always wanted to help out. I grew up in Haiti and I saw so many crimes, buried so many friends and had many friends with fathers in jail. I try to stress relationships with kids and wonder did I do my job if a kid is shot.”

Story by Eric Adams

