

CHICAGO Street Retreat Announcement

April 27 – 30, 2017

Chicago, Illinois

Led by Roshi Grover Genro Gauntt

Retreat Coordinator: Annie Myoshin Markovich

To Sign up: Please email Annie Myoshin Markovich: anniemarkovich@mac.com

WHAT IS A STREET RETREAT?

A street retreat is a plunge into the unknown. It is an opportunity to go beyond our imagined limits. It's the barest poke at renunciation. We will live on the streets of Chicago with no resources other than our true nature, experiencing homelessness first-hand, having to beg for money, find places to get food, shelter, to use the bathroom, etc. By bearing witness to homelessness, we begin to see our prejudices and boundaries directly and to recognize our common humanness. It is a way to experience our interconnection and realize our responsibilities.

"When we go... to bear witness to life on the streets, we're offering ourselves. Not blankets, not food, not clothes, just ourselves." -Bernie Glassman, [Bearing Witness](#)

CHICAGO Streets Preparation

Meeting Point: Downtown Chicago – To be announced

Duration: The retreat starts on Thursday April 27th at 2:30 PM and will end on Sunday the 30th by noon.

Street Retreat Logistics: Our group will be together almost all of the time, breaking into packs for short times during the day and always secured by buddies. We will meet twice a day for meditation, liturgy, and council.

Partial time participation is not an option. You can only join for the entire retreat.

At the beginning of the retreat, we will conduct an orientation. You will meet your street cohorts and facilitators. We will discuss what to expect, but the unexpected will be our root teacher on the street.

Retreat Guidelines:

Do not shave, nor wash your hair for five days prior to the retreat. This will also start your street experience prior to leaving home.

Wear old clothes, as many layers as you feel appropriate for the time of year, and do not bring any change of clothes for the retreat duration, except, possibly, for an extra pair of socks. Be prepared for weather extremes.

Wear good, but not new, walking shoes. We walk a great deal.

Bring one piece of Photo ID only - your Driver's License or a government issued I.D. with your picture on it.

Bring a Poncho for rain. Mandatory.

Do not bring any money, illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons, or cell phones. Do not wear any jewelry including earrings, bracelets and watches.

Besides the clothes you are wearing bring only an empty bag (shopping, plastic) or small (not new) day pack for collecting food from shelters, etc. Women may bring one change of underwear.

You should not bring any books or personal items such as a toothbrush.

Necessary prescription medication of course is permitted.

Be sure to practice rooting through garbage cans and picking up pennies on the street. It keeps us humble, and, truly, the treasures are unbeatable.

Bring a water bottle if you like. They are available in trash bins.

Bring a light blanket that will roll up - or you can wear it.

Raising a Mala

On this street retreat we will be supported by social service agencies and public non-profit organizations. Since we are not truly homeless, we need to make donations to those who will be supporting our lives. For all of the street retreats that organized by Zen Peacemakers, a donation has been requested of the participants in order to be able to offer donations to the social service agencies that support us. Prior to this retreat we ask that you each beg of your family, friends, associates or just on the street for \$500 – to be distributed to those social service agencies that have helped us.

We as a group will decide at the end of the retreat where two-thirds 2/3 the offerings should go. One-third of the funds will go to the social service activities of the Hudson River Peacemaker Center.

It is not acceptable for you to use your own funds for this purpose. To sincerely engage in this experience we need to humble ourselves at the outset, attempt to explain to others our reasons for participating and beg for their support. This is a hugely challenging and ultimately hugely rewarding experience. You need to ask at least five people – more would be great. Your donors could give you cash, or give you checks made out to the Hudson River Peacemaker Center.

In our Zen Buddhist practice we call this assembling a Mala – prayer beads. If you assemble a Mala of 18 or 108 beads, for example, you could beg proportionate donations for each bead. Your mala could also be, say, five or ten beads. Sincerely promise your donors that they will be traveling with you on the retreat and you will personally tell them about your experience when you return home. It is a lovely gesture to label the beads with your donors' names and wear them during your time on the streets.

Once you have raised the funds, make a check to "Hudson River Peacemaker Center" and mail it to:

Grover Genro Gauntt

Hudson River Peacemaker Center

5443 Palisade Avenue,

Bronx, NY 10471

To give others the opportunity to give is a true gift. Don't doubt it. When we are truly and selflessly motivated, people will support us. Trust in this all your life. Thank you for considering joining us on this retreat.

With warmest regards,

And palms together,

Roshi Grover Genro Gauntt