

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hungry for Justice: A father's fast

SAINT PAUL, Minnesota – (November 23, 2010) – On November 28, David Weiss will let the hunger sink in. For 21 days. Weiss is engaging in a hunger strike to call attention to the injustice he has experienced over the last four years in the Wisconsin Family Court System. A resident of St. Paul's Hamline-Midway neighborhood, Weiss has a teenage daughter whose mother lives near Madison, Wisconsin. He contends that despite having joint legal custody, the family court system has worked relentlessly to marginalize his place in his daughter's life.

Weiss has chosen to fast 21 days because he contends that, through judicial errors and the indifference of others in the family court system, he and his daughter have lost at least 21 days of placement time over the past four years. After repeated failures to get the system to work as intended, Weiss says his fast is not an attempt to "blackmail" the judge or the system with his hunger. "I don't expect justice any more, but I *will* tell my story of injustice. I *will* embody my anguish, my anger, and my conviction in this fast. I've spent four years hungry for justice. What my body experiences in these 21 days is a deeply symbolic echo of that—and hopefully an echo that calls attention to a system that undermines families every day."

And, he adds, this is about much more than just a father-daughter relationship. His daughter has had an older brother (now 23) her entire life, and, for the past decade, a blended family that includes a stepmother, three stepsisters, two brothers-in-law, and three nephews and nieces, all of whom live in the Twin Cities.

While admitting that he and his ex-wife do not have a positive post-divorce relationship, Weiss emphasizes that his hunger strike is about the family court system, which he says has altogether failed to support the value of his daughter's relationship with him or with her blended family. In fact, Weiss, a freelance speaker and writer (*To the Tune of a Welcoming God*, www.davidrweiss.com) on welcoming LGBT persons in faith communities, laments, "The painful truth is, I've had more success as an advocate for LGBT persons across the country than I've had as an advocate for myself or my daughter in the family court system."

Weiss will carry out his fast at his home in St. Paul where he will continue work on a writing project. He will make formal statements on Monday, November 29, Monday, December 6, and Saturday, December 18 at 11:00 a.m., and will be available for interviews and to share his story as a father fasting for justice on each day of the fast from 11:00 a.m. to noon in front of his home at 1359 Blair Avenue, St. Paul. He also plans to blog about his experience during the fast at <http://tothetune.wordpress.com>.

November 28, the evening that Weiss will begin the fast, is the first day of Advent. He explains, "In the Christian calendar Advent, the four weeks leading up to Christmas, is a season of holy hunger. While we await each year the birth of Christ, in a deeper sense we await the fulfillment of justice and the presence of peace. So, during the season of Advent, as my own hunger deepens, within my own faith tradition I'll be in very good company."

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