

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

February 7, 2014 at 9:35am

A few days with the golden calf

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Eco Catholic

I have to start taking the golden calf around with me more in the car. In case you haven't met the golden calf, it is a leftover prop from Occupy Wall Street.

It is made of papier-mâché and painted gold, with a tail that did not survive its placement in my car. It is really big, long and tall. On its front collar is the word "greed" and on its back is the word "idolatry." The way the calf got into my car meant that the two front handles were in the front seat, with the word "greed" framing the empty passenger seat. I was transporting it Jan. 20, by request, to the Metro Association of the United Church of Christ service for Martin Luther King Jr. The calf was for the altar.

While traveling uptown for the service, we got more attention than either it or I deserved. Not that we did not deserve attention. We did. But still, tourists requesting photo ops? Cops stopping me asking me what I was doing? UCC-ers competing to carry it out of the car into Broadway United Church of Christ on the corner of 93rd and Broadway?

The calf lived overnight on East 18th St. where my car and I live. Promptly at 9 a.m. the next day, when my parking meter expired, I pulled out onto the street and realized people were staring at me. Stopping to stare at me.

The calf had never been north of 14th St. and was therefore having the usual nosebleed.

The person introducing the offering at the special worship service agreed to provide liturgical context for the calf. She is often known as "Butch Baby."

?Even though the offering is going to seminarians? scholarships, I hereby declare this calf sacred,? Butch Baby said. ?It is a form of the new economy, where we help each other and live beyond greed.?

I took the calf home at noon, needing more assistance from anonymous passersby on Washington Square. Again, people lined up to carry the calf. Nobody said rude things like ?Are you kidding me?? They just said ?sure? and picked up two of the handles and carried the calf back to its perch in our office, where it awaits its next call to liturgical action.

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