

The Hartford Catholic Worker

St. Martin De Porres House
St. Brigid House



"Those who cannot see Christ in the poor are atheists indeed." -Dorothy Day

*We will not be turned around,
Or interrupted by intimidation,
Because we know our inaction and inertia
Will be the inheritance of the next generation.*

*Our blunders become
their burdens.
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy
with might,
and might
with right,
Then love becomes
our legacy,
And change our
children's
birthright.*



Amanda Gorman

from The Hill We Climb

Lent and Easter 2021

The Hartford Catholic Worker

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The Hartford Catholic Worker is published quarterly by the St. Martin De Porres Catholic Worker community. We are a lay community of Catholics and like minded friends, living in the north end of Hartford, working and praying for an end to violence and poverty. We are a 501c3 tax exempt organization. We do not seek or accept state or federal funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, purplehousecw@gmail.com and www.hartfordcatholicworker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Baby Beth Donovan, Dwight Teal Jr., Sasean Sanders, Jacqueline, Ammon, and Christopher Allen-Douçot.



Behold, the Man

[Kreg Yingst](#)

Christopher J. Douçot

On Shrove Tuesday we received an email from the social worker at the elder folk's high rise where our friend, and former guest, Jack Titus was living. Jack had listed us as his emergency contacts. The social worker wanted us to know that Jack, sick with COVID, was being removed from life support. Jack was a curious, enigmatic character. While living in a shelter during the 90's he also would attend shows at the Bushnell for free by entering at intermission. He would also wander the campus of Trinity college, linger in the library, and befriend professors whom he charmed with his poetry. Jack's pen name and alter ego was Mr. Blue. He would often refer to himself in the third person as Mr. Blue and then make cryptic comments and obscure cultural references that he assumed everyone in the room understood. I almost never understood what he was talking about but was still charmed by his company. Mr. Blue was a prolific poet. Some of his work has appeared in these pages- more would have if he had been more amenable to deciphering his penmanship. When I was in grade school we had to practice handwriting, samples of which were sent out to experts at a place called "Rhinehart" (I can't believe I remember this) who would grade our work using stars: Gold, Silver, Bronze, Red, and Black. I was lucky to get an occasional Bronze star- Mr. Blue would have been lucky to get a Red one. I still have some of his poems if any of you want to attempt to crack them.

News that the water of this world had broken for Jack and he was soon

to be reborn into the next came just two weeks after we learned of the tragic death of Kiki. Kiki was barely 30 and with child when she passed from COVID; the baby survived her by two days. Kiki, her brother Franklin and their parents, were among the first folks to befriend us when we moved to Clark St. in '93. Kiki was a newlywed. She leaves behind a devastated husband and

safe distance is like going to receive Communion only to find that the Bread and Wine have been swapped out for scratch and sniff approximations.

With Mr. Blue very much on my mind I started praying the Canticle of Daniel in my head as I went about my day. This Canticle is found in the Liturgy of the Hours and is based on Daniel 3:57-88. (If you're Protestant

you probably won't find this passage in your bible...) The [canticle](#) "is sung by three young Hebrew men who were thrown into the furnace for refusing to worship the statue of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar... From the furnace, the three young men, miraculously preserved from the flames, sing a hymn of praise addressed to God. The hymn is like a litany, at once repetitive in the form of the verses and new with each verse: the invocations rise to God... To emphasize the same things conveys the intensity and multiple nuances of one's interior feelings and affections."

Let the earth bless the Lord.
Praise and exalt him above all forever.
Mountains and hills,
bless the Lord.
Everything growing from the earth,
bless the Lord.
You springs,
bless the Lord.
Seas and rivers,
bless the Lord.
You dolphins and all water creatures,
bless the Lord.
All you birds of the air,
bless the Lord.
All you beasts, wild and tame,
bless the Lord.

-from [The Canticle of Daniel](#)

Soon the canticle and

the events of the past year became a word collage in my mind. And so, despite my fear that I am embarrassing myself by putting those words on paper, here is the prayer that has been echoing between my heart and mind these days: a canticle for these times.

*Blessed are you, O Sophia, God of Wisdom and Mercy,
praiseworthy and exalted in our midst forever;
And blessed is your holy compassion for your children.
Blessed are you in the temples of your holy glory: your children,
Blessed are you on the winds of your breath,
Blessed are you who fill us with life from the winds of your breath,
Blessed are you in the guise of the lowly,
You are praiseworthy and exalted in our*

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(Please see: [Canticle](#), p4)

A Canticle, cont.

midst forever.

*Bless Sophia, all you who labor in Her name,
Praise and exalt God in our midst forever.*

*Workers in the fields,
bless Sophia.*

*Your fields of bounty,
bless Sophia.*

*All the sweat above your brows,
bless Sophia.*

*Teachers and students,
bless Sophia.*

*Idled school bus drivers,
bless Sophia.*

*Frustrated parents,
bless Sophia.*

*Every story read and every math
problem solved,
bless Sophia.*

*Curiosity and imagination,
bless Sophia.*

*Perseverance and determination,
bless Sophia.*

*Creativity and wonder,
bless Sophia.*

*Children,
bless Sophia.*

*Praise and exalt God in our
midst forever.*

*Tony delivers the mail,
bless Sophia.*

*praise and exalt God in our
midst forever.*

*Theresa vaccinates,
bless Sophia.*

*Carlos delivers pizza,
bless Sophia.*

*Rev. Bob and Priscilla cook,
bless Sophia.*

*Sasean and Ammon, Dwight
and Brian deliver,
bless Sophia.*

*The miracle of loaves and fishes,
bless Sophia.*

*Morlianna cares for elders,
bless Sophia.*

*Maria walks in the dark to clean shiny
buildings for men with shiny cars,
bless Sophia.*

*Maria walks, again in the dark, to cook
for her family,
bless Sophia.*

*Claudia fills prescriptions and reassures the
worried,
bless Sophia.*

*Shanielle stocks shelves,
bless Sophia.*

*Walter corrals shopping carts,
bless Sophia.*

*Brittney captains a city bus and welcomes
her regulars with smiling eyes despite her
bothersome mask,
bless Sophia.*

*Janice, Denise, and the volunteer brigades of
seamstresses sew Victory masks,*



Mary, Untier of Knots

Kreg Yingst

bless Sophia.

Praise and exalt God in our midst forever.

*All you nurses and aides,
bless Sophia.*

Praise and exalt God in our midst forever.

*Tears of grief,
bless Sophia.*

*Tears of relief,
bless Sophia.*

*Healing and recovery,
bless Sophia.*

*Dying and rising,
bless Sophia.*

*Husbands and wives,
bless Sophia.*

*Sons and daughters,
bless Sophia.*

*Sisters and brothers,
bless Sophia.*

*Mothers and fathers,
bless Sophia.*

Healers

bless Sophia,

*Comforters
bless Sophia.*

*Midwives of birth,
bless Sophia.*

*Midwives of rebirth,
bless Sophia.*

*Praise and exalt God in our
midst forever.*

*All you children without homes,
bless Sophia.*

*All you who struggle with addic-
tion,
bless Sophia.*

*Those who march to a different
drummer,
bless Sophia.*

*Everyone forgotten or abandoned,
bless Sophia.*

*All who are imprisoned or
discarded,
bless Sophia.*

*Praise and exalt God in our
midst forever.*

*The despised and persecuted,
bless Sophia.*

*Praise and exalt God in our
midst forever.*

*Those who have the police called
on them for being Black,
bless Sophia.*

*[Christian](#) was watching birds,
Forgive us.*

*The [soccer moms](#) were cheering their
kids,
Forgive us.*

*[Jana'e](#) the healthcare worker had just
stepped outside for the 7 PM NYC applause,
Forgive us.*

*[Jordan](#), only eight, was selling bottled
water,*

Forgive us.

Kenzie was grilling burgers in the park,

Forgive us.

Rashon and Dante sitting in Starbucks,

Forgive us.

Shane, Kevin, and Adam were swimming,

Forgive us.

Oumou was eating lunch,

during her break,

at her workplace,

Forgive us.

Corey was baby-sitting white children,

Forgive us.

Lolade was napping between classes at Yale,

where she was a student,

Forgive us.

Shiela was running for office and knocking

on doors,

Forgive us Sophia,

praise and exalt God in our midst forever.

*The hunted and slain accuse us,
praise and exalt God in our midst forever.*

Breonna was sleeping,

Lord have mercy.

Sandra was in custody,

Lord have mercy.

Emmet's accuser lied,
mercy.

Ahmaud was jogging,
mercy.

Kurt was crossing the street,
mercy.

Trayvon was walking to see family,
mercy.

Michael was left in the street for hours,
mercy.

Eric was selling cigarettes,
mercy.

Tamir was playing in the park,
mercy.

Akai Gurley,
mercy.

Rumain Brisbon,
mercy.

Cameron Tillman,
mercy.

Reneshia McBride,
mercy.

Aiyana was asleep in her bed,
she was seven,
Christ have mercy!

*Seekers of justice
bless Sophia,*

Praise and exalt God in our midst forever.

Alicia Garza,
bless Sophia.

Opel Tometi,
bless Sophia.

Patrice Cullors,
bless Sophia.

Rev Dr. Liz Theoharris,
bless Sophia.

Rev. Dr. William Barber Jr.
bless Sophia.

*Praise and exalt God in our midst
forever.*

*Holy and humble of heart,
bless Sophia;
praise and exalt God in our midst
forever.*

*All those who have been born unto
eternity, bless Sophia.
Those who never had a chance to say
good-bye,
bless Sophia.*

*The gowned and gloved, masked and
weary, holding phones and I-Pads as
last breaths are exhaled,
bless Sophia.*

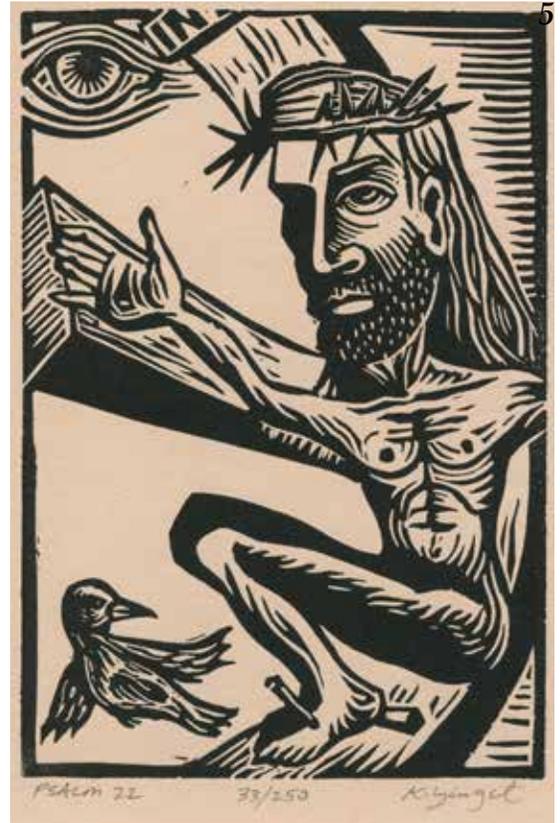
Praise and exalt God in our midst forever.

*Nan was a patron of the poor,
bless Sophia.*

*Joe was a servant of Christ in disguise,
bless Sophia.*

*Mr. Blue was an enigmatic poet of the
street,
bless Sophia.*

*Kiki was with child and a mother,
bless Sophia.*



Praise and exalt God in our midst forever.

*Sophia has delivered us from not knowing;
And saved us from the power of death.
She has freed us from the raging flame,
And delivered us from the fire.
Give thanks to Sophia, who is good,
Whose mercy endures forever.
Bless the God of gods, all you who are loved;
Praise and give thanks,
For Sophia's wisdom and mercy endure
forever. Ω*

Blue's Song

*I am tired,
I am tired of speech and action.
If you should meet me
on the street, do not question me
for I can only tell you
my name; but that is enough.
I am trying to get something clear.
In the heart of me you will
find a tiny handful of dust;
take it and blow it out
upon the wind.
Let the wind have it and
it will find its way home.*

Mr. Blue

Patricia Bellamy-Mathis

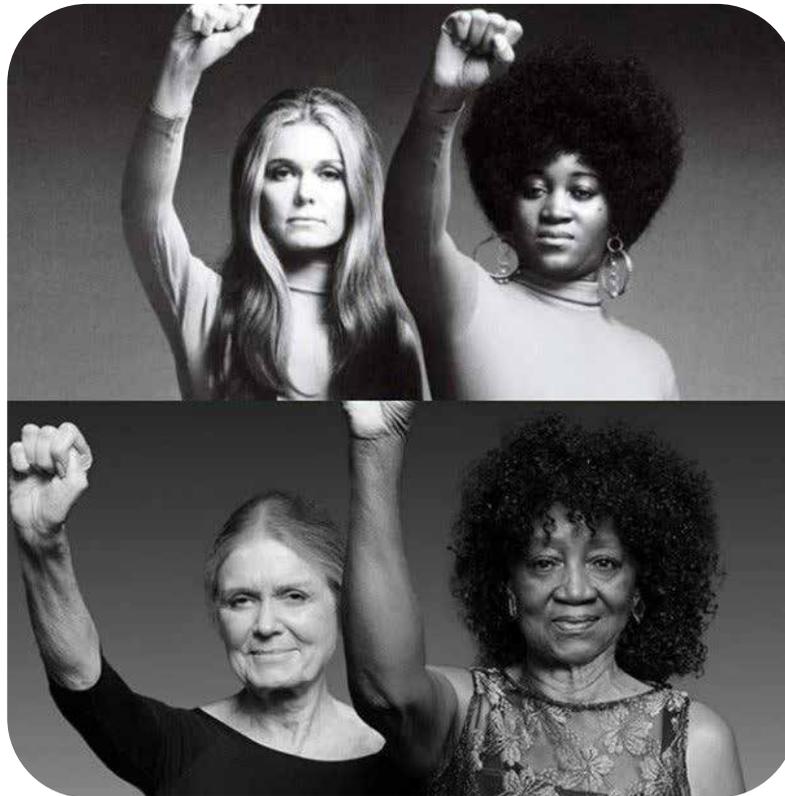
[With Her Fist Raised: Dorothy Pitman Hughes and the Transformative Power of Black Community Activism](#) by Laura L. Lovett.!!!

To share my overall feelings immediately after this read - inspiring, rejuvenating, beautifully written, and oddly familiar.

I have to be honest, when I saw that a Black woman's story was being written by a White woman, it gave me pause; some questions I immediately asked myself were: How honest will this story be? What 'Black' parts are going to be missing? Will she (*the White author*) do her story (*a Black Woman's story*) justice? In other words - Will this story be whitewashed? However, learning that Laura L. Lovett was explicitly selected by Dorothy Pittman Hughes to write her biography, some of my questions were put at ease. And now having completed the story, great job Lovett. As I read, I found myself engrossed in the narrative - eagerly reading, appreciating the text and yearning to learn more. I connected to Dorothy Pitman Hughes' work, sharing in many of the beliefs and philosophies that allowed her to excel as a Black community activist. I identified women in my own life and women whose work I follow who share in Dorothy Pitman Hughes' activism, skill and drive. And ultimately, as a Black woman learning about the empowering lifelong work of a fellow Black woman, I was reassured in the value of my own preaching and praising that representation matters and exposure is a window to a new world.

I'm a social worker and at the foundation of our work is the concept of meeting people where they are; allowing the client to define their needs, identify the resources, set the goals and to build from within is empowering - this is what social workers do with clients and in Dorothy Pitman Hughes' case, her community was the client. Dorothy

lighting their values. In her many endeavors, she not only put the community identified needs at the forefront - needs like childcare, housing assistance, employment, food access, etc. - Dorothy Pitman Hughes, also set the community members as staff, board members, teachers, decision makers - centering their voices and giving them the power to make change. Something that resonated with me most as I read, was the way Dorothy Pitman Hughes' West 80th Street Childcare Center built the curriculum - because again, she centered the community - the curriculum was built around the students' everyday lives and reinforced with community experiences, artwork, field trips, music and so much more. In Husky Sport we ground our work in relationships, representation and relevancy, apparently so does Dorothy Pitman Hughes - good to know we're doing something right.



Gloria Steinem and Dorothy Pitman Hughes, 1971 and 2021

Pitman Hughes' grounded her activism in what resonated most with her community - all of her work valued where the people in her community were and where the collective saw fit to be going - very social worker of her.

Often times, communities have the resources but may lack the collectiveness, the big picture motivation and the team drive that is needed to push forward through the many obstacles, wins and setbacks of community building. As a community activist, Dorothy Pitman Hughes' championed for her community, centering relationships, gathering the collective and high-

Even after reading Dorothy Pitman Hughes' narrative - from her own words (spoken and journaled) to the Lovett's collective writing in this book - I still wonder when it was that Dorothy Pitman Hughes truly realized that she was an activist. She has over 45 years of community work, feminism, activism - pioneering the way for many of us who don't even know who she is - when did she realize her value? When did she realize the brilliance of her work? For many Black woman, we don't see ourselves as feminists, activists, or even advocates - we're just doing what we have to do for ourselves and for others and to us, there isn't really anything

significant about that. However, it is extraordinary – it is phenomenal.

There are so many phenomenal Black women in the community that I now call home (Hartford) who might not see themselves as doing extraordinary work for their communities. I'll recognize a few here, but know that are many, many more – Brittany Cooper ([Power of Choices](#)), Carrie McCrorey ([JADHA Foundation](#)), Kimberly Bridges ([The Gifted Onez](#)), Rashia Schand ([Flourish & I Am Strong Fitness](#)), Shay Ingersoll ([Aglow Event Styling](#)), Tamara Mitchell Davis ([CEO Wife & TM Davis Enterprises](#)), [Uneeder Ruth](#) (*Author & Life Coach*). Once upon a time, someone saw fit to shine a light on the work that I do, the commitment that I have to the community, the connections that I make and my daily choices to *see* and empower our youth and because it was something that I *just* did, I missed it; how embarrassing. I won't miss it again though. Dorothy Pitman Hughes' life work makes me want to both cherish and shout to the world about the work I do as a community member and the work others do as well. One day, I think I'll be bold enough to call myself an activist.

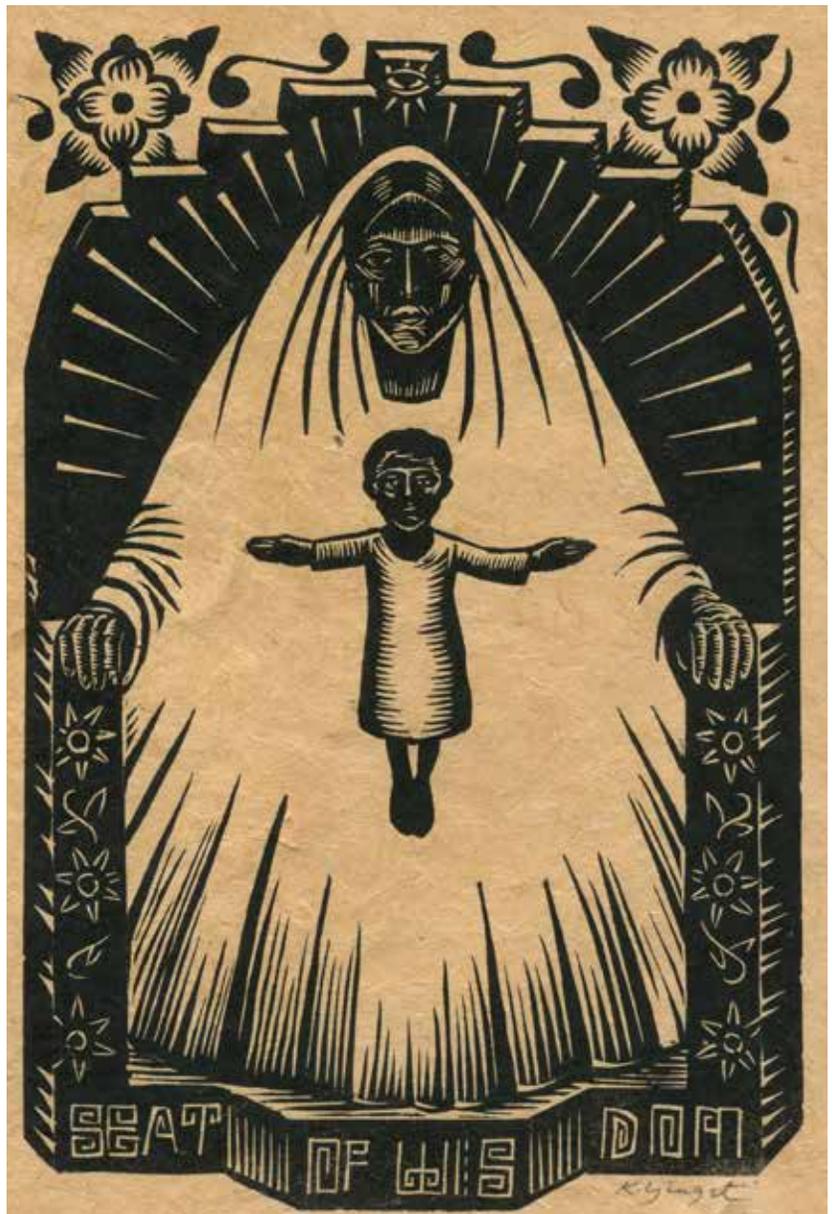
Still with all the work that Dorothy Pitman Hughes has done, I am disappointed to say that upon reading this book, this is the first I've heard of her – or at least the first that I've heard of her that's made a lasting impression. Here we have a Black woman who has built up her community and many others, who has pioneered as a powerful business woman time and time again, who has been knocked down by racism, sexism and classism (and most often and definitely likely all three at the same time) and still succeeds – Why is it that she is not more widely known? Or is it just me? *With Her Fist Raised* made it so powerfully and painfully clear to me as to why I will never not represent as a phenomenal Black Woman in the upmost highest fashion for every young Black girl and boy in my path. Every young child and every adult, deserves to have someone who is a champion for them and shines a light as to what's possible in our home communities and much further beyond.

I am proud to have learned the story of Dorothy Pitman Hughes – Laura L. Lovett did a beautiful job capturing the essence of a phenomenal Black woman. Her story and the stories of so many other Black women need to be shared with our youth very often and starting at a very young age. Representation matters – the Black community is worthy of hearing and learning more about positive figures in the Black community – we are more than

the curriculum and narrative that paints us only as the 7 slave who freed more slaves, the woman who refused to be moved from her bus seat and the men who fought peacefully or brutally for Civil Rights.

If more stories like Dorothy Pitman Hughes' story, are shared with our youth, Black children, Black woman, Black men might recognize their everyday triumphs as phenomenal, might take a leap of faith in a business venture and might simply feel confident identifying as an activist. Ω

(Patricia Bellamy-Mathis, best known to the community as Mrs. Patti, is a social worker, an educator, an Assistant Director for the Husky Sport program, a new mom and wife. In her many roles, Mrs. Patti centers building lasting relationships and fostering a positive school/community climate and culture.)



Seat of Wisdom

[Kreg Yingst](#)



to open up to the children again. Morliana is working full time AND going to school to turn her LPN into an RN degree! I am so proud. Marisol came over for a day to help me sort through mountains of art materials and lend me her organized mind! I thank God for my daughters given to me by God and another mother!! Chris has been walking 4 miles a day and getting stronger by the minute.

I look to my community for comfort. Since last March. We have not been able to run our after school program. We miss our kids. We miss our volunteers. We miss the noise and the joy and the art and music and food that comes with community. We miss making new friends and celebrating the birthdays, graduations and births that come with old friends. It is not always easy to live in community. We are not insulated from the stress and isolation that Covid brings. We each carry the worry for family members, and the longing to be free to hang out with friends. We get cooped up and cranky. We do not get out in the outdoors enough when it is cold. But by the time this

reaches you all many of us will have been vaccinated. We are already planning a big party/reunion /reopening as soon as it is safe! Meanwhile Brian and Sasean, Dwight and Baby Beth, Josh and Ammon continue to do the Works of Mercy. Throughout the week we pick up and deliver food to families, we help folks with paperwork, we bag up groceries donated by St James Episcopal, St Tim's, St Peter Claver, St Ann's, and St John Fisher. We give out eggs that Margie brings us from her job!, we help folks with huge gas and electric bills, we send out art supplies and craft kits put together by Rita and Barb. We have online mass on the first Tuesday of the month and we forgive each other our shortcomings, our grouchy moods and our failings.

I look to my strong women friends for comfort. I have been blessed to be able to take short visits with a dear friend who lost her daughter and newborn granddaughter to Covid. Her faith is a ROCK upon which she stands every day to take care of her 2 surviving grand-babies. She pushes her grief to the side every single day to feed, bathe, clothe, sing to and play with these two joyful babies. She told me that she cries sometimes because when she looks into their eyes, she sees her daughter looking back at her. Her faith is so strong that she knows the joy she will be a part of when they are reunited in heaven. I also find strength in the many, mostly women, who have come forward to help us make sure this family has the food, clothes, and housing they need to stay together.

This Lent feels like Lent right down to my bones. I think of Jesus suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane alone, his community asleep around him despite his longing need of their wakefulness. I think of the many, many times of late that I have been too tired to be with Jesus present in the broken bread and the broken bodies of our brothers and sisters, I weep in shame despite my confidence in

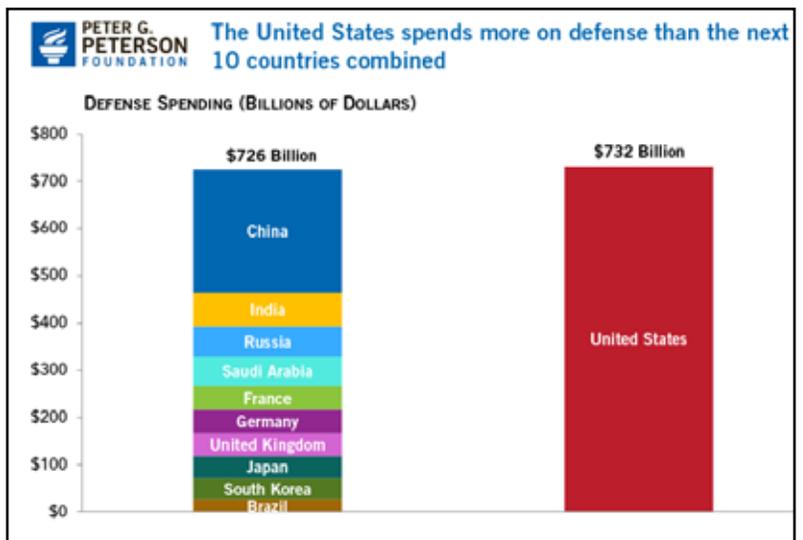
God's Grace. And I am thankful for all of you, my beloved community, that continues to stand with me in the garden of our lives as we try to be a part of God's Sacred Heart comforting those who suffer, while seeking to live more deeply and fully in right relationships.

I find comfort in the courage of my friends in The Kings Bay Plowshares. They are currently in prison for a nuclear disarmament action at the Trident base in Georgia. It is an insane nation that believes it is acceptable to spend more than \$700 billion a year on the military, especially when 16% of American children live in poverty. Jesus weeps. My plowshares friends take seriously the biblical imperative to beat swords into Plowshares. Most of them come from Catholic Worker communities and have a good sense of where that money might be better spent.

Spring is coming, Easter is nearer than we imagine. Resurrection: hope, light, rebirth-call to us. Let's open our hearts to that call.

"In the pre-dawn stillness, Mary looked through sleepless eyes at the all-encompassing night. Sitting quietly beside the window, she felt before she saw the familiar presence she so loved. 'Mother,' said Jesus softly, as a radiance enfolded her, filling her with light. She was a young girl again. The Spirit of God was in her, and she felt the familiar stirrings of life in the hollow deep inside.

When he had gone, Mary sat for a long time cherishing him in her heart. Then she rose and went to her sister, and together they told their daughters, and their sorrow was a nothing compared to their joy." -Sr. M.T. Winter Ω



Run

And they all left him and fled. Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked.

– Mark 14:50-52

*Twisting like a furious child out of its mother's arms,
he trips, almost falls, one hand briefly pressing the dirt
to push his body away.*

Was there laughter?

*All that instruction to abandon fear
was for nothing. Worse.
Nothing but fear.*

*Imagining the torturers,
the grate over the stone pit.
That was the starting gun.*

*Or it was heaven's dog, loosed for the first time,
rabid and silent,
tied to the runner's shadow.*

*Later, in another place, a linen rag
will be left behind in a grave that someone
ran from.*

*But here do we have the Greek messenger
from the battlefield who finds
no finish line but death?*

*Or is this Adam, naked again?
Sinless.
Free.*

*Stephen Vincent Kobasa
Palm Sunday, 2015*

Coming This Spring for our Families



OUR MISSION:

TO CREATE FOOD SECURITY SOLUTIONS TO BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH **PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION**

THE BOKIT



GARDENING MADE EASY:

Hydroponics is a form of farming that does not use soil, only water. Levo's Bokit is a small and simple hydroponic garden that requires no gardening experience and grows with less time than typical soil gardens. Nutrients and water go into the bucket, and the plants through the lid. Just put the "ingredients" together, place the Bokit in a sunny spot and watch it grow. In no time, with almost no work from you'll have fresh greens right at hand!

WHAT DOES THE PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

Levo works closely with partners that communities know and trust. We help those communities grow fresh vegetables right in their own neighborhood. Pickup and explanation of how to set up your Bokit will occur at the Catholic Worker. The Bokits will require new plants every few months, so when you need new plants, and nutrients, you can pick them up right in your own neighborhood!



WHAT DO WE GROW?

The Bokits grow leafy vegetables, the options Levo offers are as follows.

- Collard Greens
- Swiss Chard
- Lettuce
- Callaloo
- Kale



Watchmen? Avengers?

Nope. These superheroes are Catholic Workers! Daring Dwight and Jocular Josh bag vegetables to share with the neighborhood. You can be a superhero too- just wear a mask and share with others!

Notes From De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen-Douçot

I have really been struggling with my anger and hopelessness of late. Watching the evening news is enough to put me over the edge: last night they opened with the bombing of Syria, they then reported the minimum wage would remain \$7.25/hr., before turning to the AWOL Republicans claiming they could not safely be in the Capitol when in fact they were attending the CPAC conference in Orlando where they frolicked maskless around a golden statue of Donald Trump: cultists and their golden idol. Many of those who had separated themselves from Trump during the hearings on the Capitol Insurrection now feel safe enough to jump back on the crazy train. I know better than to let this news of the world take over my Soul.

I look to scripture for comfort. I have been blessed to be able to participate in a lectio divino or simple bible study a few mornings a week with my beloved mentor Liz McAllister and a few other good friends.



Meet Syre. Syre lost him mom, Kiki, and his baby sister Sunday, to Covid. Syre and his sister Lyric are being raised by their grandmother Kim. Photo printed at Kim's request.

Our beloved Fr. Terry Moran helps us to deepen our understanding of scripture with his exegesis of the ancient texts. We pray our intentions putting our loved ones into the hands of God. We are moving and refocusing the lens that we look at the world, and our lives, with. This is the lens of LOVE: God's great Sacred Heart, our heart, that calls us to be one family. This is the truth of who we are and how we were made to live. I can breathe again; I feel safe and loved. I can remember that God has overcome the Powers and Principalities. When we take God's hand and move in the world We shall overcome.

I look to my family for comfort. Micah has been working hard and keeping Chris and me on our toes with his quick wit, humor and willingness to share his journey with us. I am so proud of him. Ammon has come through the devastating loss of a relationship and has been back at the Worker delivering food and waiting for us to be able

(Please see: Notes, p8)