

# THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER



ST. MARTIN DE PORRES HOUSE  
ST. BRIGID HOUSE

*What does God require but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly... Micah 6:8*



*Brian Scarangh*

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness- "Prepare the way of our God"*

*Luke 3:4*

## ADVENT 2005

# THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER

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*The Hartford Catholic Worker* is published bimonthly 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 not a "tax-exempt" agency. We do not accept government funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We are not paid. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, doucot@sbcglobal.net and www.hartfordcatholicworker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Morlianna Evans, Sarah Karas, Angela Thomas, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

Lord,  
I dream it was the year 3001  
And we still didn't know  
what to do with homeless people,  
Poor people, odd people  
or sick people.  
so city Hall  
Paid for a giant flying saucer and filled it with  
The Strange, the Homeless, the Lefthanded,  
The Ill the Poor, the Poor, the Poor...  
And the people who combed their hair this way  
Instead of that way, and a few more poor.

*Jack Agueros*

*Psalm for the Next Millennium*



**NO WAR**   
**AT CHRISTMAS**

**T  
O  
Y**

## St. Martin's Calendar

- ◆ Please join us on **Tuesday, December 6, January 3 and February 7 at 7:30 PM** for the celebration of Mass at St. Brigid House, 18 Clark St., Hartford. Refreshments and conversation follow Mass.
- ✝ **Sunday, November 27 at 1:30.** Please join the Maryknoll Sisters for a commemoration program to mark the 25th anniversary of the martyrdom of Jean Donovan (formerly of CT) and Srs. Maura Clarke, Ita Ford and Dorothy Kazel. For details contact Sr. Jean Fallon (914) 941-7575.
- ☺ Calling All Elves!: Our annual Christmas Party for the neighborhood kids will be on **Saturday, December 17. Set up begins at 8:30, PARTY BEGINS AT 10. PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE** To volunteer please call us at 724-7066.
- 🌐 The vigil for an end to war continues on **Friday's from 11:30-12:30** outside the Federal Building on Main St. in Hartford. Please bring a sign and join our call for an end to the American military occupation of Iraq.



*Ade Bethune*

# THE VALUE OF LIFE

*Christopher J. Doucot*

So what is a life worth?

With the death count in Iraq surpassing 2,000 there has been a fair amount of press coverage to the human toll of the war on Iraq. Wait, you say 2000 is the tally of American military casualties surely some Iraqis have also been killed in this war. In an exhaustive and impartial on the ground study conducted in 2004 Gilbert Burnham and Les Roberts of Johns Hopkins University reported that at least 100,000 Iraqi civilians had been killed since the American invasion and contrary to popular perception the vast majority of those deaths have resulted from American military operations and not insurgent attacks. From these figures can we deduce that American lives are 50 times more valuable than Iraqi? Given the paucity of coverage of the Iraqi death toll in the American media one could even conclude that Iraqi lives aren't worth the ink and paper needed to report on their deaths.

During an interview for the radio program "This American Life" Marc Garlasco the former chief of high-value targeting at the Pentagon, the man who chose what was bombed during the war, said: "They [the Pentagon war planners] work up a collateral damage estimate and tell you, 'o.k in this strike 10 people are anticipated to be killed, civilians', or 20 civilians or whatever. And in this war in Iraq there was a magic number and the magic number was 30. And for any target that it was anticipated that 30 or more civilians would be killed it required the signature of either the president or Secretary of Defense for that strike to actually occur... I have no idea how the magic number came to be 30."

Is it likely that the president would have signed off on these attacks if the likely civilian casualties were among his friends

and family? Would we the American people be willing to offer up 30 or more American civilians so that so-called high value targets like "Chemical Ali" can be killed? "Preposterous" I can hear you say. Why is it any less preposterous when the lives are Iraqi?

Anyhow, this "milestone" of 2000 American deaths in Iraq has prompted me to consider some of the ways the value of a life is measured today. For example the young man I wrote about in our previous issue, "Greg", receives a disability check of \$521 a month from the federal government. \$521 is not enough money to rent a room at the YMCA or a studio apartment. How is Greg supposed to pay rent and utilities and buy groceries on \$521 a month? How is Greg supposed to live? Is Greg not worth more than a mere \$17 a day?

While researching background on the genocide in Darfur, Sudan I read *Shake Hands With the Devil* by General Romeo Dallaire. General Dallaire was the head of the UN mission in Rwanda during the 1993 genocide in that country. In his visceral account of those 100 days when 800,000 persons were hacked to death while the world barely noticed he recounted an outrageous phone conversation he had with a Pentagon planner: "during those last weeks we received a shocking call from an American staffer, whose name I have long forgotten. He was engaged in some sort of planning exercise and wanted to know how many Rwandans had died, how many were refugees, and how many were internally displaced. He told me that his estimates indicated that it would take the deaths of 85,000 Rwandans to justify risking the life



of one American soldier."

My God! 85,000 to 1! How was this figure arrived at? Did the Pentagon gather a crew of economists to determine the median life-time earnings potential of the typical American and the typical Rwandan? If so, are we worth only the sum of money we can earn in a lifetime? If not, what formula was used? Does this formula vary for every nationality? Does it vary only for region? Or does it vary by race? I imagine there must be some sort of ledger in the Pentagon and White House that has a magic number for how many Bosnians are worth an American, how many Iraqis, how many Darfurians??? I wonder if other nations have comparable lists of how many Americans are worth one of their own?

Elsewhere in my research on Sudan I came across information about the modern day slave trade. In the north African nation of Mauritania the value of a human being held in slavery is about equal to that of a camel. Christian Solidarity International of Zurich is one of the most prolific purchasers of humans in modern times. This anti-slavery group has bought the freedom of 11,000 people in Sudan during

**(PLEASE SEE LIFE, P.4)**

## LIFE, CONT.

the last decade. The going rate for a human being in Sudan is roughly \$75 American dollars.

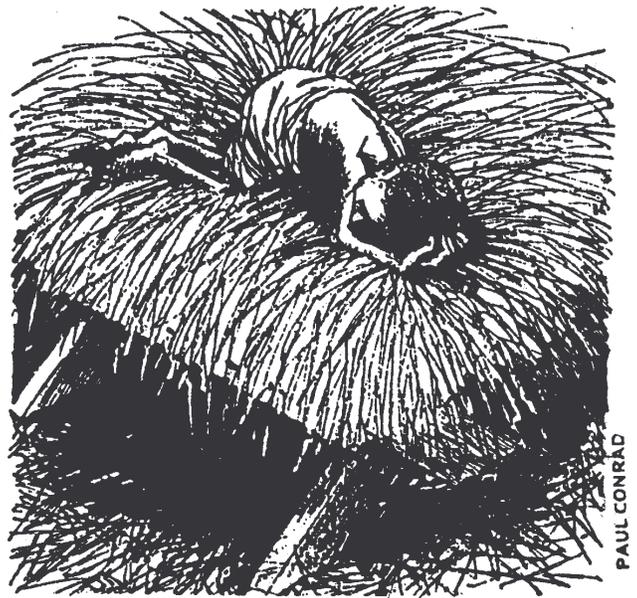
In the American South during the slave days of this nation the average cost of a Black human being was \$600, or \$10,000 adjusted for inflation. During the Constitutional Convention of 1787 the states of the South wanted slaves to be included in the census figures to determine the proportion of seats states would receive in the newly created Congress; of course these slaves would have only counted on paper since they were not eligible to vote. With the states of the North opposing the inclusion of slaves in census figures a compromise was crafted by James Madison whereby slaves were deemed to be equal to three-fifths a free person.

Slavery is the unrepented original sin of our nation and racism is the virulent heir to this sin. Sin is not the simple violation of some religious rule; rather a sin is any act

which strains our relationship with God. More than being made in God's image and likeness we are living temples of God's Holy Spirit. Thus any boundary which separates us from one another, any policy that values one group of people over another, and any practice that favors some at the expense of others is inherently sinful.

If after death our bodies were reduced to the natural elements of which we are composed we would be worth about 5 bucks. With the infusion of the supernatural, the breath of life, the breath of God, which filled the lungs of the first person we became priceless. With each casualty of the war in Iraq and genocide in Darfur and with every murder in our cities the wind is knocked out of God. God has been sucker punched over 100,000 times in Iraq, 400,000 times in Darfur and 40,000 times in

America in the last two years. Though we might fear what we could hear when the All Powerful catches His breath I suspect that we will hear the gentle whisper of the All Merciful begging us to care for Her children today the way we wished He had been cared for 2000 years ago.  $\Omega$



PAUL CONRAD

***You shall find him wracked by hunger and dying in the Third World.***

## “HEY, WANT TO GO TO THE GREEN HOUSE?”

The Green House is a fun place for me to play. I can do my homework here. I can play basketball here. I go to their camp in Voluntown, CT, it is fun there too. This year I can be one of the helpers here.

I can meet all my friends like Patrica, Bubba, Mary, Dawn, my sister and brother come here too. I have been coming here for the past two and a half years. I love to come here because on Saturday we can play flag football and do arts and crafts here too.

This is a safe place for me because when I did not come here I got beat up. But ever since I started coming here I feel safe. I love to read here because they have great classics like *Three Musketeers* and *Frankenstein*. **Michael**

“What is the Green House and why do

you call it the Green House?” “Well the reason why I call it the Green House because the house is painted green.” The Green House is where people go and have



Meinrad Craighead

fun and meet different people. When I first went I was scared because I didn't know anybody but when you keep on going to the Green House you will meet new people.

The things we do at the Green House is play games, play tag, play basketball, and sometimes we make things like if Halloween is coming up we make things that go with Halloween like spiders, skeletons, and spider webs. Sometimes we even do our homework here and if we need help someone would come and help us.

Sometimes if we be good we even go on field trips like going to Lake Compounce, going sledding, going out to eat. Sometimes new people come and we go to this big field and we play different types of sports like we play flag football. Sometimes we play baseball and sometimes, not a lot, but we play kick ball. The most thing I like about the Green House is meeting new people and having a great time together. **Daylon**

# AFTER SCHOOL AT THE GREEN HOUSE

*Sarah Karas*

2:00 PM

It is time to begin the daily ritual of transforming our home into a space for safe play, arts and crafts, tutoring, reading, and writing in preparation for the children in our after school program. This involves clearing the house of the various projects and donated items that inhabited the house during the day and setting up various work stations on the first, second, and basement floors.

Usually while this is taking place someone is in the kitchen preparing a snack for the children. One of the two Catholic Workers on at this time usually does this unless they are lucky enough to have Jeanie (one of our many volunteers) on that day in which case the children will be eating from a lavish display of apples and peanut butter (Note: when I am in charge of snacks I open a bag of pretzels and calls it a day!)

This is also the time to take a few deep breathes and sit silently for a moment before the rush of energy streams through the house.

2:30 PM

The official beginning to our after school program here at the Green House. Each day at this time there are two Catholic Workers on the house and while one of us stays to attend to the influx of children and volunteers the other one walks across the street to the Clark Street School parking lot to pick up Jose. Unless your parent says otherwise all children kindergarten through second grade must be picked up by an adult and so Jose's foster parents have given us permission to have him after school. I personally like this job because

when all of the children leave school they see me waiting for Jose and they all rush over to say hello with that newly released energy they get when they very first leave from a long day of learning.

When the children arrive at our house they pick out their card, which has a picture of them next to their name on one side and their contact information on the



ELEANOR MILL

other side. They place it on a purple painted peg board and put their belongings in the back room.

At this time the children play in the backyard or upstairs when it is raining or snowing. We encourage our volunteers to organize activities with the children and to help maintain some sort of order. One of their favorite games is called Knockout and is played on the basketball court where everyone lines up and takes turns shooting the ball from the foul line while trying to make their shot go in before the person in front of them makes their basket. Other activities include; drawing/art, scooter riding, pogo sticking, playing on the jungle gym, basketball games, and hanging out around the snack table.

Michael, one of our more enthusiastic children, comes up to me each day and gives me the latest goings on in his life.

He is very excited because his family just got approved for their new apartment and will be moving within a few blocks of our home (the Purple and Green Houses), a fact that he is extremely excited about!

Other times children will come up to me and talk about a fight they had in school or someone who was bullying them and together we try to figure out a way to address the issue incase it happens again.

Sometimes children in our program are afraid to walk over to our home from school because older children in our neighborhood often "roll on" or beat up the younger children as part of a rite of passage.

The other day Josh told us about how one of his classmates punched him at school and how he used the H.I.P.Steps to handle the situation. The H.I.P. Steps (Help Increase the Peace) are a technique that we use as a method of nonviolent conflict / resolution with the

children in our programs. The steps are: 1) Agree on the problem, 2) Brainstorm solutions, 3) Pick a Win / Win solution that is fair and just, and 4) Shake hands and shake it off.

Far too often in our neighborhood and in our world conflicts are solved through violent means, which only perpetuates more violence, hatred, and misunderstanding. By teaching our children to practice the H.I.P.Steps when they fight with each other we hope they will use these tools for settling their problems when they are at home or out in our neighborhood. I was very much encouraged to hear that Josh (age 8) had used the H.I.P. Steps because when he first started coming to our home he would ball himself into a corner and cry whenever he had a problem with a child or adult. This time he used the H.I.P. Steps (PLEASE SEE AFTERSCHOOL, P6)

## AFTERSCHOOL CONT.

and he smiled when he told me that by talking to the person who hit him he found out that the child had mistook him for someone else and apologized to Josh for hitting him.

One of the perks of working with the children over a long period of time is seeing the transformation that takes place in them when they are validated and shown respect.

3:15 PM

Playtime is over and everyone forms a circle in the backyard. Children are assigned a volunteer to work with on their homework and chores are divvied up for cleaning before they go home.

3:20 PM

Work! Work! Work! Each child is to be doing their homework, reading a book, or writing in their journals. We came up with a rewards system that tracks their homework progress and rewards them for their hard work. Each day the children earn checks for finishing their homework, writing a full journal page, or reading for 20 minutes. If they receive seven checks there are various prizes to choose from including: breakfast at the Cozy Spot (our local soul food restaurant), movies, bowling, fishing with Chris, and first in line at the Christmas party, etc.

All of our volunteers have been a great help and have allowed for us to have a ratio of about one adult for every three children. Our volunteers include students from the local high schools and colleges and various other people from our extended community. I have also noticed some of our older children helping the younger ones out with their reading and writing. We have found that by having the children journal we are able to communi-

cate with them on a more intimate level through exchanging questions and answers. This format also allows for topics that are harder for children to talk about because they can write about them instead. Last year we found that one of our girls who is very shy and quiet was having a hard time at school with people picking on her and she felt like she wanted to die and had tried to kill herself. It was through her journal that we found out about her



*Brian Kavanagh*

struggles and we were able to get help for her.

4:10 PM

Tutoring is now over and it is time to play again. This is also the time that the children that were in Power Hour arrive. Power Hour is a program that the Clark Street School has instated, which holds children grades third - sixth until four o'clock in order to prepare them for the Connecticut Mastery Tests. At this point I am usually chased around the house because all of the late arrivals wanting to know where their snack is and wondering if

they can use the telephone to call their parents to let them know they arrived at our house.

4:30 PM

Clean-Up time! We have all of the children participate in the cleaning up process, which includes the backyard and inside space. At first this was like pulling teeth but now they are used to it and I am sure they are all tired of hearing our speeches about taking responsibility and being part of a community that works together and so on (I can just see the eyes rolling and the shoulders slouching).

5:00 PM

Now we send them all on their merry little way and lock up the house, concluding the Green House activities for the day.

Our after school program is so important because often times our children do not have a safe space to play and we provide them with this space to not only hang out and be children but also to work on their homework with someone who is willing to give them individual attention. We would not be able to run our after school program if it was not for all of the generous gifts and donated time from our extended community. Various organizations and people have donated

books and school supplies so that we are able to give each student a brand new backpack filled with school supplies at the beginning of each year. Also, through monetary donations we are able to provide snacks for the children as well as bring them on field trips. And we are especially appreciative of all the volunteers that come and donate their time to work individually with the children.

If you would like to volunteer with the after-school program please give us a call. Ω

# AFTER THE FLOOD

*(eds. note: In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina with there were the beginnings of a national discussion on the shameful extent of poverty, and its' undeniable link to race, in New Orleans. The roar of the hurricane attracted the international media who were shocked by the conditions they encountered. We had hoped that the initial pundit consternation would gather momentum and flourish into a systematic examination of race and poverty in America and then into a comprehensive response of poverty elimination and the normalization of race relations. Unfortunately, now that Hurricane Katrina is old news the television cameras have moved on, taking with them the attention of America and leaving behind the dirty secret of America's Third World.*

*The following excerpts are from the transcript to the September 11, 2005 broadcast of the Public Radio Show This American Life. The episode #296, can be heard for free at [www.thisamericanlife.org](http://www.thisamericanlife.org).)*

DENISE MOORE: I kept hearing the word "animals," and I didn't see animals. We were trapped like animals, but I saw the greatest humanity I'd ever seen from the most unlikely places... we go to the Convention Center, and when we arrived there were people all over the street, under the bridge and we were like: why are these people on the street? Why aren't they in the Convention Center? And when we got there people were saying, "you don't want to go in there."

IRA GLASS: What'd you see?

DENISE MOORE: A sewer. A sewer, literally. Because I had to use the bathroom and I was like, "where's the bathroom?" So, I went inside, the whole place was a bathroom. I was stepping in feces, stepping in urine. All over the carpets...

And my mom wanted me to make sure I tell you, they kept doing, the whole time, was tell us to line up for the buses that never came. It was like they were doing drills every four hours, "you all have to line up for the bus, and if you bum-rush the bus, they're just going to

take off without you and nobody's going to get to go anywhere, you have to line up, you have to be in a straight line." We're talking about old people in wheelchairs and women with babies, waiting, for buses that you know goddamn well aren't coming. Like they were playing with us. I figured it out early in the morning, but what am I supposed to do, make an announcement? "The buses aren't coming." And so I walked up to the so-called head guy in charge of our section and said, "why do you have these people sitting out here in the sun, and you know these buses aren't coming?" "The buses are coming. The buses are coming." I said, "you're just playing with us. Who gives you the authority to keep lining us up like this, to stand in this heat?" He said, "well I know the guy who can make the call for the buses," I said, "well, why hasn't he called them, people are dying." He said, "I wish I could tell you what you wanted to hear." I said, "I want to hear, the truth. Are the buses coming or not? We need to get these old people and these babies out of this heat." And then he just walked away. And we were left there. Without help. Without food. Without water. Without sanitary conditions, as though it's perfectly all right for these "animals" to reside in a frickin' sewer like rats. Because there was nothing but black people back there... [expletive] disposable.

And then the story became, "they left us here to die, they're going to kill us."...so by the time the rumors started that the National Guard was gonna kill us, I almost half-way believed it... The police kept passing us by. And the National Guard kept passing us by with their guns pointed at us, and because they wouldn't — when you see a truck full of water and people have been crying for water for a day and a night and the water truck passes you by?



Just keeps going? How are we supposed to believe these people were here to help us?... It was almost like they were taunting us. And then, don't forget they kept lining us up for buses that never showed up...

IRA GLASS: so we keep hearing in the news about violence inside the Convention Center and people being killed and women being raped, did you know about any of that when you were there?

DENISE MOORE: the Convention Center is Section A through J, I believe. We were about at H. And we could hear, kind of craziness going on, on the further ends on either direction, but where we are was mostly old people and women with children, and I didn't see anybody get raped; I did see people die. I saw one man die, and I saw a girl and her baby die. But I didn't see anybody getting hurt.

IRA GLASS: and talk about, now, there were men just kind of roaming with guns. Packs of men.

DENISE MOORE: They were securing the area. Criminals. These guys were criminals. They were... But somehow these guys got together, figured out who had guns and decided they were going to make sure that no women were getting raped because we did hear about women getting raped in the Superdome and that nobody was hurting babies. And nobody was hurting these old people. They were the ones getting juice for the babies. They were the ones getting clothes for people who had walked through that water. They were the ones fanning the old people,

because that's what moved the guys, the gangster guys the most, the plight of the old people. That's what haunted me the most, seeing those old people sitting in their chairs and not being able to walk around or nothing. ... There was a Rite-Aid there, and you would think they would be stealing stuff, fun stuff or whatever, because it's a "free city" or whatever, according to them, right? But they were taking juice for the babies, water, beer for the older people, food, raincoats so they could all be seen by each other. You know, I thought it was pretty cool and very well organized.

IRA GLASS: wait and did you see this yourself, these guys?

DENISE MOORE: yeah, I was right there.

IRA GLASS: so basically they went off to this Rite-Aid, they got the stuff they brought it back, and started distributing it?... Like Robin Hood.

DENISE MOORE: Exactly like Robin Hood. And that's why I got so mad because they're calling these guys animals. These guys. That's what got to me. Because I know what they did. You calling *these* people animals? You know? Come on. I saw what they did and I was really touched by it and I liked the way that they were organized about it and they were thoughtful about it, because they had families they couldn't find, too... And that they would put themselves out like that on other people's behalf. You know, I never had a real high opinion of thugs, myself. But I tell you one thing, I'll never look at them the same way again.

IRA GLASS: Why didn't people just walk away? That's what I don't understand—

DENISE MOORE: We weren't allowed. The police, people kept trying to go up the bridge so they could go to Algiers, and they'd be turned away. And they'd be sent back down.

IRA GLASS: Literally, they'd send them back?

DENISE MOORE: They'd go up the bridge to go across to the West Bank where it was dry. And lights were on. *[Laughs]* You know? And the National Guard was up there with guns. And the governor gave orders to shoot to kill. You couldn't get through them... so people would go up the bridge, every time they lined us up for the buses and the buses wouldn't come, people in groups would go up the bridge trying to get across the river. People who had

family across the river couldn't get across the river. They were not letting us out of there, they wasn't letting nobody in. So, we were trapped. I can't even express it...

*Laurie Beth Solonsky and her husband, Larry Bradshaw. They're both paramedics from San Francisco, they set off with about 200 other hotel guests that morning, for the command center that the police had set up down the street, at Harrah's casino. So they go there and ask the police, what should they do now?*



LORRIE BETH SLONSKY: You know, they said, "you can't go to Superdome, you cannot go to the Convention Center." We said, "where can we go?" They said, "we don't know, you are on your own." And that's where we decided, "let's camp in front of the police command center, in front of Harrah's." There'd be protection, we'd have each other until the next day. Then, the police command center realized they had an issue on their hand. They had 200 tourists in front of their command center, so he said, "wait, I just heard word, if you cross the bridge, there are buses." And a big cheer went up. But Larry, being the realist that he is said, "wait a minute, wait a minute. We have been lied to. Monday. Tuesday. Wednesday. Today is Thursday. We would really like some guarantee this is true. And he looked us in the eye and said, "I swear to you, there are buses on the bridge. I just got word."...So the 200 of us little tourist types with our pull-along baggage, um, made our way

through the rainy weather... So, we are going through town and people saw us and thought, "hmm, here comes some folks and they must know something, and so our numbers doubled from probably 200 and then it doubled again, so we were probably about 800 to 1,000 people, marching up to the bridge. When we got to the bridge, there was the armed Gretna sheriff's and they had formed a line at the foot of the bridge... that's when they began firing the weapons. Gretna police shot at us and said, "get away, get away, you cannot come on the bridge."...

What did I really think?... what I thought was, "Are they serious? They must be mistaken. They cannot be shooting at a group of desperate-ass people." But apparently, they were serious. But, we were so desperate, you know, "we gotta get out of here, this is our only way out." We can't go to the Superdome, we can't go to the Convention Center, we are scared to death, for our lives and for the people around us's lives. We had to approach them, so my partner, Larry, had his badge with him, his fire department badge. So he would raise it up, lay it on the ground, put our hands up, and walk backwards and say, "may we approach?"

And um, when we approached and had them in conversation, the sheriff informed us that there were no buses, that the police commander had lied to us, and when Larry questioned, "can we just ask you why we can't cross the bridge?" Because there was no traffic; there was very little traffic on the six-lane highway. And they said that, "you are not crossing this bridge. We are not turning the West Bank into another Superdome." And to us, when they said that, was absolutely these were code words for, "if you're poor and you're black, you are not getting out of New Orleans. You are not coming to our territory."

ALEX BLUMBERG: it does seem hard to avoid talking about race here.

LORRIE BETH SLONSKY: Yes, we're white, and everybody else, not, most every other person was African-American. And that is what they saw. And that is what they responded to that this group of people of color were not going to come into their neighborhoods. **Ω**

## NOTES CONT.

brothers, Ammon and Mica". We're all praying the judge places him and his little brother in the best place for them.

Jose joined us at an event called *Hope Out Loud*. It was to commemorate 9/11. We had a booth and talked with a lot of different people. We were able to sell Amal's paintings and collected over two hundred dollars for her. Amal is a woman from Iraq who is a mother of three by day and a painter by night. It was a fun time.

Later that evening, we went to see a play quoting White House officials from 9/11 to the war in Iraq. It was upsetting to hear their dehumanizing words. If I were an Iraqi man or woman I would've burst out crying so many times. I'm so happy to be living at the Hartford Catholic

Worker, because I get involved in peoples lives in a joyful uplifting way.

Another peace and justice worker is George Rashmawi. George is from Palestine. His family makes olive wood, Christian figurines. He comes to the U.S. during the christmas season to make money for his family. George brought his brother Nidal with him this year. We are enjoying their company.

George has taken over Dan's room. Dan left at the end of September. He is in Boston figuring out where he would like to go next. He will probably move to New York City and join most of his college friends. We wish him happiness.

Before Dan left, he joined us in organizing a street theatre demonstration. It happened on September 24 in solidarity with the march in D.C. We held up signs saying stop the war while patriotic music played in the back ground. Then most of

us walked to the Army recruiting station. There we did a theatrical presentation. There were two dead soldier and a dead Iraqi mother with child. Mourners were over the dead Iraqi and soldiers. Grandma Micky played a flood victim, representing the fact that war money could have been spent to prevent the tragedy in New Orleans. It was a powerful scene. At the end we sang "Jonny I hardly knew you" and most of us were crying. The realities of war are very sad. It was nice to get up from that dramatization, wash the blood off, and go have pizza with great friends and family.

I hope you enjoyed the house article. We all wish you all a very happy Thanksgiving. Take good care of yourself during the Christmas season. Listen to your body and take good care of yourself. Until next time, may the joyous moments of our lives be many.Ω

## RICHARD SITCHA, REFUGEE FROM THE CAMEROON, REFUGEE FROM MERCY

Richard Sitcha fled the Cameroon after he exposed the military police, the Douala Operational Command, who had killed nine teenagers for the crime of stealing a gas can. Sitcha helped the victims' families get information about their sons, and he gave a report to the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Douala on the matter. Sitcha was arrested, tortured, and charged with the crime of releasing state secrets.

He was able to flee the country, and in April 2001, he came to the U.S. In Jan. 2003, the Federal Court in Hartford granted him refugee status. On Sept. 18, 2003, the same court revoked his status because of a questionable investigation led by the U.S. Embassy in the Cameroon at the behest of the Dept. of Homeland Security.

The investigation consisted of calling on the phone three witnesses in the Cameroon who had written affidavits on Sitcha's behalf, and asking them if they knew Sitcha. Unfortunately, DHS and the U.S. Embassy did not account for the reality that telephones are

normally tapped by the police in the Cameroon, so the witnesses denied knowing Sitcha. Sitcha was unable to cross-examine the investigator at the hearing on Sept. 18, 2003, and the judge placed him under DHS detention.

On March 31, 2005, Judge Ponsor of the 1<sup>st</sup> District Court in Springfield, Mass., rejected Sitcha's Writ of Habeas Corpus, and

on next day, DHS filed a motion for Sitcha to be released from Judge Ponsor's custody, and to be deported to the Cameroon where an execution awaits him.

The same day, Sitcha and 29 other immigrant detainees were transferred from the Franklin County Jail in Greenfield, Mass., to the Plymouth County Correctional Facility in Plymouth, Mass.

Mr Sitcha has spent two years in five separate prisons in Connecticut and Massachusetts and yet has not committed a crime in the U.S.

Sitcha had been a resident of Hartford from the summer of 2001 to Sept. 2003, and worked at honest jobs. He was a legal assistant in the Cameroon, and was a guest lecturer at Wesleyan University.

Please write to Mr. Sitcha at:

Richard Sitcha, #39823

Unit FS3, Room 402

Plymouth County Correctional Facility

26 Long Pond Rd.

Plymouth, MA 02360

for more info. [www.freerichard.com](http://www.freerichard.com).



JOHN OVERMYER ILLUSTRATION

# Notes from De Porres House

## Angela Thomas

The house and residents are transitioning into winter mode. Morliana, Ganiatou, Micalah, and Ammon have started back at school. Jackie and Sarah have returned from Camp Ahimsa being round the clock camp counselors. Brian and Chris have finished chopping and stacking our winter heat. The trees have changed into their beautiful autumn shades.

Our beloved brother Brian is enjoying fall in Ireland. For one month he will be walking around and enjoying the pubs. His travel bag was smaller than some ladies' purses. He's having a wonderful time and will return in a week.

Not on vacation and hitting the books hard are Morliana, Ganiatou, Micalah, and Ammon. Morliana and Ganiatou have returned to Capital Community College. They are both getting A's and B's while working part time jobs. Hard working and diligent define them well. Ammon is at the same school Micalah attends. Ammon is doing great and adjusting well. Micalah is also doing great at school. He's looking forward to receiving a volunteer award for his work he does to end starvation in Darfur. The students living here are a beautiful example to the kids in our after school program.

Our after school kids enjoyed a

special performance by Cirque de Soil. I found it to be a jaw dropping, hand clapping, hoot, and hollaring good time. I was not alone. One of our boys, who is



now living in east hartford, lit up like a light bulb. He clapped, cheered, and stood to his feet many times. This is a boy who a couple days before was found on the steps of a church crying. When asked what was the matter, he replied "I have no reason to go on." His Mom struggles with substance abuse, and they go from shelter to shelter. Although he

struggles, that night he had fun. Other children reacted in different ways. An young boy with A.D.H.D sat in complete silence spellbound. He soaked in every unbelievable moment of the performance. I felt like the kids perception of what was possible grew that night. I'm so grateful for my prayer being answered to bring those kids to see Cirque de soil.

Good times were also had at our Halloween party. Forty kids showed up for it. Thank you to all the volunteers who made that halloween party what it was. A big thank you also goes out to the anonymous donor who dropped off over thirty costumes. The kids got their face painted and did halloween crafts. Carmen the magian wowed them with magic tricks. It was a fun day for all.

Jose was dressed up as a muscular X-Man. He looked hilarious. The update on Jose is that he is no longer staying with us at nights. He's now in full time foster care. The Catholic Worker House is waiting to be approved for foster care. He still comes to the afterschool program. His permanent residence should be decided by January. It's tough on him. He asks the social worker when he can go home. The social worker asks, "where's home". Jose responds with, "Dad, Mom, and

(PLEASE SEE NOTES P.9)

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