

# 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 Kavanagh

*Here comes the Son!*  
CHRISTMAS 2005



## THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER

Established November 3, 1993

Volume 13 Number 6

*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.

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

**TV or Dinner.** In the draft compromise for the 2006 budget Congress has allotted **1.5 billion dollars** to provide Americans with converter boxes for their televisions when the broadcast signal goes digital and traditional televisions become obsolete.

The United Nations needed **2 billion dollars** to feed 25 million people in Africa last year. They were short 1.1 billion dollars.

60% of Americans are obese.

36,000 people die every day from starvation.

### *I Spy, You Spy*

With all the media coverage allotted to president Bush's illegal spying on American citizens you may have missed that the F.B.I. has a toll free number so you too can spy on your neighbor for Uncle Sam. Call: **1-800-CALL-SPY** if you want to report any suspicious behaviour. If you are having trouble figuring out what is suspicious behaviour consult our calendar below.

And this from *The NY Times*, 12/19/05 Counterterrorism agents at the FBI have conducted numerous surveillance and intelligence-gathering operations that involved groups active in causes as diverse as the environment, animal cruelty and poverty relief, newly disclosed agency records show... Another F.B.I. document talks of the Catholic Workers "semi-communistic ideology." The latest batch of documents totals more than 2,300 pages and centers on a handful of groups, including.. the Catholic Worker which promotes antipov-erty efforts and social causes... 'It's clear that this administration has engaged every possible agency, from the Pentagon to N.S.A. to the F.B.I., to engage in spying on Americans,' said Ann Beeson of the ACLU 'You look at these document and you think, wow, we have really returned to the days of J. Edgar Hoover, when you see in F.B.I. files that they're talking about a group like the Catholic Workers as having a communist ideology.'.. The documents indicate



that in some cases the FBI has used employ-ees, interns and other confidential informants within groups to develop leads on potential criminal activity... These networks have been described by the FBI as 'extremist special interest groups' whose cells engage in violent or other illegal acts, making them 'a serious domestic terrorist threat'..."

I am reminded of the remark of the Brazilian bishop Dom Helder Camara:

*When I feed the hungry, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are hungry, they call me a communist.Ω*

## St. Martin's Calendar

- ◆ Please join us on **Tuesday, February 7, March 7 and April 4 at 7:30 PM** for the celebration of Mass at St. Brigid House, 18 Clark St., Hartford. Refreshments and conversation follow Mass.
- 🎵 Please join us on **Saturday, January 21 at 5:30** for a spaghetti dinner fundraiser at the V.F.W. Hall, 276 Broad St, Windsor. Tickets are \$15. For more information call event coordinator Diane Cecere (aka Princess Di) at 688-9249 or 640-6316
- 🕊 Please join us on Saturday, January 21 from 9AM-3 for the Northeast Consulta on Direct Action Against the War. Capitol Community College, Main St. Hartford. For more info. contact: hartfordconsulta@yahoo.com, or call Sarah at 724-7066
- 🕊 Our 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.

# FRIENDS

## *Michael Poirier*

Thank you for the peace. Thank you for the unrest. Thanks for the Knock Out, dodgeball, and Pan Hoy. Thank you for the Spring Clean Ups and the 100 Suggestions on Being a Catholic Worker. Thank you for the food pantry, the furniture pantry, and the signs on I-84. Thanks for the tutoring, the editorials, the Tuesday night masses that are always on Tuesday nights no matter what the newsletter says.

Thank you for ripped banners and flowers in the city. Thanks for always opening the door, for friends from far away places. For friends from near places. Thanks for patience with incessant photos and crazy ideas about posters and websites and mailing lists, and thanks for being witness. Thanks for the actions, for Friday vigils. Thanks for the sacrifices. For the continued hope that this neighborhood we all live in can and will be a better place.

Thanks for the passion, snow ball fights, Christmas parties, movie nights, community. For the loud voice. Thank you for open arms. For the slideshows on Darfur which some of us still need to see. Thanks for the big smiley sun upstairs. For quotes on doing little things with great love. Thanks for the circus and for Capen and Clark. For the quiet voice. For the rewards program and seeing teen volunteers want to make a difference. Thanks for the math dittos, barbeques, spaghetti dinners and dance nights and H.I.P. steps. Thanks for the drawings and articles and poems and music. And for efforts praised and preached in water cooler conversations at insurance companies.

Thank you for holding out your hand and saying all are welcome here.

Thank you.



## FREE RICHARD SITCHA

November 28, 2005

Dear Members of the Hartford Catholic Worker group,

May the peace, the love and the joy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always.

One of my faithful supporters, Suzanne Carlson, ha[s] sent me copy of an article you published about my situation in your newsletter. Through this article I have received new supporters letters and letters from some people who lost my address when I was moved in Plymouth.

I am growing thankful to God everyday for having send on my way so lovely people thirsty for peace and justice in the world. Your struggle for those values will not be vain. God will help you and the Holy Spirit will be your adviser. You are children of God and you will [in]herit his Kingdom. Do no give up; no matter what, wherever you

are, be instruments of love, peace and justice. Your action is moving to create a world of hope, a world without borders regardless [of] our differences. A world full of love because love does not have boundaries.

One more time I thank you so much. May God [embrace] each one of you in his eternal love.

Love and Peace in Christ,  
Sitcha Richard.

Mr. Sitcha remains unjustly in prison. If the U.S. successfully deports him to Cameroon it is likely that he will be killed. Please write to him at: Richard Sitcha, #39823

Unit FS3, Room 402

Plymouth County Correctional Facility  
26 Long Pond Rd.  
Plymouth, MA 02360

For more information on Mr. Sitcha's case go to: [www.mainstream.com/freerichard/index.htm](http://www.mainstream.com/freerichard/index.htm) or do a Google search for SitchaΩ



# MY MENTOR GREG

*Christopher J. Doucot*

So let me tell you a little bit more about the young man Greg I've been writing about lately. Though we've known Greg, 19, for 11 years we are only now getting to know him more intimately. Greg is an abundantly lovable character. With Greg I have witnessed a notoriously stern judge suspend a three year sentence for burglary and a courthouse social worker empty her wallet for him to buy lunch. All the local police know him. Several weeks ago a cruiser dropped him off at our place early in the morning after his mother whacked him with a frying pan.

A couple of weeks ago a cop stopped him to see if he was carrying any marijuana. With a straight face Greg told him it was for his cataracts. The cop didn't arrest him but just took his weed- I would guess he was biting his cheek to keep from laughing at Greg's claim.

The cops aren't always so kind with him. Last week when he saw a cruiser approaching he put on his hood and stepped into an apartment foyer. I guess he looked guilty because the cop cuffed him and stripped him to his oversized boxer shorts looking for drugs and weapons. Nothing was found and he was released. I wonder if it was his hood, his fearful reaction to seeing a cruiser, or his black skin that made him look guilty?

Greg has been spending much of his time with us lately. He's usually knocking on our door by 9 in the morning. He is keen to help us with our work and will do anything we ask. He's always eager to go with us on errands to get outside the neighborhood, to see new faces, new places. When we pick up furniture donations he effortlessly initiates conversations with folks whose lives and experiences are so far removed from his that they might at

well be from Mars. He gleefully tags along when I need to do any sort of shopping. Inevitably I find him talking with the store manager asking if they are hiring. Greg



wants to work. He wants to contribute to society, to be a part of a community, a family.

This morning I received a call from the Social Security Administration regarding Greg, I am his representative payee. Greg has been receiving disability checks since he was a child. Rather, I should say his mother had been receiving those checks until I recently became his rep. payee. Consequently for the next five years Greg will have \$50 (almost %10) deducted from his check because his mother continued to cash his monthly checks during a stint he had at a juvenile detention center. When SSI recipients turn 18 the Social Security

Administration has to redetermine the disability of the recipient. The bureaucrat I spoke with this morning said that with the paucity of medical documentation on file if a determination were made today Greg would lose his check and be expected to find employment.

As already mentioned Greg wants to work and enjoys helping us out but he is utterly incapable of finding and holding a full time job in our economy. The developmental impact of his mother's crack addiction while he was in utero and the physical and psychological impact of it since he has been ex utero has effectively disabled Greg. Found among the dearth of his medical records was his IQ. It is 55; an IQ of 69 or below is the most common definition of being developmentally disabled (mentally retarded). I tried to explain to the woman from Social Security that of course Greg does not have a lengthy medical record documenting his disabilities, how could he when his crack addicted mother hasn't cared for him since conception?! Medical treatment? How about a king of Henny for pain. Psychological treatment? How about smoking pot to alleviate anxiety and control anger. Vocational training? How about petty thievery of boostable items for pocket change.

Greg is an amazing kid. Despite his mother's abuse he still affectionately loves her. Despite ample justification to rage against a society that has thrown him away he is more likely to be found laughing at the insanity of our mad world. Greg is fiercely loyal to us. When his mother goes off calling us "f\_\_\_ing hillbilly Nazis" because I won't give her his money he tries to calm her down and defend us.

Greg has a kind, gentle and generous spirit. Yesterday after helping us move around Christmas gifts all day Greg asked if there was anyway he could help us with the

after school kids. After retreating from the bedlam of 20 kids making Christmas decorations we found Greg sitting quietly with little 7 year old Corey taking turns reading aloud from a story book. The staccato delivery of the two as they struggled to sound out the words before them was in actuality melodious.

What could have been for Greg? What if his mother had never smoked crack? Would she have simply abused herself and her son with alcohol? What if we had pried a little more when we first met him? Could a little more attention from us spared him from a decade of abuse, neglect and intermittent imprisonment? His mother, his schools and his society have all clearly failed Greg, but so have we. We could have put ourselves in a position to intervene when he was still a child, but for all our focus on the injustices of the world we were oblivious to this specific injustice which we could have potentially lessened. You know how the saying about not seeing the trees for the forest, well this was an instance of us not seeing the person for the society. I'm still pissed off at the faceless bureaucrat at Social Security who is ready to terminate Greg's benefits but upon reflection I am also mad at myself for letting Greg down when he was just a boy.

We've learned a lot since first meeting Greg and we know better now. We're more comfortable here; we may still be from a different culture but we are no longer outsiders. Our relationships have deepened and we have gained the confidence to ask difficult questions of some of the parents who are neglecting their kids and of the single adults we know who sometimes seem to have given up the struggle and succumbed to the various demons which prey upon them.

This has not been easy. I mean aside from the obvious increase in work that arises from getting more involved in peoples struggles it has been emotionally devastating at times. People we've grown to love

have shared with us, not always intentionally, their pain. We've lost kids and friends to murder, prison, disease, addiction and homelessness. (We've also lost a friend or two due to our politics.) At times I find it hard not to be embittered. I won't make light of Greg's difficulties or romanticize his poverties but I certainly envy the wealth of his buoyancy.

In 1983 Howard Gardner PhD of Harvard University debunked the dominant understanding of intelligence as quantified by I.Q. Tests. Instead he identified eight different sorts of intelligence. I may have superior linguistic and logical intelligences compared with Greg's, but in interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence he's got me beat. When we're together our intelligence is accordingly broadened.

Now what if we tapped the vast reservoirs of intelligence that are typically overlooked by our society either because it is in the possession of those who may have a low I.Q., or are in a prison, shelter, or

nursing home? Imagine the brilliance of such a society. Imagine the beauty, the creativity in approaching problems, the empathy and the joy that could be unleashed if we simply valued those members of our society whom we have deemed as disposable, disabled or feeble. In my pride I never would have believed that Greg could teach me; yet his interpersonal intelligence quotient is so high he has been able to pierce my smugness. Spending time with Greg these past few weeks has been like having a private tutor teaching me how to be at ease with myself and better get along with others. My relationship with this mentally retarded, high-school drop-out, pot smoking ex-con is a mentoring one. Sometimes I am the mentor. Ω



## THANK-YOU!

We wish to thank the many individuals and faith communities who gave so generously to our ministry during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

Through your prayers, time, and money the Hartford Catholic Worker was able to help at least 150 families with food, clothing, toys, decorations, and household items this season. God bless you for enabling us to continue our ministry! Please work and pray for peace with justice, justice with mercy and life with dignity for all of God's children.



# WHO WOULD JESUS TORTURE?

December 1, 2005

Dear Family and Friends,

At the end of the summer I heard a presentation about prisoners being tortured in Guantanamo during a retreat I attended. There are over 100 men on a hunger strike. As an Irish-American woman who is at times a political prisoner in my own country, a hunger strike makes me sit up and take notice.

There was a report read by an American lawyer from one of the British citizens being detained. This man had been held for over three years and not charged with any crime. He was not allowed any contact with family. At one point he was held naked, chained by his hands and feet, to an iron ring in the center of a stone floor. My mind immediately went to an image of Christ being tortured before his execution.

I am not a person who talks at length about my religious beliefs. Like St. Francis always said, "Preach the gospel daily, use words when necessary." By the end of the retreat, I knew that God was calling me to act against torture being committed in my name by my country.

I think most good people are people who do not "believe in" torture. It is important for us to realize that not believing in it is not enough. There were probably many good people in Germany who did not believe in gas chambers or fascism. We must be ready to act on behalf of our beliefs. If I want to raise my sons in a country that does not legalize and legitimize the use of torture, I need to take action. If I believe that by engaging in torture our government lowers the bar for the treatment of every prisoner of war in every country, then I need to act. As the daughter and sister of veterans I

believe we must outlaw torture to prevent torture being committed on our own soldiers. Torture is a terrorist act. To engage in it to fight terrorism means that we have allowed terrorism to penetrate our hearts.

And so after prayer with my family and community I have decided to join 25 other Catholic Workers on a march to Guantanamo to perform the work of mercy of visiting the imprisoned there. Though it may seem ridiculous to defy the U.S. ban to travel to Cuba and march on a pilgrimage to end torture, this act challenges the system and maintains my nonviolence and my belief that we are all responsible for the acts of our government.

I hope that I can put aside my own fears and act upon my beliefs. As Dorothy Day said, "What I want to bring out is that

a pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions." So, I cast my pebble. Toss a little something into the pond yourself. I call others to stand with me and be counted. If you oppose torture write your senators and congress people. Go to a candlelight vigil at the federal building. Withhold a portion of your tax dollars in protest. Do something!

I leave you with this quote, "The only thing necessary for evil to flourish is for good people to do nothing."

You are all good people. Do something! Please pray for those suffering, fasting and being tortured. Pray for me and my community here in Hartford. Pray for our nation.

In Love and Peace,

*Jackie Allen*

To learn more about this please go to:  
<http://www.witnesstorture.org> Ω



*Brian Kavanagh*

# PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO CAPTIVES, AND FREEDOM TO PRISONERS

## Joe Morton

(Joe is a retired professor of philosophy at Goucher College and an all around good guy.)

Sister Ardeth Platte will be released from Danbury prison on December 22, the last of three Roman Catholic Dominican Sisters (Jackie Hudson and Carol Gilbert are the other two) to finish her term in prison for an act of nonviolent conscientious resistance to nuclear warfare in Colorado in October, 2002. On my most recent visit to Ardeth, Chris asked me to write my thoughts about prison ministries.

The first and most obvious form of prison ministry is attending to those incarcerated: visiting, when possible; writing; trying to provide what is needed, all within the strict, often rather bizarre (when not simply outrageous) limitations imposed by the vengeance systems of this nation—deceitfully called “correctional” facilities when in most cases there is no longer even the pretense of having any programs of rehabilitation. I have visited prisoners from Alabama to Maine, written to ones from Maryland to Illinois to California; it is one of my most steady forms of peace activity—and one often very gratifying (so I recommend it!).

A second form of prison ministry is that carried out by persons designated to be the chaplains at prisons. They, too, are limited by what the systems permit. Within the varying limits, there is probably a roughly normal range of clergy in those positions, from ones highly supportive to ones who exercise their functions rather perfunctorily. For all, even the very best, there is always the compromising fact or that they are, inescapably, agents of the system while (or even before) being ministers of spiritual sources. Of course they—just as you and I—can choose to subvert the systems rather than being compliant agents.



Pablo Picasso

By far the most important form of prison ministry is that which the few *well-grounded* prisoners provide for the other inmates—a function not noted or much misunderstood by some persons critical of activists who risk (they don't deliberately choose) incarceration for upholding their beliefs and values. Some such ministry is quite obvious as, for example, when the religious inmates (who are not necessarily ministers) organize Bible study groups or worship services—for persons of *all* faiths, not only their own.

But the more subtle, continuous, and probably most important form of ministry takes the form of individual counseling—direct support for desperately needy persons, many of whom probably never had anyone listen to them seriously, attentively, perceptively, compassionately. That is the irreplaceable service that both religious and lay members of the peace/justice community provide every day while locked up, a function usually recognized and very much appreciated, especially by the under-educated, downtrodden, often dysfunctional individuals who constitute the bulk of the U.S. prison population.

I have regularly witnessed their

very deeply-felt appreciation when (skirting the prohibitions of the visiting procedures) they introduce visiting relatives and friends to Ardeth—as others did with Carol at Alderson, West Virginia, with Susan Crane at Jessup, Maryland. Outside the visiting facilities, I have had such relatives tell me, more than once with tears in their eyes, how much it meant to those inside to have such listeners, advisers, advocates.

At least sometimes, that ministry is also recognized by prison officials, who depend on the patient, steady influence and support of inmates such as Ardeth to manage the variety of tragic or explosive crises which inevitably occur within the prison.

So when activists spend months or years behind bars, they are by no means “off duty,” nor are they, as some (even very friendly) critics believe, wasting their time or capacities. Instead, they are persistently and faithfully providing service of great value to persons who are among the most needy victims of a highly stratified, very unjust, fanatically materialistic society. Not even major reforms of the U.S. “criminal justice system” (so-called!!) could obviate the need for such service. What would be needed is the abolition of prisons which only a top-to-bottom revamping of U.S. society could bring about: the adoption by the great majority of citizens of sincere commitment to the spiritual and social values which are so often professed but unfortunately too often ignored. Ω



JOHN OVERMYER

# THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GREENSBORO

*Kate Foxon*

To spend any time at the Beloved Community Center in Greensboro, North Carolina, is to gain a sense of the particular point where history finds us, to begin to sense “the moment.” Here, the moment is felt, urgent, like birth pangs. Here it comes from out of the ground. If you have ears to hear, you can discern the sound before it arrives—the vibration on the train tracks near the sign marking the last meeting of the Confederate Cabinet in Downtown Greensboro, before the cars rumble into sight with their freight of military tanks or cargo boxes. There’s the knowledge that the moment carries a whole history of what delivered it here. It is heavy with possibility.

The idea is that you continue, always, to attend to the work of exposing and organizing against injustice, speaking the truth, feeding people, and asking why they are hungry. You do all this, anticipating the convergence of your work with the Moment—holding steady while the Moment becomes a Movement.

The original Freedom Summer was a highly publicized campaign in the Deep South to register Blacks to vote during the summer of 1964. Its moment was a long time coming, as organizers learned the skills of nonviolent civil resistance, taught math, reading, and history to young Black children, and faced harassment, beatings, and bombings in order to enact the enfranchisement won back in 1870.

Most members of African American communities here in Greensboro can remember that time of solidarity and action. There are living memories in Greensboro of the moment when the momentum of accumulated injustice overtook the people, who then took over the streets and confronted the city, forcing a response.

But another moment rose up, and just as gains towards justice and democracy were stymied or dismantled in the decades after the Civil War to keep power in the hands (more or less) of those who’d always had it, the established power structure reacted with fierce



PAUL LACHINE

resistance in the 1960s and '70s.

In November 1979, when labor organizers planned a march (under the auspices of the “Communist Workers Party”) to unite Black and white workers in a movement for racial and economic justice, a group of Klan and Nazi members drove by and gunned down five demonstrators and wounded ten. The killings that happened in Greensboro in 1979 were part of a larger pattern of disrupting, disorganizing, and dismantling movements of social change. What authority and legitimacy the power structure could not preserve by compromise (by desegregating schools, for example), it preserved by manipulation, force, and intimidation. There is ample evidence of police and government collusion in this tragic event (as the civil trial’s verdict of the joint guilt of police and Klan supports). Despite footage from numerous cameras which captured the shootings no one has been convicted in criminal trials, and no one from the city or the Klan/Nazi group has served any time.

During June and July 2005, the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission prepared to hold its first public hearings. The Commission’s mandate is to explore the context, causes, sequence, and consequences of the November 3, 1979 killings. As the hearings approached, it was time to test the winds again, to step out into the neighborhoods with a wet finger in the air, to knock on

doors and call people out. It was time to bring the history of change represented by Freedom Summer 1964 to bear, time to call forth a Freedom Summer 2005. When the idea was first posed to Steve Borla and myself, two white northerners temporarily in Greensboro to work with the Beloved Community Center, asking if we would work on a Freedom Summer internship, Nelson Johnson, executive director of the Beloved Community Center, warned us that we should be prepared to confront issues of racism head on. We nodded our heads, imagining we understood what he meant.

Our job would be to help one of the veteran organizers at the BCC coordinate the details of the selection process, pay attention to the needs of the interns, and plan reflection sessions for every Friday. Our job, we discovered, was also to continue to learn to know ourselves as white people, and to figure out how to be that here without silencing or rendering invisible other people.

The mix of interns was a challenging one. They could be grouped any number of ways: Two women, five men. Two white, five African-American. Three college educated, three with a few years of high school. Four were between ages 18 and 21; the other three between 25 and 32.

The group spent a good amount of time reading the local newspapers, analyzing how the media frames reality and discussing how we can learn to reframe it. We heard what it was

like for Sheila, an African American woman who worked for years as a phlebotomist, to be questioned constantly by white patients about her education or degree. Or how it felt when they would see her coming and ask for another technician to draw their blood; how it felt when her white bosses would as much as tell her that the “customer is always right.” We heard from Brian about what it was like to be sentenced to a prison farm, where all the African- American inmates were sent to the fields and the white prisoners got more comfortable jobs inside. We heard from B.J. as he struggled with—and was challenged on—his well-intentioned idea that as a white person he fights for justice on behalf of all humanity (whereas African American activists are often described as struggling for “their people”).

Steve and I were challenged on how we brought our own cultural expectations into the arena of work, sometimes unaware of their impact. Some of our interns had a very different sense of work culture than we did. Their actions communicated clearly that though they were employed by the BCC, the BCC did not own their time. Without meaning to, we had stepped into the role prepared for us as white people by a long history of domination. We and the interns had to talk through to a new script.

“How do we get them to feel the urgency?” asked Jonathan, a student from A&T. He had just gone out door knocking in the neighborhoods with Nelson Johnson, trying to spread the word about the upcoming Truth Hearings. He realized what an impact his college campus, a historically black university, has on the identity of the people in the surrounding neighborhoods. He also realized how insulated even the A&T students were from the realities of those neighborhoods.

Everyone felt the difficulty of organizing, of overcoming resistance to change, realizing how long it takes to build momentum. How could we convince anyone—either those beaten down by oppression or those comfortable in their complacency—that *this* moment was different from any other, that *this* moment



contained a possibility for transformation?

I know that I had never felt the urgency so keenly before coming to Greensboro. Before watching the city council’s panic as it divided (six-to-three, along race lines) in its vote to oppose the Truth Process; as whites hastened to assure the city that the decision had nothing to do with race. Before sitting in the auditorium during the first public hearings while Virgil Griffin, a Grand Wizard of the Klan, announced that God must have guided the bullets that killed the five labor activists on November 3, 1979.

As he explained that the Communists got what they deserved for challenging the Klan, I realized Sheila was sitting just behind me. We caught her glance and we all rolled our eyes and laughed. Then she suddenly reached across

and gripped my hands. I’m not sure I’ve ever had a sense, before that moment, of what it must feel like to listen from Sheila’s position, chest stifled with rage, to this man’s state-sanctioned hate.

Then the Grand Wizard’s twenty minutes were up. The Commission thanked him.

In a sense, his presence at the hearings reinforced the mainstream framing of the events of 1979, of a shootout between Klan and Communists, fringe elements irrelevant to the “rest of us” moderate, reasonable citizens of Greensboro. And because he, a Grand Wizard, held to the official city line (beneath all his bravado and bluster), a door shut on the opportunity for more repentant former Klansmen under him to give another version of the story. Additionally, his presence may have prevented some from the community, who were raised under the terror of the Klan, from venturing to the hearings at all that day. The Grand Wizard stepped off the stage to polite applause. The moment passed.

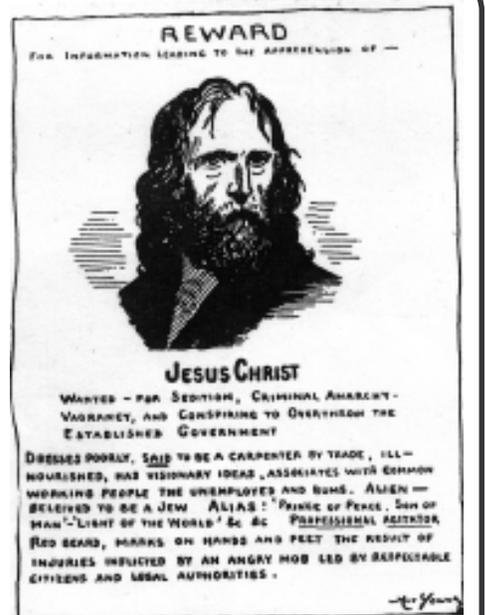
But here we sat, all the anger, trauma, and accumulated injustice squeezing through Sheila’s hands to mine. Another moment welled up, smarting in our eyes.Ω

Find out more about the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission at [www.greensborotrc.org](http://www.greensborotrc.org).

## NOTES CONT.

*on our phone calls and hear the cry of the poor. It is we who are blessed Mr. Bush. Through your efforts to revile us and persecute us and utter all kinds of evil against us falsely on account of the One we both call Lord, we have been assured that we are on the right path in our attempt to walk in his footsteps.*

*Recalling that King Bush sang the praises of Dorothy Day during commencement exercises at Notre Dame in 2001 the echo of the late bishop Dom Helder Camara reverberates loudly. “When we feed the poor they call us saints. When we ask why they are poor they call us communists.”Ω*



# Notes from De Porres House

## Jacqueline Allen-Doucot

It was already looking to be an extraordinary Catholic Worker day. While we were gathering for prayer at 8:30 at St. Martin House we began discussing the day. Some of us were talking about how to take turns being elves with the neighborhood women who would be stopping by to "shop" through the leftover Christmas party toys. We were divvying up house cleaning chores and figuring out who would pick up the food donation from Kenelly School when our dear friend Mary called from Voluntown.

She read to us from the front page of the day's issue of the *New York Times*. It seems that George W. Bush has determined that the Catholic Worker is a "semi-communist" group that bears probing by the domestic terrorist division of the F.B.I. Your homeland security at work folks.

At first we were angry: is George W. trying to scare off our supporters? Is he trying to make us paranoid wondering who among our volunteers might actually be a government snitch? We are happy to accept any volunteers, regardless of their employer. The FBI can come sort groceries or tutor someone in reading, fix a bike or ref. a hoops game!!

Next we were amused: communist??? We thought that insult collapsed with the Berlin Wall. A week later Bush claimed that anyone who complains about the

domestic spying is a "known Al-Qaeda operative". This goes far beyond the "if you're not with us you're against us" rhetoric. It is a broad sword that attempts



to invoke fear and trembling in those who dare to resist or dissent from government policy. Being neither communists nor Al-Qaeda operatives, we see again the lies of the Bush administration.

This is a government that lies to invade another nation and steal it's oil; this is a government that orchestrates a war crimes tribunal for a dictator it had propped up and supplied with chemical weapons components and anthrax for a decade. This is a government that uses depleted Uranium and Phosphorous weapons on urban areas in violation of international law. This is a government that kidnaps and tortures human beings, neglects the poor at home, and uses the media to propagate its'

fear mongering propaganda in the name of fighting the "war on terror". To be considered a subversive to this government is an honor that our community embraces.

We agree that this government should be afraid of us. Persecution, trials, torture, imprisonment and even execution have not been able to stop our leader Jesus Christ from inspiring with his instructions to "love our neighbors as ourselves and our enemies too". We always knew that his Sermon on the Mount was a radical manifesto to be taken seriously by any repressive regime looking to quell discontent.

We stand proudly with our sisters and brothers throughout America and the world who will not let governments tell us who our enemies are, nor will we obey any order, cooperate in any campaign, or fund any effort that leads to their killing. We know that every human being born is created in the image of God and a part of the Mystical Body of Christ. In fact, as we prepare to celebrate again the birth of Christ we are certain that he is reborn with the birth of every child.

We are part of a global movement for peace with justice that can be poked, prodded, spied upon and questioned but cannot be intimidated. Mr. Bush you can send us your agents in the guise of volunteers and we will introduce them to the Christ you never met; you can listen in

(SEE NOTES P.9)

18 Clark St.  
Hartford, CT 06120  
(860) 724-7066

Place Label Here, Please

