

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



Jesus was captured at night, taken away by soldiers, stripped of his garments, interrogated, tortured, crowned with sharp thorns, and finally condemned to death on a cross by Pontius Pilate, the representative of Roman imperial authority. Jesus will continue to be condemned to death so long as we do not establish the human and historical conditions that will allow justice to flower and right to flourish. And without justice and right, the Kingdom of God will not be established.

LENT 2005

Leonardo Boff

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, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

LIFE

Ammon Allen-Doucot (age 10)

Life is complicated like a puzzle.
All just waiting to fall and crumble.
Life is hurtful and hard,
so keep all pleasures with regard.
Pardon me if I've been mean,
I'm being very keen.
Keen to give my point of life.
I do not lie-
for that would fill me with strife.
(*"I'm sorry if this poem is depressing" A.A-D*)

TIME

Ammon Allen-Doucot

Tick tock says the clock as seconds pass how very fast.
Tick tock says the clock as minutes fly how very sly.
Tick tock says the clock as hours go how very slow.
That is time. Doesn't cost a dime.
Owned by none yet used by some.

A KIND WORD FROM MARY

(age 7)

Chris and Jackie are so nice
they love me and they love
each other.
They are like my own father
and mother
When I ask: "Can you bring
me to the beach to play?"
They say: "Okay!"
I love you.



St. Martin's Calendar

- ◆ Please join us on **Tuesday, April 5, May 3 and June 7 at 7:30 PM** for the celebration of Mass at St. Brigid House, 18 Clark St., Hartford. Refreshments and conversation follow Mass.
- ☺ *Give Peace a Dance: Saturday, April 30*, Contra Dance benefit for Pax Educare. For details call 231-0445 or go to www.paxeducare.org
- ◆ Please join us on **Good Friday, March 25** to pray the Stations of the Cross and for the end of war. We will gather at 10 AM in the parking lot of Pleasant Valley Elementary School on Pleasant Valley Rd, Groton and process to the Sub Base. For more information call us at 724-7066 or Stephen Kobasa at (203) 777-3849.
- 🌐 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.

YOU COULD CHANGE THE WORLD

MIRA (mir'a) n. [[< L mirare, look at]] 1
Abdul-Rahmaan Ibn Muhammad backwards; 2
anything giving a true representation-vt. to
reflect, as in a mirror.

If you would say something positive in your rhymes
Something that opened our eyes and
challenged our minds
Something that is more truth than lies
Where the struggle
Or the problems
Or ways to make better our community is
emphasized
So people will realize
That there is something that they can do
just like you
I mean
We already try to talk the talk that you do
With your holla backs
And your fashizals son
Even though most of the time by copying
your broken English
Slang
And disjointed grammar
It makes us look dumb
We already try to dress the way that you do
From pin stripped Lee's and adidas
In the 80's
To Cross colors
Baggy jeans
Huge white t-shirts
Sean John
Roca Wear
And them damn black coats with the orange lining
You told us Air Force Ones were hot
So we made Nike rich
While we remain poor
Because we can't get a job
Because we don't have the shirt and tie
Slacks and shoes
Potential employers look for from young
men looking for jobs
Plus if we are going to be successful
rappers one day
Like you
We have to be hustlers
Pimps

And drug dealers first
Right
You could change the world
If instead of buying platinum and diamond
encrusted necklaces bracelets and watches
You bought books or computers
Establish scholarships and programs
And revitalized the hood back to being the
neighborhood it once was
Even if that time was before you can remember
It is not enough to only give turkeys in November
And toys in December
I mean
We already have two way pagers like you
And we try to pimp our rides and make our
cribs look fly like we see on MTV
But to live your fantasy as our reality
We have to rob
Steal
And lie
We run up our credit cards and are late on
payments
Landing ourselves in debt
And by the time we do a credit check
There is nothing we can get
Only if you told us what real really is
Fathers might take care of their kids
And stop doing bids for chasing material
possessions
Mothers might form an obsession
With having children that seek educational

progression
Anyone 18 or older would vote in every election
Before having an erection
Young people would seek some protection
Society would move in a positive direction
The past and the present would have some
kind of connection
And the future wouldn't have to deal with
constant rejection
If and only if you rappers stop neglecting
The fact that
You
Could change the world
With your words and your actions
Rhymes and acting
You
Could change the world
With your lyrics and beats
Videos and public appearances
You
Could change the world
We're listening to you
We're waiting for you
Just to say something
Anything positive
Even if it only slips in through our subconscious
And we are just copying you like we already do
You
Could change the world
If instead of reminding us how messed up
the world is
And started telling us how great it could be
You
Could change the world
But unfortunately YOU already know your
mass appeal
And YOU sold your soul for a record deal
So I am going to change the world
Anyone want to join in? Ω



(MIRA does workshops in local high schools, after school programs and human service agencies. MIRA is working on his first book of poetry and a spoken word collaboration CD that will be available in 2005. He is available for speaking engagements, performances and always willing to collaborate with other artists.)

ON THE DISAPPEARANCE OF CHRIST

Christopher J. Doucot

The earth flag above the entry to St. Martin House is washed out and nearly torn in two. The portion blown off hangs in the barren branches of the tree in our front yard. Looking out our bedroom window this is the first thing we see when we get up in the morning and so Jackie has been on me to take the flag down, but I'm resistant. Given the fractured state of our world today an earth flag faded, torn and trapped in the hibernating branches of a naked tree strikes me as an apropos meditation for this Lent.

Last week we attended Mass with some friends at their rather affluent parish. As I was returning to my pew after receiving Eucharist I noticed a Communion wafer in the aisle. I retrieved it but balked at eating it when I realized it had been spit out by someone. So I sat through the closing prayers and hymns and meditated over the moist and discarded portion of the Body of Christ cradled in my hands. I thought to myself, who would spit out Communion? I wondered why dozens of other believers stepped over the Bread of Life without pause?

Eventually I recalled a story from Fr. Al. Over beers one night he shared with us how he had just given Eucharist to someone in the hospital when a nurse came in and stuck a suction tube in the fellow's mouth. With his jaw on the floor Fr. Al saw the Body of Christ sucked out of this guy. With

a knowing chuckle the padre quipped: "*Jesus has been through worse.*"

With this piece of Jesus in my palm I began to consider the many ways He continues to survive conditions worse than the refuge of a carpeted church floor. My



Brian Kavanagh

mind turned to our dear Patricia. Maybe you recall reading about Patricia in our Fall 2004 issue. I wrote about her dancing around the campfire at Camp Ahimsa with an ease and jubilation she is seldom afforded as she helps her grandmother raise her little sister and brothers. As the days grew shorter this Winter Patricia withdrew evermore into herself. She continued to join us at St. Brigid House after school everyday, but she spoke less and less and she kept a hood over her head.

Patricia is a beautiful girl. She has big dark eyes with long lashes and when she

smiles your heart just melts. Unfortunately the harsh chemical process of straightening has made her hair brittle and short. A merciless girl in her school has taken to tormenting Pat over her broken hair. One day after school Pat was upset and in a sour mood. She wouldn't talk with me but we wrote back and forth in her journal. She wrote that she wanted to die and that she had cut herself earlier in the week. The existential pain of being denied a childhood had finally boiled over with the cruel taunting of her classmate. We were forced to call for professional help for Pat before she seriously hurt herself. For two weeks Pat was cared for inpatient at a local hospital. Little Mary, Pat's 7 year old sister was initially distraught in Pat's absence. Mary and Pat's grandmother is responsible for their care. But Grandma P. is old, she is tired and she is responsible for 6 or 7 children! The reality of their home life is that Pat acts as the mother for Mary and 2 brothers. A heavy load for a slight girl.

At times I am sure Pat would prefer the carpeted floor of a wealthy church to the hard tile of the school corridor. I am even more sure that Pat, and Mary, Duncan and Joshua, Jose and Bubba and many of the other kids living with the stresses of poverty cherish the tender affection given by the many volunteers who spend their afternoons here at the Catholic Worker. Jamie, Jane, Octo, MaryLou, Nancy, Jory, Steve, Mike,

Pru, Kristi, and the dozens of high school students who come here do more than hold discarded Eucharist in their hands; through their devotion of time and love they adore the flesh and blood of the Body of Christ that is too often neglected by those who only adore the Body held captive in the tabernacle.

Soon it will be light when I rise in the morning. Soon the arms of our tree will be fragrant with young buds and so flush with green I will no longer be able to see the bleached cloth that flaps outside my window. Soon Pat will be back around our campfire roasting marshmallows and singing silly songs. And soon the fractured Body of our Saviour will no longer hang on the cross of war or be spat out like chaff by a ruthless economic system which measures success by the status of the wealthiest and not the least. Soon the the pain will fade and the wounds will heal. Soon we will be one with him in his many vile forms. Soon Resurrection will be ours.

Soon, yes- but when? How about as soon as we recognize that the body of Christ cannot be sucked out of any of us. How about as soon as we treat the broken bodies in our gutters as holy reservoirs of the Divine and not as speed bumps on the road to nowhere. The day I found Jesus stranded on the floor of the church, the second Sunday of Lent, he was also homeless on the streets of Hartford and persecuted in the camps of Darfur.

The second reading that day assured us that we will be saved and live forever "***through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus***",(2 Tm 1:8b-10). Naturally Winter will always give way to Spring; and Amen, Lent will always give way to Easter. But truly, so long as we make Jesus disappear our inevitable death will not give way to everlasting life.Ω



Maki Omran Raji

WHAT DOES LOVE MEAN TO YOU?



Patricia

Brian Kavanagh

Patricia P. (age 13)

Love, love, love.

Is love when someone hits you?

No!

Is love when someone makes you feel bad?

No!

Is love when someone loves you the way you want to be loved.

Yes!

That is what I think love means.

What do you think it means?

Love is the triumph of imagination over intelligence.

HL Mencken

*Love is anterior to life,
Posterior to death,
Initial of creation, and
The exponent of breath.*

Emily Dickinson

Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.

Lao Tzu

There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread.

Mother Theresa

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

RESISTANCE FANTASIES

Diane Thiel

We like to think we would have been

Hans or Sophie Scholl, scattering anti-Reich leaflets for our lives.

We like to think we would have given

our homes, our future children for the safety of our neighbors.

We like to think we never could have owned slaves

or better yet, that we were abolitionists.

We never would have paid a factory death wage.

We never would have sat at bulging tables

while the potato famine harvested the villages or packed people into coffin ships.

We hear of every trail of tears:

The only good Indian is a dead Indian

How could the people come to that – solution?



And then we close our newspapers, somewhat aware of what our investments might support, disturbed to be reminded, in the news or in a poem.

We might quietly recognize ourselves when we hear that all it takes for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing.

And yet go home to our lives and our Silence, that true rough beast, hiding in the hole of our full bellies.

so easily convinced there is nothing we can do.

And each of us continues to dream of having been willing to give anything, at that moment in history, of having been, at the very least, an active resister.

We were all heroes in someone else's war.Ω



PLEASE WRITE THESE PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE:

Sr. Carol Gilbert 10856-039 (33 months – out 10/05 or with good time, 5/23/05, with three years of supervised release to follow prison) Alderson FPC, Box A Alderson, WV 24910

Sr. Ardeth Platte 10857-039 (41 months – out 6/06 or with good time, 12/22/05 with three years of supervised release to follow prison) FCI, 331/2 Pembroke Station, Danbury, CT 06811

for more prisoner of conscience addresses go to <http://www.serve.com/nukeresister/>

LOSING AMERICA: A REVIEW

Reviewed by Bruce Kohlen

In *Losing America: Confronting a Reckless and Arrogant Presidency* (W. W. Norton & Company 2004) Robert C. Byrd, senior Senator (D.) from West Virginia, argues that the war in Iraq is an illegal violation of our Constitution. Senator Byrd, who serves on the Appropriations Committee, is a bit tedious with his narrative and he sometimes focuses too much on his Senate career, nonetheless the book offers a very common sense argument against the war. With his rich understanding of how our government is supposed to work he aptly questions the process which drew us to war in Iraq.

On page 176 the senator lists the 22 senators who opposed President Bush's motion which granted him the power to wage war in Iraq. Unfortunately neither Senator Dodd nor Senator Lieberman is among them. Our Constitution is specific in separation of powers, and the power to wage war rests solely with the Congress. Senator Byrd is quite critical of the members of Congress who just endlessly continue to vote appropriations simply because the Executive Branch requests it. The senator argues that if the Congress would live up to their constitutional responsibilities, we would not be involved in such a quagmire.

His reasoning is quite simple. He also suggests we have strayed from the intentions of the Founding Fathers and the way they designed our government to function when one branch simply follows the lead of another branch without question have we lost some of our liberty. The Congress, Supreme Court and Presidency were given separate and distinct responsibilities to

ensure a balance of power and prevent the new democracy from slipping into some form of monarchy or dictatorship. How many people in our country wanted to wage war if they had a more truthful presentation of the facts? Where are the weapons of mass destruction? Was there a connection between Saddam Hussein and the terror of September 11? Since no



weapons existed, and no there was no Iraqi connection to September 11 why did we invade and take so many lives to be lost on both sides?

Senator Byrd's arguments ably demonstrate that Congress has not lived up to its responsibilities. He more than uses other historical situations of which he personally witnessed to prove his point. When will Congress start living up to it's responsibilities? If they had initially- where would the country be today? Since we citizens do elect Congress, how much responsibility do we bear in creating this situation that now exists?

The book is not a simplistic approach to a now very complicated situation. It offers no easy solution. It might make us

learn from our mistakes. The apathy that Congress, as well as many of our citizens, is guilty of, has gotten our country into an enormously costly and complicated debacle. If we had been more attentive in the beginning and from now on things can only improve. If Congress and we citizens now understand democracy requires active participation we won't simply or blindly follow the ideas of a few with a political agenda.

Too bad we didn't learn as much as we could from our Viet Nam experience. Hopefully we have now learned, and more importantly will remember this latest lesson.

Our democracy demands participation continuously. There are still things to be done, the situation demands it. If we truly are a democracy protests can make changes. Try attending the Friday 11:30 A.M. vigil at the Federal Building downtown Hartford. Brian will personally welcome you.Ω

War is a racket!

It always has been. It is possibly the oldest, easily the most profitable, surely the most vicious. It is the only one international in scope. It is the only one in which the profits are reckoned in dollars and the losses in lives...

Three steps must be taken to smash the war racket. We must take the profit out of war. We must permit the youth of the land who would bear arms to decide whether or not there should be war. We must limit our military forces to home defense purposes...

scrap every ship, every gun, every rifle, every tank, every war plane...

So I say, "TO HELL WITH WAR!"

Brigadier General Smedley D. Butler, U.S.M.C., 1937

NOTES, CONT.

on May 25 in Washington, D.C. Coincidentally the arrest was made on a Wednesday, which is Brian's pub night and as a result he has been trying to make up for lost time ever since.

Along with Brian's action in D.C. Chris, who recently returned from a trip to the Sudan this past December, has been hard at work compiling the many photographs and stories from his trip in order to create a comprehensive slide presentation. Upon his return he has been sharing his experience with various schools and organizations in an effort to educate people about the political situation in the Sudan and to raise awareness of the violence which has manifested. During our after school program Chris led a discussion with the children about the thousands of displaced people living in refugee camps as a result of the conflict in the Sudan. In response the children made cards offering words of encouragement to those families suffering as well as calling for an end to the violence. Chris is planning on returning to the Sudan with his oldest son Micah and others this coming April.

January 20 marked the second inauguration for George W. Bush. Jackie, Chris and our friends Tim and Mary observed this day by dropping a banner across the "Welcome to Hartford" sign carved into the over pass on I-84. The banner read "Inaugurate Peace. Impeach Bush." The sign was put up early in the morning and continued to hang through out the morning rush hour until it was taken down around 9:00 AM.

We are grateful for Chris and our friend Rich who saved the day when they helped to fix a pipe that had burst at the camp in Voluntown. Because there is no

one currently acting as grounds keeper Jackie and Teri have diligently been going to the Voluntown Peace Trust farm to make sure the facility is in working order for groups to utilize. Slowly but surely the VPT is continuing to take shape as an all inclusive space for peace training and nonviolent activism. Recently groups such as the Hartford City Mission and the Westerly Quakers have held retreats there amongst the fifty-seven acres of beautiful forest. We are grateful to all the people who have worked to secure this land. It truly is a small paradise.

Our dear friend Lydia was accepted to Lock Haven University where she will



be a student this fall. Lydia has certainly helped me along in my own transition into the Catholic Worker community. Lydia was brought here through Americorps to help with our after school program. She is a pleasure to have as a co-worker and whenever I am not sure how to handle a situation she is always willing to step in and assist. She has formed a bond with the children which is obvious whenever she is not around because they always want to know where Lydia is. Congratulations

Lydia!

Morliana has been especially busy with school lately studying to be a social worker. I am so glad that she is living here with me as the only other young lady of the house. She has been great to talk to and always makes me laugh when she "tells people about themselves."

And of course we cant forget Dan whose master status is "the lovely white boy who walks the streets." Dan is a community organizer from A.C.O.R.N. (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) and is living in Saint Brigid House. He has been very enjoyable to have around to continue the "culture of George Rishmawi" by watching movies every night and he also generously cleans out the refrigerator. Just a warning to all for future reference, if Jackie goes on a romantic Valentines Day dinner with her husband DO NOT eat her left over steak and then add insult to injury by putting only a chunk of fat left over from that steak back in the fridge for Jackie to find the next day. Ouch! It's ok Dan we still love you.

Recently I discovered a framed picture above the staircase in the entrance hallway of St. Martin House. It is a picture of the 1912 Bread and Roses strike in Lawrence, MA. Across the bottom is a quote: "Hearts starve as well as bodies, give us bread...but give us roses." This statement articulates a concept often difficult to find within the context of US culture, which considers poverty simply a lack of material wealth experienced by those who are marginalized or undeserving. However this narrow view of poverty completely disregards spiritual poverty, which is an extremely powerful force that does not discriminate. As I read this picture my mind wonders to the children in our after school program. This past winter has been particularly trying for them. There

was a stabbing that occurred recently in the apartment just around the corner from our house where some of our children live. The stabbing was between two young teenage boys both of whom used to visit the Green House after school. One of the boys stabbed the other in the throat and chest leaving him in critical condition. From what the children have told us it would seem that the stabbing was a result of an ongoing conflict between the two boys which started when one teased the other one about staying back in school. The stabbing did not make the newspaper the next morning, however, because it was over shadowed by the five other shootings that occurred in the north end of Hartford later that night. With all of this in mind I can't help but think about the hardships these children are growing up with and it makes the concept of recognizing spiritual poverty so much more imperative.

We need to know that we are wanted

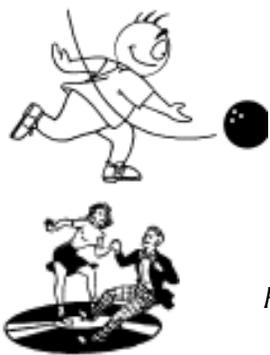
and loved. As important as it is to make sure folks are fed and clothed and have their basic needs provided for it is even more important that as a society we realize the extreme spiritual poverty that permeates through out, which only breeds fear, hatred and violence.

Well this concludes my inaugural house article. Please feel free to visit here any time. Don't be surprised if you happen to see a large German Shepherd

sheepishly walking backwards across our kitchen floor. This is our dog, Grace's latest strategy to successfully cross the floor which threatens to slide out from under her each time she passes through. We will provide entertainment, which includes tales of Greek and Roman mythology from Ammon, Crip Walk dance lessons from Micah and a very humorous story involving Morliana, bumper cars, and lacrosse! Ω



VOLUNTOWN PEACE TRUST CALENDAR



Rock and Bowl Fundraisers 7:00-9:30 PM Friday March 18 and Friday April 22. T-Bowl Lanes, Berlin Turnpike Newington. \$10 includes shoes

Work Parties in Voluntown: Saturday April 23 and Saturday June 24

Retreats: Atlantic Life Community May 6-8

Dreams and Spiritual Growth with Sister Carmela Garafola May 13 and 14

Dance Parties with the Emma Goldman Brigade: Saturday June 25 and Saturday August 20, 7-11:30 PM, \$10 for beer, wine, and d.j. dancing.

For more information or any questions about the Voluntown Peace Trust please call Therea Allen at 956-1738 or Jackie Allen-Doucot at 724-7066

THE WORLD WOULD BE BETTER OFF IF PEOPLE

TRIED TO BECOME BETTER. AND PEOPLE WOULD BECOME BETTER IF THEY STOPPED TRYING TO BECOME BETTER OFF.

for when everybody tries to become better off,
nobody is better off.
but when everybody tries to become better,

everybody is better off.
Everybody would be rich
if nobody tried to become richer.
And nobody would be poor
if everybody tried to be the poorest.

And everybody would be what he ought to be
if everybody tried to be
what he wants the other fellow to be.

Peter Maurin, cofounder of the Catholic Worker movement

Notes from De Porres House

Sarah Karas

As the new "low woman" on the totem pole I have the distinct honor and, I would say, privilege of writing my very first house article. For those of you who have not yet met me I am Sarah Karas, the newest member of the Hartford Catholic Worker. Originally from Windsor, Connecticut I joined the community formally by moving into the Purple House this past December. While attending Northwest Catholic High School I volunteered here for my sophomore

service project and continued to work as a counselor at Camp Ahimsa for six years. This past May I graduated from Ithaca College where I studied cinema production and then moved back to my family's home in Windsor to grapple with the all mighty question, What now?. This question has led me to embark on my life's latest adventure, which has, thus far, proven to be both terrifying and exciting. Through this journey I find myself here at the Hartford Catholic Worker with people whom I

have considered family for years. I am truly blessed to be a part of this community. As my Aunt Teri said to me before I left for school, "Sarah, where ever you go, there you will be." And right now this is a good place to start being.



We kicked off the new year with a spaghetti dinner / dance party to fundraise for this year's Camp Ahimsa and I am pleased to announce it was a success with over 200 people in attendance. I would like to give a special thank you to our very own Diane (affectionately known as Princess Di) for her seemingly endless enthusiasm and hard work, which made this event possible. Also, thank you to St. Patrick/St. Anthony for generously allowing us to use their space for the

evening. My personal favorite highlights from the party were Princess Di's homemade pasta sauce, the brilliantly choreographed and succinct execution of the electric slide by all of our dance floor divas, and last but not least, Brian's

interpretive dance to Fatboy Slim's Funk Soul Brother (P.S. This involved Brian spinning belly up on the dance floor while propelling himself around with his feet!). Thank you to all who helped with this event

and for making it a very enjoyable evening.

Shortly after his dancing debut, Brian along with other peace activists attended a prayer vigil in front of the Sudanese Embassy in Washington, D.C. calling for an end to the genocide in Darfur. Following the vigil he participated in a nonviolent witness, which led to a twenty-six hour stay in Central Lock Up for him and his cohorts. They were arrested on charges of unlawful assembly and are scheduled to be tried

(SEE NOTES P.8)

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Place Label Here, Please