

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

The child is born in the fullness of time/ Three wise astrologers take note of the signs/ Come to pay their respects to the fragile little king/ Get pretty close to wrecking everything/ 'Cause the governing body of the whole land/ Is that of Herod, a paranoid man/ Who when he hears there's a baby born King of the Jews/ Sends death squads to kill all male children under two/ but that same bright angel warns the parents in a dream/ And they head out for the border and get away clean.

CHRISTMAS 2006

*Bruce Cockburn
Cry of a Tiny Babe*



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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, Morliana Evans, Sarah Karas, Angela Thomas, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT AMERICAN TORTURE

- ✈ As of November 2005, over 83,000 people have been held in U.S. custody, and about 30,000 of those were entered "into the system," and assigned internment serial numbers in Iraq, Guantanamo Bay, and Afghanistan
- ✈ Over 15,000 people are currently in U.S. detention in just Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo Bay.
- ✈ At least 45 detainees died in U.S. custody due to suspected or confirmed criminal homicides. At least eight people were tortured to death. At least 98 detainees have died while in U.S. custody in Iraq or Afghanistan.
- ✈ At least 51 detainees have died in U.S. custody since former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was informed of the abuses at Abu Ghraib on January 16, 2004.
- ✈ 12 deaths have led to punishments of U.S. personnel CIA personnel have been charged with wrongdoing in connection with alleged involvement in at least 5 deaths.
- ✈ Reportedly 100-150 individuals have been rendered from U.S. custody to a foreign country known to torture prisoners, including to Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Pakistan.
- ✈ 8 percent of 517 Guantanamo detainees were considered al Qaeda fighters by the U.S. Government. Of the remaining detainees, 40% have no definitive connection to al Qaeda or Taliban.
- ✈ 5 percent of the 517 detainees held at Guantanamo were captured by the United States and the majority of those currently in custody were turned over by other parties during a time when the U.S. was offering large sums for captured prisoners.

Source: humanrightsfirst.org

St. Martin's Calendar

- ✦ Please join us on **Tuesday, February 6, March 6 and April 3 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 **Ash Wednesday, February 21** at the Cathedral on Farmington Ave. to pray and fast for an end to torture. For details please call Jackie at 724-7066 or Stephen at (203) 777-3849
- ✦ Please join us on **Good Friday, April 6 at 10 AM** to pray the Stations of the Cross at the Sub Base. We will gather 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.
- 🌍 Please join us on **Saturday, April 28 at 9:00 AM** for our annual Earth Day activities. We will clean the neighborhood, plant a tree, have a cookout and play basketball and maybe go for a nature walk in Keney Park. If you are a youth group leader this would be a great opportunity for your kids to do some service and have fun while building bridges with kids from this neighborhood.

KRAMER IS NOT THE PROBLEM

Timothy S. Black
Lorenzo D. Jones

Is Michael Richards a racist? The question preoccupying America after the comedian widely known as “Kramer” in the popular sit-com *Seinfeld* recently launched into a racist tirade at a comedy club in L.A. is the wrong question.

Towards the end of his book, *White Like Me*, Tim Wise describes how his grandmother, a strong white antiracist, who had raised her children and grandchildren to stand up against bigotry, deteriorated with Alzheimer’s in a nursing home. In her moments of fear, anger, and insecurity, confronting the greatest vulnerability of all – death, she lashed out at nursing home staff by referring to them as “niggers.” Was Mabel Wise a racist? Again, it’s the wrong question.

In the deepest recesses of our consciousness lies the racial caste system that we have all – white and black alike – internalized. Undoing racism requires that we do the internal work to recognize and manage these insidious racist perceptions, evident in those first-gance observations before our interpretive filters kick in and most apparent in our greatest moments of vulnerability. Undoing racism also requires us to recognize that all white people are capable of behavior similar to Michael Richards and Mabel Wise, because no one escapes the racist messages sewn into our cultural history. As long as we focus on what is wrong with Michael Richards, we are asking the wrong question.

For many blacks, Michael Richards’ behavior is not shocking, it exposes what they already assume – that most white people believe that blacks are inferior,

whether they say it openly or keep it neatly concealed behind their nice, liberal smiles. For many whites, Richards’ tirade is indeed shocking, it exposes what white people are capable of doing when their dignity is challenged – demean and disgrace people of color in order to reassert their power and status.



Why did Richards use racist language when confronted by black hecklers at the club? Because in Richards’ moment of vulnerability – his status and prestige as a comedian challenged – he lost control and utilized a discourse that is available to white people to restore their power and status, a discourse that asserts racial superiority by defacing people of color. When the chips were down, Richards reached into his bag of degrading insults to express his rage, but that bag is not his alone, it belongs to all white people, and the tools in that bag were developed and are preserved by a history of white status and privilege.

When the tools of racial power are used by individuals, it provides a window onto dominant culture. The same is true, however, when they are used collectively. The white backlash to the Civil Right’s Movement and to affirmative action, the creation of prison plantations through the War on Drugs, the concerted development of resource-strangled segregated black neighborhoods, and the racial politics to “end welfare as we know it” are all examples of how white power gets organized when whites are fearful and insecure. Fearful of what? Fearful of losing power, status and privilege – fears that many politicians are adept at exploiting electorally.

Most will answer the Richard’s question with the obvious – yes, America’s beloved Kramer is, as it turns out, one of those wayward white racists. Of course, what Richards did was reprehensible and indeed he is deserving of public shame. But as long as we remain focused on Richards, we are missing an opportunity to address the ongoing work of truly confronting American racism that involves all of us.

Certainly, undoing racism, in part, requires the internal work that needs to be done to manage the racist thoughts that bubble up in our consciousness. But it is also about the external work of identifying how racism remains embedded in our institutions and our language and provides a tool for white people to claim power and privilege when confronted by their fears and insecurities.

This is not Richard’s problem, it is our problem.

Timothy S. Black is Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for Social Research at the University of Hartford.

Lorenzo Jones is Executive Director of the Better Way Foundation. www.abwf-ct.org Ω

LOSING HEARTS, MINDS, AND LIVES IN IRAQ

(The following emails were exchanged in the days following the execution of Saddam Hussein. As of press time 3003 members of America's armed forces, 647 "contractors", 86 journalists, 78 aid workers, and perhaps a half a million Iraqi civilians have been killed in Iraq since the American invasion in 2003. For security's sake the name of my Iraqi friend has been changed.)

Fatima al Nouri

<fatima@godforgiveus@mercy.com>

wrote:

Dear Chris :

Happy new year for you and your family and all US honest people .

My dear I wish you send this message to newspaper or any you know.

Happy new year and God bless you and all USA honest people .

We were crying to Saddam, they kill him to please Bush and the criminals of Baghdad and Iran he was better than them. America's people should hang Bush he kill

many many Iraqis and USA soldiers for nothing ..UK should hang Blair for killing US and UK soldiers. We should hang ...Al Hakim and Sader and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki

..Iran- they killed more than Hussein killed...he killed people who try to kill him in Dujail (ed. note: Hussein was convicted for his

ordering the execution of 148 Shi'a Iraqis from the town of Dujail after a failed assassination attempt by a group from Dujail)... but Bush .Blair. Hakim, Sader killed many honest people, also the Kurdish killed 600.000 Iraqi solders in Iran/Iraq war (sic). They killed them from behind in the war, they should hunged.

Saddam he had many good things may God forgive him.. but others what they have to forgive!???

I know we were very poor [under Hussein] but we were safe at least. We had home and country but now what we have? We have nothing. We had honor in his regime. What we have now ?? We are look like slaves!! No home, no country, no hope, no future. God punish Bush (Santa Claus? giving



blood as gifts) and the Congress more than any thing I wish.

The killers killed him in a very blessing day for peace (ed. note: Hussein was executed on the eve of Eid-ul-Adha - a major Islamic holiday honoring the prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son for God.) they give us blood. Killing; not gifts for our children or something to help our situation. I'm writing with tears in my eyes.

I can't imagine our feeling in Jordan or Iraq or all Arab and Moslem countries. They pray against America and Congress. They say God will punish all who did that. It is not fair to kill a person in this blessing time for Moslems, also for Christians. I want tell Bush what he gave the world and USA: he gave them blood and hate, he gave USA people more and more enemies. He must shame on himself.

I'm so sorry to tell you that but you are my real brother and I tell you all my feelings and others .

My love and peace, Fatima

(PLEASE SEE: IRAQ, P9)

IF NOTHING BREAKS

Catharine Wiley

It is not torture if nothing breaks
if the dog's teeth click without meeting skin
if the bruise is blue but does not turn yellow
if the bile is yellow but does not turn green
if the bone leaves the socket without piercing skin
if eyeballs roll to white but stay inside the sockets
if eyelids close but the tears number less than 20
if electrodes dangle but are not connected
if the noose is never tightened
if pain turns to fear but fear does not turn to pain
if screams do not sound like songs
if we understand they'd do the same or worse to us
if imagination offers something else
if no one takes a picture
if no one writes it down
if no one puts it up online
if no one says no

A WOE AND A GIFT FROM PRISON

At the beginning of his ministry Jesus read from the prophecy of Isaiah and proclaimed: **“God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives.” (Luke 4:18).** Unfortunately, in America 5.6 million people are in prison or have served time there despite 85% of Americans proclaiming Christian faith. The late Fr. George Zabelka once quipped that it is not enough for Christians to believe in Christ, we must *believe* what he taught us. He taught us to “proclaim release to the captives”. In future issues we hope to explore Restorative Justice, alternatives to incarceration, the root causes of crime and other issues related to Jesus’ echo of Isaiah’s proclamation.

On these pages we have brought you the story of Richard Sitcha (see: www.mainstreamist.com/freerichard/recent.htm). Sitcha was a nonviolent political activist in his native Cameroon. In January 2003 he was granted political asylum by a Federal judge. In July 2003 this status was revoked and Sitcha has been held without charge in a Massachusetts prison since. On January 4 we received a financial donation from Mr. Sitcha, drawn from his meager commissary account, in support of our work. The inmate’s mite

brought me to tears.

The very next piece of mail I opened was from another inmate. Steven Smith (not his real name) is an African-American man who has been in prison for over a decade. He is serving a 30 year sentence for shooting a white woman. He is not likely to be paroled because he refuses to express remorse for a crime he insists he did not commit. I knew this man’s mother, I have been visiting him and corresponding with him for 10 years. I believe he is innocent.

The inmate’s woe also brought me to tears. He wrote:

Dear Chris,

Peace and Happy New Year! Sorry that it has taken as long as it has to respond to your letter. I did receive the money you sent and I thank-you. I’ve been totally stressed out due to this shady administration. For whatever reason, during a cell search they took all of my cellmate’s and I property for 23 days. When nothing “serious” was found they ended up giving us Petty Contraband Tickets (my very first) for items that were previously allowed to be sent in.

Now that commissary offers many of these items and we were unable to

produce receipts the items were deemed contraband. Then it took 3 weeks to get the so-called “allowed” back, which was like being in Segregation. So not only did I get a ticket I’m now having to replace items from the “only show in town”. What a racket.

To top it off, I’ve been suspended from my job and hospice (ed. note: after completing a course in hospice care Steve began caring for dying inmates.) for 90 days. Both coordinators fought to keep me because the Administration tried to take everything. Family visits with my son have been suspended for two years. You would think I had a fight, a weapon, or drugs. No such thing; just unable to produce receipts and excessive underclothes. What a life! I hate the fact that I have to accept this in order not to lose everything. I’m looking to go to Parole in 5 years or less and can’t let the fact of wanting to be “right” cause me any enemies. You never know who may get a promotion between now and then. I’ve seen it all too often. I hope that all is well.

Peace, SteveΩ

Consider This:

1 in 37 adults living in the United States are in prison or have been in prison.

The US has the highest incarceration level in the world.

1/3 of Black American men will spend time in prison.

1/17 of White American men will spend time in prison.

According to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch there are at least 2,225 child offenders serving life without parole sentences in U.S prisons for crimes committed before they were age 18.



ON NETWORKING AND GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Christopher J. Doucot

In September I began classes at Yale Divinity School. Mention of this in our Advent issue led to a few readers asking if I had left the Catholic Worker and a couple of readers asking what I was studying and why I went back to school after almost twenty years. (One reader also asked for my grades: sorry as of my writing I don't yet have my grades :)). My motivations for returning to school are varied: Jackie and several others had been urging me to get an advanced degree so that I might be able to teach at a college somewhere in order to introduce another generation of young people to the Catholic Worker and its philosophies of Personalism, Pacifism, and Communitarianism. Despite the desires of most Catholic Workers that our ranks would swell with the people from the neighborhoods within which we live the more likely route to the Catholic Worker has been via small liberal arts colleges. I am indebted to two of my teachers at Holy Cross, Robert Craig and the venerable David J. O'Brien, for introducing me to the brothers Berrigan and Dorothy Day.

When we began our community in 1992 (and opened our doors in 1993) we vowed to perform the Works of Mercy on a daily basis and in a personal manner but we were consciously vague about what exactly we would do desiring to be led by the Spirit and the community we were becoming a part of. Over the years we have participated in all of the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. We expected the bulk of our work to be feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless, instead the Work we do most is instructing the ignorant (this is the phrase used by the Baltimore Catechism- I welcome suggestions for alternatives since I see the process as a two way street where our shared ignorances are met by our shared experi-

ences to reveal a bit more of the Truth.) For the community performing this work has translated into our work with the children of our neighborhood. Given that the illiteracy rate in Hartford is 45% and the graduation rate 25% we have plenty of work to do- in Hartford and in a society that acquiesces to the impoverishment of Hartford. For me performing this work has



THE SOWER

involved sharing the struggles of the people in our north end neighborhood and in the various conflict zones I've travelled to those less afflicted through my writings and public speaking. Thus another motivation of my return to school is that with a degree from Yale I will be able to broaden the audience with whom I am able to perform this particular manifestation of the merciful work of instruction.

Related to this is the desire to broaden my network of connections. When I reflect upon the people I've met due to my

attendance at Holy Cross and the myriad of people they have in turn introduced me to (Senators, Congresspeople, ambassadors, bishops, Hollywood stars, journalists of all stripe, presidential candidates, mayors, and scores of students) I realize that I have a disproportionately loud voice in our society. This point was brought home to me when P.J. moved in with us. P.J., 21, was 8 when we first met him. P.J. grew up here because his family was unable to move out of this neighborhood. Families are trapped here by illness, illiteracy, unemployment, and/or addiction, which culminate in poverty. The nonpoor inherit more than money from their families they also receive a network of relationships which they can then build upon for their advancement in society. Social isolation may be intangible but it is both an integral cause of and product of poverty. Who are P.J.'s contacts in society? His mother was addicted and his father was addicted and homeless; they both died when he was a child. Aside from family, the contacts they left him were drug dealers, slumlords, social workers (professionally obliged to "maintain distance"), and suspicious law enforcement officials. Given that three quarters of his classmates dropped out of school what sort of contacts does he have among his peers? Some are dead, more are in prison, and many more are unemployed. By going back to school, and Yale in particular, I am hoping to build upon my network of contacts in order to build bridges between these new acquaintances and the people I've met in our neighborhood and other troubled places. In a sense I hope to be a channel to build community between the powerful and the disempowered, the rich and the poor; between those whose voices determine policy and those who are silent despite their cries.

In this way the voluntary poverty I've chosen is in no way resonant with the destitution of my neighbors. I may not have money in the bank but I have a tremendous wealth of friends, acquaintances and contacts, whom I can and do call upon. I have a good amount of "social capital". I now have an opportunity to increase this capital by making more friends and connections among an elite group of people that have not only disproportionately loud voices but also access to the ears of those who set the agenda for our society. I hope to be a responsible steward of this wealth by using the connections I will make for the temporal benefit of my friends in the neighborhood and perhaps for the eternal benefit of these hoped for new friends. One of the early Church fathers said that the rich are indebted to the poor because it is through relationships with the poor that the rich have the opportunity to do charity and justice and potentially be saved.

Maybe in line with St. Francis I am praying to be an instrument of restoration—a needle to be used by God in the effort to repair the torn cloak of humanity. If in Christ Jesus there is no longer Greek nor Jew, slave nor free then in Christ Jesus there also ought to be neither rich nor poor and no friend nor stranger but only sister and brother. Living in, and as, separate communities we have so obscured Christ among us that at times I think only children and mystics can catch a glimpse of him while the rest of us are left to discern shadows in the darkness. He will only be fully and completely revealed to us at that time when his image will be clearly reflected in a mosaic of humanity praising Him by loving each other as much as we love ourselves. A field of daisies may be beautiful but a meadow of wildflowers of all types is divine. So long as we cling to our "Greekness" or "Jewishness", or our

"whiteness" or "blackness" to hold ourselves apart from "the other" we will never be more than a field of daisies.



As for my studies: I think my first semester was a success. I took four classes: Bonhoeffer and King; Jesus' Death as Saving Event; Global Ethics; and Apocalyptic Imaginations in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In Bonhoeffer and King I read a good deal of the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. This was the first time I had read Bonhoeffer. I was left as frustrated with his dense academic writing style as with his theological gymnastics. Bonhoeffer was an intelligent and faithful Christian who despised the Nazi regime and felt betrayed by the church in Germany that at worst supported the regime and at best acquiesced to it. Despite his pacifist beliefs Bonhoeffer was executed by the Nazi regime for his involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler. For Bonhoeffer simply following one's conscience could be opportunistic, or in his words "cheap grace". It was convenient for Christians to proclaim a simplistic pacifism rather than accept the risks inherent in confronting a

violent regime. Bonhoeffer believed that the truest existence of the church is to be found in the community (of faithful?) whose concrete experience is that of solidarity with the oppressed. For Bonhoeffer the higher duty is not necessarily to serve one's conscience but the common good. So while it may have been in violation of his conscience to be involved in a murder the higher duty was to serve the common good by removing Hitler from power. While I disagree with him, consider the sacrifice that Bonhoeffer made for the victims of the Nazis: he risked his eternal life for them. If there is no greater love than that of one who gives his life for another, then what do we make of one who gives his eternal life for others? Bonhoeffer passed on an opportunity to meet with Gandhi in India because he believed it would have been irresponsible for him to use his privilege to travel abroad while so many were suffering at home. I wish he made the trip and gained a more nuanced understanding of pacifism so that he could have resisted the Nazi regime nonviolently. I have no doubt that he would have still been executed but maybe his death would not have also been a potential spiritual suicide.

Global Ethics was taught by the same professor (who is nearly a decade younger than me) a young ethicist who has spent time in Uganda, which is perhaps why he was especially critical, and fairly so, of the paper I wrote for this class. In my paper I outlined a scenario for a nonviolent intervention in the genocide in Darfur. Lacking in my paper was a sufficient argument justifying intervention, explanation of Gandhi's theory on political authority and specifics on Gene Sharp's strategic interpretations of Gandhi's theory. I'm grateful for the critique and the challenge it presents to be more thorough in my analysis.

Jesus' Death as Saving Event was a class on Atonement Theory i.e. an explora-

(PLEASE SEE YALE, P8)

YALE CONT.

tion of how the Crucifixion works to save humanity. The class opened with readings on the various sacrifice rituals of the Israelites to contextualize early interpretations of the Crucifixion. The class proceeded to examine mechanisms of salvation as proposed by Paul, Origen, Anselm, and Gustav Aulen among others. For this class I wrote about the lives and deaths of Franz Jagerstatter and Roger LaPorte.

Jagerstatter was a Catholic peasant, husband, father and farmer living in Nazi annexed Austria. After an early conversion experience Jagerstatter lived a pious life, which included thorough noncooperation with the Nazis. In 1943 he was drafted. His priest and bishop counseled him to comply with inductment and the Nazis even offered him noncombatant duty. Jagerstatter steadfastly refused any accommodation with the Nazis, which he believed would have saved his earthly life only to forfeit his eternal life. On August 9, 1943 he was beheaded. For twenty years his witness was apparently lost to history until a chance discovery by Gordon Zahn (a Catholic sociologist imprisoned in America during WWII for refusing to cooperate with the draft) led to a biography. The biography, *In Solitary Witness*, inspired many Americans to resist the Vietnam War; including Daniel Ellsberg.

Roger LaPorte may have read *In Solitary Witness*. LaPorte was a former seminarian who landed at the Catholic Worker in New York in 1965. In 1965 American bombardment of Vietnam significantly escalated and the press and nascent antiwar movement began referring to Vietnam as the "land of burning children". At the Catholic Worker Tom Cornell began using the symbol of fire to protest the war by burning his draft card. In Vietnam Buddhist monks began immolating themselves in 1963 in protest

of religious persecution by the puppet regime of Catholic Ngo Dinh Diem. In November 1965 Quaker Norman Morrison immolated himself outside the Pentagon office of Defense Secretary Robert McNamara to protest the war. A week later at a rally in NYC Tom Cornell burned his draft card while Dorothy Day condemned the war and A.J. Muste eulogized Morrison. While LaPorte observed the draft card burning he heard



counterdemonstrators chant "burn yourselves, not your draft cards". The following morning LaPorte doused himself with gasoline and immolated himself outside the UN. LaPorte's action and his brief condemnation of the war were widely reported and hotly debated.

By comparing their lives and deaths I tried to explore how they understood their witnesses, and how their contemporaries and history have understood their lives and early deaths to discern whether their deaths were "effective".

My final class on Apocalypticism traced the development of Apocalyptic thinking in Judaism, Christianity and Islam by begin-

ning with a look at early Zoroastrian texts from ancient Persia. Over the semester we studied the Book of Daniel, the Book of Revelations, and apocalyptic writings through the ages in the three religions. For this class I wrote about the origins of Christian Zionism with an emphasis on the most influential current adherent of Christian Zionism, John Hagee. Hagee believes that the Antichrist is alive today, and is probably French and gay and maybe a nobel laureate. He believes that the U.N., the European Union and the Euro are tools the Antichrist will use to impose a one world government, a one world currency, and a one world religion in order to control the world. He believes the battle of Armageddon will be fought between Israel (with the backing of the United States) and an invading alliance of the Moslem world and Russia. He also advocates a preemptive nuclear strike against Iran. Hagee believes all of this to be God's will which we should not to attempt to disrupt. Toward this end he successfully lobbied the White House (he has personally met the president) to not pressure Israel into a cease-fire with Hezbollah last year during the war. Hagee doesn't fear nuclear annihilation because he

believes that he will be raptured into heaven beforehand. Hagee has sold millions of his books and has organized a powerful lobby in Washington (Christians United for Israel). His theology may be ridiculous but given his influence in the Heartland and in Washington it should not be dismissed. He is a very dangerous man.

My papers aren't the best writing out there but if anyone is interested in reading them just drop me a note and I will send them off. I close with a note of thanks to the generous benefactors who have helped with my tuition and my community who have taken on more work in my absence. Peace. Ω

IRAQ CONT.

note: Don't mention my name they may kill me also

The Hartford Catholic Worker
<doucot@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

Fatima,

I cannot begin to understand how difficult your life has been living through wars with Iran and the United States. Your anger at the United States is justified. The execution of Sadaam Hussein was wrong- it is always wrong to kill somebody. I believe the United States wanted him executed to prevent him from reminding the world how the United States supported his war against Iran and sold him the chemicals used to kill the Kurds. Yes, the United States is guilty of making life even worse for Iraqis but please don't make Hussein into a hero. He too was responsible for much of the suffering of

Iraqis. Life may be worse now but it wasn't that great when Hussein was in power either. It would seem that in this life none



of us who are no longer children are innocent. In varying degrees, we are all responsible for the horrors of our govern-

ments. Certainly the American people have blood on our hands. May God have mercy on us.

Chris

Fatima al Nouri

<fatima@godforgiveus@mercy.com>
wrote:

Dear Chris

I agree with you he was not a hero but as I said we were at least safe. But now I want to leave to Baghdad on 17th of this Jan. but I am really scared to go. The people who scare in his regime were scary, but we are still til now peace people. No one survive peace or not all most scare in or out of Iraq . That's I mean .

We all pray for peace all over the world. You know we look like slaves because we are people with no home, no country for us. You can't imagine how we as Iraqis are suffering.

Love and peace, Fatima Ω

CALLING ALL HANDYMEN (AND WOMEN!)

We opened the doors of the Hartford Catholic Worker to our neighbors in November 1993. Our original house, now affectionately known by the neighborhood as the Purple House, was an abandoned building when we purchased in in June 1993. At the time of purchase we fixed as much as we could with the money we had leaving some serious repairs were undone. Four years back we finally replaced the roof which should have been replaced a decade sooner. We are now worried about the back porches, the gutters and some minor repairs that need attention. We are especially worried about the disrepair of the

back porches and gutters. We need to maintain a safe second exit in case of



fire and we would prefer to not have the cellar flood every time it rains. This

past summer we hired a handyman to make some repairs at both houses. He did a good job and gave us a discount but still his services were too expensive for us to have him take on more work so we are turning to you all. We are looking for: 1) someone willing to take the lead working with Chris to organize work parties and to recruit volunteers and 2) skilled carpenters and other folks competent with a hammer to help with these repairs. We would like to tackle these repairs this summer. If you think you can help us please send us a note or an email attention: Chris. THANKS!!

Notes from De Porres House

Angela Thomas

Hello extended community. This past November marked the Hartford Catholic Worker's 14th anniversary. Thank-you to everyone who helped to get us where we are today. Thank you on behalf of all the people we serve who have received God's abundance. We are blessed to be a part of the blessing. Brian orchestrated an action at his alumni art show in mid November. The school wanted former students to pay \$25 to display their art. That's one week and two days pay for us. So Brian came up with a plan. His accomplice Jackie carried the framed graphic about the torture in Guantanamo in her purse. We schmoozed our way into the event. Brian picked out a blank space on the wall. Jackie ever so discreetly lifted the art from her purse and with a few quick strokes, the double-sided sticky tape was exposed and the picture pressed up against the wall. Brian whipped out his "End Torture at Guantanamo" postcard and stuck it below his artwork. With our action complete, we all ate cheese and perused the other pieces in the gallery. A big thank you to Heartbeat Ensemble. They allowed us to take about 15 kids for free to the play Ebenezer. In the play they mentioned a lot of the issues our kids face, including the shooting of our beloved neighbor last year. Thank you to Heartbeat for bringing greater awareness and hopefully healing to our North

End community. We love you. Another thank you and praise the Lord goes to Brian and his comrades. They went to



Ines Wetzel

trial a week before Christmas facing a 15-day sentence for a Guantanamo protest. On June 26th, twenty five people blocked the main entrance to John Bolton's office building. They asked that Bolton and the U.S. Mission to the U.N. to sign on to shut down Guantanamo. The judge found them not guilty of Disorderly Conduct and guilty of Disobeying an Officer. They were sentenced to time served. Brian and his co-conspirators felt it was a success. The day after Brian returned home was our Christmas party in Voluntown for 40 of the kids we work with. It was a huge

success. The weather was warm, so the kids played basketball and flag football outside. Inside Holiday card making, playing with toys, and jewelry making was going on. Thank you to everyone that donated toys, money, food, and prayers to make it all go smoothly. We love you and God Bless. Monday and Tuesday of the next week was Mom's shopping. During Mom's shopping the neighborhood Moms picked up a bag full of presents. About 40 Mom's came and about 350 gifts were given out. We liked the idea of Moms giving their kids the presents on Christmas Day rather than the kids from the neighborhood getting gifts from the Green House. Thank you to all the churches and groups that collected for us. We even had some gift certificates left over to buy the kids shoes and clothing through out the year. God Bless you all. Much joy was created from your generosity. Thank you also goes out to UConn Husky Sport that donated tickets to a men's and a women's basketball game. I brought the kids to both games and they loved it. The more they see those players, I pray, the more they see themselves playing college basketball. Everyone needs a dream or goal in life. Part of what we do here is to expand the kids visions of what is possible for them. If anyone has any extra tickets to performances or sports events, please let us know. God Bless and Inner Peace to us all in 2007.Ω

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