

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

*Life experiences death, but it is not swallowed up in death. It comes
through death perfected and triumphant.*

Human Beings are not born to die; they die to be resurrected.

EASTER 2006

Leonardo Boff



THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER

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GOOD FRIDAY 2006: U.S. MILITARY BASE, GROTON, CT.

There would be six cross bearers
I volunteered. I don't know why.
A procession followed
At each of the fourteen stations
The names of those tortured were
read
Along the steel fence approaching
the gate of the base
Scourged, condemned,
He fell again and then again and
for the third time
the chant was quiet
Father, remember me when you
come into your kingdom

Martyrs' names scratched un-
evenly on the wood
Names of nonviolence running
into each other almost
Falling off the cross
The orange prison suit was a size
large
The only one left. I am small
My body floated inside
But the rest of me felt heavy
We did not speak as we walked
The black hood sealed my head
At the neck
Looking through the gauze
through the fence
I am faceless
Like those in
Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, trying,
crying not to
Disappear
The twelfth station Jesus dies on
the cross.

A man steps forth from the crowd
onto a box
In the street
Arms outstretched, black
hooded, head hung
An old woman under the cross
A disciple holding her up
And in a moment it was over
Taken away
To be a voice of the voiceless
To be hope for the tortured
To be Resurrection.

Barbara Pivarnik

BARRIE MAGUIRE

St. Martin's Calendar

- ◆ Please join us on **Tuesday, June 6 at 7:30 PM** for the celebration of Mass at St. Brigid House, 18 Clark St., Hartford. Refreshments and conversation follow Mass. THERE IS NO MASS IN JULY AND AUGUST PLEASE JOIN US AGAIN ON SEPTEMBER 5.
- ☺ Please join us on **Saturday, June 24** for a Celebration of the life of Fred Pfeil and a day of appreciation for our volunteers at our Camp Ahimsa in Voluntown. There will be a tree planting to remember Fred, storytelling around a campfire, a pot luck dinner, singing and dancing. For details please call Jackie at 724-7066.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Sarah Karas

We are often asked what it is exactly that we do at the Hartford Catholic Worker upon which I usually explain the philosophy of the Catholic Worker and give a list of our ministries (food pantry / co-op, furniture pantry, tutoring program, Saturday arts and crafts, summer camp, newsletter, giving table, Friday vigil, round table discussions, etc) but this never seems to fully explain what it is we do. I often think of our house as the Miscellaneous House, anything goes and it often does. But I think Peter Maurin (co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement) explained it best when he said, "The Catholic Worker is not an organization, it is an organism." Consider Monday, March 27th in the life of the Hartford Catholic Worker.

In the wee hours of the morning, the magic hour (for which I am NEVER up) when the sun is rising and the birds are singing Chris is en route to the supermarket to load up on produce, eggs, and meat for our monthly food cooperative. Today we have thirty orders, which means that each person paid \$15 and will receive about \$50 worth of meat, a dozen eggs, four bags of produce and a bag of nonperishable foods- hopefully before our after school program starts. By 8:00 A.M. the assembly line is in full tilt boogie with David, Brian, Morliana, Jackie, Angela and me dividing up each of the orders into grocery bags, easy for carrying home. We take breaks here and there to sip coffee and check email. While searching the web for orange jumpsuits like the ones worn by the detainees held in Guantanamo (for use on Good Friday) Jackie found a website that sells Halloween costumes for children that depict characters from Abu Ghraib Prison! How tactless! Needless to say we are all

mortified.

While we continue to bag the food we receive a phone call from Eve. I am delighted to hear her voice because we haven't heard from her in two months. She



Ade Bethune

explains to me that she has been in Puerto Rico with her mother who is dying of cancer and she wants to make sure she still has a food order for her family. Then she gets quiet. I know something is wrong, she is hesitating to talk. With nervousness in her voice she tells me she is pregnant. This will be her ninth child. Friends of ours sponsor Eve because she cannot afford to pay the monthly food co-op payment of \$15, however she is worried that they will no longer pay for her since she told them she

underwent surgery so as not to have anymore children and now here she is expecting another child. I am not sure what to say or how to react, I am in shock as I think of all her children. We tell her she can pick up her food.

It's now 9:00 A.M. and Jackie begins to make the usual "hooked up" egg breakfast with the cracked eggs we cannot give out as we await the first food pick up. Folks begin to stream through and amongst the morning crowd is our friend Eddie. We have known Eddie for many years and he often comes to us looking for food or clothing. We haven't seen him in awhile because he was recovering from surgery and he only recently began coming again for food. Eddie is one of our special cases where he gets a food bag a week in lieu of the monthly food co-op order. Today, however he came to pick up a co-op order, which started a (loud) disagreement on the front porch. With everyone's blood pressure up Eddie agreed to take his weekly bag and sign up for the co-op for next month. Eddie has a past history of taking food and clothing from us and selling it on the street to support his drug habit and so we are cautious about giving to him. He has been working on getting clean and has gained some weight back. It can be difficult to negotiate the fine line between helping others and enabling them.

Just when we all think it is safe to continue on with the day a very distraught Rachel shows up at the door with her four-year-old brother. Rachel, 19, suffers from mental illness and has been repeatedly institutionalized as a result of going off her medication. Chris works closely with Rachel, as her conservator, and has reported to us that, while institutionalized, she was put in restraints during the day in a

(PLEASE SEE DAY'S WORK, P.4)

A DAY'S WORK, CONT

room with nothing but a staff member observing her and a fluorescent light. Today she had been babysitting her baby brother and began to feel dizzy and disoriented while at a downtown bus stop. She immediately came to our house with her brother for help because her mother is not home. She has only been out of the hospital a few days. We show her to a seat and Jackie begins to explain to Rachel that she has to focus on getting better and cannot be doing child care, to which Rachel replies that she is fine and defends her mother for leaving her with her brother. Rachel is in denial of her illness which makes it even harder to work with her and not feel like we are in some way hurting her dignity. Clearly this is a bad situation: What if Rachel had passed out and her four-year-old brother was left by himself. We have to intervene.

Meanwhile, one of our neighborhood fathers, Malcom, arrives to begin his multiple loads of laundry and hang out at the house with his two-year-old daughter who jumps from coloring to the dollhouse and then the playscape.

Eve pulls up to the house. Exasperated, Jackie meets her at the front door. She has shared with us that she has medical concerns that cannot be addressed while pregnant. After her last pregnancy she told us that she had tubal ligation to protect her health: we are bewildered and saddened that she is again pregnant. Eve can barely care for her already born children. The father of this child lives in Puerto Rico it is very doubtful that he will help Eve raise this child. I begin to fill her order with mixed emotions of anger, frustration, and powerlessness. As I bring her food around to the front I notice her partner sitting, as usual, in the car! At this point I drop the bags halfway down the driveway and tell him (regrettably in a not so nice way) to get out of the car and get his order. I walk

away and Jackie tells him that if he wants his food from now on he needs to get out of the car and carry it himself. Thinking he is going to hit her, Jackie goes back into the house quickly as he gets out and takes his bags. He complained about how mean Jackie and I were the whole way home.

Soon after Eve leaves I take a deep breath and fix Rachel some peppermint tea to have while she meets with Chris. A lot has happened and still the day is young so I go outside to the backyard to be with myself for a moment.

At 11:30 A.M. the doorbell rings and a young, frail man is standing there covered in his own blood and feces. He tells us he was just beaten up in the hallway of his apartment building. His teeth are bad and his skin damaged from years of drug abuse and neglect. Chris takes him upstairs and leads him to the shower. He gives him a pair of his pants, a belt, a new shirt and a garbage bag to throw the old ones in. He tells Chris he doesn't want to press charges because he knows the cops will not do anything for him. As he leaves he thanks us and tells us he knew about our house because his little cousin used to play here and would often talk about going to the Green House on Clark Street. And then he leaves just as quietly as he came, another soul in and out of our lives.

Now, what to do about Rachel who is still sitting in our living room? Her little brother is in the backyard playing with Malcom and his daughter. Rachel is visibly breaking down, shaking and nervously talking on and on, which she often does when she is in a bad way. Jackie gets more and more frustrated with her mother and makes the very difficult decision to report her mother to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). This is something we have only done a few times over the past thirteen years here. Jackie tells me she would never forgive herself if something were

to happen to that child, while in Rachel's care, knowing she could have said something. We know calling DCF is not the best option but the only one we can think of now and so Jackie reluctantly calls. We also call Rachel's mom to tell her that it was inappropriate to leave her four-year-old with Rachel, that she needed to pick her son up immediately and that DCF was called.

Meanwhile, folks are still steadily streaming through the house picking up their food co-op orders. In the mix are two middle-aged gentlemen that have obviously had an early start on happy hour. They ask if we are giving out food and we explain that it is food co-op day and that people receiving food packages have paid for them. They do not seem to want to leave but rather enjoy hanging out in the hallway. One of the guys jokes with Jackie says that his wife wouldn't allow him to come by the Green House cause she is jealous of Jackie and concerned that her husband is "hitting" on her. I think Jackie got a good laugh out of that. She sent them off with a bag full of pasta, sauce, and tuna. It is nice to have a little comic relief throughout the day. Otherwise how else would we get through it?!



Joan Hyme

WHO KILLED HERBIE?

Jacqueline Allen - Doucot

About a month ago, Chris woke me up one morning with a copy of the *Hartford Courant*. Before I could rub the sleep out of my eyes I was jolted awake by the horrid news that one of our kids, Herbie, was dead at 17. I have struggled over the last few weeks to come to terms with Herbie's life, and the feelings I have about his death. There are ripples and implications from Herbie's death that have to do with our ministry, the community here in the North end and the priorities of our country.

Where do I begin?- obviously in grief. I cried a lot and in inappropriate situations in the weeks following Herbie's murder. Each time I thought about him I pictured his wide and flashing grin which transformed his face and the countenance of anyone toward whom it was turned upon. There are many famous Herbie stories from summer camp. He was one of

our best fishermen. Andy recalls holding him in his arms for over 2 hours one day when another camper had thrown his



favorite (and perhaps only) jeans into the stream. His temper often flashed as quickly as his smile.

He was frequently seen cruising around the neighborhood on a tiny banana seat trick bike. He was riding on it past the house the last time I saw him many months

ago. Like all the kids who have grown older and no longer call the "Green House" home, he pulled over for a hug and a quick chat when he saw me. He promised to bring his baby by for a visit and gave me the news about his brothers whom I had not seen for a while. In a moment he was gone and I did not think much of it. Later as I looked for photos of Herbie to give to his mom, I began to think about the long journey that led from our home to the abrupt end of his life.

Dorothy Day wrote often about poverty. It is the root of so many of our problems from here in the city and all over the world. She wrote in 1963 *"We need always to be thinking and writing about [poverty], for if we are not among it's victims it's reality fades from us. We must talk about poverty because people insulated by their own comfort lose sight of it."* For the kids in our
(PLEASE SEE HERBIE, P6)

A DAY'S WORK, CONT

Unfortunately that was only for a moment. Chris decides to drop what he was doing and take Rachel to the emergency room, something he has had to do before. Soon after her mother shows up furious with us. We remind her that Rachel is in no state to be taking care of a child and continuing to have her do so is neglect. DCF has already warned her about this. She storms into the backyard and leaves with her child stumbling behind her.

It is now 1:00 P.M. I turn to Jackie and tell her that we are shutting up the house and going for a long walk in Keney Park with our dog Grace. In full agreement Jackie makes a sign that reads "house closed, be back at 2".

Brian has been running around delivering food to our wheelchair bound friend on Barbour

Street and taking loads of cardboard to be recycled. Angela is at the police station trying to recover her stolen car and Chris is still at the hospital with Rachel.

We arrive back home at 2:30 to find Angela sorting through a massive pile of donated clothing and a dozen children chomping at the bit to be let in for the afterschool program.

After such a long day I am so thankful that our devoted volunteers Jenny, Donna and Mike show up to help with the children. We figure there must be something in the air because everyone seems exceptionally ornery this day, although this is something we notice as the school year begins winding down. Somewhere in between the hustle and bustle of handing out snacks, playing and distributing clothes a fight breaks out between the teens. At this point we call it a day!

It is 5:00 P.M time to close shop for the day. We are exhausted, our minds and emotions fatigued by the rollercoaster ride of the day. Where does one even begin to process the days events that have left a very present weight within?

We chose to highlight this day from March as a way to illustrate the daily goings on of our house in a way that a list of ministries cannot. Each day is very different and we expect anything to happen. So what exactly is it that we do here at the Green House, this Miscellaneous House? The best way for me to answer this would be to elaborate on what Peter Maurin said: we are an organism, . . . a living, breathing entity working and existing to bear witness to the Spirit in its human experience and all the while trying to be present to what is being asked of us in each moment and to answer that call to the best of our ability. Ω

WHO KILLED HERBIE?, CONT.

neighborhood, it is safe to say that the exact opposite is true. The reality of their poverty is omnipresent. It is their hope and comfort that fades from them.

I think it is important that we remember this when we ask the vital question that Herbie's murder begs of us. *Who killed Herbie?* Who is responsible for his early and violent death?

There are quick and easy answers, of course, like the violent drug dealers and gang bangers or Herbie's own bad choices. The quick answers though are easy, comfortable and incomplete. The quick answers don't address our complicity. They enable us to act as though we have no responsibility for his death. The easy answers lie to us saying that his life is not connected to our lives. I can find no comfort in them.

Deep down inside I feel utterly connected, responsible and very guilty. I need deeper questions and deeper answers. Why had we not made more of an effort to keep Herbie nearby? Why do we so easily let go of these kids when the siren calls of the streets overwhelms them?, like smoking pot? or when their hormones and sex drives out pace their maturity? Or when it is a hassle to keep them from fighting and disrespecting each other in the harsh credo of the 'hood. I told myself that for every kid who stopped coming at 14, there were another 3 younger ones at the door begging to be let in. Why would we go looking for more? The truth is the older kids can at times be so overwhelming. They have so many issues that we can acknowledge but seem impotent to help them overcome. Maybe I had the false hope that the new little ones would escape the traps of the ghetto; that maybe we could save them from the street. Maybe it was too hard to look our failures in the eye day

after day.

Poverty is so much more than a lack of money. It is isolation, despair, illness, and lack of opportunity. It's children are substance abuse, sexual abuse, illiteracy, fetal alcohol syndrome, learning disabilities, teen pregnancy, gangs and drug selling. It



Kathe Kollowitz

is the burning desire for the stuff we see on t.v. but lack the money to get.

We have tried programs on nonviolent conflict resolution, building self esteem, simplicity, prayer, music, theater...the kids find most of it a drag...it takes away from the fun parts of summer camp and hoops games in the back yard. Herbie's death for me puts into question for me all that we try to do for our kids. It makes me feel that we are spitting into an inferno.

Finally, I went to see my spiritual adviser. She helped me to understand that while I had done a good job getting in touch with my sadness there was a lot more going on in the feelings department that I was ignoring- namely my anger. This is where the conspiracy widens...and the other guilty parties are cast out of the shadows. In the process of coming to terms with my feelings, my own healing has been found in the process of "spreading the blame" a bit more. I am not the only

one who had abandoned Herbie in his time of need.

I do not have much respect for government, nor do I look to the government to care for my brothers and sisters. But ever since the development of welfare, Americans have relegated the job of caring for the "needy" to others. There is a saying that Americans like to let our government do our sinning for us as with bombing civilians and torturing "detainees". This is increasingly true also regarding the sin of neglecting the poor. We are in fact responsible for the grinding poverty in our cities. Moreover, *if* we are to have a Federal government that collects trillions of dollars in tax revenue we must then demand that our resources be used to alleviate poverty rather than creating it with an illegal, immoral war.

I am also angry on a local level. With the city of Hartford and state of Connecticut so focused on gentrification and "raising Hartford's star" they seem to have turned their backs on our children. I feel that this city has virtually abandoned the children in our neighborhood. And what about our businesses and corporations? Where are the summer jobs for high school kids? Where are full time jobs with living wages for their parents?

Meanwhile Hollywood and popular culture continue to glorify the wealth and materialism which is usually beyond the legitimate grasp of the kids raised in poverty. Dorothy Day aptly said "so many sins against the poor cry out to heaven" beyond the institutional sins like racism, deprivation of decent jobs and the lack of healthcare she said "There is another sin [which is] to instill in a man the paltry desires so compulsive that he is willing to sell his liberty and his honor to satisfy them."

What happened to Herbie is happening

to children all over our world. Until all children are deemed worthy of the future we desire for our own sons and daughters Herbie will be followed by millions of other children into his premature grave. Children are being raped and starved to death in Darfur, forced to become soldiers in Sierra Leone, trained in prostitution in Taiwan, dying of dysentery in Iraq, shot and left in dumps in Buenos Aires....the atrocities go on and on. Marian Wright Edelman (founder of the Children's Defense Fund) reminds us that "It is so important not to let ourselves off the hook or to become apathetic or cynical by telling ourself that nothing works or makes a difference. Every day, light your small candle, tutor or mentor or speak to or smile at that one child".

In the end, the thing that we are most committed to is our relationship with these kids. Personal relationships seem to be the key to the kids who have "made it" safely through those deadly teen years. When we talked to P.J., the first kid we met upon moving here 13 years ago, about how proud we were of his graduating from Prince Tech, getting and keeping a good job, and being a good to his own child, his response made Chris and I both weep. He told us he never would have made it "without you both loving me like a mom and dad". He reminded us, too, that our founding tutors Sue Petruzzi and Maryann Hubert never let him down during their years of tutoring and nurturing him. To this day they are support beams to his large family who have grown up in Hartford without their beloved mom.

In our own process we are trying to come up with better ways to keep the kids safe and connected with us. One such effort will be to build a new cabin in Voluntown on the site of an old broken down one. The cabin will be named after Herbierto. This year we want to pay 4 or 5 of the older teenage boys from the after school program to be "counselors". They will stay with us,

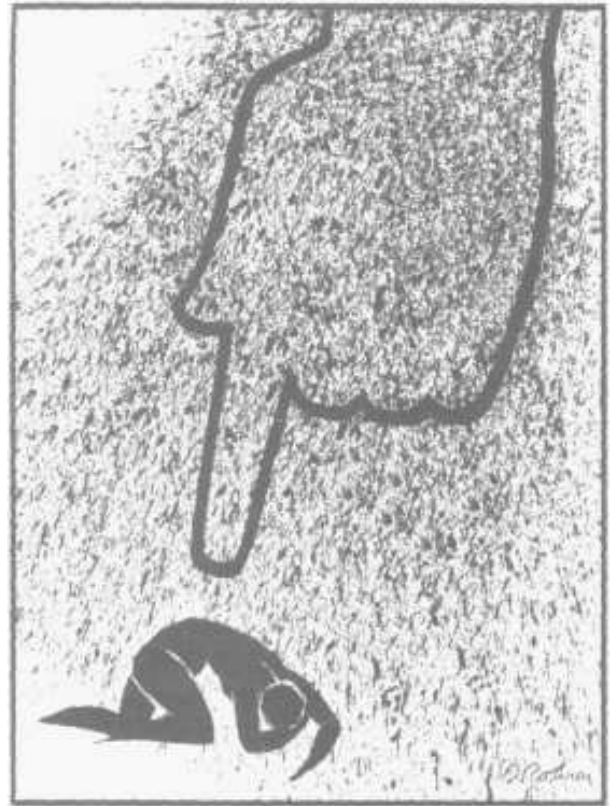
be mentored and get an extended break from their dangerous streets. Meanwhile a professor friend from U of H has introduced us to a young African-American man who recently graduated from UH. This fellow is a substitute teacher in the Hartford school system and an aspiring rapper who wants to devote more time to Hartford's children. We are hoping to work out details to have him work closely with our preteen boys. We are also thinking about ways to split up our afterschool program so that the teens can get some space and focus. One such effort will be a girls only garden for our "teen queens". We are trying to invite the older kids to take an active leadership role with the younger kids.

I guess this reflection is an invitation. We need to get more people involved in the long hard work of saving our littlest ones. Can you help us? We need tutors, mentors, friends, funds and prayers.

"We thank you, God, for this time of change, challenge, struggle, learning, witness, and action for and with our children. Thou counseled us to 'take care that we not despair'

and that it is not the will of our Father in Heaven that even 'one of these little ones be lost'.

"Help us, God, to overcome our selfishness and greed, our political and personal jockeying, our individual and organizational agendas, our need to be first, right, and recognized, and to become humble like the child whom Christ said is the 'greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.'" Marian Wright Edelman. Ω



DEAN ROHREK

Dean Rohrek

ST. MARTIN'S WISH LIST

✦ We need your prayers!

☞ For our food ministries we need: empty egg cartons, tuna, spaghetti sauce, canned soups and meats, and children's cereal. *Please: we are all set with dried pasta and pumpkin pie mix.*

☺ We also need your financial help without which we can't help people with their rent or utilities, or keep our van which we use for summer camp and field trips gassed up and insured, or help people with bus fare, or... well- you get the picture.



FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

BY JAMES YEE

A review by Bill Cook

On September 10, 2003, a U.S. Army chaplain – a Moslem – was arrested. The media reported that he was suspected of espionage. All the more shocking was that this man, James Yee, was a West Point graduate. Many wondered how Yee, knowing the horrific attacks our country suffered on 9/11, could betray his own people.

The fact is that he did not. *For God and Country* is Yee's story – the story of how his trust and fidelity were betrayed by the very military and civilian leaders whom he served.

James Yee grew up in New Jersey in a Chinese-American family which was Christian (Lutheran) and patriotic. A high school wrestler, he earned distinction and, later, an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. After graduation from West Point, Yee served as an active duty officer in the Army, but eventually left after completing his obligation to the government to begin a civilian career.

Yee is an earnest individual, whose life is guided by a commitment to the principles of honesty and integrity. It is in light of this earnestness that his conversion to Islam is understandable. In his late twenties, he befriended a young woman who was exploring Islam and spent time discussing and comparing religious traditions with her. Eventually, Yee found that he felt compelled to profess his growing conviction that the message of the Prophet Mohammed was true by converting to Islam.

After his conversion, Yee was approached by a former acquaintance from the military, also a Moslem, who encouraged him to become a military chaplain. Yee decided to do that and set about acquiring professional credentials as an

Imam. This required him to spend four years studying the tenets of Islam, an undertaking he completed in Syria. While



there, he married a Syrian woman who shared his faith.

Yee was commissioned as a Moslem military chaplain in the U.S. Army. He had a brief period of settling into his new role as a religious leader, and then the attacks of 9/11 happened, so Yee was called upon by his superiors to explain to soldiers the fundamental principles of Islam and of the distinctions between being religiously faithful and being an extremist. At first, he felt that his work was beneficial in that he was addressing problems caused by ignorance about Islam and showing how Moslems could be valued members of our society and military.

Eventually, Yee was assigned to serve as the Moslem chaplain at the prison in Guantanamo, Cuba. When he arrived there, he immediately realized that he would be serving in a charged and fractious environment. Guantanamo was a place where he would be looked upon with suspicion by both guards and prisoners, for he had, so to speak, one foot in each of their worlds. As a religious leader, Yee worked to bring

comfort to the Moslem prisoners who had been detained as part of the "Global War on Terrorism." He also organized prayers for Moslems serving in the military there.

Yee describes the prison at Guantanamo as a place where prisoners were subjected to psychological and physical abuse, one where their Moslem faith was disrespected. He saw prisoners forcibly extracted from their cells as punishment (Guards, he reports, viewed this forcible extraction as a sport which they dubbed "IRFing."). Prisoners were belittled, beaten, and in some cases, driven to insanity by harassment in their confinement. At Guantanamo, he claims, many of the prisoners have been medicated for depression. More disturbing is that even three juveniles are detained there.

The brutality of conditions at Guantanamo appeared to harm the military who serve there, too, according to Yee. He observed that many had dulled their own emotional pain by daily alcoholic binges. Yee's training at West Point, where the motto is "Duty, Honor, and Country," led him to expect a level of professionalism to be practiced by the military at Guantanamo. He was shocked to see that the rules at the prison were far different than he could have ever expected. When he saw conditions which he believed were intolerable, he reported them to his superior officers.

Many guards saw Yee's attempts to rectify what he perceived as wrongs against the prisoners as contrary to his obligations as an American military officer. As time progressed, he discovered that suspicions about his loyalty were growing. In fact, he says, that he, and other American Moslem soldiers working at Guantanamo, were under electronic and physical surveillance.

However, it was not until a return trip
(PLEASE SEE GOD NEXT PAGE)

GOD AND COUNTRY, CONT.

home to the United States that Yee realized how expansive and corrosive those suspicions about his loyalty had become. When he arrived in Florida, during the first leg of his journey home to see his wife after months of being apart, he was detained at the airport. His baggage was searched – soon, he was placed under arrest. Yee found that he was being investigated on charges of espionage.

As this part of the story unfolds, Yee enters a Kafkaesque world of solitary confinements, psychological abuse and humiliation similar to that suffered by the prisoners in Guantanamo. His wife initially has no knowledge of what has happened to Yee; she only knows that he is missing. Yee's wife is soon befriended by an undercover federal agent who does not allay her concerns, but rather, attempts to convince her that her husband has been unfaithful in order to turn her against him.

After months of suffering for Yee and his family, the case was resolved. The serious

charges against Yee were dropped – *there was, after all, no evidence of espionage*. But, the charges of marital infidelity – which Yee denies – were pursued in an administrative manner. Yee's career and reputation were unjustly destroyed; there was to be no "happy ending." He resigned from the Army.

For God and Country is a powerful and well-written story. It provides a glimpse into the conditions at the Guantanamo prison which is stark and distressing. The book shows how James Yee suffered imprisonment and

the destruction of his career because he objected to conditions at the prison and worked to bring comfort to those who were suffering there. But, most importantly, *For God and Country* is worthwhile reading because of what can be learned from this one man's profile in courage. Ω



NOTES, CONT.

the Naval Submarine Base in Groton. Torture victims accounts were read aloud at each station and military officers and government officials were quoted denouncing torture. Six people dressed in orange jump suits with black hoods carried the large wooden cross that usually hangs on the red wall at St. Brigid House. During the last Station Steve Kobasa, Chris, and Mickey Allen (Jackie's 86 year old mother) were arrested while praying in the road. They were charged with Disorderly Conduct. The charges were later dismissed; perhaps the court knows that at a time when our nation is torturing people Orderly Conduct is a crime.

The next day was the Easter party for our kids in the neighborhood. A wonderful group from Wethersfield

brought 300 plastic eggs stuffed with candy for an Easter egg hunt. The kids loved it and went wild, literally. Mary Lou, Edna, and Eula cooked a ham feast. Carol baked her amazing Easter chocolate cake. Thank you to all the people who donated easter food and candy. We were able to supply all the kids in our after school program with a food and candy basket.

Another blessing came to us by way of food. Susan Stuart and the St. Thomas Aquinas group who donated \$150 worth of prime health food per month. The food is amazing and includes really healthy juice for the kids in our after school program. **"He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." Corinthians 9:9**

We have two new house guests. One is a young lady who left her home after

her Mom's boyfriend "got fresh" with her. She was in her senior year of high school. She is now working towards her GED and hopes to attend culinary school. Our second new guest was the first kid to ever attend the after school program. Please pray that he is able to keep his job and continue to be present to his little girl while he works out some issues.

Thank you to all who help plant and water the seeds of justice, peace, and joy in the north end of Hartford. Jesus instructs us to: **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** Matthew 22:37-40 Ω

Notes from De Porres House

Angela Thomas

Hello again from the Hartford Catholic Worker. A heart felt thank you goes out to all of our volunteers and donors, You all make it possible for us to be here. Our first thank you goes out to Mr. and Mrs. Robotham's granddaughter, Sarah. She wanted to do something for our after school kids, so she initiated a clothing drive. When donations were less than she hoped for, she took all of her babysitting money and went to Kohl's. There she found a huge sale going on and got about \$600 worth of clothes for a little over \$100. **"The good woman brings good things out of the good stored up in her heart..." Luke 6:45**

Many college students have also come to help. The students from Trinity, Uconn, and St. Joseph's College are wonderful. They are a huge help with the kids, great role models, and eager to assist in anyway possible. A special thank you to the huge group of Trinity students that helped with the food co-op. We have had wonderful groups of Uconn students coming on Saturday. The St. Joseph's students come every Thursday

bringing snacks and activities. We are blessed to have so many wonderful volunteers, but remember the more the merrier.



Thanks also go out to Kathryn Daddabbo for donating a new set of basketball hoops to St. Brigid House. The new hoops are playground strength and will hopefully better endure their daily use. Thanks also to the UConn student athletes who helped install them on earth day. Speaking of earth day: thanks a ton to the nearly 100 folks (40 or so from St. Maurice parish of Bolton) who joined us on earth day to cleanup our neighborhood.

Another blessing is that Chris was accepted into Yale Divinity School. Thank you to all the donors who are helping to cover his tuition, it is almost paid for. Chris hopes a degree will help him to share the stories of the people he

has met here in the neighborhood and in the different conflict zones he has been to, to a wider audience. Someday he also hopes to teach at the college level and be the inspiration that his professors were to him.

Jackie is continuing to teach about the torture happening at Guantanamo Base in Cuba. She has given many talks. Last month Brian and Jackie went down to Washington D.C for

a witness against torture in front of the White House. They were arrested and held over night. (It is illegal for more than 10 people to stand for more than a half an hour on the sidewalk outside the White House.) Over 100 people were there to hear the accounts of torture and pray for the end of torture. The Washington D.C. Park Service police let them stand and talk to the people for over two hours. We guess that thanks goes out to the Park Service police for extending their First Amendment rights by an extra hour and a half. Three other people were arrested in another witness against torture. This took place as we prayed the Stations of the Cross outside

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