

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



*For to us a child is born whose name will be called "Wonderful
Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Holy One, Giver of Peace"*

Isaiah 9:6

CHRISTMAS 2008



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*"Imagine the vanity of believing that your enemy
can cause more damage than your enmity."*

St. Augustine

Asked about Vatican policy on Iraq, in 2003, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, a.k.a. Pope Benedict XVI, said, *"There were not sufficient reasons to unleash a war against Iraq. To say nothing of the fact that, given the new weapons that make possible destruction that go beyond the combatant groups, today we should be asking ourselves if it is still licit to admit the very existence of a 'just war.'"*

St. Martin's Calendar

✦ Please join us on **Tuesday, March 3, April 7 and May 5, and June 2 at 7:30 PM** for the celebration of Mass at St. Brigid House, 18 Clark St., Hartford. Refreshments and conversation follow Mass.

🌐 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.

ALL I HAVE

*Tawfiq Zayyad (former Palestinian mayor
of Nazareth)*

I never carried a rifle
On my shoulder
Or pulled a trigger.
All I have
Is a flute's melody
A brush to paint my dreams,
A bottle of ink.
All I have
Is unshakeable faith
And an infinite love
For my people in pain. Ω

HISTORY, NOT EPIPHANY

Christopher J. Doucot

Mr. George used to live in the room that is now my office. Mr. George was a wiry and diminutive man; no taller than 5 foot and not possibly heavier than 80 pounds. He wore wire rim glasses, a nondescript beige cap and he often used a broken umbrella as a cane. After 80 some odd years of living Mr. George passed away shortly after we bought St. Brigid House 8 years ago. Mr. George had come to Hartford from Georgia during the "Great Migration" of southern blacks after WWII. He had been raised by his grandmother; a black woman quite possibly born the property of a white man. I once asked Mr. George if as a black man he preferred living in the north or the south. He quipped in a drawl that could collapse a phrase into a single syllable: "I prefer the snake in the road to the snake in the grass." I wonder what he would make of the election of Barack Obama?

On the first morning after the election I witnessed black men dancing in the intersection of Main and Capen streets in north Hartford. As morning traffic beeped in joyful solidarity these jubilant men kicked their heels while waving the morning paper above their heads. Mr. Obama's election is an historic moment of triumph for black America and, indeed, all America.

Prior to the election I told my sons that if the Democrats nominated either Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama they would be handing the election to the Republicans. I was wrong. Obama's election is a turning point in American history. This black man has overcome our nation's legacy of slavery and Jim Crow. He is not a "boy" nor merely "3/5ths" a man. He is now "Mr. President" and we as a people should

rejoice at his achievement. However, contrary to the words preached by our deacon on a recent Sunday morning the election of Barack Obama is not an "epiphany".

An epiphany is a sudden, often divine, revelation. In the Christian tradition the Epiphany commemorates the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. It is also the celebration of Jesus' baptism, a day when,



according to Epiphanius, water turned to wine all across the Middle East- including the Nile River. After a plumbing boondoggle in Marino, Italy during the Sagra dell' Uva (festival of the wine harvest) this past October, town residents awoke to wine filling their toilets and falling from their shower heads.

This unexpected ripple of the Epiphany miracle appears to have been an isolated incident rather than a foreshadowing of things to come. On November 5th water dripped from our bathroom faucet and

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children . . . This is not a way of life at all in any sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron."

While wine was flowing from faucets in Marino Mr. Obama pledged that as president "We will kill bin Laden. We will crush al Qaeda. That has to be our biggest national security priority." (Oct. 7, 2008). This vow of vengeance is hardly the talk of one inspired by the Prince of Peace. If Mr. Obama follows through with his promise to escalate the war in Afghanistan it is unlikely that rivers of wine will soon replace those of blood in the lands where American soldiers trod.

Mr. Obama's plans to kill and crush will necessitate that he maintain our nation's obscene commitment to military spending. Mr. Obama would do well to recall the wisdom of an earlier resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Informed by his experiences in war and the White House Dwight Eisenhower said:

The \$14 billion dollars awarded to Electric Boat in Groton this past December to build 8 more nuclear submarines is \$14 billion more dollars invested in Eisenhower's cross of iron. To date Mr. Obama has given no indication that he intends to curtail such spending. Where is the change? Where is the

(PLEASE SEE: HISTORY P4)

HISTORY CONT.

hope?

A people of hope invests its treasures and labor in the future not in fear, in schools not submarines, green industrial zones not a Green Zone, health-care and not warfare. The trillions of dollars spent building nuclear weapons over the past half century have failed to protect us from terrorist attack, crumbling bridges, unemployment, failing schools... This is where Mr. George's preference for the snake in the road becomes relevant.

When I was born the snake in the road was represented by the likes of: Bull Connor the public safety commissioner of Birmingham who used fire hoses, capable of tearing the bark off trees, to disperse black children marching for freedom, George Wallace the former governor of Alabama who blocked the doors of the University of Alabama with his body to prevent black teens from enrolling; or Roy Bryant who was acquitted by a jury of 12 white men of the brutal murder of 14 year old Emmett Till- a black boy whose crime was that he allegedly whistled at Mr. Bryant's wife. This sort of visible racial hatred has largely (*but not entirely*) been vanquished from the American landscape during my lifetime.

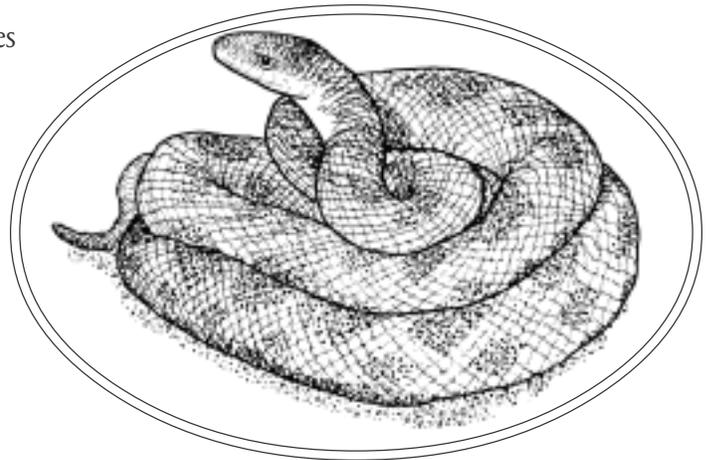
The snake in the grass has been a more elusive quarry. [see side-bar: *The Snake in the Grass*] Snakes in the grass are the policies that were put into place by the snakes in the road during the three hundred years they freely slithered in offices both political and corner. Sure the passage of various Civil Rights legislation in the 1960's overturned most of these policies but that effort is as futile a gesture as pulling a biting rattler off your leg and then failing to administer the antidote. Without affirmative and reparative treatment the venom of the invisible snake still paralyzes much of black America. Consider: the life expectancy for black men is 6 years shorter than that of

white men, the poverty and infant mortality rates for blacks are three times that for whites, and the black unemployment rate is twice the rate for whites.

Effective treatment will cost billions of dollars and require transition to a *labor intensive* peacetime economy centered on green energy, housing, health care and education rather than a *capital intensive* military economy manufacturing products that are either useless or lethal.

Doctor King's hope was not that one day a black man would overcome but rather that "... we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land." The keys to the Promised Land are not held by any president. Nor is it a territory that can be conquered by any army. Rather this Promised Land, a place where guns have fallen silent and sorrows have turned to joy, is already dawning for those meek among us who dare to live in it.

When Mary first felt the baby Jesus kick in her womb she prayed in confidence that with his birth God would **"scatter the proud in their conceit, put down the**



mighty from their thrones, exalt the lowly, fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty."(Luke 1:51-53). The fullness of this promise will be ushered in from the slums of Mumbai to the ghettos of America only when we begin to imitate the Christ whose Mystical Body we are. Our Christ neither killed nor crushed; he fed and forgave, healed and heralded the Promised Land in our midst.

The Incarnation was not an isolated incident of Divine Intervention two thousand years ago. God is not dead but is still daring to be born of woman every moment of the day in every corner of this paradise in the rough. May we be wise men and women and recognize that he still cries. **Ω**

And Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; ⁴⁸ because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant. Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, ⁵⁰ and his faithful love extends age after age to those who fear him. ⁵¹ He has used the power of his arm, he has routed the arrogant of heart. ⁵² He has pulled down princes from their thrones and raised high the lowly. ⁵³ He has filled the starving with good things, sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his faithful love ⁵⁵ -according to the promise he made to our ancestors — of his mercy to Abraham and to his descendants for ever. Luke 1:46-55

THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS

For hundreds of years enslaved black Americans generated billions of dollars of wealth for their white owners, this wealth was invested by whites to finance university educations for their children, purchase banks and real estate, and finance successful campaigns for Congress, Governor and President. When slavery was abolished blacks experienced a decade of political freedom until the Klan and Jim Crow regained control of the South for the next century. Educational and economic freedom have been harder to gain. Upon becoming "free" most blacks found themselves homeless, penniless, unemployed and illiterate. The few who did receive "40 acres and a mule" thrived until their land was confiscated a year later. Wealthy plantation owners, their descendants, those who married into their families, and those who benefited from the laws they passed, continued to benefit from fortunes amassed by slave labor. Freed blacks, and their descendants, received no recompense for their stolen labor.

I can hear many of you saying: "but that's ancient history". Consider more recent history. During the great migrations

of blacks to northern cities after WWI and 11 millions of white Americans moved out of the city. This white flight was greatly facilitated by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The FHA was a cornerstone of FDR's response to the Great Depression. Roosevelt and his economic advisers reasoned that for Americans to be lifted out of poverty they needed to build equity in their own home rather than enriching a relatively few property owners with their rent. Thus between 1934 and 1962 the FHA guaranteed up to 90% of a home mortgage and lowered down payment requirements from 30% to 10%. When guidelines for eligibility were written up for this program city neighborhoods that had black residents were "red-lined" and deemed too risky for mortgages to be guaranteed. I've seen the map for Hartford where our neighborhood is actually colored in red with a note in the margin that it had been "infiltrated by the Negro element of the most undesirable type". When Mr. George moved here the whites were moving to Windsor, Wethersfield and Bloomfield where they were able to purchase homes with FHA backed mort-

gages. However without FHA guarantees the black folks moving into Hartford were largely unable to purchase these homes.

Between '34 and '62 the FHA backed \$120 billion of mortgages; 98% of which went to whites! Ask yourself how the equity in your home, and/or your parent's home, has benefited your family. Has it financed college educations? Weddings? Cars for children? Housing stability? Inheritance? Help with a down payment for a child's first home?

The Great Depression is often said to be the great equalizer in that it made nearly all Americans, white and black, poor. This is revisionist memory. Along with the FHA, three other cornerstone policies of the New Deal were the Wagner Act which protected union organizing, the Social Security act which provided retirement and disability benefits to workers, and the Employment Act of 1946 which provided unemployment benefits for laid off workers. Unfortunately, during the Thirties and Forties most American unions discriminated against blacks while Social Security and Unemployment benefits did not extend to agricultural workers and domestic servants- when these acts were passed 2/3rd's of employed blacks were either domestic or agricultural workers and thus ineligible to apply for these benefits. Consider the impact these government programs have had on the financial trajectory of white families versus that of black families.

Required Reading: *Urban Injustice: How Ghettos Happen* by David Hilfiker, M.D and *The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality* by Thomas M. Shapiro.Ω



AN INSIDE JOB: OUR “BEST AND BRIGHTEST” PUSHED US TO THE BRINK OF FINANCIAL DISASTER

Greg Erlandson

They did it again. They distracted us with all their talk of illegal immigrants stealing our jobs and draining our resources. They told us how we had to put up barriers, distrust anyone who wasn't American. They made us suspicious of others, just the way they did in the past with blacks and Jews, Italians and Irish.

We talked about walls to keep those people out and keep us safe, and we let commentators on talk radio and cable television whip us into a frenzy over the folks they said threatened America.

And once again, the fingerprints on the knife in our back belonged not to the poor and minorities, but to the best and the brightest.

Instead of statues of a bull and bear on Wall Street, we should erect a Trojan horse, because what's pushed America to the brink of financial disaster was not all those illegals coming in and “stealing” our jobs as busboys and janitors and underage laborers in meat-processing plants.

This was an inside job. It was made in America. It was all the hotshot brainiacs, our best college grads, the brokers and bankers pulling in bonuses that weren't just in the hundreds of thousands but in the millions.

These were the people who have been most blessed by this country's abundance, and these were the people most driven by greed. They weren't minimum-wage workers trying to put food on their table and give their children an opportunity to

obtain a high school diploma. They weren't the day laborers on the city streets hoping for a job or the field hands bent double from hoeing the weeds on corporate farms.

These were the people who drove Manhattan delirious come bonus time, the folks who bid up the prices on luxury



condos, who went to restaurants competing to serve the most expensive hamburgers in America, who vacationed at the toniest resorts and who, if they had children, sent them to only the best prep schools.

These were the people whose patterns of consumption were lauded in the Style section of *The New York Times*, the same paper that now excoriates them on the editorial pages.

These were the people who saw themselves as “Masters of the Universe,” and the irony is that some of these same folks—now working for the government—are supposed to be crafting the nation's exit strategy from this financial debacle.

We don't know where this will all end. The number of people who have lost their houses and lost their jobs is already a scandal, but what the future holds, we

don't know. Will other financial institutions fall to earth? Will the taxpayers have to pay even more to cover up the bad decisions of the best and the brightest?

And will our nation with its trillions of dollars worth of IOUs to countries like China and Saudi Arabia—both made unbelievably wealthy by our voracious consumption beyond our means—have the fortitude to stick to our promises, pay our bills and not sacrifice the poorest among us while doing so?

Greed has permeated our society. In most cases, it led us to make some dumb financial decisions based on bad assumptions, and the results will be defaults on home mortgages and car loans and credit-card debt. But the greed of those most

materially blessed who were leading some of our most powerful financial companies is what is most shameful, and has done the most harm.

I know people who are in this country illegally. They pay their taxes, they work two or three jobs at minimum wage and send money back home to support impoverished family members there.

Yes, they broke the law. Yes, a country has the right to enforce its laws and protect its borders.

But Americans have taken their eyes off the ball. We have not been done in by the strangers among us. We have been done in by our own.

Never has it been more true: We have met the enemy, and he is us.

(Greg Erlandson is the president and publisher of Our Sunday Visitor.) Ω

TERROR IN BOMBAY/MUMBAI

Manisha Desai

(Pr. Desai is director of Women's Studies and a Professor of Sociology at University of Connecticut.)

I heard about the terrorist attacks on my hometown as we were driving to Pittsburgh for Thanksgiving with my US family. Needless to say the celebration and cheer of Thanksgiving break was dampened by this tragedy and the senseless loss of lives. I have just returned from Mumbai as I write this and my reflections address my concerns with the media coverage of the events as well as the responses of politicians and people in the two countries I call home.

Initially, the mainstream media coverage in the US reported the attacks to be home grown and a response to both the unresolved Kashmir situation as well as the grievances and treatment of the large Muslim minority. In contrast, the mainstream media in India immediately dubbed it India's 9/11, thereby sidelining the several previous attacks, such as the ones on the parliament in New Delhi as well as the bombings in several cities. More importantly, naming it India's 9/11 allows the media, politicians, and people to mobilize the rhetoric of "the global war on terror," i.e., preemptive strikes, "putting all options, including attacking terror camps in Pakistan, on the table," defining security in primarily militarized terms, and accepting a loss of civil liberties

and democratic processes. This is familiar to us in the aftermath of 9/11 in the US. Sri Lankan political scientist Jayadeva Uyangoda calls this a state of neo-barbarism.

Despite the mobilization of this rhetoric, there is enough resistance to it among the people that despite the sabre-rattling by both Pakistani and Indian politicians there has been no military

perpetrated with the aid of state functionaries, such as the ant-Sikh violence that was unleashed in Delhi in 1984 following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguard that led to the murder of almost 3000 Sikhs; or the 1993 violence against Muslims in Bombay following the destruction of the Babri Masjid, that was responsible for the loss of nearly 2000 lives; or the attacks in 2002 in Gujarat where nearly 2000 Muslims were murdered by rampaging Hindu mobs.

Finally, what I find particularly troubling is how the war on terror serves as a screen to the increasing privatization of the economy and the accompanying social inequalities that are a greater threat to the security of more Indians than the terror attacks themselves. An example of this can be found in the full-page ad by the Taj Mahal Hotel, one of the sites of the attack, in the

New York Times on 1/14/09 advertising that it is open for business again. The copy begins with Welcome Home Again and then goes on to state, "We're bringing back the clink of champagne flutes, even pile carpets that muffle the footfall of commerce. You will feel the buzz of business as usual. . . On this special occasion we have introduced exclusive services. . . impeccable butler service, luxury Jaguar transfers" (which the Tatas, the business group that owns Taj, acquired last year amid much racist debate in the Western business world). This business as usual is clearly not going to secure the lives of the majority of Indians. Ω



Guernica detail. Pablo Picasso

response by the Indian government. This is also the result of diplomacy by many international actors, chief among them the US and China. But this lack of military response by India does not mean we can breathe a sigh of relief. On the contrary, with President Obama wanting to move the war on terror from Iraq to Afghanistan and Pakistan, it means South Asia will become the new theatre of the war on terror with all the consequences we have seen in Iraq.

Such a global rhetoric also enables the Indian state and political parties to erase their own failures in protecting minorities against terror and violence organized and

STILL BREATHING: A REPORT FROM GAZA

Caoimhe Butterly

(Caoimhe Butterly is a former Catholic Worker working in Gaza as a volunteer with ambulance services and as co-coordinator for the Free Gaza Movement)

The morgues of Gaza's hospitals are over-flowing. Bodies in blood-soaked white shrouds cover the entire floor space of the Shifa hospital morgue. Family members wait outside to claim a brother, husband, father, mother, wife, child. Many of those who wait their turn have more than one lost loved one. Blood is everywhere. Hospital orderlies hose down the floors of operating rooms, bloodied bandages lay discarded in corners, and the injured continue to pour in.

The streets of Gaza are eerily empty- the pulsing life and rhythm of markets, children, fishermen walking down to the sea at dawn have been brutally stilled. Fear and isolation reign. The ever-present sounds of surveillance drones, F-16s, tanks and Apaches are listened to acutely as residents try to guess where the next deadly strike will be and how to move to safety.

That there are no safe places- no refuge for vulnerable human bodies- is felt acutely. It is a devastating awareness for parents that there is no way to keep their children safe.

As we continue to accompany the ambulances, joining Palestinian paramedics as they risk their lives to respond to calls, our existence becomes temporarily narrowed down and focused on the few precious minutes that make the difference between life and death. With each new call we ride in ambulances that careen down broken, empty roads, sirens and lights blaring, in a battle against death. We see

the truth of the war the Israelis are waging on the people of Gaza: we have learned the timing between an initial missile strike and the inevitable second missile- targeting those that tend to the wounded, we now recognize the signs of the different chemical weapons being used in this onslaught, we hope to overcome the vulnerability of recognizing our own mortality.

Though many of the calls received are to pick up bodies, not the wounded, the



necessity of affording the dead a dignified burial drives the paramedics despite their being targeted by the Israeli military. Thirteen have been killed while evacuating the wounded and fourteen ambulances destroyed.

Last night, while sitting with paramedics in Jabaliya refugee camp, drinking tea and listening to their stories, we received a call to respond to a missile strike. When we arrived at the outskirts of the camp where the attack had taken place the area was filled with clouds of dust, downed electricity lines, slabs of concrete and burst water pipes gushing water into the street.

Amongst the carnage of severed limbs and pooled blood we pulled out a moaning young man, his chest and face

lacerated by shrapnel wounds. As the ambulance sped him through the cold night we applied pressure to his wounds. We felt the warmth of his blood as it seeped through the bandages and were reminded of the life still in him. A volunteer paramedic, murmured "ayeesh, nufuss"- "live, breathe"- over and over to him. He lost consciousness as we arrived at the hospital and was received into the arms of friends who carried him into the emergency room.

He lived and is recovering.

A few minutes later a missile struck a house. As we arrived a crowd had rushed to the ruins of the four story home in an attempt to drag survivors out from under the rubble. The family had evacuated the day before but 17 year old Muhammad, who had gone back to collect clothes for his

family, was trapped inside. He was still breathing though his legs were twisted in unnatural directions and he had a head wound. We feared a second missile and had no choice but to move him. He moaned with pain and called for his mother. We thought he would live.

This morning we were called to transfer a body from Shifa hospital to Jabaliya. We carried the body wrapped in yet another blood-soaked white shroud into the ambulance. It wasn't until we were on the road that we realized it was Muhammad's body after his brother opened the shroud to tenderly kiss Muhammad's forehead.

This morning we received news that Al-

(PLEASE SEE: GAZA P 10)

TUNNEL VISION

Kathy Kelly

(Kathy Kelly, writes from Arish, a town near the Rafah border between Egypt and Gaza. Bill Quigley, a human rights lawyer and law professor at Loyola New Orleans, and Audrey Stewart are also in Egypt and contributed to this article.)

As I write, we can hear the dull thud of explosions in the distance. Israeli air strikes continue to blast targets in southern Gaza. Merciless bombing of the small Gaza Strip continues into a third week. I heard some people here in Egypt wonder if the Israeli air force must be running out of places and people to target. But perhaps the surveillance drones we heard and saw flying over the Rafah border crossing today hunted down more spots on which bombers could fix their cross-hairs.

Perhaps they spotted underground tunnels. The Israeli government has, reportedly, already destroyed 80 percent of the tunnels that connect Gaza with the outside world. It's common knowledge that a vast network of tunnels, some say as many as 1,700, were constructed, many from outside Gaza's territorial borders, leading into the territory. Israel claims the tunnels are legitimate targets because the Hamas government can use them to import weapons. But the buildup of the tunnel industry was fueled by desperation for needed goods within Gaza, a desperation caused by Israel's decision, over the past 16 months, to tighten the thumb-screws of its blockade on Gaza. If the blockade continues, and if the tunnels are completely destroyed, besieged Gazans will be cut off from secure supplies of food, medicine, and fuel, yet another terrifying prospect for people who are desperate to protect their children from any greater harm.

Supposedly concerned for Israeli security,

the United States supports the Israeli government's objective of eliminating Hamas' capacity to fire primitive rockets into Israel. The extensive tunnel industry may be used for weapons transport. I believe it's wrong to transport weapons, and it's wrong to develop, store, sell, or use them. Distant thuds reinforce this belief, but if the U.S. and Israel believe importation of weapons via underground tunnels is wrong, then the U.S. transfer of sophisticated weaponry to Israel must, seen



in perspective, be abominable, given the slaughter Israel has inflicted on Gazan civilians since the air strikes began on Dec. 27.

The taxpayers of the U.S. provided Israel with F-16 fighter jets and missiles to carry out these attacks. From 2001 to 2006, the United States transferred to Israel more than \$200 million worth of spare parts to fly its fleet of F-16s. Last year, the United States signed a \$1.3 billion contract with Raytheon to transfer to Israel thousands of TOW, Hellfire, and "bunker buster" missiles. In July 2008, the United States gave Israel 186 million gallons of JP-8 aviation jet fuel.

U.S. donations of jet fuel enable Israel to fire missiles into Gazan homes, streets, schools, and hospitals. Meanwhile, ambulance drivers in Gaza, also directly targeted, don't have enough diesel fuel to bring injured and

wounded people to the Rafah border crossing, where patients might be allowed to enter Egypt for critically needed care.

Within Gaza, even before Dec. 27, civilians lacked essential fuels to power the main power plant, which operated at about 2/3 capacity. Now, it's inoperative. When trucks don't have fuel, this means that rubbish can't be collected. Hundreds of tons of rubbish went uncollected in Gaza because of the blockade. Seventy-seven thousand cubic meters of raw and partially treated sewage were dumped into

the sea. Farmers couldn't operate 70 percent of their agricultural wells. Power cuts affected hospitals, water pumps, sewage treatment plants, bakeries, and other facilities dependent on backup diesel generators.

Now Gazans not only face the consequences of a destroyed healthcare system and rising sickness due to waterborne diseases, they also face the reality that

Hamas could be forced to sign a cease-fire that doesn't allow for opening the Rafah border and which insists that Egypt assume responsibility to prevent usage of underground tunnels. In exchange for relief from cowering under bombs fired by sophisticated weapon systems, Gazans would be required to endure slow-motion death through systematic cutoffs of their access to food, medicine, and potable water. This is why it is so important for people all over the world to insist that Israel not only stop attacking Gaza, but also end the brutal and lethally punitive blockade imposed on Gaza.

Here in Egypt, the government has stated that it will undertake responsibility to be an effective partner in negotiating a cease-fire.

Israelis expect Egyptians to stop the tunnel

(PLEASE SEE: TUNNEL P11)



GAZA, CONT.

Quds hospital in Gaza City was under siege. We tried unsuccessfully for hours to gain access but we could not get the ambulances past the Israeli tanks and snipers to evacuate the wounded and dead.

Hours later we received a call from the Shujahiya neighborhood, describing a house where there were both dead and wounded patients to pick up. The area was mostly deserted, many families had fled when Israeli tanks and snipers took up position amongst their homes. Those who remained kept silent in the dark, cold confines of their homes, crawling from room to room to avoid sniper fire through their windows.

As we drove slowly around the area, we heard women's cries for help. We approached their house on foot. As we came

to their home, they rushed towards us with their children, shaking and crying with shock. At the door of the house the ambulance lights exposed the bodies of four men- the skull and brains of one exposed, limbs had been severed off the others. They were the husbands and brothers of the women, who had found them after they had ventured out for bread.

The bodies were still warm as we struggled to carry them. Their blood stained the earth and our clothes. As we prepared to leave the area our torches illuminated the slumped figure of another man, his abdomen and chest shredded.

With no space in the other ambulances we were forced to take his body in the back of the ambulance carrying the women and children. One of the little girls stared at me before coming into my arms and telling me her name- Fidaa', which means to sacrifice. She stared at the body bag, asking when he would wake up.

Once back at the hospital we received word that the Israeli army had shelled Al

Quds hospital. The Israeli military gave us twenty minutes to evacuate patients, doctors and residents in the surrounding houses. By the time we got up there in a convoy of ambulances, hundreds of people had gathered. With the shelling of the UNRWA compound and the hospital there is a deep awareness that nowhere in Gaza is safe, or sacred.

We helped evacuate those assembled to nearby hospitals and schools that have been opened to receive the displaced. The scenes were deeply saddening- families, desperate and carrying their children, blankets and bags of their possessions venturing out in the cold night to try to find a corner of a school or hospital to hide in.

Today's death toll was over 75, one of the bloodiest days since the start of this carnage. Over 1,110 Palestinians have been killed in the past 21 days. **367 of those have been children.** The humanitarian infrastructure of Gaza is on its knees- already devastated by years of comprehensive siege. There has been a deliberate, systematic destruction of all places of refuge. There are no safe places here, for anyone.

And yet, in the face of so much desecration, this community has remained intact. The social solidarity and support between people is inspiring, and the steadfastness of Gaza continues to humble and inspire all those who witness it. Their level of sacrifice demands our collective response; demonstrations are not enough.

Gaza, Palestine and its people continue to live, breathe, resist and remain intact and this refusal to be broken is a call and challenge to us all. **Ω**



NOTES, CONT.

boys to death and raging riots. The CIA murdering with impunity in our names. Silence over the civilian slaughter in Gaza. Where is our Light oh Lord? How Long, as the psalmist sang....how long?

My epiphany came when I prayed to be conscious of what brings my joy to light. Here it is....Edna and Marilu bustling between two ovens cooking for over 40 people on a busy Saturday at the Green House. Jose, Angel, Saniah and Sasean shoveling off the basketball court on an icy day. The Rev Hooper dropping by with the most needed Christmas tree (that someone has always just come by looking for) or 5 hefty garbage bags filled with toilet paper! Keyanna coming over to take Sarah's place and help me cook for the big mass crowd. All the prayers that poured in when Micah's EXTREME virus sent us to the hospital one scary Saturday. Steve Dahlem gently and doggedly forcing pretty boy-Floyd to do the chores he is so good at hustling out of. Ammon making me furious and laugh in the same 30 second stretch.

Miriama patiently picking up the 1000 pieces of a monopoly game that crashed to the floor when some child left it teetering on the top shelf (after her own long day of school and work). Ramon coming over to eat dinner with us at least 2 hours after the last dish is done at least

4 times a week. Pat the bike babe wiping up the 14th hot cocoa spill that is now running down the side of the stove (while she simultaneously teaches Briana how to make sour cream cookies)

.It is Micah managing to bring just about any conversation around to being



about fishing. There is Vickie, the Grande-Dame of Panera bread who we have to yell at for trying to carry bags bigger than she is up the Green House steps. Andrea coming over on Tuesdays and letting Riley climb in her lap. John bringing over massive candy bars that he now knows are best given out at the END of tutoring! Theresa Fitch luring innocent

people to be slaughtered in Scrabble. The HuskySport folks coming in with a surge of fruit and laughter and great energy. Josh Rosa ALWAYS giving Titi Jackie a kiss when he comes in the door. Laurie J. zooming in in her yellow Mustang that bursts with joyful tutors. Mimi or Paula or Ray dropping off bag after bag of canned goods just as the pantry runs dry.

It is Edna "dropping by" for a minute and staying for 6 hours to sort the food pantry or force the boys to pull those pants up (where is your belt child???). The "God Bless You" Man, and Willie, and Linus....making sure that we be mindful that Jesus is at the door again. Jack T. always bringing us a poem (his own or maybe one from our beloved friend Tom Merton.) Jeannie bringing such great snacks that there are a few kids who only come to tutoring on Wed (just for the snacks)! The Habitat for Humanity guy dropping off donuts. Kristi G. and the Northwest kids showing up to squeals of delight from the Pipkin children. Dean bringing a wonderful priest or a big bottle of wine for mass. Brian freezing his arse off vigilling every Friday for the last 10 years...

I guess I am trying to say that the light shines on us every day. It is not always up in the sky. It is hardly ever on the news. It is almost always at the Catholic Worker. Maybe that's why things here seem to keep on growing. Happy Epiphany everybody. Ω

TUNNEL CONT.

industry. Egypt would be responsible for assuring that no one enters a tunnel, builds a tunnel, or is an accomplice to maintaining a tunnel. Already, any Egyptian caught inside a tunnel faces 15 years in prison. How much better for all concerned if the cease-fire negotiations asked the Egyptians to maintain an open border with Gaza, lift the punitive blockade, and assist in the immediate and ongoing transport of goods and services that

could help Gaza rebuild and assume responsibility, aboveground, for maintaining its citizenry and its sovereignty.

Egypt, the second largest recipient of military aid from the U.S., will be encouraged to use threat and force to curtail the tunnels, supposedly in the name of ensuring security for Israel. But who will challenge the obscenely bloated "defense industry" that allows elite gangs, some comfortably occupying the board rooms of major corporations, to supply a repressive, immoral, and illegal occupation force with the disproportionate capacity to kill,

using conventional weapons against civilians who have no means to escape?

U.S. support for hard-line, extremist Israeli government policies again represents tunnel vision by choice. U.S. foreign policy makers can begin a cure for this dangerously impaired vision by recognizing the basic human rights of all Palestinian people, and at this crucial moment by caring for the survival and dignity of Gazan people, especially those for whom meeting basic needs depends on what might come through a tunnel. Ω

Notes From De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen-Doucot

Christmas 2008 has come and gone. We were once again blessed this Christmas season by the many hands and hearts that make us the Santas of the North End. Every year we manage to gather and distribute (with the help of many extended community elves and many many churches and parishes) hundreds of toys and bags of food. Over the last 15 years our "families" that we build community with have changed, but the numbers are always growing. With hard times hitting even the folks at the top of the economic ladder, you just know the effects are going to be even tougher for those who were struggling to make it before the recession. We continue to be amazed at the generosity of so many, especially those who sacrifice to share with us.

It was wonderful to be able to let some of the moms of the neighborhood come and do their Christmas shopping here. It is always a blast to see the joy on the little ones faces receiving their gifts at the Christmas party. The credit for my favorite Christmas memory this year might have to be given to our very own Brian Kavanagh. He had the divine inspiration to hang onto 4 or 5 burlap bags from the food coop. We ended up having potato sack races for a good long

Chris was hilarious. He turned around to see his fellow racers gaining on him, and speeded up until he keeled over. The other racers fell over and on top of him. It looked like a human bowling alley and they were



the pins!!!! (I of course fell on my big butt most gracefully, losing to Sarah and Paula).

I think Christmas this year was a rough one for all of us in the community. Brian's mom, my mom Mickey and Sarah's Grandfather Joza were all greatly missed. I felt like I went about in a general fog during the week before Christmas, either blocking out my feelings

of grief, or crying over Christmas carols. Two things that gave me much comfort in my sadness was thinking of how sick my mom was last Christmas, and thinking of her being with my Dad for the first

Christmas in 33 years. I am so blessed to have my sisters who pulled me through the worst days.

With Christmas over, I have been spending some time thinking about the Epiphany. Of course this is the feast day that we commemorate the visit of the Magi to the Holy Family. It is the Season of the Light, both the light of the Star that showed the way to Shepherds and Kings, and the light of the Son, who came for both the Shepherd and the King, the rich and the poor. I

have been hoping for some light to shine for me. Perhaps it is because I have been looking at the world over the past year with eyes that are filled with grieving that I seem to feel and see that grief everywhere. Corporate bailouts while poor families lose their homes. Defense contracts for new submarines while our city has a 40% illiteracy rate. Police shooting unarmed

(SEE NOTES P.11)

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