

THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER



ST. MARTIN DE PORRES HOUSE
ST. BRIGID HOUSE

"If you want to follow me first sell what you have and give to the poor..." -Jesus



Brian Kavanagh

BMK

O Lord,
you are
our Mother and Father,

We are
the clay
and you
the Potter,

We are
all the work
of your hands.

Isaiah 64:7

ADVENT 2009

THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER

Established November 3, 1993

Volume 17 Number 5



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

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

The last and greatest Herald of Heaven's King,
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild,
Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,
Which he than man more harmless found and mild.
His food was locusts, and what young doth spring,
With honey that from virgin hives distill'd'
Parch'd body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.
There burst he forth: 'All ye, whose hopes rely
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn;
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn!
Who listen'd to his voice, obey'd his cry?
Only the echoes, which he made relent,
Rung from their marble caves "Repent! Repent!"

-William Drummond

*Prepare sisters and brothers the way of the Lord,
make straight in the 'hood a highway for our God.*

Isaiah 40:3



Clare Leighton

St. Martin's Calendar

✦ Please join us on **Tuesday, January 5, February 2, March 2 and April 6 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 and Afghanistan.

ST. MARTIN'S

WISH LIST

deodorant
toothpaste
fresh fruit
patience
mercy
and joy

WHY ARE 13 MILLION CHILDREN NOT “TOO BIG TO FAIL”?

Christopher J. Doucot

This reflection is inspired by a series of letters from prison I received. They are from my friend Sedrick. I have kept the letters on my desk for months. I read them and re-read them; praying all the time for forgiveness because they are not letters from college.

Sedrick is a nine year old boy trapped in a twenty year old body. We have known Sedrick since he was just a rail thin little kid chillin' with his cousin Deion outside his grandmother's apartment. Sed was born addicted to crack, grew up malnourished, and was oft beaten by his mother- at times with a cast iron frying pan. Sedrick's mother never sought him services from the Department of Mental Retardation so his developmental delays cascaded and contributed mightily to his dropping out of school. The only state agency that spends any time and money on Sedrick today is the Department of Corrections. Sedrick is currently finishing up 9 months in jail for "Breach of Peace", a euphemism for mouthing off to the police. While we don't advocate rudeness, it is hardly a crime. Sedrick was really sent to prison for persistently refusing to become a police informant. I know the arguments about the need for the community to support the police, but the simple truth is Sedrick fears for his life- and rightly so. He has nowhere to live, nowhere to hide, and he has had several people very close to him gunned down on the neighborhood streets.

A few years ago the Department of Children and Families removed two boys we work with from their mother's custody. The boys still come to the Green House

every day and have since been returned to their mother's custody but at the time of their removal they were as malnourished and neglected as Sedrick was as a child. When Sedrick learned that these boys had been placed in foster care he asked me point blank: "Chris, why didn't you save me when I was little?" I had no comeback and I now assuage my guilt by saying that we were young and naive, we had two kids



in diapers and a teen mom living with us, we were new to the neighborhood and unsure about what to do and how. The truth is I failed Sedrick. And though I'm not alone in my culpability (why did the hospital release him to his mother? Where was DCF for years? Or the doctor at the clinic? Or his teachers and the social worker at school???) my failure is a sin of omission in demand of a lifetime of atonement. But telling Sedrick I'm sorry won't cut it; personal penance is not the answer. Rather, we as a society need to be engaged in ongoing acts of communal contrition. Our very souls depend on it. My destiny is bound to Sedrick's fate and Sedrick's fate is bound to my privilege and wealth. Liberation and Salvation are two

sides of the same coin – none of us will be saved so long as one of us is oppressed by poverty or other forms of violence. What we do, and fail to do, for the least we do for the One we call Lord.

Over several generations Washington has spent trillions of dollars on weapons and wars. On the opening night of the latest war on Iraq American warplanes dropped a billion dollars worth of missiles on Baghdad and yet we don't have adequate funding for prenatal care in our cities. While we lament that afford health care for all our children is too expensive, it goes unnoticed that we fund warfare for them all. More recently we have invested billions of dollars to save our banks from the fallout of folly and greed. Why do we accept the notion that the banks were "too big to fail" and rush through billions of dollars to "save" them while we sit on our hands as child advocates beg for pennies to save our children? Are they not important enough? 13 million American children live in poverty; at what point do their ranks become "too big to fail"?

Sedrick is not in prison because any one individual, including me and his mom, failed him. He is in prison because we as a people have failed him. Sedrick is at the end of what is known as the "cradle to prison pipeline". This pipeline is a de facto system of neglect in our land that funnels poor children of color from the streets of the city to the steel cots of prison. A Black girl born in 2001 has a 1 in 17 chance of going to prison in her lifetime; a white girl has a 1 in 111 chance. A white boy born in 2001 also has a 1 in 17 chance of going to prison in his lifetime; meanwhile a Latino boy has a 1 in 6 chance and a Black boy has a 1 in 3 chance. Why?

According to the saints at the Children's
(PLEASE SEE: PIPELINE P4)

PIPELINE, CONT.

Defense Fund (www.childrensdefensefund.org) "poverty, racial disparities, and a culture of punishment rather than prevention and early intervention are key forces driving the Pipeline". To overcome the pipeline to prison poor children need coordinated, comprehensive and seamless services from the womb into early adulthood. In effect, we need to build a new pipeline. According to the Children's Defense Fund we need to:

*End poverty by creating jobs that offer livable wages, increasing the minimum wage, expanding job training programs, making college affordable for every student, and expanding income supports such as the Child Tax Credit.

*Ensure all children and pregnant woman have access to affordable comprehensive health and mental health coverage and services.

*Make early childhood development programs accessible to every child by ensuring such programs are affordable, available and of high quality.

*Help each child reach his/her full potential and succeed in work and life, by ensuring our schools have adequate resources to provide high quality education to every child.

*Expand prevention and specialized treatment services for children and their parents, connect children to caring permanent families, improve the quality of the child welfare workforce and increase accountability for results for children.

*Reduce detention and incarceration by increasing investment in prevention and early intervention strategies, such as access to quality early childhood development and education services and to the health and mental health care children need for healthy development.

We know this model of "wrap around" services can work. The president's "Promise Neighborhood" initiative is based on the model of the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) (www.hcz.org) which has shown signs of promise. I recently attended a

conference in NYC about the HCZ at the invitation of Jennie Bruening, founder of the HuskySport program. For six years HuskySport has been linking UCONN students and staff with young people in our neighborhood to promote nutrition, education, life skills and physical activity. By working with us, several schools in the neighborhood, the City of Hartford Health Department and the Blue Hills Civic Association, HuskySport has been quietly building a Hartford Children's Zone.



Attending the conference were 2500 people from 34 states who are committed to the poor children of America. At the closing plenary Angela Glover Blackwell of PolicyLink (www.policylink.org) declared the birth of a new movement to save America's children from poverty. If this movement, a pro-life movement for children on the outside of the womb, is to succeed you, *yes I am speaking directly to the person reading this!*, need to lift your voice, shuffle your feet, raise your hands, and open your hearts (and maybe your wallets too).

Eradicating poverty is neither rocket

science nor free. Fortunately we have both the wealth and the wisdom to lift everyone in America out of poverty; what remains scarce is the political will and urgency to do so. Sargent Shriver, LBJ's *field marshal* for the War on Poverty, once quipped that "[we are fighting a war on drugs because we lost the war on poverty and we lost the war on poverty because we paid for a war on Vietnam]" And so it continues. According to the *Populist Daily* (www.populistdaily.com) "The cost of the Iraq war is already over \$900,000,000,000. On top of that, this year's military budget will be \$515,000,000,000, plus the Black Operations budget which is estimated this year to be about \$50,000,000,000. In addition, we will spend over the next 25 year a minimum of \$25,000,000,000 to care properly for the more than 30,000 wounded veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, if those wars were to end today.

We have a national debt of \$11,500,000,000,000. The interest alone on the Iraq war and the war in Afghanistan is \$27,000,000,000. " Meanwhile President Obama has pledged to fund "20 Promise Neighborhoods in areas that have high levels of poverty and crime, and low levels of student academic achievement, in cities across the nation." but the U.S. Department of Education's 2010 budget includes only \$10,000,000 for one-year Promise Neighborhoods planning grants. Do the math. We may have an administration that now talks about replacing the pipeline to prison with a pipeline to college but in politics dollars speak louder than words. Success for our children is not a field of dreams. If we build a pipeline they will succeed. We already have the pipes and some of the pipe-fitters, what remains to be seen is if we have the moral courage to hire more plumbers so that the 13 million children now bobbing in the American sea of poverty don't drown while we watch from the safe shores of the middle class. **Ω**

LETTERS FROM SEDRICK

(The following letters were hand written. They have been typed without correction or alteration)

9/14/09 Dear Chris D.

Ha DAD. How are you and the family. I appreshate All the love yall gave me. HA Chris I can't wait to come to yall thangiven. Chris the c/o's (Corrections Officers) in here is worster then the police. Chris I was woundering if you could please send me \$35 dollars please thank you. Bro I'm not comming back to this hell hole no more one more thing I'm not on no kind of probashion or nothing when I come home. Chris I wrote [my conservator] and I wrote my mom a letter. I wounder who is going to wrote me back first. Chris I couldn't call you because I was on lost of phone for 30 days so that's why I'm writeing you this letter here. Well popps let me go right now. I wrote you again A.S.A.P.

Love you Chris D. I'm out
Write back

10/13/09 DeAr Chris.

Tell everybody I love them alot. Chris I hope everybody fell better. Tell your kids I said what's good. Tell P.J. I said to holla at me. Chris I know you heard about the



person who got shot he was my best friend. I thank about him Alot. Chris Tell everybody I said I love for everything they did. Chris tell brain (Brian) I love him for the card he sent me. Tell him I said happy late birthday too. Chris I sorry for asking but can you please send me something please.

ps. much love out Sed. Write back please.

10/21/09 Dear Chris

Chris tell Marge (Cunningham, formerly

of St. James Episcopal and the Fr. Gengras Center for Justice) I said I miss her. Chris I keep my head down so far in here. Chris I'm not comming back in this hell hole no more. Chris I though I had you on my visit list. Jackie only if she know how much I miss you'll. Chris only if you know how much I miss helping you. I love it to. Chris and Jackie tell all the kid I said thank you for signing this Holloween card. Chris I can't wait till I come home for thanksgiving I'm going to eat my ass off Chris. Chris I love you like you were my father. Well let me go I'll write to you again. Tell Brain I love him.

p.s. One love write back.

Sed out

(To send money to an inmate for commissary, so they can buy underwear, stamps, paper etc, one needs to be on their visiting list. I sent a money order to the Inmate Trust Fund on Sedrick's behalf that was returned months later with the explanation that I had been removed from his visiting list. Because I am a political activist with a few convictions for nonviolent civil disobedience it was a difficult and lengthy process to gain approval to be on Sedrick's visiting list. I have not yet figure out why I was removed from his list.)Ω

i am a little church(no great cathedral)
far from the splendor and squalor of hurrying cities
-i do not worry if briefer days grow briefest,
i am not sorry when sun and rain make april

my life is the life of the reaper and the sower;
my prayers are prayers of earth's own clumsily striving
(finding and losing and laughing and crying)children
whose any sadness or joy is my grief or my gladness

around me surges a miracle of unceasing
birth and glory and death and resurrection:



over my sleeping self float flaming symbols
of hope,and i wake to a perfect patience of mountains

i am a little church (far from the frantic
world with its rapture and anguish) at peace with nature
-i do not worry if longer nights grow longest;
i am not sorry when silence becomes singing

winter by spring,i lift my diminutive spire to
merciful Him Whose only now is forever:
standing erect in the deathless truth of His presence
(welcoming humbly His light and proudly His darkness)

ee cummings

A HARD-WORKER WHO WANTS TO SUCCEED

Isaiah Jacobs

(ed note: We are proud to have several young people poised to graduate high school this year. The following is the college essay of one of our kids. We hope to make this column a regular feature in future newsletters. Please send us your feedback.)

I can sit here and babble on and on about how I had a perfect role model or that I had a significant event that impacted my life heavily but then that would be a lie and I would just be writing a cliché essay. In fact, many people would consider my life being a rough one. For instance at the age of 4, my 7 year old sister and I was placed in foster care due to our mother having a substance abuse issues. With no family to turn to, foster care was the only place where we were able to go. So having to live without your mother at such a young age was rough because I missed my mother so much.

There have also been other experiences that impacted my life. My older brother and father were in and out of jail for basically my whole life so my father was never there for me. I always fought hard to break the chain of being incarcerated. Being without a father meant that my mother had to single handedly raise my sister and I.

These past 5 years have also been

rough on me. During this time I have lived in 3 different states, 6 different cities and have attended 3 different high schools. As you can see, I bounced around a lot. I had to make all new friends and be in an environment I wasn't used to or really comfortable with but I guess that probably will help in college.

Also during these rough 5 years my mother had relapsed with her drug issue and has been involved in domestic violence which limits the opportunities of me having

a relationship with my other little brother who I would want to consider me as his favorite role model. With our older brother still being in and out of jail I really want to be in his life so that he can have a good influence. I hope with time things will change and we'll be more in each others life.

The most tragic incident that probably happened in my life was when I was about 11 years old when my little brother had died at birth from a disease known as trisomy 18. He never even took a breath. This death hurt my family pretty hard especially me because I had really wanted a little brother because I was always the youngest child at the time. This also impacted me because it was the first death that was actually close to me and I had to learn how to deal with it which was new to me.

I have had a rough life and have been through a lot in my life but as my grades show I've been able to achieve great things in my life from being an honor roll student to being a helping hand in my community. I believe I can be a good successful student at your institution because I'm a hard-worker who wants to succeed in life and understands that nothing is just handed to you and that you have to fight for what you want. Ω



Clare Leighton

When midnight occupied the porches of
the Poet's reason
Sweeter than any bird
He heard the Holy Child.

"When My kind Father, kinder than
the sun,
With looks and smiles bends down
And utters My bodily life,
My flesh, obeying, praises Heaven like a
smiling cloud.
then I become the laughter of the
watercourses.

I am the gay wheatfields, the serious
hills:
I fill the sky with words of light, and My

incarnate songs
Fly in and out the branches of My
childish voice
Like thrushes in a tree.

"And when My Mother, pretty as a
church,

Takes Me upon her lap, I
laugh with love,
Loving to live in her flesh,
which is My house- and full of
light!

(Because the sky My Spirit
enters in at all the windows)
O, then what songs and what incarnate joys
Dance in the bright rays of My Childish
voice!

Thomas Merton

THE HOLY CHILD'S SONG

TO BE RECEIVED WITH AN OPEN HEART

HuskySport Student

(The following reflection is an excerpt from a paper written by one of the UCONN students who spend time with our community via the HuskySport program. We hope to run more student reflections in future editions.)

In Jonathan Kozol's *Ordinary Resurrections* he speaks of a certain "unexamined receptivity," which does not mean merely the willingness to listen carefully or patiently. It has to do with quieting your state of mind as you *prepare* to listen. It means not pressing on too fast to get to something that you think you 'need to get' as the 'purpose' or 'objective' of the conversation...there is a difference between 'getting' and 'receiving'"(p.76) Over the course of this semester I have changed my ways of listening and until sitting down to



write this journal had not even realized it. I have "received" feedback from kids that I at first was trying to *get* something out. Once I changed my mind set and began to quiet my mind and prepare myself to listen I got a different response from the kids I was bonding with.

When I first was going to the Green House I was so eager to communicate with the kids and impact their lives in any way that I could that I didn't listen to them. I listened to what was coming out of their mouths but I wasn't hearing them. I, as Kozol said, was engaging too fast to get out of them what I thought I needed to get or was trying to communicate with them because that's what I thought my purpose was in going into Hartford. Once I began to quiet my mind and really hear what the kids had to say and wait for the kids to come to me I had a completely difference experience. I finally received the information and the bonds with the kids that I had been before pressing to get.

Looking back on my first visits to Hartford, Joshua C. stood out to me. I was out in the back of Green House playing basketball, two on two, and Joshua was on the opposing team. Half way through the game I touched Josh's shoulder and on impact he spun around glared

at me and yelled, "Do not touch me. I don't know you. Back off." From this encounter until a couple of weeks ago this is the Joshua I knew. The little boy who thought it was his job to be a man and to be tough. He would glare at me at CWH and if I tried to talk to him and engage in conversation he would blow me off and say something mean to me as he walked away. My relationships with these two up until a few weeks ago were me listening to them but not hearing them. I had been trying to 'reach' them and *get* feedback from them. I now have *received* feedback from them and have learned to hear and listen with a quiet mind and that has made all of the difference.

Two weeks ago I walked into CWH and to my complete shock was greeted with a running bear hug from none other than Joshua C. I embraced his hug in a daze not understanding what had changed but not complaining about it.. After a few minutes of silence Joshua began to open up to me. I didn't ask him questions about how school was going or about his friends or his family like I may have done in the past I simply walked with him. What Joshua showed me is that what Kozol wrote about is true. We can't push the kids to *give* us some response but we must go willingly and with an open heart and mind and in turn we will simply *receive* it.Ω

SATURDAY MORNING AT THE GREEN HOUSE

(On any given Saturday a beloved community gathers at the St. Brigid House. Among this community are university, highschool and grade school students, retirees, moms and dads, folks young and- shall we say vintage, rich and poor, Black, brown and white all gather as sister and brother. Printed above is a university student's reflection; below are the thoughts of a dad and his little girl.)

Dear Jackie & Chris,

I know, positively, that Lily enjoyed her first Saturday spent in community at the

HCW. Now keep in mind that she is a typical, suburban, 6 year old, 1st grader with her share of weekly activities that she participates in. Lily will usually discuss the activities she does that day or evening, but not usually much more after that without some prodding from us. However, the following Sunday morning at the breakfast table, Kathy & I were talking about our plans with Lily for that day after Mass. After listening to us, while still waking up and at the end of a yawn, Lily stretched her arms

up to the ceiling and said, "Oh Dad.....I wish we could go back to the Catholic Worker today!" Kathy & I both smiled, praised her, and said that we certainly would bring her back another day..... and for many years going forward. I thought this message would bring a smile to your faces and all of the HCW community. Enjoy!

Peace to you and your family this week, and every week,

Bob HerronΩ

U.S. TROOPS TO INVADE SOUTH CAROLINA?

J. Mark Powell

(Mark Powell is a novelist whose books include: *Blood Kin* and *Prodigals*. His soon to be released novel "The House of the Lord" is about human rights in Colombia.)

When I first heard that President Obama was authorizing 400,000 federal troops to occupy South Carolina, possibly as some elaborate and much-delayed payback for slavery, I was both shocked and (I must admit) rather flattered. Shocked not by news of the coming federal storm--the rumor is the product of the wackiest reaches of an already paranoid far right-wing universe--but shocked that such a grand theory might migrate from blogs and forums to actual discussion in the "mainstream" media. I was flattered because it's South Carolina. As a native and (almost) life-long Sandlapper it's good to know we still corner the market on crazy. After secession, the *Charleston*

Mercury, declared us to be too small to be a republic, and too large to be an insane asylum. It's good to see, as the saying goes, that some things never change. Or is it? I was amused by the rumor, I admit, but when amusement passed a rather dim sadness settled, the kind of rub you feel in your bones. It isn't difficult to see that beneath such a rumor is a reservoir of fear and resentment, mixed with a good helping of racism. Obama was much (and rightly) derided for his 'clinging to guns and religion' comment. Not because the comment wasn't true, and not because it failed to acknowledge the abandonment of so much of rural America, but because he made the comment in the presence of Rich America, and thus kicked sand in the faces of those who have too long eaten the dirt of the upwardly-mobile. There is a great fear in much of rural America surrounding the "other," and that fear is being exploited

to create a narrative crafted to sweep along those who have for too long lived off an unhealthy melange of unconscious racism and canned goods from the local Wal-Mart. It's not that 'when you have nothing, you have nothing to lose.' Rather, it's when you have almost nothing you fear anything and anyone different since any change in the status quo might drop you another rung down the ladder from 'hanging in there' to 'flat-out poor.' The theologian John Caputo describes Christians as "lovers of the impossible." But right-wing politics is predicated on fear of change. Anything different is suspect. That even the most paranoid might imagine a massive federal invasion of the rural south is testament both to the continuing ills of rural America, and how far we have to go before we reach that post-race wonderland we all keep hearing about. Ω



She walked in the summer through the heat on the hill.
She hurried as one who went with a will.
She danced in the sunlight when the day was done.
Her heart knew no evening, who carried the sun.

Fresh as a flower at the first ray of dawn,
she came to her cousin whose morning was gone.
There leaped a little child in the ancient womb,
and there leaped a little hope in every ancient tomb.

Hail, little sister, who heralds the spring.
Hail, brave mother, of whom prophets sing.
Hail to the moment beneath your breast.
May all generations call you blessed.

When you walk in the summer through the heat on the hill,
when you're wound with the wind and one with her will,
be brave with the burden you are blessed to bear,
for it's Christ that you carry everywhere, everywhere, everywhere.

Miriam Therese Winter



THE VISIT

NOTES, CONT.

Sarah, Morliana, Marisol...), people who came and went (Henry Sunday, Dr. Rufin from Benin, C. the ex-con lawyer turned physics professor, Julius aka Peanut who left us to join the circus, we welcomed little Shane who came with his 15 year old mom Angie, and then there was Sandra who sojourned with us for a few months and left shortly before her little boy was born, ...) the list goes on of the many people who have sought a warm safe place to lay their heads over the last 16 years. We have kept neither count nor a registry but we sure do have stories: like "Scary Junkie" who became "Scary Gary" and then just "Gary" threatening to kill Chris as they walked to the corner to get some food (Chris wouldn't give Gary the money but wanted to give him food). We laugh now but there have been some scary times too... Brian quietly draping a large dish towel over the knife rack as a mentally ill man just out of prison tells Chris he hears a voice telling him to "stab all white people", and there was the time Chris was pistol-whipped for standing between a drug dealer and Mark, a homeless heroin addict we had all grown to love. We know that Paul Laffin's spirit was watching over us that day. Chris was attacked in the furniture pantry while he was giving away Paul's furniture. Last month was the 10th anniversary of Paul's murder by a mentally ill person he worked with at St. Elizabeth House. Mark was not killed that day but a couple of years later he was shot to death.

We have also been through great times watching our children, our ministry, and our community grow. We are so grateful to all of you in our extended

community. Thank-you for tutoring, or donating supplies, or coming in with all your love to bake, or rake, wash a dish, shoot hoops or play Connect Four. You are the breath that makes the Catholic Worker a vibrant, joyful home for so many.

We are very grateful also for the financial support that came from the direct appeal in the last newsletter. We will make it to and through the holidays. We thank God for reaffirming our belief



that we will be provided for because we are working in God's name and for God's Beloved Community. It is always wonderful and funny to find random things on our front porch. Today 30 dozen eggs (thanks Steve J.) and a big storage tub marked "open PB" with about 25 jars of open peanut butter in it appeared. Thanks to St. Tim's and St. Helena's for regularly filling our food pantry. Thanks to Kate and Fred and the small Christian community of St. Thomas Aquinas for the generous gifts of perishable food that has enabled us to feed lots of teens who surround our dinner table most nights. Thanks, as well, to St Ann's, St. Elizabeth Seton, St. Peter Claver, and Corpus Christi for turkeys, school supplies, Christmas gifts and holiday baskets. Our's is a cornucopia of blessings.

The older teens are working hard on SAT prep under the special guidance of Jim Cronin's daughter Meghan and the dynamic Danielle of HuskySport. We also have a new couple joining us on Saturdays. Javier and Carmen, a Colombian couple, have been preparing a meal or two a month and folding origami with the kids. Please keep the original Green House Martha Stewart, MaryLu J, in your prayers as she recovers from a severe back injury. God bless her. We are grateful to Miss Edna for her cooking and for helping to get the monthly food coop orders all packed up and ready to go.

We ask God to take care of our guests, especially Bubba. Bub is living with us until the eleven extended family members that his mother has taken in are able to find permanent housing. We ask your prayers that Cara our newest community member can find enough part time work when her temporary job ends so that she can stay with us past Christmas. We ask God to bless you and us and all of the souls, living and dead, who make up this crazy beloved community. We remember Rosalie Thornton and Jim Baker, Sue Ann Shay SMD and Midge Redden, wonderful, generous, and gentle souls who supported our work for many years before joining the swarm of witnesses watching over us. We pray to be faithful, patient, and humble servants as we move into our 17th year of ministry. Let the turkey riots begin!!!

O, Mother of God
Be hands that are rocking the world
to a kind rhythm of love:
that the incoherence of war
and the chaos of unrest
be soothed to a lullaby;
and the round sorrowful world,
in your hands,
a cradle for God.

-Ann WeemsΩ

Notes from De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen

"The circle of a girl's arms has changed the world, the round sorrowful world, to a cradle for God." -Caryll Houselander

Today is All Saints Day. I am writing the house article for the Advent newsletter. It is quiet today. The frenzy of the week before Halloween has burst and passed and the extra hour of sleep from Daylight Savings was enjoyed by everyone. Chris went fishing after giving a sermon at St. James Episcopal Church in West Hartford, Brian is gone on a walk and then off to Borders to relax, Micah rode his new bike (thanks Pop!) to see some friends in Windsor, Ammon is getting ready to go to his church youth group, Sarah Karas rode a broomstick from NYC to be here for Halloween and took a lot of heckling about deserting us from the all the kids, and Cara left after our Halloween party to trick or treat with her sister who is a college student in New London. As for me, I think I painted about 80 faces between ten yesterday morning and eight last night- or "yesternight" as Ammon once said years ago.

Halloween week was great fun!!

Trinity College came for a "freaky Friday" party on the day before Halloween, and then on Halloween a big group of tutors from CCSU and a great group of UCONN students arrived early for our party; Cara, Sara, Steve Dahlem, and Jim Conway rounded out the team.



Dwight and I painted faces for what seemed like a 100 kids (but I'm told by Micah I always exaggerate so I'll bring it down to about 60 faces painted). We carved and painted pumpkins (thanks Central students), danced, and played games like "cover the mummy" and an "eyeball on a spoon" race. Justin had taken off to spend the day moving his

mom to Ohio but we all think it was last year's humiliating loss in the mummy game that scared him away. We gave out lots of prizes and candy bags!! I love Halloween, but I'm glad it's over. It gets very difficult to get the kids to settle down for homework during the season of the Great Pumpkin.

We had mass on our 16th anniversary, November 3, St. Martin De Porres Day. It was great to see both old friends like Dr. Ryan and the Mastronunzios and our regulars like Jack Titus, aka Mr. Blue, and Pat the Bike Babe. Chris baked some homemade butternut squash bread and made a beef stew for dinner before mass. A group of the neighborhood kids always come to help get ready for the pre-mass dinner. Please join us next month; we eat dinner at about 6:15 and mass is at 7:30. In some ways we are amazed at how quickly 16 years has gone by. Micah was about 6 months old when we started and Ammon was still cavorting with the angels in heaven- today they are both high school students. We are so grateful for all of our community at St. Martin House. There are the people who have lived with us over the years (Andy, Kathy, Jerry, Molly,

(PLEASE SEE: NOTES, P9)