

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



*The sun is rising.
All the green trees
are full of birds, and
their song comes up
out of the wet bow-
ers of the orchard.*

*Crows swear
pleasantly in the
distance and in the
depths of my soul
sits God.*

*Thomas Merton
-Writings on Nature*

Brian Kavanagh

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THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER

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ST. MARTIN'S WISH LIST

- 🌍 your prayers for peace, patience, joy and jubilation
- 🌍 ***your financial support***
- 🌍 help on Tuesdays with modest house cleaning
- 🌍 healthy after-school snacks
- 🌍 fresh fruit, olive oil, tuna, and toilet paper
- 🌍 bus tokens

ABU GEORGE

Dear Friends, On August 18 Saliba Rishmawi passed away. Saliba was the father of George Rishmawi, our dear friend, gregarious nonviolent activist and Olive Wood vendor from Palestine In a moving essay (full text available in our online edition) George wrote: *"My Father Saliba, was my best friend, my teacher and inspiration, because of him, I do what I do now. He has taught me how to live with honor and dignity, how to seek justice and freedom, how work with the community."*

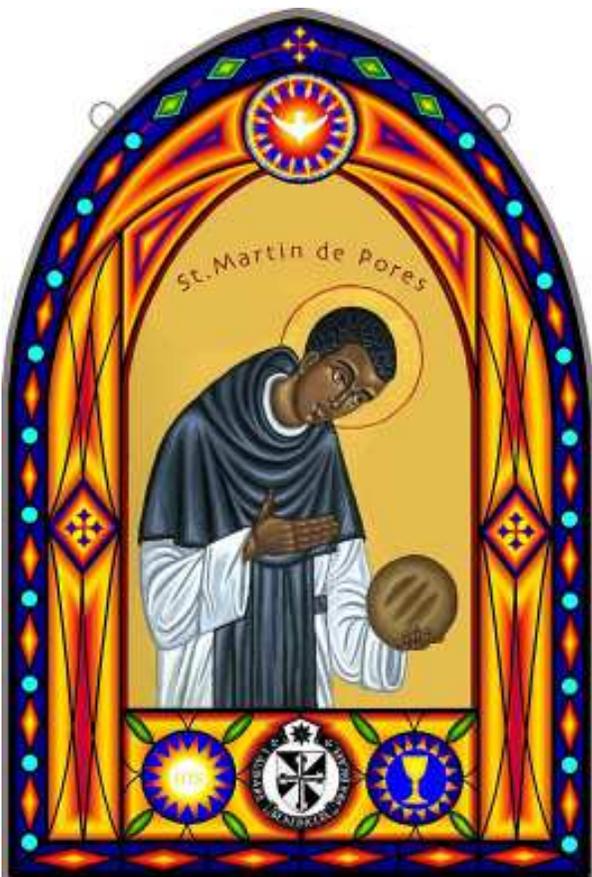
Please join us in praying for the Rishmawi family.Ω

St. Martin's Calendar

✦ Please join us on **Tuesday, October 6, November 3 and December 1 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.

☺ **EXONERATED!** Come hear Juan Melendez, an *innocent* man, speak of his 18 years on Death Row. **Tuesday, September 15, 7PM.** West Hartford Unitarian-Universalist Church, 433 Fern St.



CONTEMPLATION IN THE COMPANY OF AN ANGEL

Christopher J. Doucot

During a normal year mid-July finds the brook behind our cabin at Camp Ahimsa diminished to a mere trickle.

Meteorologically this year has not been normal. The average rainfall for the first three weeks of July in Voluntown is 2 inches; this year we have had more than 8 inches. A burst pipe in heaven has transformed our babbling brook into a roaring run of white-water rapids. Rain and camp mix as well as summer and school, but maybe because most of our campers go to summer school they didn't seem to mind the sudden transformation of the mixed evergreen and hard wood forest that surrounds Camp Ahimsa into a rain forest more likely found in the Pacific Northwest than in the Connecticut Southeast.

Honestly, the rain was not all that bad (I keep telling myself). Confined to the cabin during downpours I trounced the campers in Connect Four almost as often as I lost in between their mural painting, t-shirt making and "Guitar Hero-ing". The campers and Jackie have painted two murals this year, which will be hung by the basketball court at the *Catholic Worker House* in Hartford. One mural declares the yard to be a "Hater Free Zone" while the other has doves and spirals and a prayer for us to "renew the face of the earth".

It seems the rain has helped the fishing in Beach and Pachaug ponds. Our son Micah was again our fishing counselor and has done a great job with the campers teaching them how to cast, set the hook and release the fish unharmed. Because fishing with kids is often about knots, tying new ones when the line breaks and untan-

gling the birds nests that the kids sometime make out of the line on their reels, most camps reduce angling to a mindless activity. At the YMCA camp I attended as a kid we fished for Blue Gills and Sunfish with pathetic reel-less poles. Instead of casting we dipped a length of line tied to the pole and baited with beads of Wonder Bread off a short dock into knee deep



water. At Camp Ahimsa we use good poles baited with Shiners, night-crawlers and the latest lures. Micah and I (mostly Micah) have been teaching the campers how to tie knots, where the different fish are during the day and the year, and how the weather, sound, water temperature, and "structure" underwater affect fishing. Angling at Camp Ahimsa is an exercise in mindfulness; it is an opportunity for us to reveal to the children the inner-workings of the natural world and, their intimate place in it.

That said, we caught a heck of a lot of fish this summer mostly using these incredible plastic worms that fish are helpless against, Micah calls them "fish crack". These jiggly bits of deception are so effective I can't believe the DEP hasn't banned their use. We've had tight lines all

the time including: a Northern Pike caught by Jose at Pachaug, a Walleye landed by Saesean from the dam at Beach Pond, and dozens of keeper bass.

Perhaps the greatest fishing success has been with Jose's little brother Angel. Angel is 8. He and Jose have been recently reunited with their mom after a few years in DCF custody. As infants, toddlers and little

kids Jose and Angel were practically feral; Angel did not see a doctor between his birth and his entrance into foster care at the age of 5. Though he is a strong willed and lovable kid Angel can try the patience of angels as his fleeting attention skips to whatever catches his eye. The first day we took him fishing we expected a brief outing and instead were on the water for three hours. Angel focused, concentrated, listened and patiently caught a variety of panfish, a couple of Bass and a

tremendous Yellow Perch that he and I shared at dinner.

On the water grumpy old fishermen are apt to bark "shut up and fish" to the talkative types. We never tell the kids to shut up but when we are out fishing there are long periods of silence. Fishing for me is a contemplative exercise. As the rolling waves carry the boat across the sea I am sent deep within to examine my heart; I ponder the injustices in this world and consider my part in perpetuating them. Before I can wander too far off, a tug on my line or a spray of mist carried by a zephyr brings me back. The water cleans me while the wind carries away my worries. Watching the campers inhale deep breaths of silent contentment for hours on end I

(PLEASE SEE: ANGEL, P4)

RE-CREATING WITH THE CATHOLIC WORKER KIDS

James Conway

Summer is an excellent time for observing the biblical call to recreation (re-creating ourselves spiritually) and enjoyment of God's gifts. The universality of this call across generations was brought home during a series of field trips as part of the Hartford Catholic Worker's summer program for kids. Our field trip groups included kids from Hartford and one or two from the suburbs, college students, a middle-aged suburbanite (me), and a 70-ish grandmother. On Wednesdays small groups of us have gone to the Keney Park (Hartford) pool, Talcott Mountain State Park, the Bushnell Park carousel and the state capitol, the park again for capture-the-flag, and a couple of pool parties at Laurie Janecko's house (thanks, Laurie).

Predictably, the trips included a mixture of playful exuberance and bitter complaining ("It's too hot," "Why do we have to walk so far?"), the exuberance mostly from the kids and the complaining mostly from me. One who never complained was Grandma Pipkin. Grandma raises six grandchildren under what might be charitably called difficult circumstances. I had invited some of her grandchildren to hike up Talcott Mountain to the Heublein Tower; when she asked about coming along I blanched,

imagining a 70+ year old on the steep climb to the ridge. But come she did. She made the climb with no problem, and got more joy from the incredible views than any of us (see photo). So much for my preconceived notions about aging! As we walked along the ridge and through the woods she talked about her previous trips there and how peaceful it made



her feel - her soul was soaking up the rejuvenating power of God's creation.

Meanwhile, the spirit of exploration took hold of the kids. Some of them (Jashawn in particular) seemed drawn like a magnet to the very edge of every cliff; all the kids gloried in climbing a very steep, rocky hill, unintentionally starting lots of mini-avalanches; they crowded around such wildlife as we could find (mostly daddy-longlegs spiders); raced down a hill to investigate a pond (more like a big puddle); hid among the rocks; and just enjoyed each other's company. A great day. Lest I dwell too much

on the Talcott Mountain trip, here are some highlights from the others...

* UCONN football players (BIG guys) riding the carousel in Bushnell Park with the kids.

* The kids running up and down the stairs inside the state capitol building and peering into the solemn-looking senate chamber.

* Bridget doing backward somersaults in the pool at Keney Park.

* Eating ice cream in the Legislative Office Building cafeteria (a respite from the heat in Bushnell Park).

* "Hold-your-breath underwater" contests in the pool.

* Corey, having captured the flag, trying to run it back to his side with his pants falling down (he needs to put "belt" on his Christmas list).

* Awesome help from the summer interns, Stephanie, Ariel, Mary, and Christina.

Reflecting on these trips I think of how our society undervalues leisure, about the kids' joy over climbing rocks, riding a carousel, and jumping in a pool, and about Grandma's capacity to draw the strength she needs from a hike. I'm not a kid anymore, but I'm hoping if I can open my heart to the wonders of creation all around me, I'll be climbing Talcott Mountain in my 70's. Hope to see you there. Peace Ω

ANGEL, CONT.

know this experience is not mine alone.

Summer camp at Ahimsa is a magical experience for the kids, counselors and adults. When we sit around the campfire we see stars that back home are dimmed to invisibility by the city lights. No longer deafened by the screech of tires and the wail of sirens we are serenaded by the whoosh of breeze through

forest trees and when we walk barefoot atop the tender ground our feet are washed by dew laden grass.

Sometimes when I hear our campers giggling before they emerge from the woodland I imagine their playful melody drifting up to the heavens and I listen carefully for the harmony when the choir of angels looking over them joins in. The eloquent echo of this choral movement in the forest will be heard by these kids when their children laugh and play in a

world healed by beauty.

At Camp Ahimsa we are reminded that the surest way to renew the face of the earth is through the easy smile of a child immersed in the glory of nature and embraced by a loving community.

Please help us gather that community with your gifts of financial support. Please help us nurture that community with your gifts of prayer. Please help us be that community with the gift of yourself. Ω

CHOOSING OUR NARRATIVE: CHRISTIAN AMERICA AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Richard C. Goode Ph.D.

Messiah College historian, Richard Hughes, has done it again. In 2003, his *Myths America Lives By* exposed how, for centuries, the U.S. has fabricated self-righteous stories to justify its violent and acquisitive behaviors. His latest book, *Christian America and the Kingdom of God* (Univ. of Illinois Press, 2009), is less an historical exposé and more a work of Christian apologetics. Typically works that “defend the faith” pit believers against unbelievers. *Christian America and the Kingdom of God*, however, fits that growing category of apologetic works that defend Christianity from its own die-hard and devout believers. Stated otherwise, in this book Richard is not responding to a Richard Dawkins or a Christopher Hitchens (i.e., today’s most public atheists and vigorous critics of Christianity). Rather he is defending Christianity from the Religious Right, which means this book nicely complements volumes like the 2006 Progressive Christians Uniting anthology entitled, *Getting on Message: Challenging the Christian Right from the Heart of the Gospel*, Randall Balmer’s 2007 *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America*, and Robert Jewett’s 2004 *Captain America and the Crusade Against Evil: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism*—to name merely three.

At the heart of Richard’s investigation is the central question, “Which narrative will you serve?” and throughout the book he juxtaposes the narratives of the empires against the narrative of the Kingdom. “Empires,” like the U.S., Richard explains, “seek greater and greater power over others and more and more wealth for the elites.” These empires “expand on the backs of the poor and the dispossessed” and “embrace violence and wars of vengeance

or retribution—even wars of preemption—against their enemies.” By contrast, “the kingdom of God rejects self-interest, urges mercy instead of violence, promotes peace-making instead of war, counsels love for one’s enemies, and exalts the poor, the dispossessed, and the powerless” (p. 91).

At first blush our choice seems clear and easy, but as Richard illustrates our selection is complicated by the fact that both scripture and history present competing narratives. Some



biblical passages, for example, depict God endorsing—even demanding—lethal force to support and advance the agenda of empires. Other biblical texts establish the nonviolent genius of the Kingdom. When it comes to scripture, therefore, “Christians must choose,” Richard counsels. “Those Christians who read the Bible in a flat, uncritical fashion risk placing the Bible above the biblical vision of the kingdom of God, above the teachings of Jesus, and even above God. In this way,” Richard continues, “the Bible becomes the idol that sustains injustice, violence, and war. And in an ironic way, the Bible becomes the text that can also sustain the traditional vision [narrative] of Christian America” (p. 83). Acknowledging the options, Richard advocates that the metanarrative of God’s nonviolent Kingdom

must inform the way we read all of scripture. Clearly this is what the early church did. Instead of trying somehow to synthesize or homogenize all of scripture’s competing narratives, the early church read all of scripture according to the narrative of the nonviolent Kingdom.

Just as scripture contains competing narratives requiring a choice, the canons of American history also contain contrasting scripts. One is the “Christian America” narrative, with a plotline that includes:

Political leaders—from the 17th to the 21st centuries—who lead the nation as if they were God’s chosen, innocent, millennial instrument in history;

A messianic nationalism that “justifies war and genocide;”

A Gospel of Wealth that sanctifies capitalism; and

A fundamentalism exhibiting a “suspicion of diversity, [an] aversion to nuance, and [an] instinctive way of dividing the people of the world into good and evil” (p. 144).

By contrast, the Kingdom narrative has nothing to do with national constitutions, the expansions of economies and geographies, or even eschatological expectations. “Instead,” Hughes explains, “the biblical vision of the kingdom of God has everything to do with how the followers of Jesus should treat their sisters and brothers [of this world] in this world” (p. 148).

By the end of the book the reader can almost hear Richard—in Joshua-like fashion—pleading with his fellow believers, “Choose this day the narrative you will follow, whether the narrative of the radical Kingdom of God or the narrative of the Americans in whose land you are living.”

Does the choice matter? A few weeks ago a student came by the office, challenging an essay I had written on Christian anarchism. A

(PLEASE SEE: KINGDOM P6)

KINGDOM, CONT.

graduate of a Christian high school, he is now a college junior and a promising History Education major here at Lipscomb. In our conversation he explained how “exceptionally proud” he is to be an American.

“The fourth of July is my favorite holiday,” he explained.

“How about Pentecost?” I inquired. “What does that day mean to you?”

“Pentecost? What’s that?” he asked.

Even though it might seem like a trivial and symbolic matter, when the Empire’s battles set our calendar and its dynasties define our pride are we not announcing the narrative we have chosen? Can we serve two narratives? In this book, Richard is asking us to consider whether we can celebrate both the narrative that baptizes the business and brokers of empires, **and** the one that “exalts the poor, comforts those who mourn, lifts the dispossessed, ministers to the suffering, feeds the hungry, liberates those in prison,” and otherwise privileges the disinherited?

The choice not only matters, I would like to push Richard on the attendant responsibilities of the decision. First, the book is quite clear in its denunciation of empires as self-centered powers, built on violence. I wonder, however, whether such self-serving values and exploitative policies are limited to empires. Might those ethics and practices be endemic of **all** nation-states, of whatever size or might? Whether a nation-state attains empire status or not, perhaps we should see that *all* nations are violent, and *all* governments are cudgels. Because *all* nation-states are Babylon and thus denounced by the Kingdom

narrative throughout scripture, should we only become alarmed once a nation-state attains superpower status? Might the Kingdom narrative prompt disciples to resist civil governments even **before** those nation-states become colonial conquerors? Toward the end of the third chapter, for example, Richard draws beneficially from William Stringfellow. However, in *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land*, Stringfellow illustrated that the radical Christian message was an attack on *all* principalities and powers. Just as the ancient Roman Empire was Babylon, the United States is “a demonic principality.” Moreover, “the same basic theological statement, by virtue of the biblical word, *can and must be made about every nation*” (p.

154). I wonder how comfortable Richard would be in substituting the more encompassing term “nation-state” for the word “empire” throughout the book.

The second responsibility centers on radical vocation. Richard notes how together the New Testament authors and the early church created a “long tradition of treason against Rome.” No small indictment here. Governments typically make treason a capital offense because they are eager to eradicate competing allegiances. If treason is at the heart of our Kingdom narrative, therefore, what will our sedition look like? We know it will not be violent revolution, but are we simply called to endure as the empire’s loyal dissent, issuing

(PLEASE SEE: KINGDOM, P8)

key Anna pettway

Life through my eyes

Is when I got an A on ma test?

It took me awhile to find ma talent

I worked day and night to get it down packed

Like a lion teaching his cubs to stalk their prey



People from ma program help me

Then I realized ma program was the place for me

Life through my eyes

Is a dark place like hell?

My mom is a drug addict and she drinks a lot

Having to live with this for years now

It wasn't always like this though

We used to be cool like friends not just fams

But now it's like she's been hypnotized by some insane dude

We don't look eye to eye we keep a distance I no longer see her as my mom

She made a mistake to have me and I know she thinks that

Life through my eyes

Is when I think: did my mom make a mistake

Did she not want me as a daughter?

I always wonder to myself why she had me

She only fights and fuss never helps me with stuff

She thinks the Green House can do all the work

Well u thought wrong they can't always help me

out so step in and help me now

Every time I'm around my mom I can't help to wonder why

Did she just have me to just fight? Cause she tried to kick me out three times

Life through my eyes

Is full of memories of dark times

It will last til ma time dies

I wonder how it will be in the next century

Will it be good or bad we don't know but will find out soon

It hurts to love someone that doesn't care or that doesn't show it

So I wonder should I be loving or filled with hatred

It's hard to live your life the way your mom wants u to

I think to myself: are u just living off of my life

Life can be fun but life hurts most of the

time.Ω

LIFE HURTS

graphic by MaMajina

PERCEPTIONS FROM A SIX-YEAR IRAQI REFUGEE

Farah Abraham Mosken

As an Iraqi refugee displaced for six years in a row, the vision of Iraq has become more distant every year, but the desire to go back grows stronger day after day. On a cold Damascus winter afternoon, over a hot cup of Shai Khameer, I shared with a friend my dream to go back home. "If you miss home so much," he asked, "why don't you go back?" "If only it was as easy as it sounds," I said. I sighed and my eyes filled with tears. He wondered what I meant and why a girl like me, who has nothing to do with any conflict and is not affiliated with any group, militia or party, could not simply go back home. But that is where the problem lies. Though I do not have any of these affiliations, I am a target because I am an educated Iraqi woman.

The American led invasion unleashed many hungry monsters that were competing for the biggest share of Iraq. The hatred that most of them carried towards the former regime worsened our situation. Since the first day of the invasion there has been bloodshed; lists of most wanted people and death threats have spread everywhere. All were seeking vengeance from all, and the doors were wide-open, thanks to the American forces. There was no authoritarian censorship as in previous years, but complete "democracy". This chaos, interspersed with periods of extreme

harshness and dreamlike calm, has continued for six years. Various methods of terror and fear have been used, such as car bombings, kidnappings and raping of women. This latter practice ends almost all the time by killing the women and throwing



them in the streets like garbage. Corpses could frequently be seen in the streets of Baghdad; their faces mutilated beyond recognition, thus depriving their loved ones of a decent funeral.

Although my family and I left Iraq two months after the war started, we are consistently updated about the happenings in Iraq. A lot of what is being reported in the American news only shows the positive side of what is happening in Iraq. It started

with media catchphrases "democracy is finally here" and "freedom for everyone." Later, we heard babbling about how the "surge is working". Most frustrating is the proposal that Joe Biden came with when visiting Iraq earlier this month. Biden's proposal offers equal rights for the three main sects of Iraq Shia, Sunni and Kurds as "quota-sharing" or what is called "Muhasasa" in Arabic.

But what about the Christians and other minorities in Iraq? Where is their share of the quota? And how could this possibly be presented as an equal division and fair sharing of rights and resources in the new democratic Iraq? All I can see from this proposal is that it will broaden the divisions between all sects of the Iraqi society, when what truly needs to happen is to bridge what separates Iraqis.

As an Iraqi refugee who lived in three different continents for the past six years, I see Iraq from a different perspective. I see its wounds, I feel its pain, I hear its scream. I know what is happening today and I have only my prayers and my voice to tell the story of a country that is my home.

(Farah is from a middle-class Baghdad family. After the American invasion of Iraq, she moved to Syria and lived there for five years where she studied at Damascus University. She is currently living in northern California and is studying at Dominican University of California. She can be reached at farahabraham@yahoo.com.) Ω

KINGDOM, CONT.

more books and blogs against the powers-that-may-be? Richard is quite clear that to choose the Kingdom narrative means we will "exalt the poor, comfort those who mourn, lift the dispossessed, minister to the suffering, feed the hungry, care for those in prison," and generally embrace the marginalized (p. 154). However, the long tradition of defiance against empires has been more than a set of progres-

sive public policies or personal disciplines. Biblically and historically, the Kingdom has overcome empires via **martyrdom**. Through martyrdom the mothers and fathers of the early church confronted imperial Rome, and the Anabaptists challenged Europe's early-modern empires. By martyrdom Franz Jagerstatter and Oscar Romero defied empires of recent history. Our Kingdom story celebrates the blood of the martyrs as the seed of the church, sowing our treason. Finding ourselves *in* such a narrative

and *under* such an empire, what then must we do? Are our histories preparing disciples to own the Kingdom narrative, take up the long tradition of treason against the empires, and be martyred?

Six years ago Richard exposed the self-righteous myths of U.S. history, and encouraged readers to resist their powers. Now he adds a vigorous option for the poor and marginalized as integral to the Kingdom narrative. Ω

THE FIGHTIN' IRISH COME TO THE GREEN HOUSE

Mary McKenna and Stephanie House

Thank You, Hartford Catholic Worker! This summer the Hartford Catholic Worker opened its doors to us and welcomed us into their lives. As sophomores at Notre Dame, we were assigned to work at the Catholic Worker as part of a summer service-learning course. In June, we moved in not knowing what to expect but hoping for an experience to remember- in no time at all we felt part of the community.

The most meaningful experiences of our time in Hartford involved getting to know the community surrounding the house and spending time with the kids at the summer camp. Never before had we been to such a close-knit community where people smiled and said hello as you walked down the street.

Within the first week we had begun to create meaningful friendships. It really helped us feel at home when the kids would accompany us on our morning runs or on trips to the corner store.

Our favorite memories took place at camp Ahimsa. On the week that we took the younger boys up to camp, we played an intense two-hour game of capture the flag. Now this may not seem memorable, but anyone who witnessed it can attest to its greatness.

Everyone was running around, completely enthralled at the task at hand. The competition was tough and tireless. After two hours on the battlefield we called it quits. This was such a wonderful time because for those two hours we all forgot about whatever stresses we had in



our lives, or differences we had among each other and we just had fun. There are few things as liberating as that.

We will never forget the trips to Misquamicat and to the lake. It was great to watch the kids attack the water so fearlessly, even when they didn't know how to swim! The kids would also watch out for their friends who may not have been as comfortable in the water as they were. One of the best times at the beach was when we all tried to build a pool for

Toya (who uses a wheelchair) to sit in so the waves could wash over her. We made walls of sand and drip sandcastles only to have a cool, refreshing wave completely overwhelm us all. No matter where you come from you can guarantee that you'll have the same reaction to a icy ocean wave, a squeal of delight!

This summer taught us the impact just one house can have. If everyone cared about their neighbors as much as the Catholic Workers do, the world would be a much different place. It's a testament to the community how the neighborhood kids orient themselves around the house. It's not just that the house offers fun activities; the people at the house are committed to building relationships with the kids. Seeing the impact these relationships can have was a wonderful thing to witness this summer. For ourselves, it meant a lot to us just to make connections with the kids and laugh with them. We wished we could've stayed longer; it was very hard to say goodbye. Neither of us realized the impact 8 weeks can have. When we came to Hartford we were strangers; when we left, we were family. Thank you, Hartford Catholic Worker for giving our summer vacations such meaning! Ω

NEW HOME

Christina White

This past October I accompanied Jackie and Ammon for a ten day service trip to Guatemala. During the trip I was able to get to know Jackie in a way I never really had. Growing up I was blessed to be raised in a family that opened my eyes to important aspects of life including the Hartford Catholic Worker. As a kid I always enjoyed visiting, but it was not until the trip with Jackie that I really put together the meaning of their work. Upon returning, she immediately proposed the idea that I move into the house come summer. In my heart I knew that it was something I wanted to do, but I knew it would require me to make serious changes.

In May the semester as well as my lease were ending and I was forced to make a

decision as to what my next step should be. I had spent almost two years working for Constructive Workshops, now CW Resources. It was in the moments of reflecting on that that I realized the Catholic Worker also shared the same initials which coincidentally are also mine. I decided to take that as a sign of fate and move into the community.

I've been here three months now and I must say I have made the right decision; seeing the relationships that have been created over the past months is the beginning of an experience that is well worth it. My community members are family. I moved in at a time when three other interns were also moving in, Ariel, Mary and Stephanie. The relationship that the four of us created will last a lifetime. We served as a

constant support system for each other during the entire summer and I only hope that carries into our everyday lives.

I have also created relationships with the kids. The joy they give me is unexplainable. I wake up every morning smiling from feeling a sense of community, and seeing the kid's faces day in and day out, filled with happiness for being able to be around us, and for the opportunities they are given through the Catholic Worker. Although days can be frustrating and stressful and the kids may test your relationship with them at times, when you get your first hug and you realize your finally being trusted and respected its an amazing feeling.

I will hold close my memory of getting to
(SEE: NEW HOME, P8)

NOTES. CONT.

Pete pulls up in his old Volvo and sets up shop. He spends 5 hours repairing donated bikes, fixing ones the kids drag in, teaching them how to fix brakes, patch tubes, etc. There is always a line of people wanting bikes. Some are folks in need; others are users looking for a bike to sell. We struggle with the bike list. Some of our own kids can go through 4 or 5 bikes a year because they get stolen so often. We keep trying to find a process that is fair, just and preserving of everyone's dignity. On one recent boiling summer day a woman drove by on a bike on her way home from work. She yelled out to Chris "this bike saved my life!" That woman made up for the 20 people who lost or stole a bike and even came to fight for a bike in a drunken stupor. I make that be the thing that sticks in my head.

Instead of thinking of the kids who broke in and robbed us...I have to think of the 7 counselors who spent Saturday sorting school supplies for the other kid's backpacks. Instead of lamenting Sarah being gone, I need to give thanks that God brought us Justin and Christina. Instead of dreading that Monday is food coop and Tuesday means mass and cooking for 25 guests...I need to remember how much I

have missed our House mass and Eucharist, and how Steve D., Edna, Mary, Stephanie, and Ariel have been like Eucharist to the kids while we were at camp. And yes, even though someone spilled a gallon of milk in the fridge that leaked into the motor and smelled like a dead



body on the hottest day of summer one of Chris's students, Katherine, came by to volunteer and has been AWESOME!!! Her sister Jess and the South Windsor Jaycees did a wonderful fundraiser that helped us make it through the summer. Sure, we are cranky and sick and tired as all get out, but Floyd and G-Baby and even little Jose spent the last day at camp making sure we could finish the mural in time for the Voltown Peace Trust Garden gala fundraiser!

Most of the time lately I wonder what God has in mind for us. Are we supposed to be doing something different with our lives? Why does everything seem so hard lately? Are we doing something wrong?

Have we lost support because we have not been careful enough to show gratitude to those who support our work? I can always think of people we owe thanks to and forgot to thank. Is the economy so bad that we will have to close the house? We struggle along in our ministry. We are tired, broke and burned out. I think often of my Mom's favorite prayer. Thomas Merton wrote it. She had it taped to the headboard of her bed. It is now taped to mine. It goes like this...

My Lord God,

*I have no idea where I am going
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.*

*Nor do I really know myself,
And the fact that I think I am following
your will does not mean that I am
actually doing so.*

*But I believe that the desire to please
you does in fact please you.
And I hope that I have that desire in all
that I am doing.*

*And I know that if I do this, you
will lead me by the right road
though I may know nothing about it.*

*Therefore will I trust you always
though I may seem to be lost
and in the shadow of death, I will
not fear, for you are ever with me
and you will never leave me
to face my perils alone.Ω*

HOME, CONT.

know Angel. After a week of living in the house Angel confronted me: "I don't like you Christina, your no fun, Sarah was way better." I convinced him to give me a chance and lo and behold, about a month later, he finally expressed his feelings again and apologized giving me the biggest squeeze of a hug and told me how much he had missed me after I was away at camp for a week. By testing my patience and my loyalty, the kids have required me to gain a deeper patience within myself and also understand the effort that needs to be put forth to gain respect in their lives.

Right now I feel I just owe many thanks to the people who have been involved in welcoming me into the community and sharing this experience with me. Thank you Jackie, Chris and Brian for staying on my behind to move in and then graciously accepting me into the community you have created. Thanks Sarah Karas for talking me through my decision to move in, being my friend, and still being my on-call go-to girl when I need some advice and support. Thanks Micah and Ammon for letting me fulfill the desire I have always had for more siblings and letting me pretend I have two little brothers now. Thanks to Ariel, Mary and Stephanie for the friendship and support

system that was crucial to my transition, I will always cherish getting to know the three of you and the memories we made.

I also owe thanks to all the kids that have also let me in and now trust me to be a part of their life and someone they can rely on. Lastly, my biggest thanks goes to my parents who support my every decision and have always given me the helping hand or wise advice I have needed to make it to the next step, without them I may have never found my new home and community. I am looking forward to keeping everyone updated on this new venture of my life, thank you to all who have welcomed me into the community. Ω

Notes From De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen - Docuot

As usual I am all that stands between the newsletter being in the mail and Chris losing another publishing date to Scott of the Worcester CW. For me...there is always a good excuse; there is also always any number of odd jobs languishing in every nook and cranny of each house. Any one of them becomes more important than the house article in my state of perpetual procrastination.

Friday we got up at the crack of dawn in Voluntown and began the 10 hour cleaning and packing that signals the end of Camp Ahimsa. Always a daunting chore it was made more painful this year by the absence of Sarah Karas energy and the fact that 5 of us were laid low by a virus dropped off at the Allen family reunion/VPT fundraiser the weekend before. Last night, after a full Saturday on the house and packing and distributing 30 backpacks I found myself picking thru the duffel bags that I had lived out of all summer putting away this and that. When it hit time for the Red Sox game to start, I said to Chris "I am so beat...maybe I will write it as soon as I wake up tomorrow." With that Ammon and Chris exchanged grins and an I told you so smirk. Am I that predictable??? Apparently so!

On Sunday morning I had just started writing when Chris called to ask me to pick him up at the boat launch in Wethersfield Cove. The small 25 year old boat we use to take kids fishing at camp had been in the shop most of July and

August. On Sunday he was hoping to spend a few relaxing hours before going to Voluntown for a monthly meeting of the board of directors of the non-profit we started there 6 years ago. When I asked him what had happened, he shocked me by telling me that the engine had literally blown up on him. It was a miracle that he



was not burned! The top part of the engine was blown so far away he couldn't find it.

I am starting to feel like that engine is a metaphor for our life here at the Catholic Worker. When I got Micah to help me get his dad he informed me that someone had broken into the house while we slept. We are guessing the thief was one of the kids who we work with because Riley never barked, and they took only the xbox and guitar hero guitars. Now I hate the xbox, but my previous position was always to replace anything of my kids that got stolen. Right now we are so broke that it

will not be happening, and my teenagers are furious.

There is something that makes you feel so violated when you are robbed by someone who knows you. In May Micah lent our guest PJ his bike to get to work. The bike was not locked up and got stolen. In June Ammon lent his bike to a neighborhood kid that goes to his school; we have not seen the bike or kid since. A week later, someone hopped the fence and stole Chris' bike too.

When things weren't disappearing they were breaking. During the course of the summer our 5 year old van died and the washer and dryer bit the dust. I am praying to let go of all of this stuff. Maybe God in Her infinite wisdom is trying to push us along on the path of detachment. Maybe all these little things going wrong is some kind of karmic balance that enabled us to make it through another year of camp without any injuries. Maybe that is why Chris was not burned when the motor blew...the Holy Spirit is saving it for the big stuff.

A friend of ours was joking about the formula for a standard Catholic Worker article. Lots of sad stories, gloom and doom, pathos and personal suffering...then throw in the heartbreaking tidbits of shining examples that make the suffering worthwhile and redeem the bad parts. I laughed at the time, but in reality that is the discipline of being a Catholic Worker. For example, our bike repair shop can be extremely frustrating. Every Saturday

(PLEASE SEE: NOTES, P9)

A LETTER FROM PALESTINE: *LIFE & PASSING IN THE PROGRESSIVE NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE*

Greetings and Salaam from Palestine.

I hope that this message finds you well.

As some of you have heard that my father (Saliba Rishmawi, Abu George) have



passed away at sixty six years old last Tuesday August 18th at 15:40 Pm while sleeping in his house in Beit Sahour, which was the biggest shock for my entire family.

My Father Saliba, was my best friend, my teacher and inspiration, because of him, I do what I do now. He has taught me how to live with honor and dignity, how to seek justice and freedom, how work with the community.

He used to host elections campaign for his political party in our house, since I was a little child, campaigning for how making Palestine a better place to live, so from early age, I used to see people coming to our house, organizing for demonstrations around the area, preparing for strikes, and working hard solving people's problems.

My father was an active volunteer in the workers trade unions, helping to make the struggling people have a better working hours and wages. Hard to remember the number of cases he solves in cooperation with his friends and comrades.

My father was conflict resolution man, he used to solve problems for many people in the town and for people from my family, until the last day of his life, he was helping people solving their problems, hard to be believe.

My father was very active in the popular committees during the first Intifada, he used to urge me to participate in the

demonstrations if one day I did not go, he will get mad at me, he always told me you should be their with your comrades all the time, never miss any event.

My father was active in the voluntary working committees, always participating in helping farmers and people in our community by volunteering his time and labor for them.

Words can not help me describing how he was, some of you reading this message have met him in person and have spend time with him, he meant the life for my family and I. He was the compass for our journey, he was the captain of our ship, he was the leader he was he was,

It is very hard for me to write this message about loosing him, very hard to go home and not seeing him, very hard to say that he is dead now, I wish he is in a better place now watching over me and my family.

The only thing we could do is to continue his journey for Justice and freedom for Palestine. One of my friends wrote to me, that my father is lucky and privileged that he was never a refugee, lived, died and buried in Palestine, yes very true, he is privileged that he is buried in his hometown, in Beit Sahour the town he loved.

The funeral was attended by hundreds of people, a local poet from the town had written a long poem about

him, and one of my cousins read it in the church, during the funeral, it was really moving for all the town seeing an honorable beloved man departing. Thousands of people came to the wake after the funeral, according to the Palestinian traditions all families in our town came and gave their condolences and all of the people who loved him, came also.

My of you has written to me and my family, one behalf of my family, we are so grateful for all of them we are grateful for those of you who came to Beit Sahour and spend time with my family and got to know him, we are grateful for all of you who prayed for him while he was sick, we are grateful for you of thought about him.

Please help us continue his journey by bringing Justice and Peace for this part of the world. Salaam and Peace for all of you.

George Rishmawi and family



SUMMER PHOTOS FROM THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER



