

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



Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made to her by the Lord would be fulfilled.
Luke 1:45

Advent 2010

The Hartford Catholic Worker

Established November 3, 1993

Volume 18 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.hartfordcatholic-

worker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

One Hundred Issues of The Hartford Catholic Worker

Christopher J. Doucot

Late in the winter of 1993 a couple of hundred friends, family and supporters received the inaugural issue of *The Hartford Catholic Worker*. It's six pages contained a brief introduction of who we were, a biography of our patron St. Martin De Porres, an essay by me: *Restore Hope in the Lord* about the American invasion of Somalia named Operation Restore Hope, a piece by Fr. Tom Goekler who had recently returned from five years in Nicaragua, and Jackie's first ever *Notes From De Porres House* (have any of you ever gotten my lame pun? “Notes from the Poor House”?).

When we sent this issue for a mere 29 cents our community consisted of: Betty Hartinger, a remarkable woman whose faith has endured through tremendous personal suffering; Frank O’Gorman, who was helping to support his mom in Ireland and is now an active anti-war organizer; Paul Laffin, a joyful servant of God who was working at Mercy Housing where he was murdered by a client ten years ago; Brian Kavanagh was living in Meriden and creating art; Jackie and I were living with Jackie's mom in the south end; Micah was living in the womb of Jackie- Ammon was still in God's.

We met weekly around the dining room table at Grandma Mick's house to pray, discern God's will, and build the bonds of community with one another. Brian, a confirmed bachelor and urban hermit was the only one (besides Jackie and me) to be a

spond to the needs of the neighborhood but we did anticipate that the bulk of our work would involve housing homeless persons.

Today we have a full house with a mom and her two kids in a couple of rooms and a young man in another room at Brigid House.



Our Community circa 1994, photo by India Blue

part of the initial “live-in” community. On page one of issue one we stated our hope that we would “*live simple and in community with the aim of performing the Works of Mercy*”. We did not envision an afterschool program, HuskySport, a bike repair shop, a food buying club, a furniture pantry (now defunct), Christmas parties for hundreds of kids, a neighborhood Laundromat, a Saturday art and sports program, a summer camp or a playground. We were intentionally nonspecific in our agenda wanting to re-

We have had hundreds of people stay with us over the years: high school students, a former Hueb- lin exec/disbarred lawyer/ excon/physics professor, a medical doctor from Benin whose English was not quite good enough to garner a residency, a Lebanese precious metals trader, veterans, a 300+ pound guy named “Pea- nut”, mothers with young kids like Duke and Shani- qua who are now in their twenties, several guys struggling with alcohol addiction who would swear

to us that they were just drinking “root beer” and taking shots of Nyquil because they couldn't shake their colds, a Palestin- ian mom and her ten year old daughter with an Israeli bullet in her brain, an Iraqi mom and her seven year old son who lost half his hand and his older brother to a misguided American missile, and pregnant teens resisting familial pressure to abort their children, among many others. Though our rooms have rarely been empty it has been

the children of these streets who have revealed Christ to us. Our “work” with them has coincided with the raising of our sons who are now sixteen and seventeen years old. Loving, and being loved by, these kids has been a blessing beyond measure for us.

In *Notes from De Porres House* we shared the news of our nonviolent witness about the war in Iraq at the state Capitol on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. We also informed you of my arrest with Grandma Mick at the Federal Building on the inauguration of Bill Clinton. On George HW Bush’s last day in office, American warplanes bombed Iraq. On Bill Clinton’s first day in office, American warplanes bombed Iraq. Grandma and I chained the Federal Building doors shut and held a sign that read “*Inaugurate peace: Stop the Bombing*”.

Outside our jail cells cops were walking into each other at the sight of this elderly woman behind bars. Finally one of them asked her why she had been arrested and without skipping a beat grandma put her hand on her hip and with the Brooklyn accent of her youth answered the cop: “*Solicitation- what’s it to ya?*” At our trial



Grandma movingly spoke of caring for wounded civilians and children in Italy and north Africa during her time in the Army as a nurse in WWII. She told the judge that she “meant no disrespect” but that she “would soon be appearing before a higher judge” and would need to be able to defend herself when questioned what she did to stop our government from killing Iraqi women and children.

We had been charged with “Creating a Public Disturbance” and the judge found us guilty because we had “definitely disturbed the public,” “but” he went on, “sometimes the public needs to be disturbed.” At grandma’s suggestion he sentenced us to time served for the day we sat in court after

she told him he would have to **3** send us to jail because we weren’t paying any fine for doing what needed to be done.

When we published that issue we had \$800, a vision, and a nascent community. Jackie and I had been married less than a year. A few weeks after folks received this newsletter Micah was born and Jackie very nearly died from complications. By June we had bought the abandoned building that had become St. Martin House and on the same day I was asked to join a nonviolent force in Bosnia that was heading to the front lines of the war in Bosnia.

Jackie ended her *Notes* asking “*that you keep us in your prayers as we await the birth of our first child, the birth of our community, and the arrival of the Reign of God. Alleluia!*” Our sons and our community are now teenagers, and so we are all going through adolescence. Our teen years have not been easy and we are still facing some uncertainty as celebrate our 17th birthday on November 3. As you read of our hopes and struggles on the following pages please pray that we may respond to those who doubt, question, condemn, ignore and/or prosecute our work in a faithful, yet humble, way. Ω

St. Martin’s Calendar

Please Note Well *We will no longer be celebrating Catholic Mass at the Hartford Catholic Worker. Someone has complained to the bishop that we have a shared homily and that occasionally a woman has read the Gospel. These practices are forbidden under canon law and so the diocese has asked us to cease them. Though women reading the Gospel and sharing in a homily may invalidate the mass, these practices do not invalidate our prayers. We will continue to pray the way we have done so for 18 years, but now we will call our prayers “liturgy” instead of “mass”. We hope with all our hearts that we will be able to find priests to celebrate with us and that you will continue to join us for dinner, fellowship and prayer.*

+ Please join us on **Tuesday, December 7, January 4, and February 1 at 7:30PM** for the celebration of Liturgy at 18 Clark St. Hartford.

+Please join Brian on **Fridays from 11:30-12:30** to pray and vigil for peace outside the Federal Building, Main St. Hartford.

St. Martin’s Wish List

+ your ongoing prayers
+ **your financial**

support: please consider making a regular monthly donation of \$25, \$50 or more, in support of our work housing homeless folks, working with children, and providing food for the hungry. Donations can be made to “The Hartford Catholic Worker” and sent to: 18 Clark St. Hartford CT 06120
+Thank-you!



Infiltrating Ranks, Infiltrating Minds

Christopher J. Doucot

I was returning home from some errands in 2003 (or maybe 2004) to find my buddy Tony Pinto talking with a couple of white guys in dark blue suits on the sidewalk outside of St. Brigid House. Without identifying themselves the men asked Tony if he knew me and knew my whereabouts. He told them he never heard of me and then turned to give me a big hug. The men were from the FBI and the CT State Police. They had come to question me about my times in Iraq; earlier they told Jackie not to worry since they “were interviewing all Iraqis in the U.S.”- I guess they can’t distinguish a Bostonian accent from a Baghdadian one.

The G-Men declined a cup of tea and asked a few inconsequential questions before I asked for the file they had on me from which I was able to get a up-to-date phone number of one of my brothers. Aside from another brother being questioned about me (during the process of being hired by the FBI to catch fugitive pedophiles) I don’t think anything more has ever come from this visit. Perhaps this belief is quaint if not naïve.

When other peace folks rant about whether their phones are tapped or speculate on who among us is a government spy/provocateur I



Balaam's Ass

Brian Kavanagh *Numbers 22:30*

have always been uncomfortable. I have never thought that in my lifetime the peace movement has had its act together enough for the FBI to bother monitoring us. It seems my

analysis was at best half right (see *VFP Appalled at Recent FBI Raids*). I still don’t think we have achieved a level of organization or a critical mass of noncooperation with the war making demands of our government to give it any pause to reconsider its next invasion or to reprioritize funding human needs rather than military wants. However it is apparent that the federal government is watching, listening and “joining” our ranks- and I thought my peace compatriots were the paranoid ones.

For what it’s worth I welcome anyone willing to sit and read with our kids, pick up trash in the neighborhood, listen to the men and women who collect cans in the gutter for a living, and pack up bags of food. I have no doubt that practicing the works of mercy will transform their hearts, heal their paranoid minds and provoke a further in-breaking of God’s reign in our midst.

So, to any agent that may be reading this as I type: we have children in on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays after school for homework help and on Saturdays for art, sports and lunch; you are welcome to join us even if you are only posing as a Christian. But beware, though you may infiltrate our community- we will infiltrate your heart. Ω

VFP Appalled at Recent FBI Raids

Like other peace advocates, Veterans For Peace is appalled by the heavy-handed actions of the FBI in raiding the homes of anti-war activists. We would also be astonished by those actions were it not for the FBI’s long history of harassing peaceful dissent. From the disgraced leadership of J. Edgar Hoover down to these 2010 raids in Minneapolis and Chicago, the Bureau has allowed itself to become the dark agent of stifling democratic opposition to America’s embarrassing military adventures abroad and its resistance to equality at home.

The idea that the victims of these home invasions are providing “material support of terrorism” by opposing brutal U.S. foreign occupations is ludicrous. It strikes at the very heart of the freedoms that VFP members thought they were donning the uniform to

defend. For those of us who sought to protect democracy from alien forces it is particularly disheartening to watch that democracy now being eroded from within by our own government. Are we truly to believe that the FBI is all that stands between us and the terrorism of the Quakers, the Catholic Worker, Greenpeace, and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals?

It is further more than a little ironic that these raids of harassment should occur only a week after the Justice Department Inspector General himself concluded that the FBI does indeed have a long sorry history of baseless intimidation of dissenters to American policy. Veterans For Peace members themselves were victims of these actions surrounding the infamous police violation of dissenter rights at the Minneapolis/St. Paul Republican Convention in 2008.

As veterans and as seekers of peace we stand in solidarity with our comrades in sister organizations who are victims of this sinister FBI action. Who knows who its next targets will be? Pressing our government to withdraw from aggressive and mindless wars should be viewed as heroic activity, not a hostile act subject to persecution.

Veterans For Peace is a national organization founded in 1985. It includes men and women veterans of all eras and duty stations including from the Spanish Civil War, World War II, the Korean, Vietnam, Gulf and current Iraq wars as well as other conflicts. Our collective experience tells us wars are easy to start and hard to stop and that those hurt are often the innocent. Thus, other means of problem solving are necessary. Ω

Render Unto Caesar?

Christopher J. Doucot

When we formed as a community in 1992 I opened a "Doing Business As" account for the Hartford Catholic Worker at People's Bank. The account, *Christopher J. Doucot DBA The Hartford Catholic Worker* was opened under my Social Security number and worked fine for us until a few years ago when People's informed us that they were phasing out DBA accounts. "It's no big deal" the chirpy teller quipped, "you just need to open a business account." And so I did.

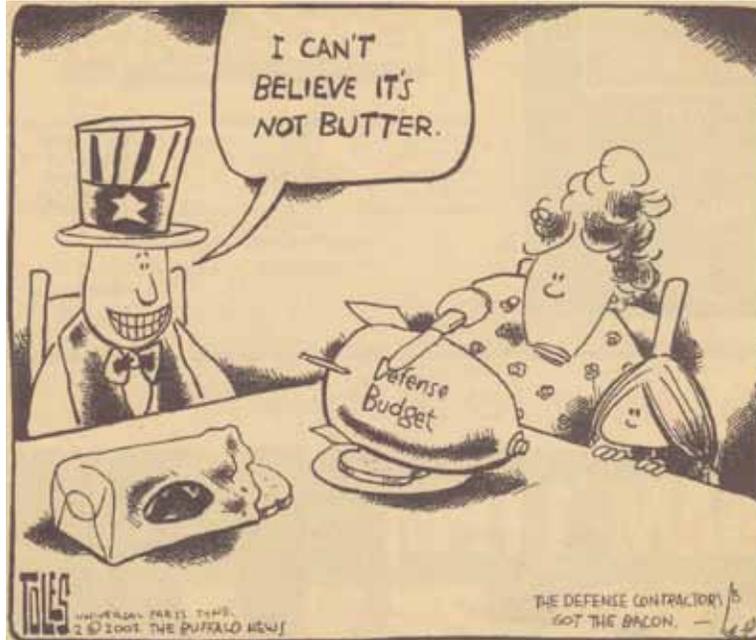
We were able to open a business account because we had created a corporation, Hartford Catholic Worker Inc., when we bought St. Brigid House. A corporation is a peculiar kind of "person" according to our laws and we birthed this "person" for the sole purpose of owning St. Brigid House.

We did so in order to protect the property from seizure by the Federal Government. You see, my many trips to Iraq, delivering medicine to a Catholic hospital and showing journalists, academics, moms and grandmoms, the civilian impact of American bombings and American led sanctions was illegal and could have resulted in large fines and prison time, and ultimately the seizure of any assets in my name. Since St. Martin House is in my name we thought we were being prudent putting St. Brigid House in the name of our new child- Hartford Catholic Worker Inc.

When I opened the business account it was on behalf of this child; I continued to use my Social Security number on the account. All was fine for a few months until I got another call from the bank informing me that during an audit they discovered that our business account was improperly using a Social Security number. "You need to obtain an EIN," they explained. It's kind of like a Social Security number for businesses I was told. "You can get one immediately at the

IRS website." And so I did.

For a baker's dozen years we went about our "business" of worshipping on Sundays and practicing our faith the rest of the week through the practice of the Works of Mercy with little thought given to whether we had proper permis-



sion to do so. In line with the tradition begun by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin we did not seek the government's approval to practice Christianity. Neither did we seek government assistance for our work, i.e. faith practice.

We have all individually heard from the IRS. About ten years ago Brian received a letter claiming that he owed back taxes and penalties due to a mistake on a previous return. He wrote back explaining that he was a Catholic Worker living in voluntary poverty and told the IRS "you can't get blood from a stone". They wrote back telling him that he had been declared "indigent" and no further action would be taken unless his fiscal situation improved.

About fifteen years ago I came home from walking the dog to a report from our neighbors that "a white lady in a suit was looking in our windows." Apparently she was still sitting in her car since the doorbell rang as soon as I closed it. The lady introduced herself as being from the IRS and asked if Jackie was home. Prior to living at the Catholic Worker Jackie had worked at a shelter for women and children. She wasn't

paid much but her wages were enough for the IRS to tax. Since Jackie as a Christian, and therefore a pacifist, would not pay taxes to our government the IRS had levied fines. This visitor had come to collect.

Nonetheless, I asked if she had come to tell Jackie that it was all a big mistake and that the government had decided to allow Jackie to freely practice her religion and not pay for practices that violate her faith. She said "No".

"Oh", I said, "I understand, you've come to tell us you have resigned from the IRS in protest."

"No," she said.

"Oh," I said again, "well in that case we have no business with you. Have a nice day." I closed the door and Jackie has never heard from the IRS again.

In 1998 I received a letter from the IRS telling me that since I had no income I didn't

have to file a return. I didn't trust or believe the letter so I filed anyway- a pretty simple task when one does not have any W-2 forms. In 1999 I received the same letter sent in 1998. I called the IRS to make sure and they told me that unless my financial situation changed it was true that I did not need to file a return. (Obviously, I saved the letters.) I didn't again file a return until I began teaching a class at CCSU for which I earn enough to report but not enough to be taxed.

In fact, in each of the years I've filed I have not only not paid taxes but I've received letters from the IRS that I had made a mistake on my returns and the government actually owed me money. I gladly accepted the checks totaling a few hundred dollars reasoning (rationalizing) that it made up for the few hundred dollars I had paid twenty years ago when I was working at a community mental health center in Worcester. I went to Confession, much to the priest's chagrin, after paying taxes in 1990 and 1991 but I have never felt that my confession atoned for the

(Please see: *Caesar*, p6)

Render Unto Caesar, cont.

suffering in Iraq paid for by my taxes during the first Gulf War. Yes, I am a hypocrite.

So while the IRS seems to have given up on Jackie and Brian, and they are sending me money I never asked for, our child, Hartford Catholic Worker Inc., has caught their attention. Rather, I caught their attention. Shortly after I applied for an EIN the IRS sent us a letter asking why our “business” has not been filing returns.

That was four years ago. Since then we have been working on a response with a fantastic lawyer at the CT Urban Legal Initiative of the UCONN Law School. Here’s our problem: we don’t neatly fit into any of the IRS’ boxes. We are not an individual, we are not a business, and we are not a “non profit corporation” (which includes all churches, mosques, temples and even Scientology; most universities, including ones with billion dollar endowments; traditional charities, including ones which pay salaries more than our annual budget; and all sorts of political action groups that are now funneling millions of anonymous dollars into political campaigns).

Let me be clear, we are not a “nonprofit corporation” but we are certainly not for profit! Money donated to the Hartford Catholic Worker goes directly to our work of feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, and caring for children. Members of our live-in community receive a stipend that is intentionally below the taxable level. We are intentionally not getting rich here-or middle-class for that matter.

Last year our lawyer and her diligent law student suggested we explore the possibility of seeking inclusion in the Official Catholic Directory (OCD). This tome that dwarfs the OED is a listing of every Catholic organization, school, hospital, parish, club and ministry in the US that is sheltered under the EIN of the Catholic Church in America. It turns out there are several Catholic Worker communities listed in the OCD. One community we spoke with was unaware of their listing; apparently inclusion once was rather informal.

The archdiocese of Hartford has a long application that closely resembles the IRS’ application to become a nonprofit corporation, which we duly completed this past summer. The application required that we adopt by-laws and appoint a board of directors, which we did setting aside a seat for the bishop or his representative. In early October our lawyer was informed



that our application had been denied because the church apparently wanted more formal control of our community. We are now working with our new board, lawyer and an adviser (Sr. Lorraine LaVigne) to tweak our by-laws and cast our lot before the IRS.

Most of our closest supporters are relieved that we have been turned down by the church. Think about that for a minute: this group of devoted Catholics has less antipathy for the IRS than for the hierarchy of the Catholic Church! In their effort to protect the Church (as institution) in the aftermath of the child sexual abuse scandals, rather than protecting the Church (as the people of God), the bishops have failed to protect either.

We have not made this decision to form a board of directors and seek tax exempt status easily or as thoughtlessly as some of the other decisions I’ve made that have brought us to this

point. We are skeptical that even the most carefully written by-laws and the most conscientious board of directors will be able to protect the grassroots and community based orientation of the Hartford Catholic Worker. We hope that we haven’t “saved” the “Green House” from the IRS only to eventually lose its essence to a nascent hierarchy. We have seen what top down organization can do to radical movements: would the apostles, who

held everything in common so that there was not a poor person among them (Act 4:32), even recognize the Catholic Church as heirs to their community?

Nonetheless, we are moving forward with hope and confidence in the community who have come forward to serve as our board. We are painfully cognizant that in doing so we have diverged from the path tread by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin by conceding to the state’s demands for fiscal scrutiny (please see: *We Go On Record*, p7).

Though the proximate cause of our predicament is my obtaining an EIN from the IRS, we are certain that the ultimate cause is a fear, bordering on paranoia, borne

of the horrific attacks of September 11, 2001. To prevent another attack the federal government has been tightening banking laws in order to more closely track money. (For a recent example please see: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130197341> *Treasury Seeks to Cast A Wider Net For Terrorists*).

My unadvised effort to obtain an EIN only hastened the inevitable questioning that every Catholic Worker community will eventually face.

Globalization and the combined proliferation of weaponry, communications and computer technologies, along with antipathies to American hegemony have ushered in a dark new era in America. IRS and FBI interference in the work of a tiny group of pacifists living in poverty and in the ghetto portends of things to come. We are the canary in the coal mine. Resistance to the values of empire: violence, greed, and gluttony, is

(Please see: *Caesar* p8)

We Go On Record: CW Refuses Tax Exemption ⁷

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, May 1972,

The Catholic Worker has received a letter from the Internal Revenue Service stating that we owe them \$296,359 in fines, penalties, and unpaid income tax for the last six years. As the matter stands right now, there might be a legal battle with delays and postponements which may remind us of Dickens' *Bleak House*. Or, since we will not set up a defense committee to campaign for funds, it may terminate swiftly in the confiscation of our property and our bank account (never very large). Our farm at Tivoli and the First Street house could be put up for sale by government agents and our C.W. family evicted.

Perhaps no one here at St. Joseph's House realizes the situation we are in right now as keenly as I do, having seen so many evictions in the Depression - furniture, clothes, kitchen utensils piled up on the streets by landlords' marshals. The Communists used to demonstrate and forcibly move the belongings of the unfortunate people back into the tenements, but our Catholic Worker staff, a handful of us, begged money and rented other apartments for eight to fifteen dollars a month and moved the evicted families there. What a job! It exhausts me to think of it.

I can only trust that this crisis will pass. Just as we believe that God, our Father, has cared for us, I am sure that some way will be found either to avert the disaster or for us to continue to care for our old, sick, helpless, hungry, and homeless if it happens.

One of the most costly protests against war, in terms of long-enduring personal sacrifice, is to refuse to pay federal income taxes which go for war. The late Ammon Hennacy, one of our editors, was a prime example of this. He earned his living at agricultural labor, always living on a poverty level so as not to be subject to taxes, though he filed returns. Another of our editors, Karl Meyer, recently spent ten months in

jail for what the I.R.S. called fraudulent claims of exemption for dependents. He ran the C.W. House of Hospitality in Chicago for many years, working to earn the money to support the house and his wife and children. Erosanna Robinson, a social worker in Chicago, refused to file returns and was sentenced to a year in prison. While

around us, and that our protests are incomplete. Perhaps the most complete protest is to be in jail, to accept jail, never to give bail or defend ourselves.

In the fifties, Ammon, Charles McCormack (our business manager at the C.W.), and I were summoned to the offices of the I.R.S. in New York to answer questions

(under oath) as to our finances.

I remember I was asked what happened to the royalties from my books, money from speaking engagements, etc. I could only report that such monies received were deposited in the C.W. account. As for clothes, we wore what came in; my sister was generous to me - shoes, for instance.

Our accounts are kept in this way: Contributions, donations, subscriptions that come in daily are entered in one book. The large checkbook tells of bills paid, of disbursements. Since we send out an appeal once or twice a year, we have to file with our state capital, pay a small fee, and

give an account of monies received and how they were spent. We always comply with this state regulation because it is local - regional. We know such a requirement is to protect the public from fraudulent appeals and we feel our lives are open books - our work is obvious. And of course our pacifism has always been obvious - a great deal of nonviolence to be worked toward.

Christ commanded His followers to perform what Christians have come to call the Works of Mercy: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the harborless, visiting the sick and prisoner, and burying the dead. Surely a simple program for direct action, and one enjoined on all of us. Not just for impersonal "poverty programs," government-funded agencies, but help given from the heart at a personal sacrifice. And how opposite a program this is to the works of war which starve

(Please See: *We Go*, p8)



Lazarus and Dives (Luke 16:19-31)

Brian Kavanagh

in prison she fasted and was forcibly fed. It will be seen that tax refusal is a serious protest. Wars will cease when we refuse to pay for them (to adapt a slogan of the War Resisters International).

The C.W. has never paid salaries. Everyone gets board, room, and clothes (tuition, recreation included, as the C.W. is in a way a school of living). So we do not need to pay federal income taxes. Of course, there are hidden taxes we all pay. Nothing is ever clear-cut or well defined. We protest in any way we can, according to our responsibilities and temperaments.

(I remember Ammon, a most consistent, brave, and responsible person, saying to one young man, "For the love of the Lord, get a job and quit worrying about taxes. You need to learn how to earn your own living. That is most important for you.")

We have to accept with humility the fact that we cannot share the destitution of those

people by embargoes, lay waste the land, destroy homes, wipe out populations, mutilate and condemn millions more to confinement in hospitals and prisons.

On another level there is a principle laid down, much in line with common sense and with the original American ideal, that governments should never do what small bodies can accomplish: unions, credit unions, cooperatives, St. Vincent de Paul Societies. Peter Maurin's anarchism was on one level based on this principle of subsidiarity, and on a higher level on that scene at the Last Supper where Christ washed the feet of His Apostles. He came to serve, to show the new Way, the way of the powerless. In the face of Empire, the Way of Love.

And here in small groups we are trying to talk of these things in the midst of the most powerful country in the world, during wartime, with the imminent threat of being

crushed by this government, all because of principle, a principle so small and so important! It is not only that we must follow our conscience in opposing the government in war. We believe also that the government has no right to legislate as to who can or who are to perform the Works of Mercy. Only accredited agencies have the status of tax-exempt institutions. After their application has been filed, and after investigation and long delays, clarifications, intercession, and urgings by lawyers - often an expensive and long-drawn-out procedure - this tax-exempt status is granted.

As personalists, as an unincorporated group, we will not apply for this "privilege." We have explained to our donors many times that they risk being taxed on the gifts they send us, and a few (I can only think of two right now) have turned away from us. God raises up for us many a Habakkuk to bring

his pottage to us when we are in the lion's den, or about to be, like Daniel of old.

Frankly, we do not know if it is because the government considers us a danger and threat that we are faced by this crisis. I beg the prayers of all our readers, whether they are sympathetic to us or not. I'm sure that many will think me a fool indeed, almost criminally negligent, for not taking more care to safeguard, not just the bank account, but the welfare of all the lame, halt, and blind who come to us.

Our refusal to apply for exemption status in our practice of the Works of Mercy is part of our protest against war and the present social "order" which brings on wars today.

(ed. Note: The Hartford Catholic Worker has likewise paid property taxes to the City of Hartford since our inception. Ironically, if/when the IRS grants us tax-exempt status we will no longer be obliged to make these payments.) Ω

Catholic Worker Christmas Cards For Sale



If you would like to support our work and spread awareness of the Hartford Catholic Worker please consider sending Hartford Catholic Worker Christmas cards this year.

The cards, featuring an assortment of Brian's Christmas themed graphics with envelopes, are available in packets of 10. 5"X7" card for \$20 or 4.25"X5.5" for \$15.

To order please contact Marie McKenna at (860) 704-8360 or bcmarie98@yahoo.com



Render unto Caesar cont.

the song we sing.

The failure of the federal government to distinguish between the Catholic Worker and terrorists suggests that we have not done an adequate job proclaiming our vision. We do not seek to topple the American empire with violence, but to subvert it with nonviolent love. We seek to "build

a new society within the shell of the old" where cooperation replaces competition, sharing replaces greed, community replaces rugged individualism, and love of stranger, neighbor and enemy like oneself replaces the narcissism of our age. The Catholic Worker seeks to displace the kingdoms of this world by revealing that portion of God's Kin'dom that is already in our

midst. The Kin'dom of God won't be ushered in decree, found in any government, or declared by any Church: it can be found by seeking the least among us, but to enter we must embrace them-
and they us.

FBI, DBA, IRS, HCW, EIN, SSN, OCD... *Oblah di Oblah da Life Goes On... la la life goes on.* Ω

Notes, cont.

other than live by our fear and mimic the evil in a vain effort to overcome it.

If Josh or Jose were killed...would it matter to their mom if the bullet was fired from the "good" cop or the "bad" driver...or the uncle (who was never arrested or charged because he had a permit)? In Iraq does a mother care if her child dies from a bomb delivered by the Americans or the insurgents? I am constantly amazed at how hard the guardian angels in my neighborhood must work. At night I pray that they watch over the children everywhere. I am astonished at what little regard we have for our children. I am astonished that the figures for drop out rates and addiction among teens have not moved us to make a national priority of education and job training. I am disgusted with the gun culture and how cheap human life has become. "Jesus wept" has become a mantra that runs through my mind and echoes in my soul as I listen to the news on the radio... just this morning NPR broke the story (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130833741>) that Arizona's anti-immigrant law was written by investors in private, for profit prisons seeking to build a market for their product! Stock in Corrections Corp of America is rising on Wall St. while women and children are being rounded up on Main St. When will we begin to look at the world without the goggles of empire and greed. When will we turn our faces back to God whom we can't love without loving neighbor, stranger and enemy alike? I think of the psalms and my prayers feel like the lamentations of old.

*Have they no knowledge,
all the ignorant,
who devour people and nations
as if they were bread,
and never call upon Love?
Terror will reign in their hearts;
for Love's friend is Truth
and in Truth will those
who seek Love's way
be set free. (Psalms 14 as interpreted
by Nan C. Merrill)*

Always we pray for an end to the violence of Empire, the capitalism that sustains it, and the culture of greed that flows from it. End of rant...

As an antidote to the sickness of the above, I offer the joy and blessings of the Green House/St. Brigid afterschool program.

This year the after school program has been run by a collective of caring adults. On Mondays Justin and the HuskySport folks are joined by Lori Janecko and the crew from East Catholic High. Tuesdays we are closed to kids, but we think of them all day as we clean up after them! On Wednesdays Amanda T. comes over and helps Jeanne, Marilyn and



Florence get ready for the kids with healthy snacks and John brings students from Trinity. On Thursday Amanda joins Ms. Gillespie and the Northwest Catholic crew. On Fridays Jim Conway is captain and John brings students from CCSU to round out the week.

Our friend Denise W. has been sewing with both boys and gals for many months. On top of the gorgeous quilt that she made for our latest fundraiser, she will be helping the kids make Christmas stockings. The last 2 weeks, she brought some science experiments involving home made helicopter, hair dryers, and balsa wood airplanes! We are blessed with people like Nancy- who reads with the "littles" when she is done being Denise's lab assistant; and Kate M.- who has been tutoring Dwight for his final alternative high school test), and a few others who make the Green House home for a few hours a week. If anyone is interested Amanda would love to have help with Girls nights on Fridays. On Sundays Danielle, Xi and the HuskySport

folks are running a teen night that provides healthy cooking lessons, health education, homework help and college prep business!

I am especially grateful to all of these adults who responded wholeheartedly to our appeal for help. In September we had a meeting with the 25 people who represent the core of our community. We acknowledged that Chris, Brian and I could no longer keep on running the community with just the 3 of us. We asked our "extended" community to help us figure out how to move forward in a way that will help us not be so burned out. For me, that meant being given the freedom not to take after school shifts on the house. Because I am present pretty much 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, I needed to set some limits for my own personal sanity. So far this has enabled me to do some one on one work with Angel, and to pursue using my love of art and kids to have our Green House kids showing art in 2 different places since September.

Today we go to an opening of an art installation that several of the kids have worked on. It is in response to the Mosque near Ground Zero uproar- pretty ignorant since the mosque is a community center with a prayer room in an old Burlington coat factory that is not at ground zero. Our piece is called *Ground Zero Sacred Space*. It is a poustinia of sorts, painted with landscapes on the outside to show that all the earth is God's church. On the inside are sacred scriptures from many religious traditions and beliefs. The walkway is made of stepping stones with words like mercy, justice, love, tolerance...and other Godly virtues

We will be traveling down there today to attend the grand opening! I love the enthusiasm and creativity of all the kids who helped out on the project. Here is my SHOUTOUT to Bubba, Dwight, Jose E., Josh R, Thomas, Khari, and Keyanna,...You guys are the best! Hopefully our next issue will have photos of the artwork!!

I leave off with the words of our beloved Dorothy Day... *"God sees truth but waits. He waits on us to open our eyes and ears to justice. Let us be part of His justice, whose property is always to have mercy and to spare."* Amen, sister! Ω

18 Clark St.
Hartford, CT 06120
(860) 724-7066

Notes From De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen-Doucot

On a recent mid-October Saturday about 100 volunteers from UCONN joined the Green House community and our regular Saturday volunteers (the “Green Team”?) to do a major cleanup of our block, the Clark school grounds, and Keney Park. I was a chilly, but beautiful fall day- a bit windy, but that kept everybody moving. There was also a sports clinic at the Salvation Army for most of the “littles”; 5 of our most high energy “littles” went on a field trip to the Glastonbury Cider Mill to feed oats to goats in between stuffing their own gobs with cider donuts and fresh apples. By half past noon we had 200 folks gathered in front of the Green House for a barbecue picnic. It was a fantastic day and a fantastic way to celebrate our 17th year at the Hartford Catholic Worker.

That afternoon Chris, Marisol and I joined Danielle and Justin from HuskySport for dinner and drinks downtown (thanks GiGi for being the best bartender ever!).

When we got home at around 8PM the ‘hood looked good... quiet and clean. I was thinking of how nice it would be to tell folks about it in this newsletter until I saw the crime scene tape closing off our street and the Hartford Police mobile command center set up across the street. A young cop on the corner couldn’t tell us what had happened. Local news outlets were reporting on the internet that there may have been a carjacking and that a cop may have been shot at. Flashing blue lights illuminated our bedroom until dawn broke.

On Sunday a group of the after school

kids arrived early to join me at the Charter Oak Cultural Center where we have been working on an art installation. On the way there they began to talk about “what happened last night”. As it turns out four of the kids made the poor choice of climbing on



Luba Lukova

the roof of our local Salvation Army to throw rocks at the passing cars. One car pulled over, and an enraged man got out and began shooting at the kids. A block away and across the street from our house a police officer heard the gun shots and began shooting at the man. As if that weren’t enough another of our kids was driving by with his uncle when a shot nearly hit him; so his uncle pulled over, took out his gun, and began shooting at the crazed man too. Two of the kids being fired at were in my car processing all this with a cer-

tain amount of detachment. I was horrified. On Monday night I returned home from art class with Dwight and was greeted by Angel (age 9) who told me that he had to “run away from an armored tank that was trying to kill people on Elmer Street.”

Apparently the Hartford P.D. had discovered where the shooter lived- a half block from the Green House. In a show of force the police descended upon the neighborhood in a dozen vehicles: cruisers, unmarked sedans, paneled trucks and an armored personnel carrier. Two percussion grenades were thrown at the house as the police broke down the door to apparently arrest the shooter. When Chris heard the blasts (which he said reminded him of the car bombs he heard in Baghdad) he ran outside and saw dozens of screaming and crying children running in every direction.

Not a bit of this veritable orgy of violence was recorded by the corporate news media. I am left with the sad reflection that yes, indeed ...we are at war my friends. And I am living, at times, in a war zone. Living in the North End of Hartford I feel a great deal of solidarity with the women and children of Baghdad, Kabul or Palestine who huddle in terror and worry about letting the kids out to go play. The wars abroad, and the violence at home, come from the same stinking source. Since we are so unwilling to look at the root causes of violence (racism, poverty, injustice, addiction) we are unable to do anything

(Please see: Notes, p9)