

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

*And the angel
said to them:
"Be not afraid, for
behold, I bring you
Good News of great joy
which will come to all
the people; for to you
is born a savior, Christ
the Lord."*

Christmas 2010

The Hartford Catholic Worker

Established November 3, 1993

Volume 18 Number 6



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, Kirstie Dodd, Joseph Cignera, Jacqueline, Christopher, Micah and Ammon Allen-Doucot.

Doctor King Said...

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr was the one brave African American he faced segregation. He told many speeches. He had a dream and his dream came true. His dream was to have blacks and whites together instead of them being separated. Like he said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate only love can do that." That is why we should all be together.

-Ashanti, 8 years old

When I saw I poor man I gave him a cookie and I said to myself if people are not the same color no matter if your not family you are still God's son or daughter. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity." He wanted to stop racism. I don't want anyone to be racist either. He believed in joy and in people. People should act better and nice.

-Tylehjah, 9 years old



Eileen R. Kinch

Planting Forgiveness

for Barbara and George Heavilin

"Forgiveness is the seed of peace,"
a woman in Indiana told me
after the Nickel Mines shooting,
clasping my hand in hers.
Her hands were warm and dry.
She had raised seven children.
Her eyes were bright.
She sat next to her husband,
who beamed at her like a newlywed.
They were ninety, both of them.

I stand now at an empty bed of earth
near the front steps, wondering
how to begin.

Forgiveness in seed packets.
Forgiveness, a letting-go,
opening my hand
and dropping a seed
into the earth, perhaps every day.



Who knows what comes from
one seed?
A crop of peace—ripe tomatoes,
juicy and splitting,
or ground cherries, small fruits
in paper lanterns?

The harvest is easy, though.
It's the planting that's hard.Ω

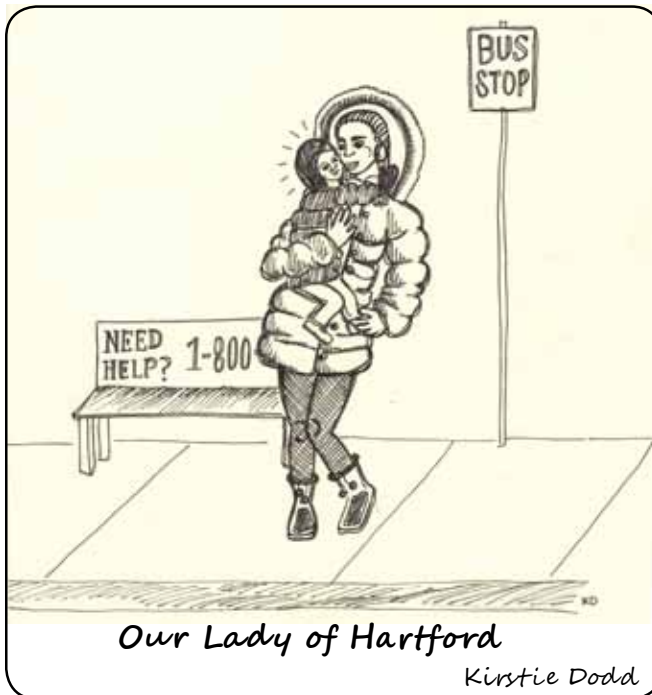


Kirstie Dodd

I grew up in a steady middle class home. There were times when we had less, and there were times when we had more, but I spent the bulk of my adolescence in comfort, in a not-too-big house, in an orderly, safe suburb of Orlando where doctors and lawyers watered their lawns in peace. My first encounters with poverty were with homeless people on the streets of the cities my family visited. I remember as a small child being fascinated by these people: who were they? What did they want from me? Their faces all seemed as though they had a story to tell. As I grew older, this fascination changed into discomfort, and eventually a willful, almost strained indifference. I ignored them because they were the other—they had need and I did not—and this need made me shrink away in repulsion. I aped the sentiments of those around me, saying, “Why should I help them? They’re just going to spend the money on booze and drugs anyway.” I said this out of fear, but I always said it with a cringe. It felt duplicitous to call myself a Christian and not help “the least of these.”

I didn’t meet Dorothy Day until college (pretty typical, I think), but with one statement she deftly solved all of the problems I had had with “altruism” as I knew it. In a response to the they’re-just-going-to-buy-drugs-crowd, Dorothy simply said, “God help us if we got just what we deserved.” This statement played a chord on my soul: we live in a world where every eye is jammed with a log and a speck. Her other writings have taught me that poverty isn’t something to shy away from; poverty should be embraced by every Christian as

a holy occupation, and we should heed the bald words of Luke 6:20: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” My transformation has been slow but complete. I am a Catholic Worker because, like most other people who find themselves in a CW community, I want my faith to instruct my life. I want to enact the spiritual and corporeal works of mercy, walk amongst the poor and be poor as Jesus and St. Francis and Peter Maurin were, follow the simplicity of the Benedictine motto *ora et labora* (“pray and work”), find God in the



Our Lady of Hartford

Kirstie Dodd

loving of other human beings, and find God in suffering and hardship.

My pilgrimage to the Hartford Catholic Worker began in May of 2010 when I graduated from St. John’s College in Annapolis (better known as the “Great Books Program”). I spent a humid summer in Annapolis as a wage slave, making money at a retail job I didn’t like very much. With \$800 in my bank account and no set plan, I began to work my way North. I started in D.C. at the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, the very first one I visited a few months before. From there, I visited a couple work-

ers in Philadelphia, a peace community in Camden, and spent time in Harrisburg at the St. Martin de Porres Catholic Worker. I arrived on the doorstep of the Hartford Catholic Worker on All Saints Day.

I spend most of my days helping around the house, cleaning, working at the Green House throughout the week and on Saturday with the kids, joking around with the “characters” that hang around the Purple House, and stealing any and all of Ammon’s favorite seats. In my free time, I like to read novels and draw whatever pops into my head. I take a lot of inspiration from Dorothy—from her life, orthodoxy, and depth of prayer—and so I often find myself praying before the statues of Mary we have sprinkled around the house for her intercession (a practice I adopted after reading Dorothy’s spiritual memoir *The Long Loneliness*). I do not know how long I am staying or where the road leads from here, but I take comfort in Dorothy’s words from an March 1975 article in *The Catholic Worker*:

“What is it all about—the Catholic Worker movement? It is, in a way, a school, a work camp, to which large hearted socially-conscious young people come to find their vocations. After some months or years, they know most definitely what they want to do with their lives. Some go into medicine, nursing, law, teaching, farming, writing, and publishing. They learn not only to love, with compassion, but to overcome fear, that dangerous emotion that precipitates violence. They may go on feeling fear, but they know the means, they have grown in faith, to overcome it.”

My hope is that in time, I may be granted the means to overcome fear, and take what I’ve learned as a Catholic Worker spread the love for the poor and nonviolence to those around me for the rest of my life. Ω

Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are, and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are. – St. Augustine

A Lucky One

Micah Allen-Doucot

(The following is the latest installment of college application essays by kids who come to the Green House.)

I stepped off the plane in Sudan unsure of what to expect and eager to compare life in Darfur to the poverty of inner city Hartford where I grew up. Two weeks in one of the poorest places on earth changed my perspective on my community, my world and my future.

For my entire life I have lived in a Catholic Worker House. Living as the only white kid (besides my brother) in my neighborhood with parents whose religion included voluntary poverty and sheltering the homeless, I thought I knew all about sharing. I shared my home with pregnant teenage girls and others who found themselves in dire need of a place to stay. I shared my parents with over 100 children from our tutoring program who needed caring and guidance. I shared my bathroom with people dying of AIDS, and “can men” who never had another place to take a shower.

The work of our community revolved around helping those who lived in poverty alongside us in finding food and shelter, and providing a safe environment for kids in an area ravaged by gang violence and drug addiction. It is this work, along with my journey to Sudan, which offers me the unique perspectives I have today.

In all honesty there were plenty of times throughout my childhood when I wished that I lived in a more “normal” household. I struggled greatly with not being overwhelmed by the suffering around me. I got tired of sharing everything I had, and found

it increasingly hard to be grateful for the things I was provided with. This disposition led to great envy of others such as my cousins and middle class friends who in my eyes took for granted the things I didn’t have, like privacy, a quiet house and most of all the undivided attention of their parents.

Then, as I began the age old transition from elementary to junior high school, I joined my Dad on a trip to bring food to refugees in a camp for displaced persons in Darfur. It was here that I discovered my understanding of both sharing and poverty to be completely askew.

One of my most vivid memories of my



Lucky Ones in Derej Camp of Darfur

trip to Sudan was one that changed the way I understood sharing in general. Over the two week period that we stayed in Darfur, we made several trips to an internally displaced person’s camp to bring food. At this camp there were between 13,000-17,000 people residing with more and more coming each day, and although our aid in retrospect was marginal, we were able to help some of the people provide food for their families.

The third or fourth time we went to the camp to bring food, we met people who had arrived just the night before. They told us that upon arriving they had no food but some of the “lucky ones” who had gotten food the day before had shared what they

had with these newcomers. After hearing this story I was amazed that people who had nothing still put themselves in the position of giving.

I began to regret everything that I had previously been ungrateful for, and realized I had just been given a lifelong lesson on perspective and what it really means to give. I returned home feeling privileged and blessed. I began to think long and hard about what I would contribute to this broken world. I now look forward to being a person who struggles to make the world and my community a better place.

I look forward to college because I

know that a liberal arts education will show me where I can direct my energies. I cannot tell you right now what my future work will be. College will help me to clarify that. I know that my work will have to be work that has its foundation in justice, and that I want what I do to make an impact on the people in the world who suffer most as a result of injustice.

I feel that I have many characteristics that make me an asset to The Amherst College Community. I will bring a unique perspective to campus. I can move between diverse groups of people and bring unity. I am someone who has matured in a community that is focused on education, hard work, and creativity. I am a good writer, enjoy sports and I am an aspiring musician. I look forward to adding a lively element to class discussions. I look forward to using my talents and skills to build a better world for all people, not just “the lucky ones”. Ω

Return to Palestine

Christopher J. Doucot

It was ten years ago that I went to Palestine for the first time. I travelled with three other Catholic Workers for the founding of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM). The ISM is a community of Palestinians, Israelis and internationals who are engaged in aggressive nonviolent actions against the Occupation of Palestine and in defense of the human rights of Palestinians.

During our stay we learned of Marwa Al-Sharif. Marwa was a nine year old Palestinian girl from Hebron who slept on a mat in the hall outside her bedroom because her family feared that the window in her room left her vulnerable to fire from Israeli soldiers who had commandeered a Palestinian home on the hill beyond the family home.

It turns out the family was prescient; one night in July, 2001 an Israeli fired round ricocheted off the metal blind of that window before penetrating the still skull of a little sleeping girl. (see: *A Shot in the Dark, HCW*; Fall 2001). When we met Marwa the bullet was still lodged in her brain. Through

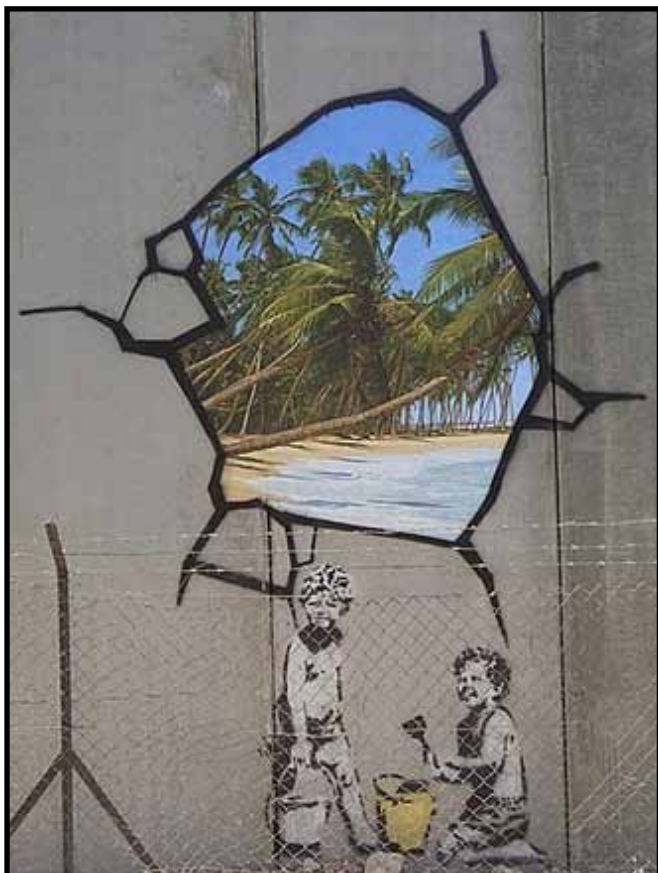
the generosity of many of our readers and the CT Children Medical Center we were able to bring Marwa, and her mom Sahar, to Hartford where the bullet was successfully removed.

Over the New Year my son Ammon accompanied me on a return trip to Occupied Palestine. The purpose of our trip was manifold: we visited Marwa and her family, we did political tours of Jerusalem and the West Bank to learn more about the impact of the Israeli occupation on the lives of ordinary Palestinians, we celebrated New Year's and Orthodox Christmas with our friend George Rishmawi, we visited sacred sites, and we participated in the nonviolent struggle for freedom in the village of Bi'lin (see *I Spent One Day in Bi'Lin*, p6).

For those of you who remember Marwa I am pleased to report that she is a healthy, mature, and artistic young woman. She is currently in her second year of a university studying design. The only lingering effects of her injury are occasional headaches while she studies and some sort of dental problems that the family

can't afford to fix. Due to the Occupation Marwa's father remains unemployed and her family poor. They support themselves through piecework sewing that Sarhar does at home. If any of you would like to help Marwa, we are accepting contributions specifically for her dental care.

In our Lent 2011 issue we hope to have an essay by Ammon on his experience and related information on several nonviolent campaigns for human rights and against occupation, as well as information on how to safely tour the Holy Land without supporting apartheid. Finally, the history of the Israel/Palestine conflict is a contentious story that is not taught in our schools. Thus, despite the billions of dollars in our taxes sent to Israel every year most of us know very little about the nature, or even the length, of the conflict. If you are interested in a brief and relatively balanced history of the conflict, I recommend *A Concise History of the Middle East* by Arthur Goldschmidt, Jr. I hope to post the pertinent chapters, as well as a bibliography of suggested reading, on our website soon. Peace. Ω



Repairs to the Apartheid Wall by street artist Banksy

I Spent One Day in Bil'in

Nicholas Furrow

I got off at the mosque in the center of town. Another man also getting off the bus waved me to follow to where some people were gathered. He exchanged a few words with a youth who then led me through a gate and to my friend's door.

We went first to see the wall. There were dry hills in every direction. We looked over the olive trees and across the valley to where there was a fence, waiting to be replaced by the concrete wall that you could see to both sides. There was a tall thin tower with a camera on top and a military building there behind the fence.

We waited for a minute until a pair of army vehicles drove up behind the fence, and we could see soldiers getting out. My friend told me they were out in force. He was calm but I could tell his mind was at work.

Back home his wife had prepared a heaping platter of chicken and rice and we gathered around the table in the living room. There was a Japanese woman staying there as well, a real estate agent from Kobe, a gentle and friendly person. Over the next day she would tell me a few times, in her limited English, that Israeli people are not normal. This while looking at soldiers with tear gas and machine guns waiting for us, unarmed protestors, regular people, doing nothing other than showing our disapproval of the wall. The wall was wrong for stealing farmland and water. Wrong for making space for Jewish-only settlements. Wrong because a concrete wall surrounding a people on all sides is a prison wall.

Before we went out for the evening, to patrol the town and organize for the next day, I spent some time with my friend's children. Such fierce, strong little people. The adults weren't trying to control them or to hide the truth from them. They were part of the resistance as well, it was in their eyes and their bodies.

It was dark now and we went to the

house of another organizer. There were a few of us there. We waited and drank first coffee, then tea. They smoked one cigarette after the other. We looked out the windows



A Palestinian from Bi'lin returns a spent tear gas canister.

and across to the military outpost every few minutes to see if the soldiers were on the move. The men with guns could raid during the night. They would find no weapons, no bombs, no papers, just people and families in their homes. Their raid would be an attempt to break our will, to shake us, to scare the children.

The guys made some phone calls and talked about the plans, but mostly we waited. They spoke to each other in Arabic about the nature of love. They kept on the topic for some time.

They told me the goal was not to confront the soldiers. The goal was to show people around the world that what was happening here was a crime, something so terrible that people would gather and shout, chant, sing, give speeches, and march until they were dispersed with military violence. Then they would regroup and march again until broken by violence. Then do it again until they were too tired to go on. Then re-

peat each week until the world took notice. They have been repeating for six years now.

The next morning we gathered in front of the mosque. Boys sold coffee from tall metal pots that they carried or propped somewhere. Townspeople young and old were there, more arriving each minute. People shook hands and greeted each other and talked.

The soldiers had put floating checkpoints on the major roads coming into town, trying to stop the media and other protestors from getting to us. The organizers were on their phones, explaining alternate routes. If they were also blocked people could park their cars and hike over the hills. And like this they arrived, Palestinians, internationals, and Israelis, soon there were hundreds of us.

A motorcade of black cars pulled in. The prime minister, Salam Fayyad, was here. Men with suits and collared shirts stood around him while he shook hands.

There was good energy in the air. Then the prime minister and his entourage took off their shoes and went into the mosque.

Everyone gathered around the stage. The organizers gave speeches and the prime minister made a speech. Middle Eastern music blasted from a truck in the intervals. I held a banner with my friend's son. Men and women waved flags and cheered. Then we started down the road.

Before we got close the soldiers launched a volley of tear gas. The canisters hissed and released their poisonous smoke in the air or on the ground. It smelled sweet at first then your face, lips, and the inside of your mouth began to sting. If one landed right near you or on both sides, you tried to hold your breath and run. You were coughing and spitting and thinking that you couldn't breathe, trying not to panic.

Townspeople offered slivers of raw onion to be rubbed around the eyes and nose. Rubbing alcohol was passed around to soak handkerchiefs and wipe the toxic powder off

(Please See: Bi'Lin p7)

Christopher J. Doucot

It is the Monday following the shooting of Congressperson Gabrielle Giffords and several innocent souls. The airwaves are full of angst and recrimination. Many liberals are aghast, rightly so, that this shooting is more than an assault on a handful of individuals but rather a manifest attack on democracy itself fueled by the vitriol of talk radio and the faux folksy aphorisms of Sarah Palin. Meanwhile many conservatives-cum-psychiatrist have diagnosed Jared Loughners deranged; derisively dismissing the notion that he put deed to their creed.

While I am heartened that leading voices on the Right have condemned this shooting it remains a preposterous notion that discourse can be without consequence. Ideas are propagated with the implicit hope that they will influence how we lead our lives. Repudiation of Loughners after the fact by those who have participated in the discourse that (mis)informed him is a cowardly attempt to avoid responsibility. To call him

crazy is to slander the mentally ill.

As for the voices on the Left bellowing righteous indignation over the shooting of a member of Congress and what that signifies, I'm peeved by their whispering in polite objection to other attacks on our democracy like the mass imprisonment of Black men and the widespread poverty in our cities.



Barrie Maguire

Meanwhile, the president's broken promise to close our gulag in Guantanamo and increased use of unmanned drones, which continue to kill dozens of civilians in Pakistan, is met with the silence of acquiescent approval.

The ideas circulating in any society are

the blood of the body politic. Our body today is infected with ideas that vilify dissent, shun the outsider, blame the poor, neglect the weak, and justify (glorify?) killing the enemy. The remedy to this pernicious affliction on our civic life is for those of us who subscribe to life giving discourses to live them; presumably that includes *at least* those among us who file into houses of worship each weekend.

The Catholic chaplain who blessed the bomb crew of the Enola Gay once told me: "It is not enough to believe in Christ, we must believe him as well." Fr. Zabelka had believed in Christ when he blessed the atomic immolation of 200,000 Japanese children of God but he didn't believe him when Jesus said to love our enemies. After visiting Hiroshima he spent the remainder of his life in penance. Imagine how our society would be transformed if just the Christians of America began believing Jesus and we started loving our enemies and neighbors as much as we love ourselves.

Here's to letting love be our penance, the works of mercy our atonement, and beloved community our vision.Ω

Bi'Lin cont.

your face.

Some people were able to get down through the valley and start up the other side. A group of soldiers advanced to meet them partway down the slope. I could see the protestors were still. The soldiers formed a semicircle and had their machine guns ready.

Acrid air blew up at us from the valley. Some youths marched by with a twisted length of metal fencing. They had gotten to part of the fence and cut the wires and ripped it out. Some people cheered but most just watched them, too tired to respond.

Eventually we all pulled back towards the town and fresh air. We were completely spent. The sun came out again and I talked to some journalists, an Israeli based in Tel

Aviv and a Palestinian in Beirut.

A family waived some of us over to their porch, and offered us fresh squeezed grapefruit juice. They picked the fruit from their tree. They said they always made juice for the internationals after the protests.

People were leaving now, to get back to Ramallah or Jerusalem. Shared taxis were organized, photos and emails were exchanged.

I learned the next day about Jawaher Abu Rahmah, who died from the gas. I hadn't met her. My friend had showed me the video capturing the death of her brother the previous year, shot in the chest with a tear gas canister (likely American made) from close range. The violent murder was terrifying but the courage he showed was inspirational. Like brother, like sister.

I had always learned about the protest and

violence from a distance. I would shake my head and ask my friends, 'Did you hear what the Israelis are doing in Bil'in?' But to go there and take part, to follow the lead of the people of Bil'in, this was to join in the shared struggle, a universal struggle for our principles and rights.

(Ed. Note: Ammon and I attended the wake for Jawaher Abu Rahmah. A week after her death we joined 500 Israelis, 1000 Palestinians and a couple hundred internationals for the weekly demonstration against the wall. To disperse the demonstration the Israeli soldiers used a water cannon to douse us with sewage followed by a cascade of tear gas. For video click on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTEAHMuHCKM&feature=player_embedded

(Nick is currently working on a master's studying Human Rights and Democratization at the EIUC school in Venice, Italy.)Ω

Dear Chris, Jackie and Brian,

May the Lord give you peace! This past weekend I flew to LA for a conference, and as is my custom I brought along a stack of CW newsletters to read. I like to linger over them, and so they have a tendency to pile while I wait for the “right” time—unfortunately this means that I sometimes have 5-6 issues to read!

This time, as I was reading about your quotidian life, I got to thinking about all my experiences with you guys. I remember packing endless bags of groceries. Remember the Thanksgivings when we would have 90-100 orders and the backyard of the Green house was a giant assembly line, with the coffee steaming as we fought to stay warm? Or what about the time Chris scrawled “1 lb green beans” and everyone thought he wrote “115”? Of course, I still have scars from all the razzing I got from Jackie, Sarah, and Morliana. I never was able to dish it out as fast as they could. On the other hand, after listening to me complain, Jackie suggested that they all say affirming and uplifting things about me instead, which was worse.

I remember the time Chris came to speak to my first year seminar. He was in full bore angry prophet mode and afterwards one of my best students (who later did medical volunteer work in Latin America) asked me, “Does he enjoy what he is doing?” I told her you did, though she didn’t believe me at first. I would love to ask her what she thinks now, after a few years in the field.

I remember neighborhood clean-ups with Trinity students. I spent one of them in the old furniture pantry, sorting broken furniture and explaining Christian anarchism to the women’s volleyball team. Did they ever come back after that?

I remember sitting in your basement picking through a box of donated Tim’s, and then explaining to my kids where they came from and what they symbolized. I was building off Malcolm X’s trenchant observations about “nigger shoes.”

Over the years we have laughed, and shared, and argued. There have been many times when I have been in awe at what you’ve done, and times when I shake my head in wonder. I’ve been in trenches with

you, and a few times I felt like I was on the outside looking in. I have even sent you a few bucks from time to time, though you kept spending it on “godless communist propaganda” (or whatever that bishop used to remonstrate Dorothy Day about, when he was sending her a check every month).

But in going through all this, I realized that, in all these years, I never said thank you. So, belatedly: THANK YOU! Thank you for all the opportunities you have given me to go beyond myself, to share myself with God’s poor, to help build up an institution of grace to counter the structures of sin all around us. Thank you for all you have done and for remaining a sign of contradiction and hope to the world.

Ad multos Annos!

May the Lord bless you and keep you,
May He turn His face to you and bless,
May he give you His peace!

Yours in Christ,

David Cruz-Uribe, SFO

P.S. I have enclosed a small check.

Please don’t spend it on godless communist propaganda! ☺

St. Martin’s Calendar

+ Please join us on **Tuesday, February 1, March 1, and April 5 at 7:30PM** for the celebration of Liturgy at 18 Clark St. Hartford.

+ Please join us on **Good Friday April 22** in praying the Stations of the Cross at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton. We will gather at 10:00 at Pleasant Valley Elementary School, 380 Pleasant Valley Road, Groton,

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



Brian Kavanagh

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!

Notes, cont.

in through the swelling. I was pretty well spent by the time we closed for our Holiday. I did a lot of sleeping and resting during the holiday break I want to thank everyone who helped out and pitched in, especially Joe, Kirstie and Amanda!

+ To bury the dead: We were overcome with grief upon learning of the death of friend and next door neighbor Tyrone. He was a very gentle, hard-working dad and we grieve with the McNeil mom and sisters. Chris and the boys helped shovel the family



Catholic Worker ninja elf, Ammon Allen-Doucot, gives war the boot!

out the day before the funeral.

There are plenty of other memories that may not fit under particular Works of Mercy, but still qualify; I overheard some hilarious back-and-forth between Joe and Jada (age 5) while they played doll house one Saturday afternoon. Denise and Ms. Pat worked over the heads of little and big kids sewing quilted pillows and Christmas stockings. Danielle and Justin filled the cars with kids to go support the older ones at their basketball games. Kristie G. and the Northwest Catholic kids sorted toys and made the Purple House look like Santa's workshop. Ms. Edna helped us supervise

Mother's shopping before we closed up for the holidays. Chris and Ammon returned safe (although tear-gassed) from their Christmas visit to Palestine.

We give thanks at this time of Christmas for the example of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, good Catholics that stayed the Faith and challenged all those people of faith, clergy and lay people alike to live up to the lesson of Christ who calls us to a life of hospitality and mercy. This New Year, begun in fear, shootings and storms call us all to add a bit of hospitality and mercy to our own daily lives. In the quiet that now follows a day with 24 inches of snow, I end with



Alex is all smiles at our Christmas Party

a psalm /prayer from Thomas Merton:

...I beg you to keep me in this silence
so that I may learn from it
The word of your peace
And the word of your mercy
And the word of your gentleness
to the world
And that through me perhaps
your word of peace
May make itself heard
Where it has not been possible for
anyone to hear it
For a long time. Ω

When the white stars talk together like sisters
And when the winter hills
Raise their grand semblance in the freezing night,
Somewhere one window
Bleeds like the brown eye of an open
force.

Hills, stars,
White stars that stand above the eastern stable.

Look down and offer Him.
The dim adoring light of your belief.
Whose small Heart bleeds with infinite fire.

Shall not this Child
(When we shall hear the bells of His amazing voice)

Conquer the winter of our hateful century?

And when His Lady Mother leans upon the crib,
Lo, with what rapiers

Those two loves fence and flame their
brillancy!

A Christmas Card

Thomas Merton, 1947



Carlina Hines

Here in this straw lie planned the fires
That will melt all our sufferings:
He is our Lamb, our holocaust!

And one by one the shepherds, with their snowy feet,
Stamp and shake out their hats upon the stable dirt,
And one by one kneel down to look upon their Life. Ω

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Notes From De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen-Doucot

What do elves have to do with the Works of Mercy? Everything if you happen to be one of the many elves that show up at the HCW during the times between Thanksgiving and Christmas. At the HCW elves were very busy doing the works of mercy. It has been fun today to sit and write down some nice memories of the Works. Perhaps these are not the strict definitions of the Works of Mercy but I think they are easily covered in the WOM manual. Let's see...

+ To feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty: Andrea cooked a huge traditional Puerto Rican meal for Christmas Eve; Brian, Dennis and the dudes made gallon after gallon of hot cocoa for about 80 kids at the Christmas party at Voluntown; Jeannie and Bob sprang for pizza for the whole party! The kids decorated gaudy hardly edible cookies with sprinkles and frosting; the Knights of Columbus from St. Brigid's Council dropped off several dozen crates of fantastic oranges to distribute to the families; Panera bread via Vicky, Vince and Diane gave us bagels for after school and Saturday mornings. Fred and the small Christian community he belongs to at Storrs took me to Costco to buy the cream cheese in 25 gallon tubs to put on the bagels! Kirstie and Joe whipped

up brownies and "puppy chow" candy for the kids after school. Jeanne made healthy and tasty snacks before tutoring. The Robothams gifted us with the biggest piece of meat I have ever seen in my life! Northwest Catholic, St. Helena's, St. Tim's, and



St. Anne's kept our emergency food pantry going and our food co-op thriving.

+ To clothe the naked: Many churches contributed winter coats and sweatshirts for us to distribute. Mrs. Erdmans in Minnesota knit beautiful warm woolens for the kids, Steve D. and my art teacher Mary, and others, brought us warm, gently used things to put on the neighborhood kids.

+ To visit and ransom the captive: Our friend and almost relative Kathy M. helped us to navigate the frightening world of child court, jail, and hospital with one of our

young friends who is trying to get away from the gangs (enjoying a large resurgence) in Hartford, Big Kev (our in-house scholar) volunteered a couple of nights a week at the prison up at Enfield AND pulled off honors at MCC while working full time at Home Depot!!

+ To shelter the homeless: Marisol, Carlos, and the kids are very happy to report that they are hoping to close on a house in East Hartford and will likely be moving out by March. We will greatly miss them and the joy they have brought to the Purple House. Aryon's dinner grace of saying thank you for "laughing" every night makes us all laugh! Ellie is so sweet and kind to EVERYONE that comes to the

Green House and is always ready to lend a helping hand setting the table or cooking. With 13 of us there is a lot of cooking going on.

+ To visit the sick: Well, here is where the elves really worked! I have been struggling with a double ear infection since June. Having tried every natural remedy known to women, I finally went on antibiotics.

After 3 months on antibiotics I had the hideous experience of having 'wicks' stuck in my ear canals so the medicine could seep

(Please see: Notes, p9)