

The Hartford Catholic Worker



St. Martin De Porres House
St. Brigid House

"The Poor Tell Us Who We Are" -Philip Berrigan



*O paradise, O child's world!
Where all the grass lives
And all the animals are aware!
The huge sun, bigger than the house
Stands and streams with life in the east
While in the west a thunder cloud
Moves away forever.*

*Thomas Merton
from Grace's House*

Grace's Dog

Brian Kavanagh

Fall 2019

The Hartford Catholic Worker

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The Hartford Catholic Worker is published quarterly 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 a 501c3 tax exempt organization. We do not seek or accept state or federal funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, purplehousecw@gmail.com and www.hartfordcatholicworker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Baby Beth Donovan, Dwight Teal Jr., Sasean Sanders, Jacqueline, and Christopher Allen-Douçot.



Friends, the needs of our Beloved Community are many, but so are our gifts and talents- the trick is to connect those with needs to those with corresponding gifts and talents.

☺ Maybe your grand kids are grown and you have a need to be buoyed by the innocent energy of little ones. Well, we have little ones learning to read that could feed your soul while you feed their minds.

✂ Maybe you “suffer under the burden of your prosperity” (this is a verbatim quote from the Prayers of the Faithful I heard at a wealthy parish a few years back). Well, we can answer your prayers by accepting donations made out to the Hartford Catholic Worker and mailed to **18 Clark St. Hartford 06120**. Unburdening yourself can help keep our heat and lights on, help families in the neighborhood keep their fridge full, and help buy books for our young people in college. **We depend upon your financial support to do our work.**

✂ Maybe you have the need for order and cleanliness. Well, the Green House is in constant need of cleaning.

✂ Maybe your gift is praying. Well, by all means pray for us! And join us for mass at 7:30 PM on the first Tuesday of the month.

☺ Maybe you have a talent that is unappreciated at home? Denise has the talent of sewing- I didn’t appreciate it and was skeptical when she offered to share this gift with the kids. Wow! was I wrong. The kids, boys and girls, love sewing with Denise and have created pillows, pajamas, and quilts.

What is your talent? Photography? Gardening? Cooking? Baking? Writing? Story-telling?

Come! Share that talent with this Beloved Community of ours. We are eager to welcome you. ☺

I Thank You God for Most This

e.e. cummings

i thank You God for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinte which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today, and this is the sun’s birthday; this is the birth day of life and love and wings; and of the gay great happening illimitably the earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing breathing any- lifted from the no of all nothing- human merely being doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

I Thank You God for Most This

e.e. cummings



There is a Vine

Christopher J. Douçot

By Bastille Day the vine was twenty feet long. Beneath its dinner plate sized leaves, and behind turmeric blossoms this volunteer from the compost heap bore three butternut squash about the size of a quanco (don't look it up, a quanco is the ball used in rugby).

Everything about this plant gratifies me. It appeared unannounced, it thrived on the rinds and peels- the essence of its ancestors that we had returned to the earth. It drank from the well of the earth that had been filled by melting snow and replenished by late afternoon thunderstorms. It's six-inch tendrils kept unfurling and elongating all summer in search of something to hold onto, something to give it the strength to withstand the gusts that come with the rain.

Yellow spots have begun appearing on it's leaves; at thirty feet the vine grows no more. It's end is near. The shells of its progeny, ripening from pale green to khaki, hold persimmon hued flesh which will soon nourish me with thiamin, niacin, and vitamin B-6.

This vine, and the repair work



Buddyboy and Me with his kids Carmen and Maria from half a lifetime ago

I completed on the Purple House bathroom, the sacred and the profane, has me thinking of my friends Dennis, Fred, Frances, and Michael.

I started reminiscing about Dennis when I was doing some demolition

in the bathroom and saw the subfloor boards that we put in back in the summer of '93. I met Dennis when I was just 14. Dennis was a carpenter who took me under his wing teaching me about life as he taught me how to swing a hammer. Dennis died young a few years back just after he retired. He left me his tools which I'm using to fix the bathroom. He also left me with the confidence to even try. My apprenticeship with Dennis was not simply about how to join wood. BuddyBoy mentored me in how to be a man that could be a reliable friend, a gentle husband, and a nurturing father.

Smoothing caulk along a joint in the new shower walls I had the belated epiphany that our relationship has informed our outlook at the Hartford Catholic Worker from the beginning. I had my troubles as a teen, but BuddyBoy didn't try to rescue me, and he didn't do service hours for court, school, or God showing me how to fix stuff; rather he set forth to have a right relationship (shalom) with me that evolved over time from mentor, to friend, to brother. I miss you Denny and I hope I can be, like you, somebody's mentor, friend, and brother.

On April 28 Michael True

died. During my sophomore year at Holy Cross I underwent what [Paulo Friere](#) described as conscientization, or consciousness raising. Among my guides were David O'Brien- who was



Michael True, Servant of Peace

my teacher and is now my friend, and David's decades long friend Michael True. Michael taught English, poetry especially, at Assumption College in Worcester for three decades.

Michael was also among the first academics to engage with peace studies and nonviolence as subjects worthy of an academic discipline. I first met Michael on a day of torrential rain on the campus of St. Joseph College in West Hartford. He was there for the New England Catholic Peace Fellowship Conference. I was there to introduce myself to [Plowshares](#) activist and artist [Tom Lewis](#). I struck up a conversation with a joyful young woman who happened to be Michael's daughter Betsy. The pride she had in her father was the kind of blind, generous pride that usually goes in the opposite direction. I later worked at a community mental health center with her brother John who shared stories of being harassed by FBI and IRS agents because of Michael, and his wife Mary Pat's, efforts to end war. John, too, deeply admired

(Please see: *Vine*, p4)

There is a Vine, cont.

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his dad despite the IRS' seizure of his bicycle. Betsy insisted that I meet her dad and buy his book [Justice Seekers. Peace Makers: 32 Portraits in Courage](#). I did. I devoured his book that day learning about: Ammon Hennacy, Eugene Debs, Lucy Stone, Liz McAlister, Frances Crowe, and others.

The True household was the free air bnb of Worcester for every sort of radical that either came through town or was brought there by Michael. Dorothy Day was a frequent guest who didn't want to disturb the Trues in the morning, but also couldn't wait for her coffee, so she would drink instant coffee made with hot tap water after her morning prayers. *Yuck!*

Our second son is named for another True guest: [Ammon Hennacy](#), a cantankerous Catholic Worker who likely had the unrequited hots for Dorothy. When my Ammon was old enough to appreciate stories about the original Ammon, Michael generously spent an afternoon reminiscing with us.

Michael was not a native New Englander, and it showed. Michael was

an Okie, he was patient and gentle. He spun yarns, and committed puns. If he had been born a half century earlier, it would have been easy to imagine him sitting around a campfire in denim and flannel sharing stories of the cowboy life. Instead Michael wore well-worn tweed and the occasional bow tie while sitting in a classroom sharing stories of the radical life.

I was a part of one of those stories after I was arrested with Michael, and others, at Raytheon's headquarters sometime in the 90's. After our arrest we were led from our cells one by one to a cold concrete block room that was barren beyond the television monitor that hung on a wall. We soon learned that the monitor was our portal to a distant courtroom where a judge would arraign us. I remember remarking on the indiscernible voice of the judge and the fast food nature of our drive through arraignment. Michael, of course, did not reference Jack in the Box or Ronald McDonald but George Orwell.

Joining Michael and I that day in a cell straight out of Orwell's [Oceania](#) was Frances Crowe, then in her 80's. Frances died on August 27th. She was 100. [Frances](#) became an antiwar activist on August 6, 1945. As she told the story she was home ironing in New Orleans when she heard the news that an atomic bomb had been dropped on the people of Hiroshima. She unplugged the iron and went looking for a peace center.

She didn't find one but ended up in a used bookstore whose keeper directed her to books by [Leo Tolstoy](#). Tolstoy was a Russian count who gave up his status and wealth on his spiritual journey towards a nonviolent life. Tolstoy's ideas were inspired by the ideas of a Christian socialist minister from Massachusetts,

[Adin Ballou](#). Gandhi initiated a correspondence with Tolstoy and incorporated Tolstoy's ideas into his emerging understanding of nonviolence.

Frances nonviolently fought the good fight every day after. During the Vietnam war she was living in Northampton, MA attempting to provide draft counseling for young men. With few men coming to the local peace center Frances went to them picking up hitchhikers travelling between Amherst and Northampton; the cost of a ride was a lesson on war and the imperative to resist. During one action at the gates of Westover Air Force base Frances, wearing a non la and "pajamas", the conical straw hat and clothes worn by poor Vietnamese villagers, participated in a "die in". Years later a veteran who was briefly stationed at Westover in between deployments to [Vietnam told Frances](#) that seeing her "die" struck him viscerally and prompted him to apply for conscientious objector status rather than return to bombing.

My favorite Frances story may be her campaign to bring the radio program Democracy Now! to the Pioneer valley. After her appeals to the local college and public radio stations failed Frances, in her 80's!, launched a pirate radio station, with Ed Russell, out of her home to broadcast [Democracy Now!](#) Shamed, *nay inspired*, by Frances WMUA broadcasting from the University of Massachusetts broadcasts Democracy Now! daily at 8AM.

Jackie and I visited Frances on March 1. Her body was failing but her mind was still sharp. She shared with us stories of her life. She defied rigid gender roles to ask her soon to be husband to dance when they met in college. She defied the police to climb through a window at an administrative building at UMASS that had been occupied by students protesting [Pentagon research](#) on anthrax. A local doctor concerned about hunger striking students wanted a way inside the building; Frances was the obvious person to escort the doc in.

Shortly before she turned 100 Frances was interviewed by the [NY Times for her obituary](#) (kinda creepy, to be honest). She said: *"I don't want a party.*



Frances Crowe, Seeker of Justice

©Paul Shoul

I want an action that will accomplish something... Somebody just told me that at my age, the way to be happy was to play cards all day, and I said, 'Hogwash!'... "People my age can afford to take risks, to be arrested, after you've raised your family, now is the time for us, the elders, to act."

As our visit ended Frances invited Jackie and I to take a book from her library. I chose [Philosophy of Nature](#) by Jacques Maritain. Maritain's ideas on personalism greatly influenced Dorothy Day. Maritain wrote: *"The means are the ends in the process of becoming."* Frances lived that maxim. On the cover page she wrote: *"Chris- Read and enjoy, Love, Frances"*. I will read and enjoy, and I will try to act like you did, Frances, for as long as I can, but I don't think I'm making it to 100.

Finally, I want to remember [Fred Costello](#) who passed away on July 31. He was 82. Fred was a country boy from the Berkshires who made his way to Worcester Poly Tech and then Hong Kong and the upper circles of corporate America.

I never knew corporate Fred. I knew Pop. On the day we bought the abandoned building that became St. Martin De Porres House I was asked to participate in a nonviolent mission to the front lines of the war in Bosnia. My trip was covered by local media outlets and read by Nancy Costello. One of Nancy and Fred's sons was in the marines and had just been deployed. Nancy found our phone number and called Jackie asking her to pray for her son's safety as she promised to pray for mine. Nancy and Fred also sent along a thousand dollar donation which quintupled what we had raised to fix the house. A year or two later we finally met Nan and Pop at Wisdom House during a Dan Berrigan retreat.

Nan and Pop were middle school sweethearts! whose love for each other somehow magnified the love they had for others. When it came to kindness they were an indomitable couple. Despite becoming regular, and generous, donors our relationship with them was hardly defined by the money they shared. When our boys were not yet ten Nan and Pop invited us to spend a week with them in their Florida winter home. When we arrived at their home, in the minivan they had rented us, Am-

mon blurted out *"Nan, you didn't tell us you lived in a mansion!"* While I cringed in embarrassment Nan and Pop just howled at the unfiltered truth of a child and, to be fair, more than one kid who has come to the Green and Purple Houses has told us that *we* live in a mansion!

We would visit Nan and Pop in Florida every winter for 20 years. Our days were spent with Nan, Jackie, and Ammon going to art museums and painting, while Fred, Micah, and I would go fishing. While the boys swam we couples would have hours long conversations after dinner. We discussed the church, my travels to war zones, spirituality, and our mutual friendship with Fr. Dan, but we also talked about family. In a gentle, loving way Fred listened to difficult stories from my growing up, he was understanding but still he urged me to keep working on a relationship with my



Micah Allen-Douçot with Pop Costello, Patient Patron of Parents
dad. I have Fred.

As our boys got older Nan and Pop became surrogate grandparents to them, especially Pop. Jackie's dad died when she was still just a girl so my boys only had one grandpa until it became clear that Fred would be their other grandpa.

As the years went by our dinner conversations at times included stories that were repeats; I'm sure I was as guilty as Pop. I suspect one oft repeated story was retold on purpose since it's telling usually coincided with us

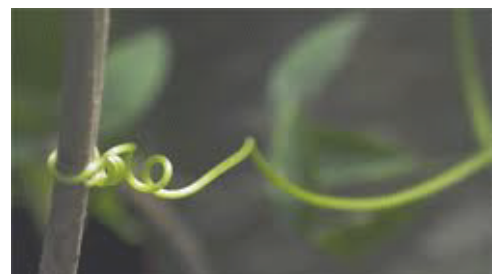
having shared some difficulty we were having with one of our boys. After sharing our parental woe Fred would recall with candor and gusto the time his youngest child screamed to her father *"I hate you!"*, to wit Fred replied: *"Great! I'm six for six!"* After a laugh he would console us and urge us to never give up on our boys- no matter what.

Pop wasn't like a father to me, with his easy, avuncular gentleness he was more like the uncle I wish I had. Fred was very much a father figure to Jackie; indeed, Jackie knew Fred twice as long as she knew her dad. Fred was always kind, compassionate, and supportive of us but he also always held us accountable. He was patient with our complaining- that at times I'm sure spilled over into whining- but he never would let us settle into self-pity.

Jackie recalls one such moment when we were deep in our despair and Fred said to her *"you can't lose hope, the people in your life are looking to you for hope,"* he told Jackie that she had been *"blessed by God to love like few others have been able to"* and that she had a responsibility to embrace, not abandon, this *"grace that God has given [her] because not everyone has been similarly graced"*.

When we whined to Fred, he never dismissed our weariness, our exasperation, or our outrage. He knew we are weary because we love. He knew we are exasperated because we see love squandered. And he knew we are outraged because we see love denied. Still, Fred always brought us back to love because Fred knew love.

There is a vine that is love. It weaves through time and across creation. With it's tendrils we are held up when we can't stand any longer. It draws from creation all that is needed to sustain us, and it fills us with all that is needed to sustain creation. I didn't plant the seed, or even notice the vine until it matured, and yet- without my asking- the fruit of this vine sustains me with hope, grace, and love. Ω



The Little Way in the Age of Trump

Terrence J. Moran

(Fr. Moran is Director of the Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity at Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth)

Talking with Jerry Berrigan about the now over a year-long pre-trial incarceration of his mother, Elizabeth McAlister, for the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 action, I was struck by his observation, “She has done her action and each day in jail holds for her the opportunity to follow the little way.”

The phrase, “the little way” originates of course with [St. Therese of Lisieux](#) (1873-1897). Therese was the prom queen of 1950’s Catholicism. Nearly every church had a statue of “The Little Flower,” – an attractive, habited, young girl; dainty sandaled feet; like Miss America with a bunch of roses in her arms. She lived a constrained, unremarkable life, going from a bourgeoisie family at age 15 to a cloistered Carmelite convent where she died of tuberculosis at the age of 24.

The posthumous publication of her autobiography *The Story of a Soul* made her one of the spiritual teachers of the modern era. Most people, including Dorothy Day, are at first put off by her cloying prose. But eventually they were won over by the depth and power of her “little way.” Dorothy Day wrote a biography of [Therese](#) (1960), her only non-autobiographical work. Dorothy remarks, “It was the worker, the common man, who first spread her fame by word of mouth. It was the masses who proclaimed her a saint. It was the people.”

Dorothy published her biography of Therese in 1960 – during the Cold War, the beginnings of the civil rights movement, the sexual revolution, a few years before the Second Vatican Council. Yet her words have a striking prescience fifty nine years later: “With governments becoming stronger and more centralized, the common person feels his ineffectiveness. When the whole world sees given over to preparedness for war

and the show of force, the message of Therese is quite a different one. She speaks to our condition. Is the atom a small thing? And yet what havoc it has wrought. Is her little way a small contribution to the life of the spirit? It has all the power of the spirit of Christianity behind it....”

Artist Brother [Mickey McGrath, OSFS](#) has an eloquent illustration of Therese and her little way. She stands with her back to the viewer in front of a steaming sink



Mickey McGrath, OSFS

piled high with dishes (a scenario too familiar to any Catholic Worker). She raises a plate above her head in the gesture of a priest elevating the host at mass and the billows of steam become incense, become the dazzling cloud of the mount of transfiguration. This is Therese’s little way; to make ordinary life Eucharistic; to transform by love the most insignificant gestures into an invincible spiritual force.

Therese’s field of action was a claustrophobic convent of very peculiar people whom she committed herself to love. She encourages me in my own constant struggle to insure that activism for change comes from

a place of love and not ego-enhancement or violence. I confess that I do not love Donald Trump. Indeed, I feel immensely superior to him. I feel superior to all his followers, to every MAGA hat-wearer, to everyone who cheers him. My sense of contempt and superiority might perhaps succeed in getting Trump out of office. **But it will not build the Beloved Community.** It will not release Eucharistic energy. It is just another manifestation of “the preparedness for war and the show of force.” As Dan Berrigan observed, “a revolution is interesting insofar as it avoids like the plague the plague it promised to heal.” And so Dorothy Day found Therese’s revolution intensely interesting.

Surprisingly perhaps, Therese had a deep interest in Asia and volunteered to be sent to a Carmelite convent in Vietnam. I find in her little way many resonances with Buddhist practice. Kainin Katagiri Roshi, founder of the Minneapolis Zen Center, spoke words identical to those of Therese, “Do small things with great hope.” Therese’s words resonate with those of Thich Nhat Hanh – “Greet life with a smile.” I think of Therese when I read a poem *Kwan Yin* by Laura Fargas. Kwan Yin, “*She Who Hears the Cries of the World*,” is a beloved female bodhisattva – someone who continually postpones her own enlightenment until all beings are freed from suffering.

Of the many buddhas I love best the girl who will not leave the cycle of pain before anyone else.

It is not the captain declining to be saved on the sinking ship, who may just want to ride his shame out of sight.

She is at the brink of never being hurt again but pauses to say, All of us. Every blade of grass.

Therese the bodhisattva said, “I

(Please See: Read and Riot p.8)

shall not be able to take any rest until the end of the universe, as long as there are souls to save...I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth." All of us. Every blade of grass.

In a retreat talk a few years ago, Liz McAlister lyrically described a "little way" for our age:

"We are in a period of struggle with a movement spiritually deep and broadly connected – and a movement that knows it has to go deeper and broader yet. And we need to keep connecting across barriers of faith and ideology. The good news

is that we have not collapsed or imploded with despair! Many of us understand that a deeper resistance is summoned of us. We are trying, praying, working to be strategic, to be faithful, to be human. And we know that we must keep at it:

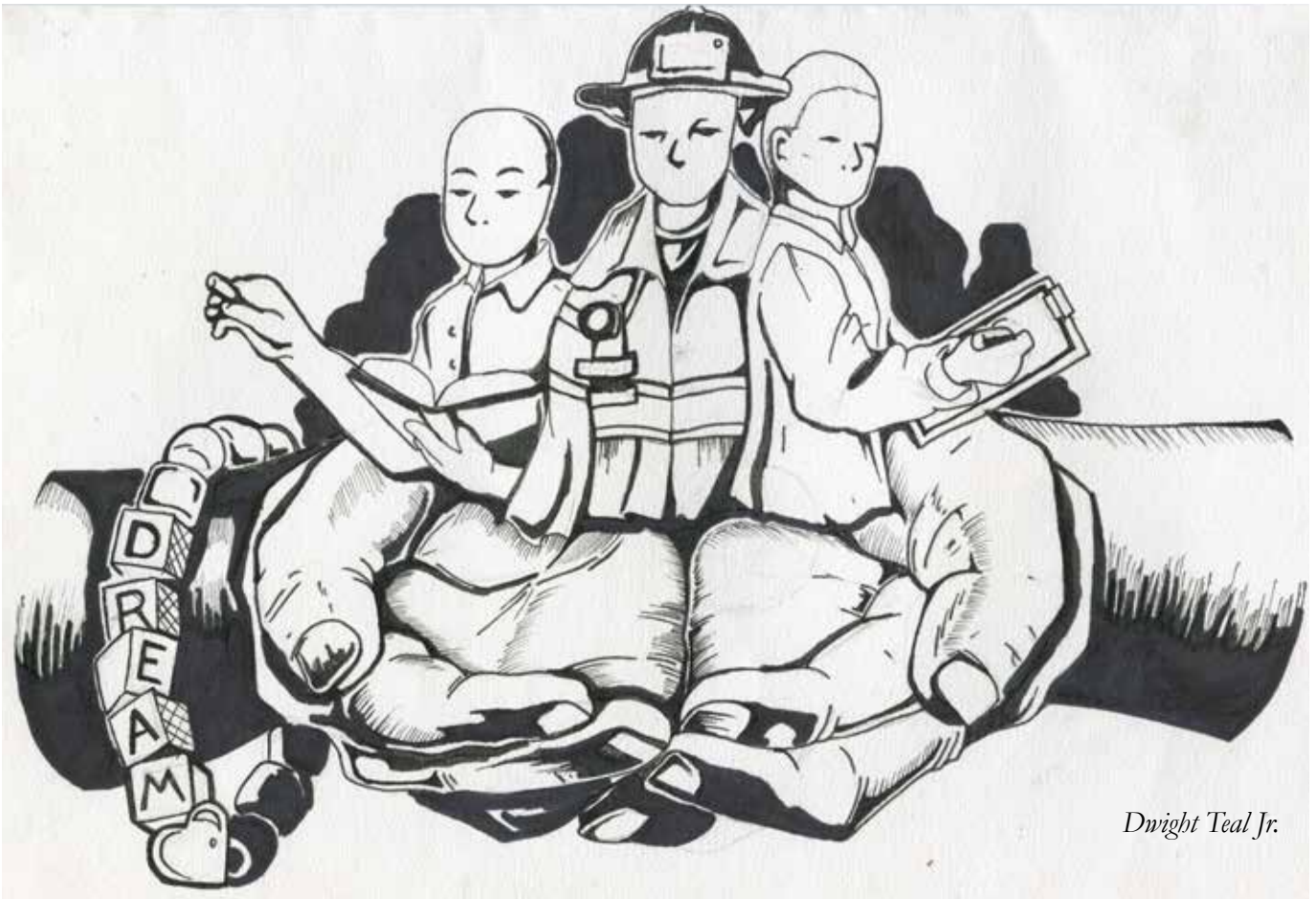
*conspire the next steps
be in conversation
be in community
be in the streets
refuse to fight
disrupt business as usual
prefer poetry to ideology*

pray for victims before nations.

7

The powers of death and destruction appear to reign. But they are undone. In short, dear friends: Be not awed by the mayhem with which the powers of this world would bamboozle us. When you light a candle let it mean intransigent resistance. When you pray, imagine a new world is possible. And then live it."

A little way; the spark of a candle; deeper resistance; intransigent resistance. As Therese wrote, "I simply sing



Collective Nouns for Humans in the Wild

of mine. I wish it to believe." Ω

A group of grandmothers is a tapestry. A group of toddlers, a jubilation (see also: a bewailing). A group of librarians is an enlightenment. A group of visual artists is a bioluminescence. A group of short story writers is a Flannery. A group of musicians is — a band.

A resplendence of poets.
A beacon of scientists.
A raft of social workers.

group of hospice workers, a grace.

A group of schoolchildren is a target.

A group of first responders is a valiance. A group of peaceful protestors is a dream. A group of special education teachers is a transcendence. A group of neonatal ICU nurses is a divinity. A

Humans in the wild, gathered and feeling good, previously an exhilaration, now: a target.

A target of concert-goers.
A target of movie-goers.
A target of dancers.

—[Kathy Fish](#)

Notes, cont.

atmosphere suits his gentle spirit and needs better...and Brian keeps him in Chinese food and pizza. He is deciding if he wants to remain with the community when he turns 21 in January and his disability support allows him his own space in Section 8 Housing. We are trying to decide if he needs the live in support of our community long term, but in the end the choice will be his.

The Workers have been a busy lot as well. Brian continues his weekly vigil for non violence at the Federal building every Friday at noon. He patiently takes care of lots of things like thank you notes and car appointments. He takes charge of the mass volume of recycling and clothing donations. He picks up the vegetables, backpacks, food donations and gifts from area churches and coordinates the yearly linen drive. He makes himself available (spiritually and physically) to the older Green House kids ...taking them for appointments or out for a pizza and beer. He is our anchorite and holds the whole place together with his disciplined prayer life. Many a day his morning hugs that come with a joke and a cup of coffee make it impossible to be in a bad mood.

He calmly puts up with all of us "youngsters" that swirl around him with our bossy, critical impatient whirling dervish of activity. I frequently tell him that when I am 76...my butt better be on a beach someplace. Sasean is juggling a LOT right now. He is under a great deal of pressure from all areas. UConn and the HCW share a Public Ally (see; <https://>

publicallies.org/ for more info). This means that Shizz spends his days at Fred E. Wish Grammar school on Barbour St. with the Husky Sport program. After school he leads the volunteers at the HCW after school program. He is starting a teen night for the older kids. We have jokingly called him the Mayor since he was about 8 years old...but he really should be the mayor! We are hard on the ones we need most...and as Ammon reminded me...just doing the day work at the school was pretty exhausting. We are so glad that this opportunity at Public Allies will give Sasean the financial help he needs to get back to college. This is my shout out to let the world know how much we love and appreciate him! Baby Beth continues in her role of the house mother/kitchen boss. You better wash your hands before snack and say please and thank you or else! She has recently helped the folks who ran the food pantry at St Mikes continue the ministry from our place after the church was closed. The master coordinator...she schedules everything from field trips to chefs for meals. She also works on the fundraising committee! I am very grateful for her taking on a great deal of my work so that I am able to deal with some heavy family issues and my poor health. Chris is teaching classes on race, class, gender and peace studies at both CCSU and U of H this semester. He continues to do ALL of the administrative work. He tackles repairs at both the houses and the Ahimsa at Voluntown. This summer when we were all exhausted after summer program ended he ripped out and repaired and rebuilt the

purple house tub and shower saving us thousands of dollars! He is the person most requested for speaking at schools and churches. His mastery of fishing has kept us in seafood this summer as well. Every year we get a few more kids who learn to love fishing and boating with him.

I myself have been really struggling with some painful stuff in my family. This past weekend I spent time with my "other family" of the bigger Catholic Worker movement. Many of us are in great pain. A dear friend has cancer and is facing radiation twice a day. She suffers and struggles with not only physical pain. Another struggles with a child too sensitive to be at peace in the brutality of our culture. Yet another struggles to support an addicted child. Many of our children seem to be suffering and unwell...but we seem unable to connect their spiritual health (or lack thereof) to the bigger picture of our broken world and separation from God's Spirit. We have allowed corporations and the greedy people who run them to take over our governing. We have abdicated the resources given to us by a loving God and meant for human needs to be pillaged for profit. The greedy have quickened the pace of sucking the planet dry. Their commercials, television shows and computer games have sold us a "sexual revolution" that promotes rape culture and denies the sacredness of our bodies and any responsibility to honor the flesh that holds the Spirit of Christ within us.. Those in power protect predators and work hard at trying to get us to turn on the "least among us" with the myths of scarcity and fear mongering.

Their only hope is that we turn on each other so that they can continue to profit from stealing the world's resources unchecked. "They" are only individuals but the policies and laws they enact in their personal ignorance, prejudice and evil continue to institutionalize racism and climate change. There is a great deal of spiritual death, as anyone who has ever seen a post on RICH KIDS OF INSTAGRAM can attest. The way things have gotten so much harder for most of us seems quite



Our latest mural painted by Jackie, Dwight, and the Green House kids

Grace's House

Thomas Merton

*On the summit: it stands on a fair summit
Prepared by winds: and solid smoke
Rolls from the chimney like a snow cloud.
Grace's house is secure.*

*No blade of grass is not counted,
No blade of grass forgotten on this hill.
Twelve flowers make a token garden.
There is no path to the summit—
No path drawn
To Grace's house.*

*All the curtains are arranged
Not for hiding but for seeing out.
In one window someone looks out and winks.
Two gnarled short
Fortified trees have knotholes*

*From which animals look out.
From behind a corner of Grace's house
Another creature peeks out.*

*Important: hidden in the foreground
Most carefully drawn
The dog smiles, his foreleg curled, his eye like
an aster.
Nose and collar are made with great attention:
This dog is loved by Grace!*

*And there: the world!
Mailbox number 5
Is full of Valentines for Grace.
There is a name on the box, name of a family
Not yet ready to be written in language.*

*A spangled arrow there
Points from our Coney Island
To her green sun-hill.*

Between our world and hers

*Runs a sweet river:
(No, it is not the road,
It is the uncrossed crystal
Water between our ignorance and her truth.)*

*O paradise, O child's world!
Where all the grass lives
And all the animals are aware!
The huge sun, bigger than the house
Stands and streams with life in the east
While in the west a thunder cloud
Moves away forever.*

*No blade of grass is not blessed
On this archetypal, cosmic hill,
This womb of mysteries.*

*I must not omit to mention a rabbit
And two birds, bathing in the stream
Which is no road, because*

Alas, there is no road to Grace's house!

Notes, cont.

hopeless. But wait....

If greed is the poison we have also been given by our loving God the antidote. The antidote is in Dorothy Day's words of wisdom "the only solution is LOVE. "Love and ever more love is the only solution to every problem that comes up. If we love each other enough, we will bear with each other's faults and burdens. If we love enough, we are going to light that fire in the hearts of others. And it is love that will burn out the sins and hatreds that sadden us. It is love that will make us want to do great things for each other. No sacrifice and no suffering will then seem too much."

I have been blessed to join a book club reading and praying together with Richard Rohr's newest book [THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST](#). I am finding in it a great source of hope. Rohr encourages us to see the universe as created and infused by God's loving Spirit... that seeks connection and communion, not separation and division—"except for the sake of an even deeper future union." This is an Incarnational world view. He asks us to understand that Christ is in every being ...and especially in those whose sin (separation) keeps Christ as if dead in their souls. Comfort the sinner because Christ is not dead there. Christ in that tomb within them is the One waiting for resurrection. Our hope lies in our understanding that Christ is waiting for rebirth in every one of us...even and especially Donald Trump and the "Christians" that seem so unlike our

Christ. "God is not just love (1 John 4:16) but also absolute faithfulness and hope itself. The energy of this all faithfulness and hope flows out from the Creator toward ALL created beings producing all growth, healing, and every springtime." This gives me the strength to keep on working and praying for the incarnation of God's beloved community on earth... where no one...not even The Donald shall be excluded from the beloved community.Ω



Our neighbor Sam shared Swiss Chard with us.

One True Vine

*I was last in line
For the one true vine
Endless winding prayer
I was dead at first
I had done my worst
And you came to me
Life had ceased
I was lost and tired
You set me free
From this mighty, mighty fire
Just in time to be
My one true vine
You still come to me
And you comfort me
The only one that I believe
I trust you
I hope that someday you will
Trust me too
I wanna be what you are to me
Life had ceased
I was lost and tired
You set me free from
This mighty, mighty fire
Just in time to be
My one true vine*

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Notes From De Porres House

Jacqueline Allen-Douçot

It is still warm and sunny, blue skies and bird song fill the air. There is a pine tree over 100 feet tall filled with birds...a bird for every foot of tree. They are chirping and calling to each other. Fall is coming and though I don't speak bird, I sense they are talking about it.

After a few short-handed weeks our mentors/volunteers are back from UCONN, Trinity, CCSU, Northwest Catholic and St. Joe's. When we do not have them we become acutely aware that we could not continue the work here without these valuable partners that we build community with. The noise level and the JOY level go up exponentially with them here!

Our guests in community continue to grow and change and move around between the houses. The hospitality is in full swing. Khari stays with us to save a deposit for purchasing his own home. He puts in over 60 hours a week as a special needs teacher's aide. He works Saturdays with us and mentors some of the older kids and helps with field trips. Cleveland has taken over buildings and grounds and one of our older Green House guys is trying to get him a job detailing cars at UHaul. Hannah has her working papers and just found a job. She will work from 4 to midnight so as not to disrupt the classes she takes at the Hartford Public Library. We may be offering hospitality to a young Americorps volunteer currently working down the street for Habitat for Humanity. Sometimes those offers turn into full time community! Josh C. has moved from the Green House to the Purple House (a.k.a. St Martin DePorres House from St Brigid House).The quieter

(Please see: Notes, p8)



Haze Says "Hello Everybody!"