

The Hartford Catholic Worker



St. Martin De Porres House
St. Brigid House

"I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least." -Dorothy Day



HOPE
BEGINS IN THE
DARK. THE STUBBORN
HOPE THAT IF
YOU JUST SHOW UP AND
TRY TO DO
THE RIGHT THING
THE DAWN WILL COME... YOU WAIT
AND WATCH AND WORK... DON'T GIVE
UP!

Jacqueline Allen-Douçot

Fall 2020

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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 and Cullen Donovan, Dwight Teal Jr., Sasean Sanders, Jacqueline, Ammon, and Christopher Allen-Douçot.

You probably do not know or remember me but I knew your son Daylon. Daylon was my age and I was devastated when he passed away. He was literally an angel. I knew him from when I used to walk up and down Barbour Street searching for "friends and love". For me it was always hard for me to gain friends because of my Trauma.

Fortunately, I had a different experience with Daylon. I used to see him standing at the corner of Barbour and Nelson next to the corner store that used to be opened but burned down a few years ago and he always said to me "You in school right?" Literally smiling ear to ear.

We also use to hang out and have cook-outs at the Purple House with Micah and my

brother Julianne . SORRY MICAH! We always talked about completing school. We always talked about this while we both were in school because we were both Dreamers. We wanted more for ourselves, family, and community.

It was nice having someone to talk to

and upsetting right?

I just want you to know that I am a First Generation College student, I lost my mother a year after graduating college, last year I was struggling to complete my Masters, I currently work with homeless youth in the Greater

Hartford area with minimal community resources and I live pay check to check, and I am currently in a Pandemic due to Covid-19 . Even though, it is a lot going on I am still going to complete my Master's degree, I still hope to make an impact in my community, and I still show love to others because I have hope.

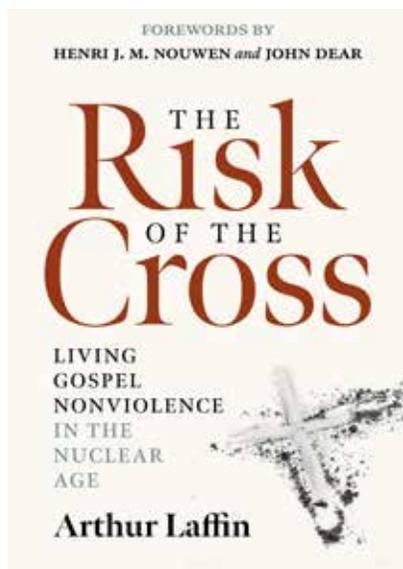
Please never give up. You have God and an Angel (Daylon) with you every day.

Stay Blessed ,
Gabrielle B.

Dear Mrs. Ore

about that because I felt like there weren't many people in my neighborhood talking about completing College. Unfortunately, Daylon was not able to live out his dream to teach basketball to the younger generation in our community due to gang violence and hate that is still prevalent in Hartford, CT. It is sad

Through donor generosity we were able to help Gabrielle with a scholarship from the Daylon Fund. If you would like to help young people from our community with housing and education costs please make a contribution to the Daylon Fund. Please mail checks payable to: Hartford Catholic Worker to 26 Clark St. Hartford 06120. If you are reading this on our website you can donate by clicking on the left side of our home page. With your support we have also been helping families with: back rent, unpaid utility bills, and grocery gift cards. Thank-you for your support. We depend on it.



"The Risk of the Cross is an excellent resource for courageous groups and individuals seeking to learn about the danger presented by nuclear weapons, to pray and reflect together on the Scriptural call to just peace, and to act in response." -Marie Dennis, Pax Christi International

Christian discipleship depends not on what ideas we believe but rather on a fundamental question: In whom do we place our trust? In Mark's gospel, we find what this challenge entails when Jesus declares that the primary condition for discipleship is "to take up the cross and follow in my steps" (Mk 8:34). What does it mean to follow Jesus' way of the cross and to place our trust in God for our true security, instead of in nuclear weapons that can destroy all life on earth? How do we find hope and courage to stand for God's reign of love, justice, and nonviolence in a time of unprecedented nuclear danger and other global perils?

Hartford native Arthur Laffin is coauthor of the original *The Risk of the Cross* (with Elin Schade and Christopher Grannis), and co-editor of *Swords into Plowshares*. A member of the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker in Washington D.C., he has long been active in faith-based nonviolent movements for peace and social justice.

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To order by phone, call 1-800-321-0411 or email: 23rdbooks@twentythirdpublications.com

Christopher J. Douçot

I am filled with grief. The loss and suffering of this summer has been overwhelming. As I write the American death toll from this virus exceeds 180,000 souls. Imagine everyone in Hartford, Farmington, and Avon dying between March and August. I can't. I can't grasp loss at such a scale, it's too abstract. Attempts to conjure up 180,000 faces produces a blurred portrait of anonymity, but losing a loved one is intimate and particular. In recent weeks we have lost two of our dearest friends: Joe McKenzie-Hamilton and Nancy Costello.

Joe was a hell of a good guy. We first met Joe, and his bride Sabra, in the early 90's. They had just moved out of the NYC Catholic Worker; we were just starting the Hartford Catholic Worker. At his wake someone inaccurately described Joe as a NYC version of me; he wasn't. Sure we shared a love of baseball, albeit he loved the bums from the Bronx; and sure his NY accent was as thick as my Boston one; and sure we both went to Jesuit colleges, loved U2, became Catholic Workers, and "married up" to perfectly beautiful women, but Joe was a much better person than me in the most important ways. I don't suffer fools at all, and, frankly, the older I get the less patience I have with knuckleheads doing knucklehead things. Whereas Joe was an amazingly patient man. Since he didn't let stupid griefs bother him and thus sap his spiritual energy, Joe was always fully present to those he was with. Joe was also present to those he was not with

physically through his letter writing discipline. I never received an email from Joe, and only a few texts, but he sent me dozens of letters over the years. In his letters he called me "Chrissy". He wasn't being sarcastic nor was he teasing me. It was a gentle, intimate term of endearment that he oft repeated with a wry chuckle. It was disarming, it was warm, it was real. Joe also faithfully wrote to incarcerated people, other



Catholic Workers, and folks who were struggling. Our son Micah received a letter from Joe that arrived the day after Joe entered heaven.

Joe was not a fan of celebrity. I'm a shameless name-dropper. I think his skepticism of celebrity was a product of his lived experience. Martin Sheen may have grabbed headlines when he was arrested at the School of the Americas but his participation was not more important than that of the hundreds of others who marched, prayed, kneeled, and were hand-cuffed. The reporters may have known Martin's name but they would not have even known he was there if the others weren't there first. Joe was always among the first to be "there" whenever, and wherever, it mattered. Joe was a true disciple of the Little Way of St. Therese. Knowing that grand

gestures don't often change things for the better, Joe didn't perform for an audience, rather he persistently practiced humble, mundane acts of mercy and justice. Joe's little way to a better world was to forge meaningful, dignified, and reciprocal relationships with his friends, neighbors, and strangers surviving in the margins.

Joe had Covid during the Spring. He seemed to have recovered and was back to work after a few weeks. On July 8th he came home from work not feeling well. He laid down and was quietly born unto eternity a short time later. Please remember Joe's bride Sabra, and their children Adam, Sophia, and our Godson Brendan, in your prayers. I love you brother.

Nancy Costello was like a third grandmother to my sons. She had a cute cow-

lick, a bob style haircut long before Dorothy Hamill, and a keen sense of social justice. She was just the right mix of June Cleaver and Mother Jones.

When I was in Bosnia with an international group of pacifists during the war in 1993 Nancy reached out to Jackie after reading about my mission in the Catholic Transcript. At the time she had a son in the military, and she asked Jackie to pray for his safety while she prayed for mine. Nancy, and her husband Fred (who passed away last summer), soon became generous donors and more generous friends. We met in person for the first time during a retreat at Wisdom House led by Daniel Ber-rigan S.J. sometime in the mid-90's. During that weekend we had the first of our many, hours long and

(Please see: *Loss*, p5)

A Son Says “Thank-you and Good-Bye”

Adam McKenzie-Hamilton

Hello everybody for those of you who don't know who I am, I am Joe's eldest son Adam. Today we say goodbye to the eldest son of Joseph and Gertrude Hamilton. The world will long remember their son Joseph Vincent McKenzie-Hamilton. There are a lot of things I could say about my dad, how loving he was, how much he meant to the people in his life. But I think it is almost better to use his own words, to remember him as he was. A few years ago my father wrote me a letter in which he gave me six pieces of good advice to set me into the world, and I think they capture his spirit better than anything else I could say on my own.

The first thing was to keep it simple. My father loved to keep things simple. He hadn't discovered a new outfit since 2003. He knew what he liked and would buy the exact same thing over and over again just in case they discontinued legal pads. In our apartment we have every book on Thomas Merton ever written, and approximately 17 separate hour-glasses. He didn't have to overthink because he knew these objects would bring him joy. From his wooden boxes, his walking sticks, his sun hats, his worry stones, to his children, one was never enough. He surrounded himself with the simple, but the simple was extraordinary.

Number two: Do the Next Right Thing. My Father had no grand plan for life. He didn't set out to become the Pope or President, he just set out to be a good man. His

desire to do the right thing connected him with the Long Beach Catholic Worker, [Pastors for Peace](#), which led him through Central America, where, along with getting deported for radical actions in El Salvador he managed to meet my



mother Sabra at a Spanish language school, where he was introduced to her as “Jose Loco.” The two of them moved in together at the St. Joseph Catholic Worker and were married in 1993. A priest who liked my father offered him a scholarship to return to Fordham to pursue his masters. He countered by asking for two scholarships, so he could bring his wife along with him. I was born a few days after he submitted his thesis. Good things came to him because he did the right thing in the moment.

Number three: Progress not perfection. Whenever any of his children would stress about their work or our problems, he would tell us that the progress you have made is far more valuable than the act of making it perfect. The act of doing

the thing that scared you was more important than finishing it. One of the weirdest moments of my life was when I watched my parents wedding video for the first time. My parents were living in the Catholic Worker soup kitchen, and they got married right on the main floor. They converted the cooking table to an altar with an altar cloth, and removed all the dining tables and replaced them with rows of chairs so their community could be in a palace they loved. And the weirdest thing was I heard my own voice. Watching my father as a 25 year old man, so young and happy and excited to see his bride, our mom, made me realize there was so much more to him than what I knew. He was an entire person before I was born. There was something so magical about

watching my late grandfather Cliff walk my mother down the aisle in a kilt, pleading loudly “*You don't have to do this, you don't have to do this,*” under his breath. What's really amazing to me watching that video is how many of the same people from the wedding video 27 years ago are still here gathered today. My father had the remarkable ability to make people feel comfortable with themselves, which is why so many people have joined us here since from so many separate walks of life. Watching the people from so many different universes come together yesterday at my father's wake was amazing. To see the fact that across his life so many different people could be touched truly shows my father was more than the man I knew, he was special

(Please see: A Son Says, p8)

Loss cont.

effortless conversations of substance with Fred and Nan.

Nan and Fred were childhood sweethearts. They met when they were in their early teens growing up in the Berkshires. Fred was the son of dairy farmers, and Nan's pop sold Buicks. They were sweethearts for more than sixty years! The last time we saw Nan and Fred was in May of 2019. They were living in an assisted living complex in Florida. Nan had advanced dementia; while it was clear that her brain had begun to malfunction it was more obvious that her heart was strong as she serenaded her "boyfriend" with vintage melodies.

Nan and Fred moved about a bit because of Fred's job, but wherever they ended up Nan was sure to connect with the local Catholic Worker house and to go on retreat at the local retreat house whenever Fr. Dan was in town. Nan joined us for prayers and protest outside of Electric Boat during the launching of a Trident nuclear submarine, and she and friend made critically generous donations to refurbish the Green House and to establish the Volun-town Peace Trust.

But Fred and Nan weren't donors or activist friends- they were family. Indeed, Jackie knew Fred nearly twice as long as she knew her own dad. We were blessed by their generosity with annual trips to visit them in Florida. Fred was an avid angler- it was a real burden for Michah and I to spend an entire day with

him catching snook, drum, and sea trout (wink, wink). I'll never forget the first time we pulled up to their Florida home; Ammon, who was only 6 or 7 exclaimed "Nan, you didn't tell us you lived in a mansion!" Man! were we embarrassed! Fred and Nan were wealthy: they were generous, compassionate, humble, and loving. That kind of wealth will never be confused with having money. When the pandemic spread rapidly in Florida this summer it reached Nan. On July 25th she was reunited with her sweetheart Fred. We miss you Nan and Pop.

Attempts to quantify the suffering induced by this pandemic by focusing on the growing death toll are a mistake. Aside from the ways in which citing large numbers of dead works to wash away the humanity of those who have died, it also ignores the tremendous toll of those who are surviving. Very many of those who survive an infection will live with lasting damage to their lungs, kidneys, livers and more- maybe 75% of survivors will experience lasting [damage to their hearts!](#)

And the suffering extends to even those who are never infected. We learned this week that our dear little Lilly is having a hard time. She is 8. She is separated from her friends, her church, and her school, her mom is dealing with a second major illness, and there is a worldwide pandemic. Good grief. What does it mean to be mentally healthy in these times? I am worried about Lilly, an 8-year-old should not suffer

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under the burden of a worldwide existential crisis. But a part of me is relieved that she is acting out, I think it is a healthy response to the world she is living in. I'm wary and suspicious of those I meet who are moving through the world these days as if these were like any other days. These days are disturbing days on all fronts. In June the temperature rose above [100 degrees in the Arctic Circle!](#)

In Washington the president had peaceful protestors tear gassed so that he could have his picture taken in front of a church. In the news are true stories of Black women and men being killed with impunity by police, videos of protestors being beaten, videos of "police" in unmarked vehicles preemptively arresting protestors. Georgia is about to elect to Congress someone who believes in the absurd [Q Anon conspiracy](#) nonsense- for heaven's sake! At least 50,000 Americans a day are infected with Covid, and upwards of 1000 Americans a day are dying from Covid!

I'm disturbed! And you should be too. Grandma Mick and I were arrested during Bill Clinton's first inauguration as American war planes bombed Iraq. Charged with "creating a public disturbance" the judge found us guilty. He then added: "*but there are times when the public needs to be disturbed*". Indeed, these are such times. If you're not disturbed, you're either a mystic or a sociopath. If you are not a mystic, what will it take to disturb you?Ω



In Search of Humankind

By James Conway Ph.D.

"We must make the kind of society where it is easier for people to be good." - Peter Maurin

Peter Maurin's profound statement is an excellent framework for Rutger Bregman's [Humankind: A Hopeful History](#). The book includes many examples of human goodness and some prescriptions for what kind of world makes it easier to be good. But a disappointment is Bregman's central thesis *"that most people, deep down, are pretty decent."* He does a good job of weaving a narrative with examples of human good-heartedness, using evidence of a variety of types – archeological, historical, psychological, and otherwise. But it feels like Bregman chose examples to fit his thesis, rather than seeking the truth about human nature; a more useful approach would involve acknowledging that sometimes human nature is not so good.

Bregman begins with *"vener theory"* – the idea that civilization is a veneer covering humanity's true nature which is not pretty (he uses [Lord of the Flies](#) as an example: – peel away the institutions that govern daily life, and people quickly become savages). The philosophical underpinning comes from Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan which describes human existence as a war of all against all. Bregman provides ample evidence that many people believe in the uncharitable Hobbesian view of human nature.

However, the author overdoes the idea that we believe the worst of each other, describing his claim of human decency as a radical one. A contradiction is that early in the book Bregman highlights the philosophical work of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau claimed in the 1800's that humans are fundamentally good but that civilization itself is what has brought out the worst in us (by bringing us together in very large groups, spurring competition to acquire and amass wealth, etc.). So describing human nature as essentially good is not really a radical idea.

One virtue of the book is a convincing description of humanity's potential for good. It may not be an earth-shattering idea but if you are feeling cynical,

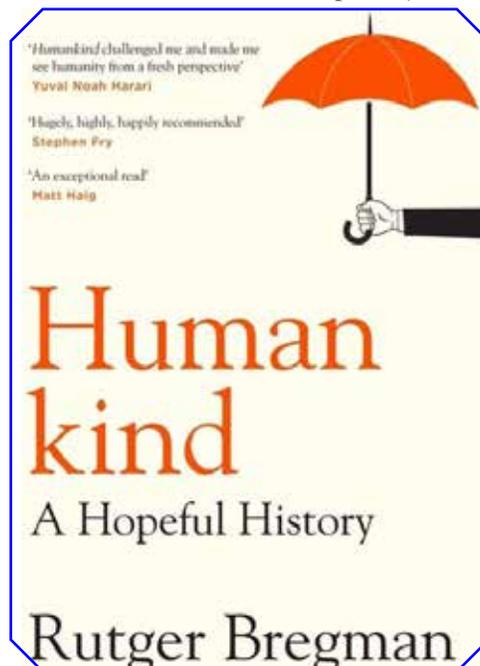
it might be helpful to read about a real-life Lord of the Flies scenario, in which a group of Tongan adolescents are shipwrecked. Rather than devolving into murder as in the novel, the Tongan youths established a peaceful community complete with methods for nonviolent conflict resolution. Another example involves soldiers who refuse to shoot the enemy and a celebration of Christmas by German and allied troops at the front lines during World War I.

But I couldn't shake the feeling that there may be some selective sifting and interpretation of evidence. One example is Bregman's claim based on archeological evidence that as hunter-gatherers, humans did not engage in war (this is consistent with Rousseau's idea that "civilization" is the cause of inhumanity). I do not have the expertise to evaluate Bregman's claims about prehistoric humans, but given that there is no direct evidence, I will take his conclusion with a healthy grain of salt. In other cases, apparent evidence of inhumanity is reinterpreted. Examples include the collapse of the society on Easter Island (the people there were resourceful and resilient according to Bregman, rather than warlike and cannibalistic as previously claimed), and Stanley Milgram's famous obedience research; according to Bregman, participants' willingness to deliver painful and harmful electrical shocks actually demonstrated a desire to make the world a better place (i.e.,

they believed that scientific progress from the research was worth pursuing, even if it meant doing cruel things to another person).

This brings me back to Peter Maurin and a world in which it is easier to be good. A reasonable interpretation of the body of evidence Bregman presents is that human decency is a strong tendency but far from automatic. Rather, how well we behave depends on the context. This is a clear implication of [Stanley Milgram's obedience research](#), for example. The well-known finding is that about two thirds of participants (from the New Haven area, by the way) were willing to administer shocks to "teach" another participant to avoid wrong answers, even after the learner, unseen in an adjacent room, complained loudly of heart problems and then stopped responding. In lesser-known conditions not discussed by Bregman, Milgram manipulated the situation, e.g., by placing the learner in the same room, or including another teacher who refused by obey. In such conditions obedience dropped dramatically. Milgram's finding is consistent with Peter Maurin's idea that some contexts make it easier to be good; this would, I believe be a really good framework for Bregman's book.

This idea would still not be earth-shattering but would beg the question of how we create such a world. We have lots of room for improvement given our society's readiness to use violence to solve problems, unwillingness to give up White privilege, etc. Bregman does spend considerable time on creating a better world with a series of chapters on workplaces designed to take advantage of intrinsic motivation and schools that take advantage of students' curiosity and playfulness; participative democracy as practiced in Torres, Venezuela; humane prisons in Norway; and creating opportunities to get to know your enemies (with an interesting story about Nelson Mandela). The theme of these chapters is trusting in the goodness of others, which is a key to building the Beloved Community. While Humankind has its flaws, it also has important virtues, including a look at what humanity can be, and ideas for how we can build a world in which it is easier to be our best.Ω



Brenna Cussen

“Revolution is based on land. Land is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice, and equality”
-Malcolm X.

As a Catholic Worker farmer and activist living in the Midwest, I have watched the recent inspiring uprisings around the country with cautious optimism. It seems that a shift is taking place in the consciousness of many of us white people in the U.S. A critical mass have finally begun to listen to and take seriously the voices of Black and Brown people in the nation who, for the past two centuries, have been living with the oppressive reality of police brutality. The conversations around shifting funding away from the police and toward mental health services, housing, and other programs that uplift human dignity is exciting and necessary (I have been particularly inspired by organizations like MPD150, Reclaim the Block, and Black Visions Collective.) I pray that this movement bears fruit.

In a country that was founded upon what many Christians refer to as the “original sins” of the genocide of Indigenous peoples and the enslavement of African peoples, however, I also pray that white people continue to listen - and respond - to the voices of People of Color who are calling us to go deeper. If we truly desire to live in a society based on justice and freedom, and to rid ourselves of the scourge of institutional racism, we need to figure out a way to make amends for the overwhelming theft of land, resources, labor, and life that has taken place here.

In her revolutionary book [Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land](#), author, activist, and farmer Leah Penniman calls on

white people to support the Black and Indigenous struggle for justice by participating in concrete acts of reparations: transfers of land and resources to members of Indigenous and Black communities. *“The most important action that white people can take to uproot racism is to enact repara-*



tions,” she says, *“to quite literally give back what was stolen.”* Penniman is the co-founder of Soul Fire Farm in Grafton, NY, a project committed to *“ending racism and injustice in the food system by increasing farmland stewardship by people of color, promoting equity in food access, and training the next generation of activist farmers.”* According to Penniman, this generation of Black people is becoming known as the *“returning generation”* of agrarian people. While their grandparents fled the terror they experienced on the land, she says, young Black people are now *“cautiously working to make sense of a reconciliation with land. We somehow know that without the land, we cannot return to freedom.”*

As part of its mission, Soul Fire Farm teaches the history of atrocities committed against Black and Indigenous peoples on this land, both in order for those communities to grieve and to heal, and to help white people better understand their responsibility to make amends. In

Farming While Black’s chapter titled “Healing from Trauma,” Penniman briefly outlines some of this history, which I have excerpted below:

- 1619-1865: Slavery. Six to seven million enslaved African people labor in the plantations of the American South, generating \$6.5 to \$10 trillion of wealth, in today’s dollars, for their enslavers.

- 1862: the Homestead Act. 270 million acres of stolen Native land is opened up to mostly white settlers. The number of adult descendants of the original Homestead Act recipients living today is about a quarter of the US adult population (overwhelmingly white).

- 1865-1941: Black Codes and Convict Leasing. The 13th Amendment abolishes slavery except for when people were convicted of crimes. The South makes it illegal to loiter, to be unemployed, to “not be upright and honest”... and such Black

Codes are used to imprison African Americans and force them to labor in farming, railroad construction, mining, and logging.

- 1865-1940s: Sharecropping. When slavery was abolished, most Black farmers are forced to remain in a high-poverty debt peonage system of tenant farming.

- 1877-1950: Terror Campaign.

- More than 4,000 African Americans are lynched, Black landowners specifically targeted.

- 1908-Present: Theft of Black-Owned Land. In one detailed investigation by the Associated Press alone, white people violently stole at least 24,000 acres of land from 406 Black people, depriving them of tens of millions of dollars, and often at the cost of their lives.

- 1933-Present: Federal Discrimination Against Black Farmers. Throughout the South, USDA agents withheld crucial loans, crop allot-

(Please see: *Black Land*, p9)

A Son Says, cont.

to each one of you in his own way.

Number 4: You control the effort not the outcome. Some of my favorite memories of my father were walking up on Holidays to go to the Catholic Worker. He would be so excited seeing his nieces and nephews pile into the car with his children at the crack of dawn. We would all be together in the car half asleep while Dad would chatter away, so excited to up and at it with us. We would all chop vegetables and prepare sandwiches until eventually, right before the soup kitchen would open up he would gather us and the rest of the volunteers to join hands to lead us in a circle of prayer. He always told us that we are judged by the food we give to the homeless by the joy in which we give it. I know that my father lived in the spirit of grateful service, and I know he would appreciate the outpouring of love and support that has gone his way. The struggle against poverty and homelessness continues without him, but I know through his legacy future champions of the cause will have the

shoulders of a giant to stand on.

Number Five: Be. Here. Now. For father's day this year the family drove out to spend the weekend together on the Jersey Shore. Joe, Sabra, Sophia, Brendan, and I all hopped in the McHamfam van, it's the minivan that you see parked around the neighborhood covered in duct tape. We had a wonderful few days just playing on the beach and being able to spend time together as a family. On our last night, we were driving back to the hotel and stopped at Taco Bell (they have an amazing vegetarian menu), and my mother was driving. As she was trying to order a "Gordito Taco" but couldn't get the words out of her mouth without cracking up. So we were in the middle of nowhere New Jersey laughing. There is something absolutely beautiful about that being the last moment my family spent together. A moment of pure, simple, small joy. It wasn't special or extraordinary, but it was truly ours.

Number Six: One Day at a Time. This I think is the hard-

est piece of advice he gave.

A week ago today I went home for dinner. Sophia and Brendan were out of town. Mom made enchiladas, and me, Mom, & Dad watched "[Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story](#)," which was a very stupid movie, but it was so nice just to be able to appreciate doing something so casual and small together. I will always treasure that the last thing I ever said to my father was "I love you Dad," and the last thing he said to me was that he loved me. What more could a son ask for? Accepting that he is gone will be one of the hardest things that I will have to do, but more importantly it made me realize how amazing of a father I had that he could leave in an instant, without any warning, and I could still feel that nothing was left unsaid because he was sure to say it every day. I wish he could be part of my life longer, but I have no regrets about the time we spent together. We will take it one day at a time.

Thank you all for being here. My Dad always hated when things ran late. With that, go forth in his memory.Ω

Remember

*There is a swarm of witnesses
we see them,
hear about them
learn friendship from them
we share their vision*

*Dorothee Sölle
[Revolutionary Patience](#)*

Joseph McKenzie-Hamilton, now that you glide with Daniel and Dorothy, Phil, and Elmer in a holy swarm of peacemakers and justice seekers we ask that occasionally you will swoop by our community. I will look for you in the breeze, and listen for you in the rustle of Autumn leaves. Pray for us, brother.



Fall Migration 2020

Brian Kavanagh

Black Land, cont.

ments, and technical support services from Black farmers.

•In 1920, there were 925,000 Black farmers owning 16 million acres of land, 14% of US farmland. Today, Black people own approximately 1% of rural land in the country, while White people own more than 98%, over 856 million acres valued at more than \$1 trillion.

Since the end of the Civil War, Black leaders in the country have been calling for some form of reparations. In January 1865, after meeting with Black leaders in Georgia, General William Sherman designated 400,000 acres along the coastal South to be given to 18,000 former slaves, with plots divided into roughly forty acres per family. An early attempt at reparations, the order recognized that unpaid Black labor had made white wealth possible. Less than a year after Black families had begun to work the land, however, the order was rescinded by President Andrew Johnson, and the land (and all the crops) were taken and given instead to wealthy white former planta-

tion owners.

From Black Christian leaders in the Sixties, to Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, to Ta Nahisi Coates in his widely-read 2014 Atlantic article, [“The Case for Reparations”](#) - not to mention the efforts of Indigenous nations- Black people have continued to call for those in power to at least study what a just and fair form of reparations could look like. But while reparations at the federal level is necessary, we do not have to wait for institutions to take action in order to begin making right in this country what for so long has been wrong.

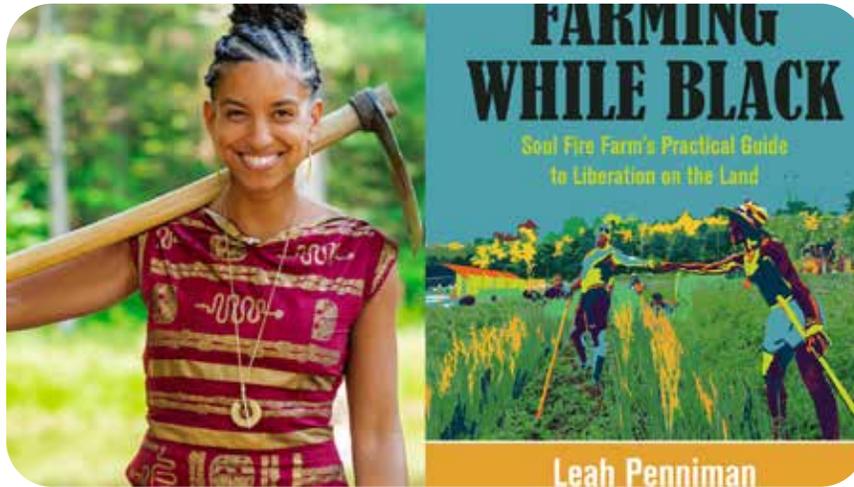
Several years ago, alumni of Soul Fire Farm’s Black Latinx Farmers’ Immersion project (BLFI) catalyzed a national reparations initiative to return stolen land and resources to those from whom it was taken. Together with the [Northeast Farmers of Color Network](#), BLFI put together a

[reparations map](#) to channel land and resources directly to People of Color working on farming and food justice projects. 9

Many white people in the U.S. inherit land or money through family or other connections; we have the ability to redirect those resources back to those from whom they were stolen.

Theologian Jennifer Harvey encourages fellow white Christians to put ourselves in the place of Zachaeus, a tax collector who pledged to return all he had stolen from the poor, and then some, in order to be counted among Jesus’ friends. In the Catholic sacrament of Reconciliation, the penitent is required to make a “penance” as part of the forgiveness process. It would seem that, for those of us who are both white and Christian in the United States, it is well past time to participate in reparations, not only for the sake of justice, but also for the well-being of our own souls. Ω

(Brenna Cussen Anglada is a co-founder of St. Isidore Catholic Worker Farm in Southwest Wisconsin, Ho Chunk and Meskwaki homeland, where she lives in community and tries to live justly on the land.)



Notes, cont.

Voluntown we have been working with families to schedule time for them to escape the heat of the city and spend some relaxing time in the woods and at the lake. All the families who have gone so far have had a lovely time, and it has been exciting for parents who have sent their kids to the camp for years to finally see it for themselves. The reviews we have gotten back were great: “The Cabin was wonderful thank you for sharing all your goodies with us.” “It was great to get out of the city, we appreciate this tremendously.”

The storm that swept through a few weeks ago did take down several branches at both

the houses, we’re thankful to Mark Laganga for helping out with his chain saw for the branches that were too big for our chipper. Peacecorps had to end their overseas work because of covid and have been generous enough to give us a grant to buy more picnic tables for the backyard of the Green House to facilitate some open air activities in the fall. We would also like to thank Reverend Bob Hooper and the community at St. James for providing fresh produce from their garden to the families in our program.

Dwight has been working on restoring the weathered murals in the back of the Green House. Baby Beth has been coordinating with families to ensure that the gift cards and meals that Sasean and Cullen have been de-

livering arrive in an orderly fashion. We also said farewell to Cleveland and Hannah who have both moved on from Catholic Worker and are living independently.

While we are still unable to see most of you in person, know that we are constantly thankful for your support and generosity. We hope that you will join us for Mass over Zoom, where our beloved Father Moran will be celebrating. We know how hard this pandemic has been for everyone and we are trying to remain flexible as the fall will undoubtedly come with new challenges and problems, but please know we are still doing everything we can to help the under-served and underrepresented folks in our community. Ω

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Notes From De Porres House

Ammon Allen-Douçot

Hello folks, as many of you know I am an astute follower of all the popular Millennial trends, and as an avid fan of popular culture I too decided to return home to quarantine with my family. The time soup of pandemic living has hit us hard, as the once dependable summer schedule of camp and summer programming was scrapped in the face of the virus. We're not sure what the fall will look like, as schools open up with hybrid models, adjusted class sizes and maybe 60% percent of parents opting out of sending their kids back to school.

We, however, are determined to help the families of our community cope with these uncertain times. We are exploring some socially distanced models for reopening our program including keeping kids with their family units while at the Green House, working with our

partners Husky Sport and Public Allies to create prerecorded video art lessons, workouts, and activities for kids to do at home. We are excited to announce that Cullen and Sasean will be spending the year as Public Allies working with Husky Sport to coordinate these efforts and continue to network and collaborate with other like minded young people in the state.

While we have not been able to host kids or volunteers at the house we have been able to help families get through the summer by helping to pay their rent, electricity bills and groceries. Thank you to everyone who has donated gift cards as many in our community have been depending on that for their family's food. Most of the families have sent along generous thanks; one family wrote: "Thank-you so much, 'XYZ' [a local nonprofit we will not name] doesn't do anything for us!!"

We have also been able to support incarcerated members of our community by contributing to their commissaries. It is important to remember that as difficult as things have been for all of us during the pandemic, the situation inside jails and prisons is even harder, we ask that you keep those who remain incarcerated in your prayers. We are also continuing to work with John Selders and Trinity College to deliver full meals to families twice a week, and we even have families that are sharing that food with folks outside our network. The current plan is to continue providing these meals through the fall until Christmas.

Instead of running our usual camp down in

(Please see: Notes, p9)



The ramblin' Hamblins at Ahimsa