

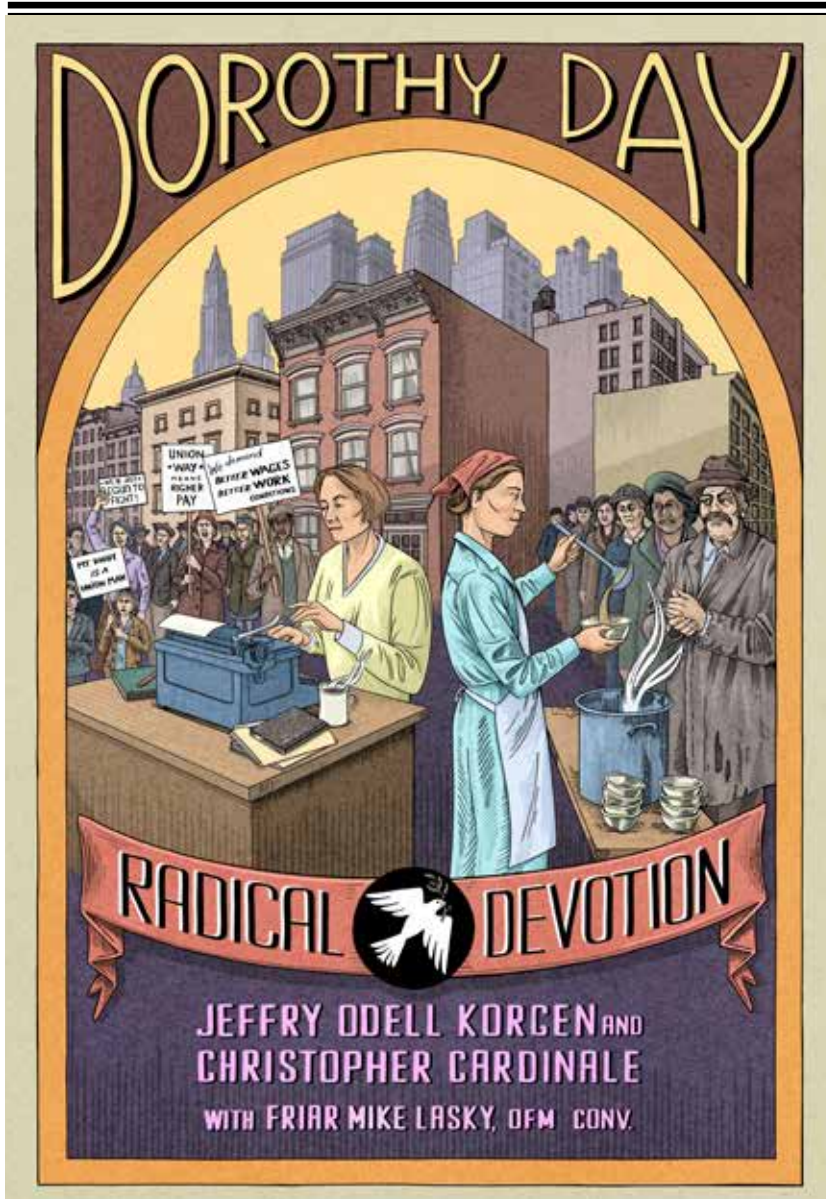
The Hartford Catholic Worker

St. Martin De Porres House
St. Brigid House



The poor tell us who we are...

-Philip Berrigan



A custom existed among the first generations of Christians, when faith was a bright fire that warmed more than those who kept it burning. In every house then a room was kept ready for any stranger who might ask for shelter; it was even called "the stranger's room." Not because these people thought they could trace something of someone they loved in the stranger who used it, not because the man or woman to whom they gave shelter reminded them of Christ, but because—plain and simple and stupendous fact—he or she was Christ.

-Dorothy Day

Summer 2024

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, Joshua Collazo, Jacqueline, Ammon, and Christopher Allen-Douçot.

Our Board of directors include: Justin Evanovich, Danielle DeRosa, Sr. Pat McKeon, Rex Fowler, Marybeth Albrycht, Isaiah Jacobs, and James Conway.

Rainbows and Sparkles

Ammon Allen-Douçot

On a rainy Thursday afternoon, Beth found a bag of stuffed animals left over from our Christmas party. These animals were eminently unsafe in the house with Raffy so Beth decided to make them a nice surprise for the kids who would want them.

The first few kids were too old and cool for stuffies. Laylah was delighted, she immediately emptied the bag out onto the couch thoroughly inspecting each one to see which one was her favorite. Squeeks and barks of happiness filled the room as Laylah went from giving each little creature a voice to arranging them in order of prettiness. Eventually she chose a poodle with pompous rainbow frill and bunny wearing a sparkling tutu.

She then went on for about fifteen minutes about how grateful she was to whoever donated the stuffed animals. Alas, neither Beth nor I could recall the specific origins so I asked Laylah if she had anything she wanted to say to our supporters in general.



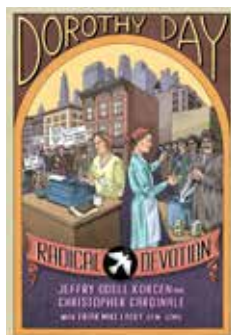
"Hi Laylah, can you introduce me to your new friends?"

"This one I named Rainbow and this one I named sparkles."

"Which one is your favorite and why is it your favorite?"

"Both of them are my favorite because they represent my dog's personality; his happiness!"

"Is there anything you want to say to the people who help us keep the Green House open?"



Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion

By Jeffrey Odell Korgen and Christopher Cardinale with Fr. Mike Laskey OFM

Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion introduces readers to the amazing life of Dorothy Day, reviews her impact on the church and peace and justice movements, and provides an informative understanding of the process of canonization. *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* is a well researched, easy to read, beautifully drawn graphic novel ideally suited for parish and parochial religion classes. [It is available from Paulist Press for \\$19.95.](#)

10% OF PROCEEDS WILL SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE HARTFORD CATHOLIC WORKER.
Thank-you Jeff and Christopher.

"Thank you for getting us toys, I really appreciate it. My stuffed animals make me happy. Thank-you for getting me stuffies!"

After this brief interview, Laylah let me know that both Rainbow and Sparkle were very hungry and she had to go feed them. How wild, only seven and already intent on the Works of Mercy.Ω

If you want to help keep the Green House open for Laylah, and all the other kids who come here, please send support to: HCW 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120.

Other ways of supporting our work include:

- **organizing a morning coffee hour or evening wine hour event at your home, group, or church with one of us sharing stories about our work and the need for support.**
- **praying for our work and neighbors.**
- **asking friends to make donations to HCW in lieu of other gifts for birthdays etc.**

Thank-you!!

Be sure to welcome strangers into your home.³ (Hebrews 13:2)

Christopher J. Douçot

A few weeks back we heard from Tesmija for the first time in 15 years; she was despondent. Tesmija, a Bosnian Moslem, arrived in the U.S. in the late '90's as a refugee. Having survived genocide she was granted asylum.

Bosnia emerged as a new nation in the wake of the disintegration of Yugoslavia via a three-sided civil war. Yugoslavia became a nation after WWI with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire; this territory was the westernmost extent of the empire. The three parties of the civil war: the Catholic Croats, the Orthodox Christian Serbians, and the Moslem Bosniaks are representative of fault lines between the "Christian West" and the "Moslem world", between Western/Catholic Christianity and Eastern/Orthodox Christianity, between the West (ie the U.S. and Europe) and Russia, between democracy and monarchy.

I was in [Bosnia](#) in [1993](#) with an unarmed, nonviolent, [civilian force](#) that was attempting to break [the siege of Sarajevo](#). In interviews with Bosniak Moslems, Croatians, and Serbians I heard representatives from all three communities cite some injustice or atrocity, some from centuries ago, perpetrated against them by one or both other communities. It was a tense, grievance filled land.

Remarkably, Tesmija is neither tense nor aggrieved: she is soft spoken, humble, gracious, diligent, and grateful. She is not unscathed; she lives with PTSD. Tesmija called us because she had no one to turn to. Her landlady, after learning that Tesmija had lost her job, was threatening to keep her security deposit and change the locks in a week's time. Tesmija was current with her rent after depleting her savings and retirement accounts. *Only a judge can*



La Sagrada Familia

Kelly Latimore

order an eviction.

Tesmija had stopped working because thirty years of low paying menial manual labor has left her with incapacitating pain in both wrists due to Carpal Tunnel syndrome. She has maxed out on cortisone shots and is now trying to navigate our absurd medical system to get relief through surgery. Under the best conditions this navigation is akin to wading in molasses, with linguistic and cultural differences, and growing anti-immigrant sentiment Tesmija finds herself in particularly cold and viscous molasses.

Ours is a society that considers housing and health care commodities sold for profit rather than human rights guaranteed by society. And so, even though the landlady was cruel for illegally threatening Tesmija, she was "right" that Tesmija needed to find a new home, which turns out to be our home. On a couple of sunny, end of April days, "Juan" (see our previous issue) and I packed up and moved Tesmija, her stuff, and her kitty-cat to the Purple House.

We've happily shared our home with multiple dogs, and less hap-

pily with many bats, more than a few mice, and a rat (once, eww! And ugh!), but Lilly is our first feline housemate. St. Martin smiles even as the mice, and hopefully the bats, shudder.

Through the generosity of our supporters Tesmija and Lilly will be able to stay with us for as long as they need. Unfortunately, thousands of folks fleeing war and persecution for refuge in the United States today are not so lucky.

In the wake of losing the '64 presidential election in a landslide the Republican party and candidate Nixon adopted the "[Southern Strategy](#)"- a campaign to peel disaffected Southern white voters from the Democratic Party. The strategy associated the Democratic Party with lawlessness and a breakdown in social order. The "evidence" for this was a sleight of hand conflation of the sporadic violence at Civil Rights and antiwar demonstrations (violence that was often perpetrated [by law enforcement](#) and [racist vigilantes](#) against nonviolent demonstrators) with the tactic of nonviolent civil disobedience. The Southern Strategy gave birth to the [War on Drugs](#) which has incarcerated millions of largely young Black men for engaging in a business that is now legal and enriching a handful [of largely white men](#).

The architects of this [strategy](#) [later admitted that it was based on lies](#) and was in fact a "[dog whistle](#)" [calling racists to vote for Nixon](#). Our second worst president won in '68 (despite avowed racist George Wallace's 3rd party effort siphoning off 46 electoral votes), and again in an avalanche in '72.

The lasting result of the Southern Strategy has been the centering of "law and order" in American po-

(Please see: [Welcome](#), p4)

litical discourse. Witnessing such a reversal of electoral fortune the Democrats have done their best to out “law and order” the Republicans in rhetoric and policy. Their [spineless efforts](#) culminate with [Clinton’s 1994 Crime Bill](#). In remarks supporting Bill’s Crime Bill, Hillary Clinton spoke of the need to [bring “super predators” “to heel”](#). Some Black voters heard Hillary’s dog whistle loud and clear; their [lower turnout on election day](#) (and the racist [Electoral College](#)) may have cost her the presidency.

Mark Twain quipped that “*History Doesn’t Repeat Itself, but It Often Rhymes*”; today’s presidential rhyme is as unimaginative as writing that Lee Atwater was Reagan’s minister of the sinister. Felon and former president Donald Trump utilized the [Southern Strategy 2.0](#) to win in 2016, though [apparently he can’t whistle](#), never mind dog whistle: his racist and xenophobic remarks are [often plainly, audibly stated](#). Not to be out “xenophobed”, President Biden announced on June 4th that his administration will further restrict access to the U.S. for asylum seekers; despite his obligation to uphold the law, not to mention his avowed Catholicism.

WASHINGTON ([AP, June 4, 2024](#)) — *President Biden on Tuesday unveiled plans to enact immediate significant restrictions on migrants seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border as the White House tries to neutralize immigration as a political liability ahead of the November elections.*

The classification of a migrant as a refugee was formalized in the wake of the massive displacement of Europeans during WWII by the establishment of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in 1950 and the [Refugee Convention of 1951](#) which declared crossing international borders to seek protection from violence and persecution to be

a human right.

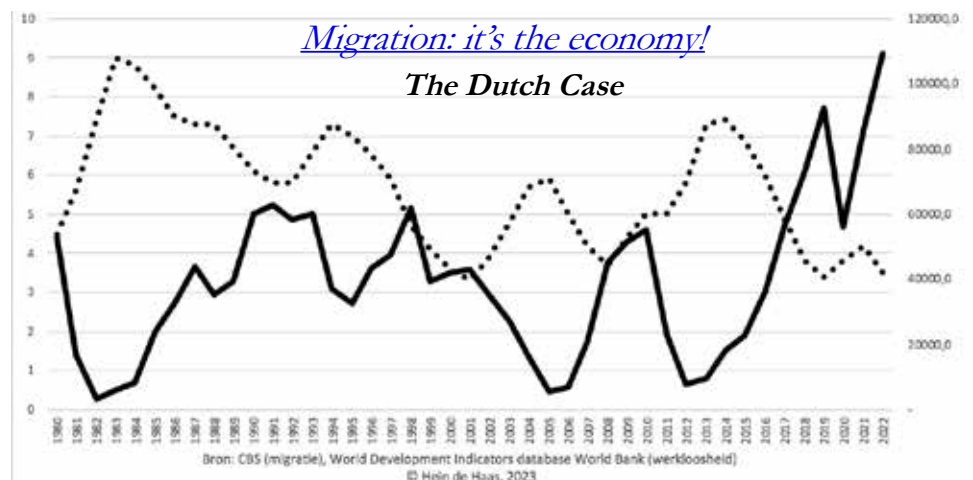
When the Senate ratified this Convention in 1968 it became binding US law. Migrants who cross our border to seek asylum have not broken any laws. They are legally in the US until and unless an immigration court rejects their asylum claim and they remain past their deportation order. What’s illegal is to deny them entry and opportunity to plead their case.

The “border crisis” is a [moral panic](#) used to instill fear so that voters can be more easily manipulated to vote against their own self-interest. There is, however, a constellation of crises obscured by this panic, including a shortage of immigration courts, judges, and attorneys, nationwide shortages of affordable housing and shelter, widening inequality, withering critical thinking skills, a diminishing social safety net, burgeoning mis and disinformation campaigns, and a paucity of compassion. One minor adjustment that would mitigate the stress on local communities to house asylum seekers would be to shorten/eliminate the current 6 month wait for a work permit.

Our current discourse on immigration is dominated by myths. Dutch sociologist Hein De Haas busts 22 of them in his 2023 book [How Migration Really Works](#). A few

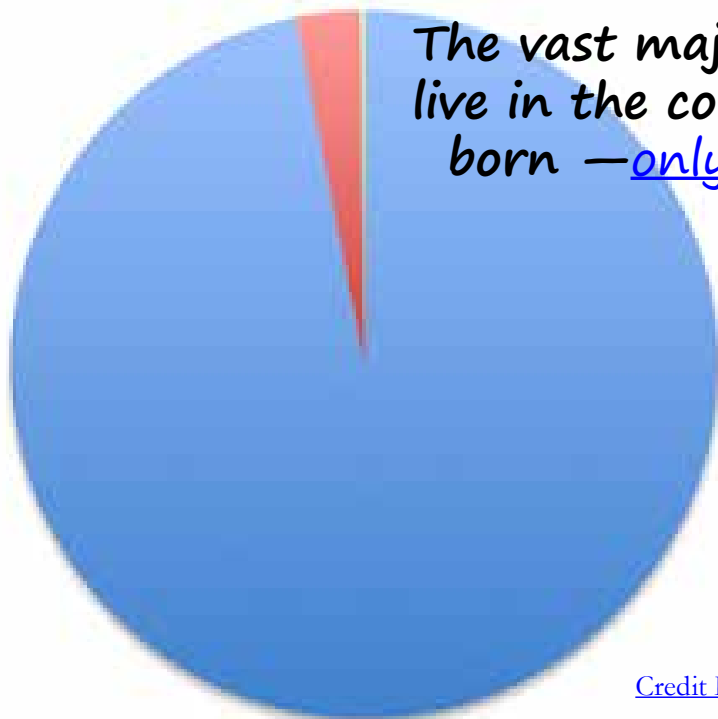
are worth noting.

- **Migration is not at an all-time high**, for at least the last 60 years about 3% of the world’s population have been migrants. ([How Migration Really Works](#): p11)
- **The vast majority of migrants worldwide and in the US are legal.** “In 2018 there were about 10.5 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S.- that is, one-quarter of the total foreign-born population of 44.8 million... and [just] 3.2% of the total U.S. population.” (p35)
- “Most immigration stems from active labor recruitment” (p37)
- “Most workers... arrive legally” and “illegal migration has nothing to do with [a] ‘foreign invasion’ but is largely a response to labor shortages... most illegal migrants are wanted workers.” (p41). N.b.: undocumented [immigrants pay taxes](#) at a higher rate than the wealthiest 1% of Americans.
- **Most refugees don’t come to the U.S.** In fact, the [U.S. is not even in the top ten](#) of nations welcoming refugees. Sudan and Ethiopia host more than we do. Turkey leads the world hosting 3.6 million refugees. In terms of density, Lebanon leads the world with 164 refugees for every 1000 inhabitants.
- “legal migration is predominately driven by destination-country labor demand [which] is the main driver of international migration... immigration



◆◆◆◆◆ Unemployment % of active population — nonasylum related net immigration

The vast majority of people continue to live in the countries in which they were born — only one in 30 are migrants.



- World population (7 billion)
- International migrants (3%)
- Refugees (0.3%)

5.1 million Americans live outside the U.S.
3.9 million are immigrants, 1.2 million are in the military or diplomatic corps

Credit Hein De Haas

follows economic trends, generally with a slight delay of about six months to a year... Immigration goes up when the economy is booming, and down when the economy is tanking.” (pp 115/116) N.b. the U.S unemployment rate has been at record lows during this alleged migrant crisis.

- **Immigrants do not “steal jobs and drive down wages”.** De Haas debunks this myth with data and an explanation of how many folks wrongly assume causation when there is only correlation of data points. This debunking can’t be refined to a bullet point- read the book, or at least watch this video.
- **Increased immigration doesn’t increase crime rates.** Despite high profile instances of immigrants committing a crime, there is no evidence that immigration drives up crime rates. There is evidence of crime rates falling in times of “high immigration” (p199). AND **“illegal immigrants have the lowest crime rates”** when compared with crime rates for “legal immigrants and native-born US citizens. (p200)”. Crime rates do

creep up for the children of immigrants; that is, as immigrants assimilate into American-ness, or are born American, their crime rate approaches that of other Americans (p201). Maybe assimilation into a society addicted to violence isn’t a good thing? Perhaps it’s time to replace the melting pot with a salad bowl.

President Biden avoids speaking in detail about his Catholic faith declaring it to be “a private matter.” But is it? As president he leads one of the most public lives for someone not named Kardashian. If he belonged to the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster would we accept his faith being a private thing? Ostensibly one’s faith (religious, philosophical, or otherwise) shapes and informs their moral and ethical codes. As president, Biden’s moral and ethical codes affect nearly every other inhabitant of this planet, and so he is obliged to be a bit more public about what he believes.

Since President Biden purports to be a proud and faithful Catholic I’m left wondering what he makes of the Church’s unequivocal support

for migrants. The president is not on our mailing list so he won’t see this essay, but maybe he read this from The Vatican News:

“See in the migrants of our time, as in those of every age, a living image of God’s people on their way to the eternal homeland,” writes Pope Francis in his 2024 Message for the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees... Pope Francis reiterates his call to us to open our hearts and doors to our brothers and sisters on the move, reminding us that **“the encounter with the migrant... is also an encounter with Christ... Every encounter along the way represents an opportunity to meet the Lord...”**

The loudest Catholic voices critical of the president seek to deny him the opportunity to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist. It seems to me he is already passing up the opportunity to encounter Jesus present in the migrant.

What becomes of Jesus in the Bread when we refuse to encounter Jesus in the flesh of one another?Ω

Fr. Terrence Moran

Readings: Acts 16:22-34, /Jn 16:5-11

Today's reading from *Acts* is a wonderful illustration of what Jesus promises in the gospel - the Spirit convicts the world and the ruler of this world is condemned. Unfortunately tonight's passage leaves out the reason why Paul and Silas were attacked by a mob and dragged to court. It was for an exorcism - a mentally ill slave girl was being used by her masters as a fortune teller. Paul exorcised her and restored her to her right mind.

The text says the reason they grabbed Paul and Silas was "*they saw that their profits were gone.*" And they were disturbing Roman customs - meaning they were bad for Roman business. The ruler of this world as of the Roman Empire is the Almighty Dollar. And so the Spirit sets to work.

Jesus calls the Spirit the advocate; it's a legal term - the defense attorney of the poor and enslaved and her convictions are very bad for business - then and now.

The Empire goes on to do its best against the Spirit. It brutally flogs Paul and Silas, imprisons them in maximum security, and puts their legs in stocks. Immediately the Transforming



Spirit does her work. Maximum security becomes a church through the prayer and songs of praise of Paul and Silas. It's as if the Empire has lost its power to imprison - and it has. And then the Spirit comes as she so often does as an earthquake which shakes the carceral state to its foundations - chains fall off and doors swing open.

Now if we were writing this fairy tale we would have said, everyone ran for their lives and lived happily ever after. But the Spirit has some further shaking to do of the foundations of Empire.

The jailer is terrified and is going to kill himself with his Roman sword; better to off himself than to be a victim of crucifixion which is the punishment which would have awaited him. Amazingly none of the prisoners runs. The freedom of their brother the jailer is more important than their liberty.

The earthquake of the Spirit continues.

What a tender scene unfolds. The man who probably a few hours earlier was involved in the flogging of Paul and Silas now washes their wounds and then Paul and Silas wash his wounds with the healing waters of baptism. Everyone gathers in his home for a meal - which in Luke's writings always

means Eucharist.

The convicts and the jailers sit as kin at table. The Roman Empire is overturned and a community of love is established. Maximum security becomes a place of healing, feasting and songs of praise and joy. How blessed are the Easter earthquakes of today; people who are doing this in Guantanamo, in Rikers Island, in college encampments for Gaza.

We celebrate this liturgy between two birthdays - May 1 was the 91st birthday of the Catholic Worker and May 9 will be the 103rd birthday of Daniel Berrigan. Dorothy and Daniel, both familiar with jail cells, both earthquakes of the Spirit to shake the foundations of the carceral state and the complicit Church.

Every Easter morning for years I have used for prayer an essay of Dan's called [*An Ethic of Resurrection*](#). Here are some words from the conclusion:

Some continue to labor to break the demonic clutch on our souls of the ethic of Mars, of wars and rumors of wars, inevitable wars, just wars, necessary wars, victorious wars, and say our no in acts of hope. For us, all of these repeated arrests, the interminable jail-ing's, the life of our small communities, the discipline of nonviolence, these have embodied an ethic of resurrection.

Simply put, We long to taste that event, its thunders and quakes, its great yes. We want to test the resurrection in our bones. To see if we might live in hope, instead of in the silva oscura, the thicket of cultural despair, nuclear despair, a world of perpetual war. We want to taste the resurrection. May I say we have not been disappointed.

We all grew up in a church where we were accustomed to ask ourselves what we would give up for Lent. I propose a better question, "How will I be an earthquake for Easter?" Ω
(Friends, please remember Fr. Moran in your prayers as he recovers from a stroke. We will forward cards of support sent to the HCW)



Easter Peeps: Maggie, Anthony, Timmy, Dwight, and Keshawn... not the yellow poison in Keshawn's hands.

Thomas Gumbleton: bishop and disciple of justice, Presente! ⁷

Peter Feuerherd

(reprinted from [The National Catholic Reporter](#)- a publication worthy of subscription!)

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, the Detroit prelate who for many American Catholics defined faith-based social justice activism in the post-Vatican II church, died April 4. He was 94.

Described sometimes as the pastor of the Catholic peace and justice movement, Gumbleton lived in Detroit nearly his entire life, yet his influence was felt in far-flung places such as El Salvador, Haiti, Vietnam, Iran and Iraq.

He was a founding member of [Pax Christi USA](#), the national arm of the international Catholic peace movement, and [Bread for the World](#), an advocacy organization seeking to end world hunger.

"To put it most succinctly, Tom lived out the peace of Christ in his complete being," said Johnny Zokovitch, Pax Christi USA's executive director, shortly after the bishop's death. "Everything that our movement strives to be was evident in Tom and how Tom lived."

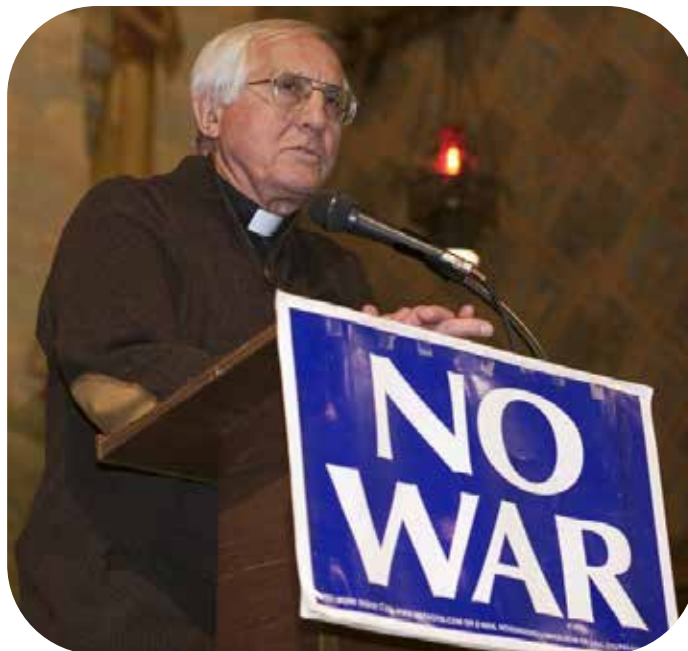
Expressing care for a wide range of global issues, Gumbleton was frequently on the scene of world trouble spots. In the United States, he was arrested for civil disobedience in protests against nuclear weapons and the 2003 Iraq War.

In Central America during the 1980s, he visited El Salvador and Nicaragua, returning to the U.S. with pointed criticisms of Cold War policies backing [Contra guerrillas](#) in Nicaragua and a government in El Salvador that allowed a military to trod [over human rights](#).

While embracing a prophetic role, he could also be a churchman. He was among the authors of the U.S. bishops' landmark 1983 pastoral letter on the nuclear arms race, [The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response](#), which criticized American

policy but offered some justification for the Cold War system of nuclear deterrence. By 2017, after Pope Francis changed the church's position on deterrence and declared for the first time that the "[very possession](#)" of nuclear weapons was to be "[firmly condemned](#)," Gumbleton told NCR he regretted what he wrote in 1983.

A Detroit native, Gumbleton was ordained a priest in 1956, served



Jim West

in Detroit-area parishes and was an archdiocesan chancery official. He was a protégé of Cardinal John Dearden, a leader who both influenced and was galvanized by the Second Vatican Council.

Ordained an auxiliary bishop in 1968 at age 38, he was the youngest U.S. bishop at the time. But Gumbleton's rapid ascent through the church hierarchy hit a dead end. He retired with the same title in 2006, having served for decades as pastor of inner-city St. Leo's Church, where he shared his rectory bathroom with worshipers and visitors.

"He never learned to speak bishop-ese," said Fr. Norman Thomas, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Detroit and a longtime friend of Gumbleton.

Gumbleton's frequent forays into political activism and candor

on divisive church doctrinal issues such as women's ordination and gay rights guaranteed that he would never ascend beyond auxiliary bishop in his beloved hometown.

During an interview in the late 1960s, Gumbleton voiced candid opinions on social and church issues. He later received a friendly warning letter from Archbishop Jean Jadot, then the apostolic delegate to the U.S., suggesting that bishops stay out of controversial press interviews.

"I was shocked that Jadot would say you should back off. I didn't take his advice," said Gumbleton.

As a young chancery official, he was sent to talk with clergy and other activists opposed to the Vietnam War who had been pushing the archdiocese to do more. The goal was to see if Gumbleton could calm matters. After meeting with activists, Gumbleton himself became a convert to various social justice causes.

"By the time the evening was over I was convinced they were right and that I should protest," he recalled.

Gumbleton later rankled church officials for the way he acknowledged the reality of Catholic clergy sexual abuse. In 2006, he gave written testimony to Ohio state legislators revealing his own sexual abuse by a priest, and supporting an extension of the state's statute of limitations in sexual abuse cases. As a consequence, he was effectively removed from his post at St. Leo's Church and forced to retire.

Gumbleton continued to minister at local parishes and continued writing and speaking on social justice issues until his death.

His friends said that the bishop was a natural introvert. His approach to issues was to listen, ask questions, seek advice and place himself in situations where people felt oppressed. "He wanted to be in places where it was all about economic justice," said

(Please see: *Presente!*, p8)

The Aims and Means of the Catholic Worker: Nonviolence

Each year the *New York Catholic Worker* publishes [The Aims and Means of the Catholic Worker](#) in the original Catholic Worker newspaper put out by our “mother house”. Over the past year we have reprinted portions of the aims and means with commentary on what they mean to us. This is our final installment.

The arms race stands as a clear sign of the direction and spirit of our age. It has extended the domain of destruction and the fear of annihilation, and denies the basic right to life. There is a direct connection between the arms race and destitution. “The arms race is an utterly treacherous trap, and one which injures the poor to an intolerable degree.” ([Gaudium et Spes](#))

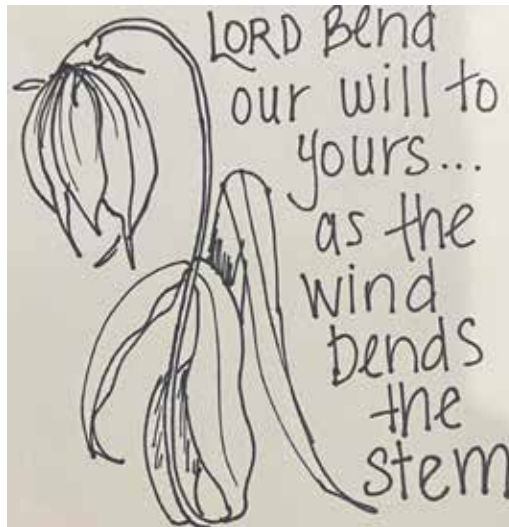
Nonviolence. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Matt. 5:9) *Only through nonviolent action can a personalist revolution come about, one in which one evil will not simply be replaced by another. Thus, we oppose the deliberate taking of human life for any reason, and see every oppression as blasphemous.*

Jesus taught us to take suffering upon ourselves rather than inflict it upon others, and He calls us to fight against violence with the spiritual weapons of prayer, fasting and noncooperation with evil. Refusal to pay taxes for war, to register for conscription, to comply with any unjust legislation; participation in nonviolent strikes and boycotts, protests or vigils; withdrawal of support for dominant systems, corporate funding or usurious practices are all excellent means to establish peace.

The Hartford Catholic Worker community has been engaged in active nonviolent resistance to violence and oppression since our inception. We understand violence to be any act, system, or societal structure that causes harm and/or undermines the inherent sacred dignity of the human person. [Christian pacifism is not Christian passive-ism](#). In the face of evil, such as violence, each of us has a positive moral duty to do what we can to nonviolently overcome said evil. Some will fast and pray, others will picket and vigil. Some will stand in solidarity accompanying those targeted, others will challenge unjust laws- or otherwise just laws perverted in service

of injustice by committing civil disobedience. Some will be imprisoned, some may endure injury, some will be martyred. Some [symbolically disarm](#) weapons of mass destruction, some [dismantle](#) destructive objects. Some [refuse to pay](#) federal taxes.

Spiritually, our nonviolence is informed by the Gospels, the lives of the saints and martyrs, and by our mentors- especially Dorothy Day, Daniel and Philip Berrigan, [James Lawson](#), and Elizabeth McAllister.



Jacqueline Allen-Douçot

Tactically, our nonviolence is informed by [Bayard Rustin](#) and [Saul Alinsky](#).

Strategically and politically, our nonviolence is informed by Gandhi and [Gene Sharp](#).

A complete listing of our nonviolent heroes and mentors would fill a volume: [Franz Jagerstatter](#), [Kathy Kelly](#), [Diane Nash](#), [Ella Baker](#), the [Mothers of the Plaza](#) in Argentina, the multitudes of

Black women who boycotted Birmingham's busses, Tom Lewis, the [Trocmes of Le Chambon](#), Gordon Zahn, Delores Huerta, Cesar Chavez, [Iyad Burnat](#), [Arik Ascherman](#), Mubarak Awad...

Knowing what to say “no” to is only half of the nonviolent commitment. The more difficult portion of nonviolence is knowing what we are to say “yes” to. This requires engaging our moral and prophetic imaginations. Engaging these imaginations requires proximity to those who suffer and the humility to listen to them. Phil Berrigan opined that “*the poor tell us who we are, the prophet tell us who we could be. So we hide the poor and kill the prophets.*”

During India's liberation movement Gandhi's “no's” included boycotts, marches, fasting, and civil disobedience. Gandhi's yeses, what he called Constructive program, included speaking indigenous languages instead of English, making and wearing traditional Indian clothing rather than buying imported British goods, organizing a parallel political structure- the Indian National Congress, and harvesting salt.

The constructive program of the Catholic Worker is to live communally with impoverished sisters and brothers while performing the Works of Mercy in a personal manner and on a daily basis. We believe that in doing so we are [“building a new society within the shell of the old.”](#)

The truth of Pope Paul's declaration: [“if you want peace, work for justice”](#) is that many conflicts could be resolved before they become lethal if we committed to feeding, forgiving, healing and housing every single human being. Ω

Presente! Thomas Gumbleton cont.

Thomas.

Much of his ministry was beyond the media's notice, including visits to Michigan prisons and a medical mission he supported in Haiti.

“He epitomized the best of the Catholic tradition,” said Benedictine Sr. Anne McCarthy, a former staffer

at Pax Christi USA who worked with Gumbleton and traveled with him frequently on overseas trips.

Despite Gumbleton's devotion to the church, said McCarthy, “when push came to shove, he would always go for the Gospel over the institution.” Ω

Notes, cont.

experience, the plight of Hartford students is dire. [Under 25%](#) read at or above grade level, our [graduation rate](#) is nearly 20% below that of the [statewide average](#), and Hartford (all of CT really) is experiencing a teacher shortage. I think about two kids who exemplify the foibles of this system that is still not working despite a 30 year fight to fix it.

Jorgé moved into the bedroom next to mine in October of this year. Ongoing family conflict and compounded trauma had made his home life unsafe and unsustainable, and the best thing for everyone involved was for Jorgé to stay with us. Jorgé is kind and gentle most of the time, has a critically thinking mind that likes to ask the higher order thinking questions of why and how. When I drive him to school in the mornings, I bother him about what he's working on in school or what social situations he's facing, we have a standing joke for when he gets out of the car and he always takes a second to scratch Raffy behind the ears before heading into school.

Just as we seemed to be getting into a regular routine, tragedy struck, one of his best friends was murdered, shot at a party Jorgé had been invited to. He shared this with me on a Sunday morning, weeping in my arms. Even after all of this time, I'm never sure what to say when one of the children's families is visited by the quintessential American specter of gun violence.

I hugged and held him as the teapot behind me boiled over. Less than two weeks after the shooting another friend of his was killed in a hit and run. Both of these students had attended the same school as Jorgé, but as they weren't current students, the school did nothing until the students staged a walkout, at which point the school implemented a lock-down. Our education system really has a single way of responding to the gun violence or the trauma it causes: locking the doors and hiding from the windows. An apt metaphor for those students trapped in Hartford schools.

Unsurprisingly, of late Jorgé has doubted the value in completing his education at this school, and while we are doing everything we can to make sure he stays in school, he's so smart for my argument to be based on the learning he will do. I told him "Look, when it comes down to it, the place is a charter school, it is in the interests of their profit margin to see you graduate, that

piece of paper is a key to being able to function as an adult, I know that they don't really teach you, but you need to stay in school just to get that piece of paper."

I probably should have said something along the lines of "your education is what you make of it, if you put in the work to learn you will grow and be better for it" but that kind of motivational poster sentiment, is really so much blame shifting. It feels like saying "It's not our fault 75% of you can't read, school is about the effort you put in."

Jorgé is a picture of what its like for students who stay in Hartford, but what about those kids who win the magnet lottery instituted by Sheff V. O'Neil?

Fredie comes from a family of "cheaper by the dozen" proportions. Their arrival at program heralds a busy day simply through their num-



This 70 year old photo may be retro, sadly it's message is not.

bers, but the joy and work they bring make it absolutely worth it. Freddie is even one of our counselors this summer. Around the end of the pandemic, he went from being a pretty short skinny kid, to a taller than me and broader at the shoulder young adult. You can see the man he's becoming every day; the timidity of youth gone replaced with the confidence of size and strength. Oh how I wish that the only display of strength from Freddie was his new acclimation to the basketball court.

Freddie's family has been going through a housing crisis for about four years now. We have helped them with utilities and negotiations with their landlord, but the fangs of poverty are sharp and Freddie and his siblings have faced undue suffering throughout. Luckily they aren't also condemned to a cardboard degree. Freddie and his siblings go to school in Farmington. This

should be a triumph of desegregation efforts, Freddie's rich caramel skin brings some much needed melanin to the majority white district, along with perspectives, stories and insights from a life the Farmington students will simply never face.

I know from experience, that the Farmington students are perhaps too young, and too privileged, to appreciate this. I remember from my childhood, that even my white skin wasn't enough to allow me to pass as a suburban student. The white kids at my school referred to me as a hobo, a taunt that misinforms by sartorial choices to this day. I didn't need the following anecdote to inform me that Freddie likely faced a harsher level of discrimination, but as it was shared with us, I'll share it with you.

It is not always easy to hang out with friends from a different town when you're that age.

Freddie took it upon himself to catch a city bus out to Farmington at the invitation of a friend he had made. An hour long bus ride, and a fare that came out of the few bucks he makes as an HCW counselor, only for him to arrive to an impossibly cruel response. One of the other children upon seeing him, remarked "Who invited the N*gger?" Freddie's friend did not stand up for him, and Freddie got back on the bus and returned home.

Is it better for Freddie to be attending school in Farmington? It's certainly better in terms of academics, available resources and class sizes. However is that worth the racism he faces among his fellow students? Is it worth the teachers who will have little to no context for

the greater issues in his life? I do not know.

I think the current system will always be the educational equivalent of inviting a starving child to eat at your house. It's a good thing to do, but it does nothing to alleviate the hunger of the family, or to end the system that left them without food.

If it were up to me, I'd reverse the magnet systems. Would Fred E Wish school lack resources if the kids from Farmington were shipped there? I think of the generosity and growth we see in our student volunteers from North West Catholic, who come to Hartford and meet the people here on our terms. Is there a power imbalance? Sure, but that will always be the case. Would that young man have felt comfortable dropping the N word if he weren't surrounded by protective whiteness? I doubt it, racism rarely correlates with courage. Ω

Return Service Requested

Notes From De Porres House

Ammon Allen-Douçot

One hundred percent of my public education came from magnet schools, and on my less depressed days, I like to think that I am a testament to their quality. Montessori Magnet was a haven for the development of my love of reading and writing, the Metropolitan Learning Center was... well it was a disaster, but I can hardly blame them for it. The Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy, while I attended at least, regularly placed in the top 10 high schools in the country. I often reflect on the fantastic education I received, when faced with the wildly different circumstances and outcomes of the children I care for every day at program.

Many of our kids don't actually go to school in Hartford, enduring hour plus long commutes to make it to Windsor Locks, Glastonbury or Manchester (none of which are an hour away, but school buses routes are a nightmare) This reality is a result of the Sheff v. O'Neill case in which it was decided that students in Hartford faced systemic inequality with their suburban counterparts, and to rectify

this, in 1997 the state assembly passed 3 part legislation that would: 1) Initiate a 5-year state takeover of the Hartford school system; 2) Fund



a major new commitment to early childhood education throughout the state; and 3) Implement a basic structure of a two-way, voluntary

integration program, including a new regional magnet school system and an expanded inter-district transfer program to be known as "[Project Concern](#)" and, eventually, "Open Choice."

Less than a year after that decision I was enrolled in my first magnet school. In the next 3 decades since, the situation has seemingly improved, though not without continued pressure from the plaintiffs of Sheff v. O'Neil. The plaintiffs returning to court and negotiating new settlements with the state over the course of thirty years directly benefited me: in 2001 Montessori Magnet moved into a beautiful new building, in 2006 MLC was one of the first middle schools to give every student a laptop, in 2012 I graduated from one of the best high schools in the country with a full semester of my college credits (worth a cool 20 grand) under my belt. On paper one hundred percent of my experience is a testament to the boons of the magnet school system, and the work of the plaintiffs in Sheff v. O'Neil.

Of course the fact that needed injunctions is because despite these efforts and my personal

(Please see: Notes, p9)