

CATHOLIC  WORKER

Hosting

By Henrietta Cullinan

People often ask me if they can come and stay sometimes I say yes and sometimes no, mostly no. Four grown-up children, always coming and going, late night pre-loading sessions at weekends and four tiny bedrooms. Up until now our daytime lives have always been communal. The bathing arrangements are not at all private, my husband and I having been born into a generation accustomed to wandering around their own house naked. We still have a communal sock pile, not so long ago we had a communal dressing room and before that we all six lived in one room. I am using the communal nature of our house, I can only conclude, as an excuse not to have anyone to stay.

It doesn't seem selfish to be looking after your own children, three meals, shopping, cooking, fetching, carrying, mopping, picking, riding through teenager hood four times. This month my eldest son got married. It's time for a new approach to home ownership.

Playing music at New Year, my friend the viola player says, 'and what does 2013 hold for you?' I say, 'this year is going to be the year of Hospitality.' He says, graciously, 'I'm sure (*cont p4*)

I Will Not Fight for Queen and Country

The following is the text of a speech given by Ben Griffin at a debate at the Oxford Union. The title was "This house will not fight for Queen and country." Ben Griffin was in the British Army in Afghanistan and Iraq

Fight for Queen and Country, what does that mean? It is a jingoistic phrase dreamt up by some propaganda merchant intent on stoking the fire of that false religion patriotism.

The idea of fighting for Queen and Country is held tight by those who never have and never will actually fight. It is held by those who long to bask in the reflected glory of war. It is held by those who have no experience of the suffering that war inflicts. It is an idea held up by those who gain the most from war, Politicians, Generals, Arms Industry and The Media. It is a phrase that is dredged up again and again to stifle dissent and build unquestioning support for the aggression we choose to unleash.

We must look at what lies behind this decrepit phrase.

Who is it doing the fighting? A well-trained and professional force that's highest collective desire is to go to war, any war.

This force does not fight for Queen and Country. It fights when it is told to fight. Even when the Generals believe that a certain war is illegal or un-winnable or detrimental to the long-term security of these isles, when it comes to the crunch they always want war.

Below: Catholic Workers, Pax Christi, CCND and friends, gather outside the Ministry of Defence, Whitehall, on Ash Wednesday

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London Catholic Worker:

We are: Angela Broome, Simon Watson, Henrietta Cullinan, Chris Goodchild, Scott and Maria Albrecht, Martin Newell, Sean O'Malley, Ciaron O'Reilly, Mirjam Johansson, Liz & John Hamblett, Roland Dale and Dave Nash

Dorothy Day House

16 De Beauvoir Road,
De Beauvoir Town, London N1 5SU
Tel: 020 7249 0041 Email:
londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk
We are: Liz and John Hamblett

Giuseppe Conlon House

49 Mattison Road, London N4 1BG
Tel: 020 8348 8212 Email:
londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk
Dorothy Day House and Giuseppe Conlon House offer hospitality to destitute refugees, mainly men. We run Peter's Community Café and the Urban Table Soup Kitchen. We organise regular non-violent resistance, and produce this newsletter.

We are: Martin Newell, Sean O'Malley, Ciaron O'Reilly, Roland Dale, Dave Nash, Nora & Joel

Catholic Worker Farmhouse:

Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Road,
West Hyde, Herts, WD3 9XJ
Tel: 01923 777 201 Email:
thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk
We are: Scott & Maria Albrecht & family, Mirjam Johanssen & Sigrun.

The Farmhouse offers hospitality to destitute women. We vigil regularly at the nearby Northwood Joint Forces Military HQ. We also grow organic vegetables and have a poustinia.

Maryhouse also offers a home to four destitute women with children.

Peter's Community Café:

Open Mon-Weds **1pm—4.00pm**
The Crypt, St Peter's Church,
Northchurch Terrace, De Beauvoir
Town, N1 5AT Tel: 020 7249 0041

Urban Table Soup Kitchen:

Open Sun. 2.30pm-4.30pm
The Old School Rooms, The Round
Chapel, Powerscroft Road, Hackney,
London E5 0PU

Peter's Cafe and the Urban Table are both attempts to imitate Jesus' practice of sharing his table with all comers. At the Café in particular we also hope to offer a space to build bridges between the disparate groups and individuals in our local community, as well as welcoming activists.

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“War, Peace and Interconnectedness”

By Jaroslaw Dabrowski

London, February 2013

Already there has been 10 years of continuous bloodshed in Iraq, almost 12 since the invasion in Afghanistan... It seems so long ago. So many things have changed in our own lives.

And we have got used to other conflicts taking place during the “Arab Spring”, in Syria, Gaza, Mali. As long as these conflicts don't affect us personally, do we really care about them? The media want us to believe that all this violence and blood is inevitable part of the process of bringing true democracy and defending the freedom which we want to enjoy in our own countries.

Before joining the London Catholic Worker I didn't challenge too much the mainstream media “war propaganda.” Being raised in a soldier family and having lived on a military base, I learned to respect the armed forces. Coming from Poland, the country which over centuries struggled to defend its independence through violent uprisings and wars, I have lived in a culture and Church that glorify life sacrifices of its soldiers. Therefore it did not seem odd to me when the Polish government sent troop to Iraq and Afghanistan. The media kept saying that was our duty to help fight “terrorists.” The Catholic Church responded eagerly sending their chaplains. And everything in the name of what? “Peace” and “Democracy” that can be brought no matter the means and costs?

How sad it is that majority of practicing Catholics, church hierarchy, and Westerners boasting to have such “advanced, civilized” cultures still embrace this conviction. How sad it is that we don't see a conflict between the non-violence that Jesus taught, and the ‘need’ to have a strong army ready to intervene wherever and whenever our national security and interests are at stake. How sad it is to witness our clergy imbedding with



the state as military chaplains caught up in the pursuit of higher ranks and “30 pieces of silver.” As a former hospital chaplain I would like to ask those military priest chaplains how they manage to live and minister in “spiritual bipolarity” - to promote love towards all human beings and bless those who are paid to kill? It is so sad to see us Christians not opposing more military service and abandoning the harsh practice of public penance and confession which was practiced in the Christian community until the time of Constantine (end of 3rd century). That penance was done only in three cases: adultery, apostasy (renunciation of faith in the time of persecution) and murder. They automatically excluded the offender from the community of believers because the gravity of the deed had profound consequences on the functioning of the community. To be able to be re-admitted the penitent had to undergo a public confession of one's deed, wear a penitent's sack during the time of Lent, and promise a complete change of heart. Committing the same offence again would mean definite excommunication. Therefore it is indeed sad to see how slack we have become with regard to our practice of penance and interpretation of the love imperative.

Some may say, however: it is justifiable to kill the terrorists somewhere in Middle East! Our brave Catholic, Christian soldiers should not feel guilty about that. Why would they need to repent or be excommunicated? Not at all! They don't do any harm to us, our Christian

(Continued on page 11)

What does the fighting involve? (cont p3)

I WILL NOT FIGHT FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY

(from p1)

Well if you believe the media or the citations written for medals awarded you might imagine that the fighting consists of bayonet charges, lone hand grenade assaults on enemy positions or modern-day spitfire pilots scrambling to some noble action.

In my experience the reality is a lot darker.

Long periods of waiting punctuated by unforeseen moments of extreme violence.

Having your legs blown off by an IED.

A supposed ally shooting holes in your chest.

Dying in a helicopter crash.

Burning to death in a transport plane.

Being beaten to death by an angry mob.

Being shot in the face as you break into someone's home.

The reality is setting up thousands of checkpoints in the country you have occupied, disrupting the lives of the people and then killing them when they approach too quickly or fail to stop in time.

The reality is raiding people's houses, using explosives to enter homes. Detaining previously unknown males some as young as 15 and handing them over to be tortured. Whilst their families are left to fend for themselves, traumatised by your action.

The reality is killing people from the safety of an attack helicopter or drone control room. As if you are playing a computer game, with no regard for the lives of people who have been dehumanised.

Haji, Raghead, Sand Nigger, Chogie, Argie, Paddy, Gook, Chink, Jap. Kraut, Hun. All terms used by our armed forces. The product of a society which still believes in its superiority over other people's and cultures.

We pretend that we wage war for higher, noble causes. We claim that our armed forces fight for Freedom, Democracy or Human Rights. This is not the case. We wage war according to Policy. It is a choice determined by Government. This policy is influenced by those who gain the most from war. Politicians, Generals, The Arms Industry and The Media.

These scoundrels always predict victory. Always insist that violence is the answer. They Ignore the inevitability of unforeseen consequences. The existence of Blowback The fact that it is our own policy that creates our enemies. They deny that we have been defeated to maintain support for current and future bloodletting.

The reasons they give for starting wars rarely match the reasons they give for continuing wars and rarely match the actual outcomes. These scoundrels currently hold the noble position of backing a military junta in Mali against insurgents that we decided to arm in Libya.

Before that they celebrated the Arab Spring whilst turning a blind eye to Saudi Arabian aggression in Bahrain. Where weapons that we supplied were used by our Saudi allies to kill civilians engaged in non-violent protest. Their silence in this matter shines a light on their complicity.

In both Iraq and Afghanistan, once the reasons for going to war were found to be false, or unattainable or just forgotten, those with a vested interest in continuing the wars resorted to one of the oldest tricks in the book.

They cultivated the myth of the soldier as hero. They told you that you might not understand why the war continued but that you should support the soldiers. They told you that to stop the pointless slaughter would be sacrilege to those heroes that had already died.

Truth is the first casualty of war and tonight you will see this phenomenon first hand. You will hear men speak in reasonable tones using educated language to mount a defence of Fighting for Queen and Country. They will argue that at the very least we must be ready to defend this country. But they are talking about a hypothetical situation. The Taliban are not going to invade, The Chinese are not massing on the coast of France.

From positions of vested interest they will try to convince you that Fighting for Queen and Country is your highest duty. But what they are really calling for is a continuation of business as usual. Fighting and killing in accordance with their policy. Which is designed to fulfil their interests, their greed, their ambition.

I am a Human Being and my allegiance is not to Queen and Country but to the whole of Humanity.

I no longer accept the lies which perpetuate war.

I no longer accept that violence can lead to Peace.

Never again will I be complicit in the killing and torture of my Brothers and Sisters.

Never again will accept the vile religion of Patriotism.

I refuse to pull on that rancid uniform.

I refuse to fight for Queen and Country.

**Bradley Manning
is on Trial for Us!**

We're on the loose for him!

**Read
Bradley Manning's
court statement at
www.tinyurl.com/bmp8mk**

**Full
Court
Martial
June
2010
Speak &
Act Up
for
Bradley**



HOSTING *(from p1)*

you're always hospitable.' On Twitter I post, 'hospitality in my house every single day' and get spammed by internet dating sites. I print out a colour copy of Andrei Rublev's icon, Trinity, Abraham with the three angels under the oak tree at Mare (Genesis 18, vv 1 – 15) and pin it up in my office.

Shortly after this the opportunity arrives and KM, a Burmese man waiting for NASS support, moves out of Dorothy Day house and into my third son's empty bedroom. I had discussed the plan with my husband who at first just says 'yes if that's what you want.' 'Should we undergo some discernment and preparation?' I ask. He says, 'What is there to discern?'

This experience has taught me more about marriage and notions of house and home than about offering hospitality. We don't need to be Mr. and Mrs. tucked up in our own house. Our house is not part of us; it's just concrete, aluminium and glass. Welcoming a guest makes us both nervous and nervous of admitting this to each other but then draws us closer.

There are of course possible problems. Our guest is almost completely nocturnal and so I immediately start to worry about being woken up and the back door being left open when he goes out to smoke. KM tells me his own father is a very disciplined man who doesn't like any kind of noise. He himself is so quiet he never disturbs us. I discover that privacy is a shared endeavour, a shared sensitivity to each other's needs. We settle into a rhythm of conversation every few days, each knowing when the other is likely to be in or out. I quickly develop the sense that our guest wants to be respected and that our son's bedroom is his room for the time being. Paradoxically at the same time I am asked to write a letter saying that KM couldn't stay any longer than the next two weeks, a date which shifts as bureaucratic delays appear and disappear.

I am shocked that our living room that I always thought was a shared space seems like a private room to KM, who never comes to watch television with us for more than a few minutes, even Match of the Day. He often uses the kitchen after we've finished even after we've gone to bed. It turns out the 'communal' areas of our house are not that communal.

My upbringing says hospitality is cooking a shared meal, clean towels, books and flowers in the bedrooms, polite conversation at meal times, but mainly a shared meal. But who is expecting this of me? At first I leave a small pan of rice for KM to eat late at night with dried hot red chillies.

Our guest arrives in winter during the snowy weeks when the temperature is below freezing each night.



There is no heating in the bedrooms, and I worry how cold it must be for a guest with nocturnal habits. I buy a thermometer for our kitchen, which struggles to stay above 15 degrees, sometimes making it to 18 degrees, warm and cosy for our house. I realise I needn't worry. My husband's grandmother used to say, 'a jumper is something a child has to wear when its mother feels cold.'

Dorothy Day tells us that every home needs a Christ room. The paradox is that the minute that empty room is filled with a guest it doesn't feel like a Christ room anymore. The Christ room is a promise for the future. It is a first practical step in the realization of my individual responsibility to others.

It makes me sad to realise how selfish we have become. Offering hospitality helps me remember the many, many people who are hovering on the fringes, not able to work, to support themselves, to be with their families. It makes me realise that for some ours is an oppressive and unjust society, where the burden of proof lies with the asylum seeker, where there are different rules for different people.

It is easy to have a guest but also hard. At first I feel uneasy and guilty. I regret losing my peace of mind. I am aware that my own taboos and customary compulsions were getting in the way. It doesn't come naturally to me, but when I turn away and set off for work, I have a deep gladness that KM is here sharing our house with us. It has led me to dream of inviting more guests, why not two or three, sitting round the table, keeping warm.

Ash Wednesday call for peace at Ministry of Defence

More than 100 of us, Catholic Workers, members of Pax Christi and Christian CND and other friends braved freezing temperatures in London on Ash Wednesday to pray and voice our opposition to war and nuclear weapons outside the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

We gathered in Embankment Gardens for the first part of the liturgy which included a call to repentance: 'Within weeks of the bombing of Coventry Cathedral in 1940, a wooden cross of charred timbers was set up, and in chalk on the wall was written 'Father, forgive'. Before we go to mark another place with that same call to repentance, let us recognise our own sinfulness and ask God to forgive us of all that separates us from his divinity and one another.'

After the blessing of ashes and charcoal and scripture readings, our foreheads were marked with ashes in the traditional way, always very moving as we remember the ashes that were all that was left of so many and so much at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We then walked in silence down Horseguards Avenue, stopping three times for prayers and readings: "Nuclear weapons and defence are a counter sign to the Cross. They threaten to undo the work of creation, they control through fear, their development and production take resources away from the poor".

Outside the Ministry of Defence we formed a large circle, and carried out symbolic actions including making a silent appeal for the government to stop the new Trident nuclear defence system, tying ribbons to a cross in memory of places and people in need of peace, and drawing the word 'Repent' in ashes on the pavement in front of the MoD.

During this day, as has been done each year for over 30 years now, some of us also marked the MoD buildings with charcoal: Henrietta Cullinan (right) and Martin Newell in the early morning, Mirjam Johanssen, Scott

Albrecht and John Lynes during the liturgy.

Martin Newell said "Marking the walls of the MoD with blessed charcoal is an integral part of this act of witness. Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent and the journey to Holy

Week where we recall the events that led Jesus to arrest, court, sentence and execution. Those who mark the MoD walls are risking arrest and beginning a journey that can lead likewise to court, sentence and prison."

In the event, although those of us marking the walls were all stopped and searched and had our charcoal taken from us, no one was arrested this time.

The UK government agreed in January to spend £160billion on the new weapons system on four Vanguard submarines. Each sub has 16 missile tubes. Each missile can deliver eight warheads. Each warhead is eight times more powerful than the bomb used at Hiroshima.

One reading quoted Archbishop Chullikat who said in 2011: "In Catholic teaching the task is not to make the world safer through the threat of nuclear weapons but rather to make the world safer through disarmament. The moral end is clear.."

The service concluded with a prayer of commitment: "may the God of peace, who loves each one of us infinitely, send us forth as an instrument of God's peace, love and nonviolence, and may the God of peace bless us, the Creator, the Christ and the Holy Spirit!

This service has taken place every year since 1982. It was organised by Pax Christi, Christian CND and London Catholic Worker. Participants included a group of pupils from Trinity Catholic School Leamington Spa, Catholic students from London and Oxford, several religious and parish groups and some Japanese Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist monks and nuns who are based at the Battersea Peace Temple.



Above: Henrietta Cullinan and Katrina Alton outside the MoD on Ash Wednesday



Left: Henrietta Cullinan after marking the Ministry of Defence building as a call to repentance from nuclear weapons

October 7th 2012

TO: PHILLIPS BAILIFFS
PO BOX 997, DONCASTER, DN1 9GD

RE: Your letter dated October 2nd 2012

REFUSING TO PAY - THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION CONTINUES

Dear Sir / Madam,

I received your letter dated as above, which was in reference to the £445.00 fine that you have been instructed by the courts to try to enforce payment of. Your letter says that you will add £215 to my 'balance if I don't pay within 7 days'.

Today is an appropriate day for me to write to you, as it is one year to the day since I went to Downing Street with some friends, and poured out red paint in the street outside the gates there, to symbolise the blood of the innocent people of Afghanistan, which has been poured out on the streets of their country, at the behest of our UK government, along with the USA and others.

That day was the 10th Anniversary of the war on Afghanistan, today is the 11th. Today I heard one of the women whose sons went to Afghanistan with the British army, and came home in a body bag, call for the troops to come home immediately.

It was for witnessing to my faith in the God of Jesus Christ who refused to be defended by the sword, a God of peace not war, that I was fined, and I will not co-operate with our war making state by paying this fine. I want to try to remain human and faithful, and do penance for my complicity in this war which continues to be waged 'in my name', whether I like it or not, which I don't.

Although I am a Catholic priest and a member of the Passionist Religious Order, I work as a live-in volunteer, and I live in a shared house with other single people, provided by the London Catholic Worker, which is a voluntary group. Nearly all the property in the house – certainly all the furniture, all the household goods and nearly all electronic equipment, are the property of the project or the landlord, and not mine. Anyway, leaving that aside, it is all old donated stuff anyway. My own personal property is all in my room, which comprises clothes that are generally old and often second hand and / or donated, or very cheap to start with. I have a few cassette tapes and a 20 year old radio cassette player and an old donated stereo. I have a few books, which are also old and I would think of very little value. The furniture in the room belongs to the project I work for.

My personal possessions are very limited since I have been committed for many years to a life of voluntary poverty. So is my income.

I'm willing to go to prison for my beliefs. Since there is nothing here for you to take that has any resale value, you would be wasting your time sending anyone here, and it would worth your while to return this to the courts. I've been to prison before for similar reasons, so I'm not afraid of it. I'm a conscientious objector – I encourage you to make moves in the same direction.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours

Martin Newell

Right: Catholic Workers and friends blockade Downing Street on the 10th Anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan, October 7th 2011.

For my part in this act of witness, I was fined £445, along with Chris Cole. I am still refusing to pay the fine, as is Chris Cole. Above is a copy of a letter to the bailiffs, who write threatening to come to our house and take away my possessions, as a result of my refusing to pay the fines the court say I owe them. This letter is stuck on the wall inside the front door of Giuseppe Conlon House, along with one of their letters, in case they come. I also sent a copy to a friendly solicitor, just in case.

Martin Newell

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Regular Events:

Vigil in solidarity with Wikileaks & Julian Assange: every day 2pm–5pm
Ecuadorian Embassy: Behind Harrods:
Hans Crescent, London SW1X 0LS.

Drones Vigil

Every two weeks, Fridays, 4.30–6.00pm
Outside Tower 42 (the old NatWest tower)
25 Old Broad Street City of London,
Greater London EC2N 1HQ

Peace Vigil Thurs 3.30pm

Northwood Town Centre
For Northwood Military HQ
Contact CW Farmhouse for more details

HOLY WEEK: Palm Sunday

- "Faith and Resistance" reflection day &
Mass – 12noon– 5pm at Giuseppe Conlon House

Holy Thursday: Stations of the Cross
around the Geography of Suffering, Central
London: for start time & place, contact GCH.

Ground the Drones (see right):

organised by Stop the War Coalition
www.stopwar.org tel: 0207 561 9311

Catholic Worker Euro Gathering:

May 16th–20th at Cudham Environmental Centre,
England, (just inside M25 near Orpington, Kent)

DSEi Arms Fair 2013

10th - 13th September

See: www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk
for more information about the protests.

PROTEST

Ground the drones



Join us in calling on the government
to abandon the use of drones as
weapons of war.

Assemble: 12 noon at Lincoln station
March to rally at 2pm
at RAF Waddington – the UK's new
Centre of Drone Operations

Saturday 27th April 2013

DOROTHY DAY SAINT FOR OUR TIMES?

Dorothy Day, founder of our movement, once said, "Don't call me a saint, I don't want to be dismissed so easily". She also kept repeating, "We are all called to be saints" - and she yearned to see "saints of the social order".

Her cause for canonisation is being promoted in the USA. All the American Bishops recently voted in favour of it. But Catholic Workers on the whole, we're not much interested. To us she's already a popular saint, like Archbishop Romero. And we're not much impressed by what many of those Bishops said about Dorothy when they voted. It sounds like they are trying to airbrush her social and political radicalism out of the picture, to put her up on a spiritualised plaster saint pedestal like all the others, which is exactly what she feared. So let's hear from the real Dorothy Day - and what she had to say about Bishops, and saints:

"I never expected much of the bishops. In all history, popes and bishops and abbots seem to have been blind and power-loving and greedy. I never expected leadership from them. It is the saints that keep appearing all through history who keep things going. What I do expect is the bread of life and down through the ages there is that continuity."



MEDITATIONS by Dorothy Day

Taken from Dorothy Day's column in the original
"Catholic Worker" paper published in New York, USA.

WE MUST BEGIN

We have to begin to see what Christianity really is, that "our God is a living fire; though He slay me yet will I trust Him." We have to think in terms of the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount and have this readiness to suffer. "We have not yet resisted unto blood." We have not yet loved our neighbour with the kind of love that is a precept to the extent of laying down our life for him. And our life very often means our money, money that we have sweated for; it means our bread, our daily living, our rent, our clothes. We haven't shown ourselves ready to lay down our life. This is a new precept, it is a new way, it is the new man [sic] we are supposed to become. I always comfort myself by saying that Christianity is only two days old (a thousand years are as one day in the sight of God) and so it is only a couple of days that are past and now it is about time we began to take these things literally, to begin tomorrow morning and say, "Now I have begun."

April 1965

BRIDE OF CHRIST

There is plenty to do, for each one of us, working on our own hearts, changing our own attitudes, in our own neighbourhoods. If the just man [sic] falls seven times daily, we each one of us fall more in thought, word and deed. Prayer and fasting, taking up our own cross daily and following Him, doing penance, these are the hard words of the Gospel.

As to the Church, where else shall we go, except to the Bride of Christ, one flesh with Christ? Though she is a harlot at times, she is our Mother. We should read the Book of Hosea, which is a picture of God's steadfast love not only for the Jews, His chosen people, but for His Church, of which we are every one of us members or potential members. Since there is no time with God, we are all one, all one body, Chinese, Russians, Vietnamese, and He has *commanded us to love one another*.

"A new commandment I give you, that you love others as I have loved you" not to the defending of your life, but to the laying down of your life.

A hard saying.

"Love is indeed a harsh and dreadful thing" to ask of us, of each one of us, but it is the only answer.

January 1976

EASY ESSAYS by Peter Maurin

The Case for Utopia

The world would be better off

If people tried to become better.

And people would become better

If they stopped trying to become

Better off.

For when everybody tries to become better off,

Nobody is better off.

But when everybody tries to become better,

Everybody is better off.

Everybody would be rich

If nobody tried to become richer.

And nobody would be poor

If everybody tried to be the poorest.

And everybody

would be

What he ought

to be

If everybody tried

to be

What [s]he wants

the other fellow

to be



Sowing Seeds: One step at a time

I've been volunteering with the London Catholic Worker only for a short time, but perhaps due to the anarchic, all-hands-on-deck nature of the place, the job of writing a blog post on "a social justice issue" for the run-up to SCM's Seeds of Liberation conference somehow fell to me, probably the least qualified for the job. It's not immediately obvious to me how I can possibly speak authoritatively on any social justice issue, but I can say that it was a question of justice that first brought me to the London Catholic Worker: how can I live my life in a way that means justice to the peoples of the world - the poor, the oppressed, the voiceless, the homeless, the hungry? If all that suffering out there is real, what will I do with my life? How will I respond?

The Catholic Worker movement was started in 1933 in New York by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. It consists of between 150 and 200 communities, mostly in the USA but also dotted around other countries as well. Catholic Worker communities consist mainly of houses of hospitality built around the works of mercy – feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, etc. Recognising that this alone would, in a sense, be simply tidying up after the unjust social and political systems around us, Catholic Workers also aim to speak out, to challenge and to resist those same systems. Ultimately, our aim is to "create a new society within the shell of the old", a society where "it is easier to be good".

Here at Giuseppe Conlon House, we try to do all this by running a night shelter providing emergency accommodation for about 20 destitute asylum seekers (I can hear them snoring in the next room as I write this), and

a community café (where people occasionally even pay for what they order!), we help to run a soup kitchen, and we're as active as we possibly can be in acting and speaking out against violence and injustice.

It all sounds great on paper, to me at least, but I often can't shake the feeling that basically it all boils down to us doing a lot of cooking, cleaning, chatting, moving stuff from one place to another, and standing around in the freezing cold with a banner or placard frozen to our icy finger-tips. Not exactly glamorous stuff.

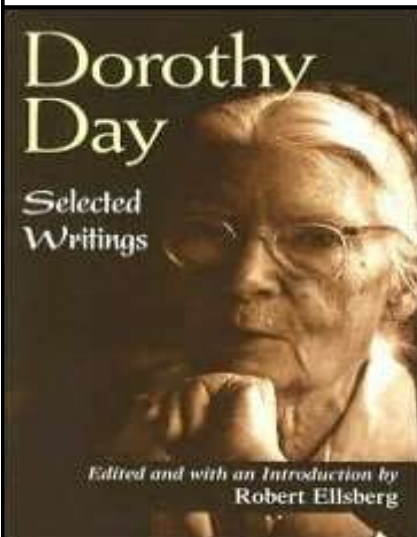
As I sorted out the laundry the other day, putting someone else's dirty underwear into the wash, I was struck by a sense of futility as it occurred to me that perhaps none of this was making a difference at all. It's a common feeling, so I'm told, amongst those struggling to follow Christ's call to work for justice and liberation. Luckily, Dorothy Day has some wise words:

"People say, what is the sense of our small effort? They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time; we can be responsible only for the one action of the present

moment. But we can beg for an increase of love in our hearts that will vitalize and transform these actions, and know that God will take them and multiply them, as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes."

Whatever questions you bring with you to the Seeds of Liberation conference, whatever work you choose or continue to do, I hope you will always know that, one step at a time, your response of love will undoubtedly help to make the world a better place.

By Roland Dale



SPECIAL OFFER:

"Dorothy Day - Selected Writings"

for £5 + £2.50 p&p.

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"Reads like a sustained prayer - for peace, for love, for humility, and most of all, for activism."

-Christian Century

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LCW NEWS...NEWS...NEWS

By Martin Newell

We've seen a lot of coming and going since our last newsletter. We said good bye to Sarah and John, and Liz and John were away for over two months discerning their future. That's an on going project for them, as they are back with for the time being at least. Conor was also away getting a much needed break for a month, after being with us for three years and only having about three weeks off in that time. We also welcomed Dave and Roland, who are also discerning as to where their future lies with the Catholic Worker. In the meantime, Jarek and Eva came and went, leaving a cleaner and tidier house in their wake! Currently we have Nora from Germany and Joel from Sweden come to share in our life and work for a few weeks or months.

So many other things have happened its hard to know where to start. Having had contact with some CW friends in Glasgow, we were able to put them in touch with each other. **The result has been the re-birth of the Glasgow CW.** They don't have a house yet, only a website, but they are meeting to pray, build community, study, and plan a growing witness to faith, peace and justice. Check them out at www.catholicworker.org

We had some successful events here at Giuseppe Conlon House in January, with a Catholic Worker study day, reflecting on the sermon on the mount and the works of mercy via Mathew 25, and a day of reflection preparing for the annual Ash Wednesday act of witness at the Ministry of Defence. (see p5 for a report on the act of witness) We also continued our tradition of monthly socials with home made music, food and beer (not home made), and often Mass too (before the beer and food!)

Back in 2011, we helped to start the Harringay Refugee and Migrant Support Centre, which is operating out of our parish church centre at St John Vianney, Tottenham. It is now going from strength to strength , and the advisors as well as the hospitality is a welcome addition to the lives of our guests. **Another project we are supporting is the Refugee Bike Project,** Jeremy and Felicity, who collect old bikes, fix them up and give them to destitute refugees who can use them to travel around this very expensive city.



The Bike Project, operating out of our basement here at Giuseppe Conlon House, has so far given out over two hundred bikes!

On the resistance front, Ciaron especially, and others, continue to vigil at the **Ecuadorian Embassy in support of Wikileaks and Julian Assange.** The recent revelations of the involvement of CIA torturer from 1970's Latin America, James Steele, in Iraq, came about following journalistic investigation into the vast amount of information now available following Bradley Manning's releases to Wikileaks.

Bradley Manning himself recently acquired the dubious distinction of having spent 1,000 in jail without trial. This day was marked by a vigil outside the American Embassy, as we have marked, and will continue to mark, his appearances in court.

Connecting all these dots, on way or another, recently, have been the re-election of Rafael Correa in Ecuador, and the death of President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela.

Significant anniversaries have passed recently, prompting much thought and reflection - 10 years since over a million people marched in London, and by the time you get this, 10 years since the invasion of Iraq, on March 19th.

DVD FOR SALE:

“Fool for Christ - the story of Dorothy Day”

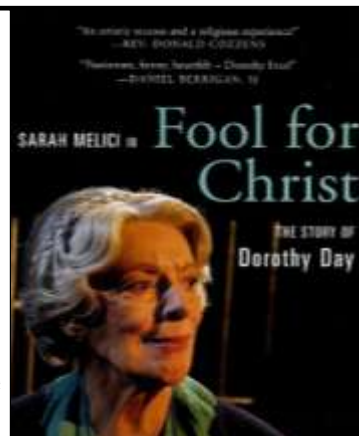
- the best introduction to Dorothy Day on film. 55 minutes.

“Passionate, funny, heartfelt - Dorothy lives!”

- Daniel Berrigan SJ

AVAILABLE from LCW for just £10 inc. p&p

- write to London Catholic Worker, 49 Mattison Road, London N4 1BG - make



War, Peace and Interconnectedness

(from p2)

community. That's why we should leave them alone and be grateful instead.

My time with Catholic Worker showed me that the only answer to this way of thinking is saying a loud "NO"! Through interactions with victims of wars and familiarising myself with the true stories from the war zones, I have realized that I also have to repent. For what? For being silent and approving of what my government, fellow Catholics and Church have been doing when it comes to armed conflicts. For not questioning how much of my taxes are used to make weapons and finance military operations that cause enormous suffering of innocent people and destruction of what they had and were proud of. For forgetting that I share the same humanity with all my sisters and brothers of the world and, if I want to call myself a Christian, I have no choice but to love and care for them. For forgetting how interconnected all of us are...

During my studies in Chicago I was privileged to meet a Dominican sister from Iraq. With her I was learning how to read Gospel of John knowing that her country was being bombarded by the people who claim to be Christ's followers. In London I volunteered at a soup kitchen with a university professor who, in order to save her life, had to leave her work and family also in Iraq. My heart was filled with sadness while saying good-night to 20 asylum seeking men who were forced to flee

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parish hall, in a foreign country. I am also saddened to hear about my Polish uncle who, having served in Iraq and Afghanistan, returned to his family with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), anger and substance abuse problems. All of these experiences and encounters show how interconnected as human beings we are and what we do, or don't do, impacts, believe it or not, the entire world.

May I and you have the courage to face this truth, repent for our self-righteous life, and don't be indifferent to all the people whom we don't know by name.

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Tel: 020 8348 8212

E: londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk

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Dorothy Day House & Giuseppe Conlon House, and Urban Table Needs

FOOD:

- Rice
- Instant coffee, fruit juice
- Tuna & corned beef
- Sugar & herbs & spices
- Tinned tomatoes & canned foods
- Cheese and eggs
- Breakfast cereals, porridge oats

OTHER

- Handyman / woman with DIY skills
- Plumber, electrician
- Shampoo & razors.
- Cleaning materials & equipment
- Volunteer drivers with car / van.

OFFICE:

- IT help & printing

HOUSEHOLD GOODS:

- Bike locks, bike lights & bike pumps
- Single sheets and single duvet covers

MONEY! - see p11 for standing order form

- **New full time community members, volunteers and participants in vigils etc!**

"Prayer - without this, all the rest is useless"

CW FARMHOUSE NEEDS:

- Food, esp. juice, milk, cheese, butter, cooking oil
- Toilet paper, nappies, baby wipes
- New members & help with gardening, cleaning, cooking, DIY
- People to take part in vigils & round table discussions
- Visitors to use our poustinia (for a donation)
- **MONEY! -and of course your prayers.**

OTHER CATHOLIC WORKERS IN THE UK:

OXFORD : St Francis CW House, 227 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 Tel: 01865 248 288 - and see their page on our website.

GLASGOW: A new group just started. They do not have a house, but have been to meet, pray and study. To find out more, or join them, see www.catholicworker.org.uk

SUPPORT OUR WORK

The London CW is part of the radical, pacifist Catholic Worker movement started in 1933 New York & inspired by the Gospel vision and practice of our founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. There are now over 150 CW houses and communities in the US and about 10 other countries. Check out the US-based CW website www.catholicworker.com, and come visit us!

CW houses and our finances are independent. There is no 'headquarters' or central organisation. We in London are a network, not an organisation.

To donate to Dorothy Day or Giuseppe Conlon House make a cheque to "London Catholic Worker".

To donate to the Farmhouse, make a cheque to "Catholic Worker Farmhouse".

CATHOLIC WORKER IN YOUR AREA?

START YOUR OWN! We can offer some help and advice, and / or see the main Catholic Worker website, www.catholicworker.org, for more information.

We are not paid for this work: it is a gift of the heart. We receive nothing from the government. For reasons including our political witness, we are not a registered charity. Between us, we now have 4 houses hosting 42 destitute refugees not allowed to work or receive social security benefits - among the most disenfranchised in our society. We also run a community café and a drop in soup kitchen. So we continue to rely on our supporters and readers donations, to pay our rent on houses and other costs. Our accounts are available on request. Please make out a Standing Order and give generously to support our work with the crucified of today's world. You will have your reward. (Luke 16:39)

Standing Order form overleaf.