

# THE LONDON CATHOLIC WORKER



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Free/Donation



## Cover photo

*Dorothy Day*, Ruben Ferreira,  
60 x 40 cm, oil on canvas  
facebook: RezArteRubenFerreira

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## ....from the editorial team

For our front cover this month we are fortunate to be able to use Ruben Ferreira's portrait of Dorothy Day. Three articles inside refer to a passage from *Loaves and Fishes*, in which Dorothy Day writes, 'poverty is a strange and elusive thing'. It is in this passage, so often quoted, that she asks us to be rigorous in figuring out the paradox of poverty in our lives and our neighbourhoods. She encourages us to stand humbly before and in the paradox of poverty. She hopes that this 'grace' will save us from massive expenditure on arms.

Her words are particularly relevant at the start of the collective month of protest against the renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system. The projected cost of Trident now stands at £205 billion. At the end of this month the London Catholic Worker is organising the 'No faith in Trident' day of protest. (see calendar p11)

Rather than traditional membership, being a Catholic Worker consists of action, much of which takes the form of daily, practical tasks. Nora Ziegler explores this in her article, *Robots vs Giuseppe Conlon House*. We also hear from the Servite sisters how they make their famous stew. Also included is Martin Newell's annual report for the year 2014 which gives a good idea of how the London Catholic Worker works.

**Write in! We warmly invite you, the reader, to comment on what is written here. We will be including the most interesting letters in our next issue, Autumn 2016. Contact details on p2**



# Robots vs. Giuseppe Conlon House

*Nora Ziegler*

'What is your utopia then? As an activist, don't you believe in progress?'

We had been debating the vision of an egalitarian society based on full automation of labour. I had my doubts about technological progress solving humanity's troubles. The truth is I don't believe in a progressive utopia. And looking both at history and prevailing systems of oppression, why should I? I'm not just being cynical. For me, being an activist who doesn't believe in progress is part of my Christian faith. My cynical/faithful perspective could be summarised as follows: the poor will always be among us and God will always be on their side. I would argue that the violence underlying poverty and inequality is endemic to society and to human nature. It is not caused by a lack of technical skill or false consciousness. It cannot be fixed by an advance in technology or educational campaigns.

Violence in our globalized modern world is to a large extent structural: the cultural alienation caused by colonialism, the psychological and social violence of capitalism, the cross-generational and racist violence of climate injustice. For example, while slavery in its most blatant forms has mostly been abolished, the system of slavery is fundamental to the capitalist system. If some people are entitled to their life style and wealth, then the existence of an underpaid, low-educated and politically unrepresented work force making this wealth possible, is itself an entitlement and therefore a kind of property. This structural slavery is indirect but not "less" violent. Violence is not located in the material conditions of people's lives, but in the alienation of people from themselves, each other and the world, through oppressive institutions. Technological innovation in itself cannot change these institutions and improved material living standards cannot make whole what they divide.

The idea that replacing human labour with machines can eliminate poverty assumes that poverty is primarily a material condition, from which we liberate ourselves through technological innovation. In fact, as Marx observed, the real "liberation" achieved by technology in conditions of capitalism is to remove restrictions to productivity and therefore increase the extraction of value from workers and natural resources. Machinery that could potentially improve working conditions, increases the length and intensity of work when employed by capital. As the function of human labour changes, work conditions are no longer bound to the natural needs, limits and abilities of the worker and are instead attached to machines whose only "purpose" is to increase productivity. Work then loses its intrinsic purpose and is given abstract meaning, measured in hours and pay.

## The Catholic Worker in the UK

### London Catholic Worker

Giuseppe Conlon House  
49 Mattison Road  
London N4 1BG

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8348 8212  
Email: [londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk)  
Website: [www.londoncatholicworker.org](http://www.londoncatholicworker.org)  
Twitter: @LndnCathWorker  
Facebook: London Catholic Worker

Giuseppe Conlon House offers hospitality to destitute refugees. We also run the Urban Table soup kitchen. We organise acts of non-violent resistance and produce this newsletter.

Urban Table Soup Kitchen:  
Open Sunday 2:30 — 4:30 pm,  
The Round Chapel, Powerscroft Road,  
Hackney, London E5 0PU

### The Catholic Worker Farm

Lynsters Farm  
Old Uxbridge Road  
West Hude  
Herts  
WD3 9XJ

Tel: +44 (0) 1923 777 201  
Email: [thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk)  
Website: [www.thecatholicworkerfarm.org](http://www.thecatholicworkerfarm.org)

The Farm offers hospitality to destitute women. We grow organic vegetables and have a poustina and hermitage retreat. Maryhouse also offers a home to four destitute women with children.

### Glasgow Catholic Worker

Email: [glw@catholicworker.org.uk](mailto:glw@catholicworker.org.uk)  
Website: [www.catholicworker.org.uk](http://www.catholicworker.org.uk)

The Glasgow Catholic Worker offers a place of welcome for asylum seekers and destitute refugees in the centre of Glasgow at the Garnethill Multicultural Centre, open Saturday 9:00—1:00pm and a soup kitchen on Friday nights. We keep a regular vigil at Faslane Nuclear Base as well as having monthly meetings and prayers.

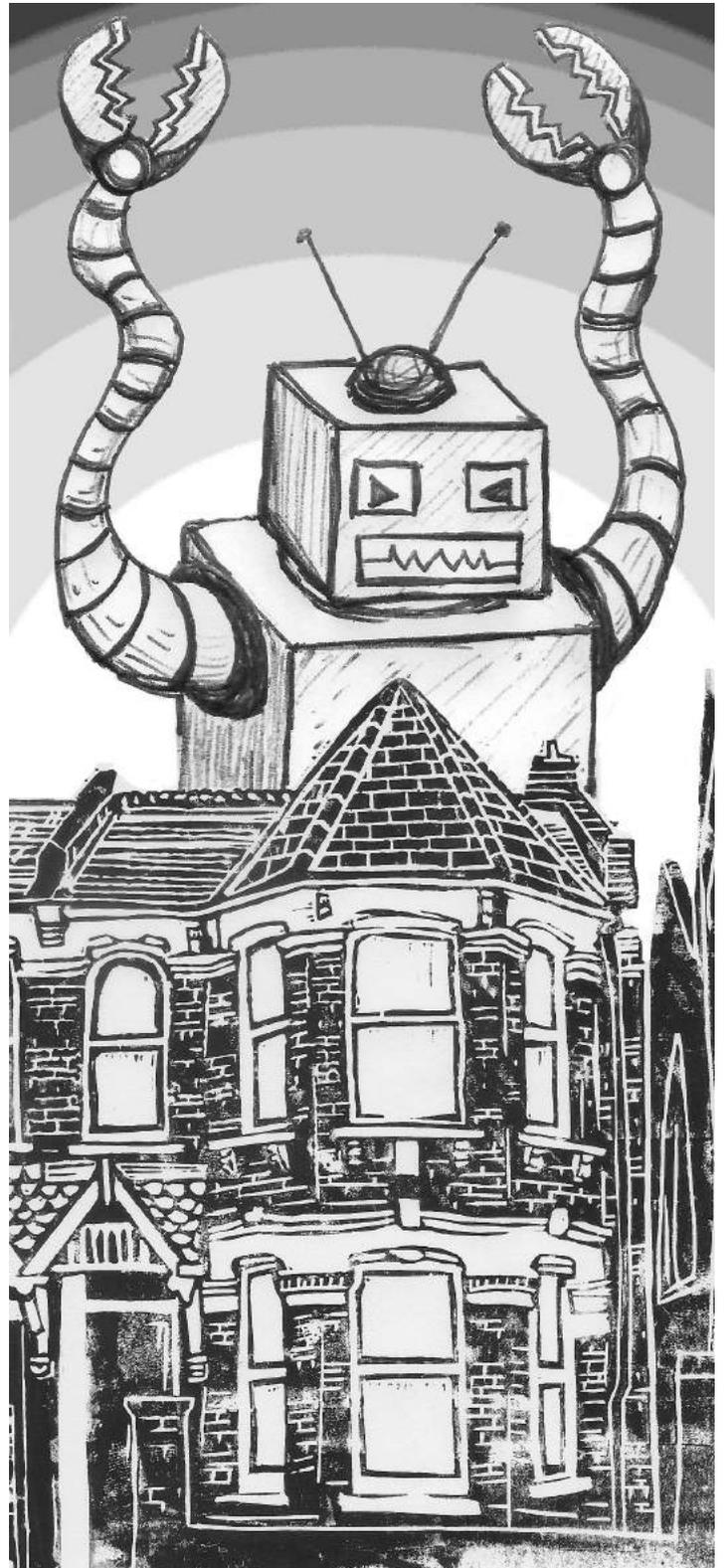
At Giuseppe Conlon House, without fixed work hours or a salary, I find myself struggling with and exploring the meaning of work. Which tasks are urgent, which can wait? How much work can I do in one day and still be a pleasant or at least tolerable community member? What actually counts as work and what do I need to do to relax and regain energy? If I clean two toilets, wash and hang several loads of laundry, answer all our emails, write an article for the newsletter and turn the compost just because I want to feel productive, then my work feels exploitative. Even if nobody actually benefits from me being exhausted and run down by the end of the day. Exploited by my own internalised capitalist mind set.

Trying to lose this mind set and learn to find joy in my work has been a fascinating project for me. I discovered that I enjoy deep-cleaning the kitchen and bathrooms and trying to fix broken shower heads and toilet seats because I feel responsible for looking after the community and because my work is appreciated. I take pride in my work. I like the feeling of being able to do "whatever is necessary". I'm also learning to enjoy "time off" as a valuable thing in itself, not just the absence of work. For example, I volunteer at a garden project once a week because I like the people there, I enjoy doing physical work outside and I always feel relaxed and happy afterwards. I still sometimes feel like its an unjustifiable waste of time but its getting better.

Work in itself is not exploitative. Living simply in itself is not poverty. Yet interestingly measures of progress seem to focus on the improvement of material living and working conditions. Material progress is not necessarily an indicator of moral or social progress. By which standards do we measure such progress? Who gets to decide what makes life more worth living in one place or moment of history than in another? "Human" progress in not so much an observed phenomenon but a kind of creed, a fundamental belief that justifies an oppressive violent system. A secularized version of Marx's opium of the people. We accept injustice because it is just part of capitalism's bigger plan for us.

Both the secular and religious versions of this progress myth project into the future an ideal state which serves to justify the violence of the present. I believe that God is on the side of the poor, that God is *present with* the poor. I believe in God's presence as a kind of utopia but one that does not need to be brought about through progressive developmental change. If God's presence on earth was subject to history, the generations who lived and perished without ever laying eyes on it would be wasted. God's presence as a non-progressive utopia is real across space and time. It can rupture into our lives at any moment, anywhere, in the past and in the future. It is the powerful who write history, who decide which ideology is superior, which way of living is the "good life" and which lives are wasted. If God is neutral in history, God is on the side of the powerful. God on the side of the poor disrupts history and the tyranny of progress.

The narrative of progress disconnect us from others, from people of the past and of other places and social groups. It suggests that some lives are worth more than others, some times and places more worth living in. This division contradicts my faith that all life is equally valuable, and no part of God's creation is wasted. It also contradicts my personal experiences and memories of growing up in Kenya and living at Giuseppe Conlon House. [continued p4]



*Robots vs Giuseppe Conlon House* by Roland Dale, after original lino cut by Sarah Fuller. Roland is a live-in community member at Giuseppe Conlon House

## Robots vs Giuseppe Conlon House [ 1 p3]

Love, joy, hope: these are universal human qualities that persevere even in the most difficult of circumstances. To say this is not to romanticize or trivialize poverty but to indict those who oppress and terrorize the poor. It is to reject the grounds on which oppression justifies itself: the idea that exploitation of the earth and other people can increase any person's quality of life.

At Giuseppe Conlon House, some volunteers and guests pray the Compline together at night, after our communal dinner. After a long day I love to say these words before I withdraw to my room and fall into bed:

*"At last powerful master you give leave to your servant to go in peace according to your promise; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared for all nations"*

Things can be difficult at the house. Some of the guests have been with us a long time with few prospects of moving on. Members of our community struggle with depression, illness, ridiculous demands and decisions from the Home Office and on top of that the normal strains and conflicts of living in a shared house. I often feel completely incompetent, especially when we struggle to make decisions like how to solve a conflict or how to enforce rules effectively. Or when I see the damp on the walls, the broken curtain rod and think of all the things we could do or should do that never happen. Yet through all this there are moments like when I listen to the playful banter around the dining table in the evening, I play a game of pool, I watch someone playing with the cats and I'm overcome with love for my community.

Despite everything I go to sleep with faith that God is with us, that God's presence among us disrupts the sadness and frustration, the violence of the immigration system and the internalised violence of capitalism. I sleep in peace because I have seen glimpses of God's salvation and I know that it is real and present in our lives. My work and activism is motivated by faith in transformative change, not progressive change. Where there is love there is always the potential for beauty, for beautiful acts, for acts of solidarity and kindness, for forgiveness. Such acts transform our lives. They comfort, they give hope, they allow new beginnings. They overcome violence by mending what is broken and bringing to life what seems lost. Love, God's presence with us, does not eliminate violence in this world but continues to endure and disrupt violence like a light that "shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 5:1).

*Nora Ziegler is a member of the community at Giuseppe Conlon House*

## What has gentrification ever done for us?

*Henrietta Cullinan*

Just down the road from Giuseppe Conlon House in Hackney, in the same borough as the London Catholic Worker's weekly soup kitchen, Urban Table, there is an unmistakable whiff of gentrification about the place, with all the changes going on.

Some might call it regeneration, others gentrification, others social cleansing even. The Catholic Worker would call it clarification. Dorothy Day writes, in *Loaves and Fishes* [1], 'Poverty is a strange and elusive thing [...] We need always to be thinking and writing about it, for if we are not among its victims its reality fades from us. We must talk about poverty because people insulated by their own comfort lose sight of it.'

There is plenty to laugh about how bad things were in the bad old days: an infrequent train service and a bus that only went half its route on Sundays. Before mobile phones, in the early nineties, my street was a sort of crack superstore; customers would stand in a row, staring in the direction of the high street, looking out for the dealer's gold BMW.

Improved transport links, street furniture, cycle routes, regular rubbish collections, decent schools, more restaurants and cafes to choose from; the benefits of gentrification are obvious. Above all, an expansion in housing and therefore population. What's not to like.

However there is also a housing crisis. House prices have risen out of the reach of most. Young people and those on low incomes have to rely on renting from private landlords, who can then charge as much as they like. Private rents in London are now 72% of income. Meanwhile anyone who is homeless, even if they are housed in the area, the minute they get a job and lose their housing benefit they won't be able to afford the rent. The message of gentrification is: if you can't afford to live here, move out.

I was looking around for an alternative proposition, perhaps an anarchist view on the situation. One housing expert friend suggested that, short of a riot, the way to bring house prices down was for all the school children to fail their GCSEs. Another warned, 'Laws will be broken'. A mass squat.

Then I found 'Hope and Rage', an experimental series of six discussions on gentrification. Rob Schellert, the facilitator, told me he set up the group after feeling angry and frustrated at the evangelical churches' response to the changes in his neighbourhood. He feels church Christianity has nothing to say about the real life issues present. The church he said just tends to be about 'spiritual stuff' and offered no discipleship. It offers only a superficial response to what it means to love our neighbour.

The sessions covered transport, shopping, socializing, education, and included an expert speaker, information from local government sources, and a scripture passage. As a group, we put our comfort filled domestic lives, under scrutiny, from a radical Christian perspective.

My first task was to speak to local people about their experience of gentrification in Hackney, so I combined this with setting up a justice and peace group in my parish. One parishioner I spoke to said he was moving; Dalston was too noisy and he had found a larger place in Enfield. He lived in the estate next door and we found much in common. The 'hope' part of 'Hope and Rage' was already working.

One evening the group took the 242 bus from Dalston to Homerton. When we set off the night time economy of Dalston was just getting started. Commuters were flowing out of its two stations. By the time we reached the far side of Hackney, the Nye Bevan estate, most passengers had already got off, and the road was poorly lit. The 242 bus is the only immediate transport.

For the session on 'shopping' Simon Jones, a Baptist minister and financial expert, told us about the small shops, barbers restaurants and businesses that have sprung up in the refugee camp at Calais. Whatever happens people always have a little money for a hair cut or a shave, preferably at a barber's shop specific to their own ethnic origins.

That week we also read the Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25. We discussed how the common expectation is that even if you have just a little, you should put it to earning capital. How many good stories do we hear about people who have risen from humble beginnings. The parable ends, after 'there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' with:

'to those who have  
will be given more  
and to those that have not,  
even the little they have will be taken away.'

Nowhere has this prophecy been more fulfilled than in Hackney, in the housing crisis and in particular in the private rental market. More and more people have to rent privately, with no hope of a council house or owning their own home. Where rents remain unregulated, private landlords, and those who own property, can only get richer. Those on low wages lose a disproportionate amount of their income to the landlord, effectively buying his property for him. In addition they are in danger of losing their home through 'no fault' evictions. Their situation becomes precarious, leading to anxiety, stress and ill health, the 'gnashing of teeth'.(2)

Rob Schellert believes social cleansing is already happening. In a place such as Hackney, which used to be one of the most diverse boroughs, it would be a 'tragedy' if through gentrification that diversity was lost. Both at my local church and Urban Table, the weekly soup kitchen, I meet elderly people who seem to have been abandoned. Their families chose to leave from the Hackney, of drugs and gang

violence, for somewhere leafier or somewhere more affordable. The ones left behind are the elderly, the sick or the very poor.

'What little they had', their community, is being taken away. As gentrification as we enjoy the advantages, we can easily lose sight of those who are losing out.

The conversations on domestic matters, shopping, transport, made me think long and hard. I felt resistant at times - who cares if I take a bike or catch a bus? But this in itself reminded me of my own responsibility, the times I have thoughtlessly taken more than my fair share. It's so easy for us to enjoy the benefits, thank you very much, without considering our relations to others and our neighbours. Even Radio 4's Money Box Live recently ran an item on how parents giving their grown-up children money contributes to rent hikes and therefore the housing crisis.

Living in a family or community, I grow to understand the pitfalls of taking more than my share. If I take too long in the shower, I'm stopping my son from getting ready for work. If I extend this to my own neighbourhood, my shower, the one I am taking too long in, is someone else's shower, the one I am taking from the poor. My house is the one I am taking from the poor. I am like the rich young man in Mark 10, turning away disheartened.

Hope and Rage, Rob says, is about recognising how our actions, whether consciously or not, affect others around us. Together we grow in awareness of how we relate to our real neighbours through shopping, education, transport. We persevere in sharing our experiences, until we see there is no right or wrong answer. The group is a place of encouragement to commit to something, to try new habits.

Dorothy Day writes, 'But maybe no one can be told about poverty; maybe they will have to experience it; Or maybe it is a grace which they must pray for. [...] I am convinced that it is the grace we most need in this age of crisis.'

*Henrietta Cullinan edits this newsletter*

1 Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton, *Loaves and Fishes*, Orbis Books, 1963

2 Rosie Walker and Samir Jeraj, *The Rent Trap: how we fell into it and how we get out of it*, Pluto Press, 2016



*Pray and Work: Ora et Labora woodcut by Ade Bethune, 1935, Ade Bethune Collection, St Catherine's University Library*

# The Church's turn toward nonviolence

Fr. John Dear



Fr. John Dear came to speak to us at Bloomsbury Baptist Church this year  
photo: John Cullinan

For its first three centuries, Christianity required the practice of active nonviolence as taught by Jesus. The early Christians refused to serve the Roman Empire or kill in its wars, and so they were routinely arrested and killed. All that changed in the year 313 when Emperor

Constantine legalized Christianity. He baptized his troops and established Christianity as the official religion of the Empire. Christians could now serve in the Roman military and kill Rome's enemies. In effect, he threw out the Sermon on the Mount and the commandment to love one's enemies, and turned to the pagan Cicero to justify Christian violence, sowing the seeds for the so-called 'Just War' theory. Over time, justified warfare became the norm, Christians everywhere waged war and every one forgot that Jesus was nonviolent.

For the last 1700 years, as we all know, Christians have waged war, led crusades, burned women at the stake, systematically persecuted Jews and Muslims, kept millions of people as slaves, ran concentration camps, blessed conquest, prayed for successful bombing raids, and built and used nuclear weapons. Throughout Catholic history, Jesus' teachings of nonviolence were rarely discussed, much less implemented.

Until last week. Eighty of us from 25 nations were invited to the Vatican last week for the first ever conference to discuss formally abandoning the so-called "just war" theory and formally returning the Church to the nonviolence of Jesus. This was the first ever gathering of its kind in history!

For three days, we deliberated at the Vatican about the questions of violence, war, and nonviolence. Catholic peace leaders came from Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, DR Congo, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, the Philippines, and Japan. Everyone who attended had submitted a paper ahead of time about their vision of peace and nonviolence as well as their own experience living and practicing nonviolence, often in warzones. We shared our experiences, and reflected on the nonviolence of Jesus, the "just war" theory, and a new "just peace" paradigm. During the last closing hours we discussed and debated a draft

of a statement, which was eventually completed, approved and released the following day at a press conference at the Vatican radio.

What is so unusual is that this event was co-sponsored and hosted by the Vatican Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. We were welcomed by the head of the Council, Cardinal Peter Turkson, who was the leader behind Pope Francis' recent encyclical on the environment. Nine of his staff attended the conference. Turkson opened the conference by reading a long letter of welcome from Pope Francis, and sat in during the final hours as we debated the wording of the conference statement. He gave his full support to the conference and the statement, which, in the end, called upon Pope Francis to write a new encyclical which would formally reject the just war theory once and for all and return the Church to the nonviolence of Jesus.

This has never happened before. With this event, this statement, and this call, the Church could change course from the last 1700 years. A new encyclical on nonviolence could open up a whole new history for Christianity, and return us to the spirit of the early Church, where no one was allowed to participate in war, prepare for war, or kill another human being, where everyone had to practice and teach the nonviolence of Jesus.

The statement, called "An Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence," offers four points: first that Jesus was meticulously nonviolent; that there is no just war and we should never again invoke the so-called "just war" theory; that nonviolence as a methodology for positive social change works, whether in our personal lives, in nations, and internationally, that it can resolve conflict and peacefully transform any situation; and finally, that the time has come for the Church to apply nonviolence at every level around the world. (To read the statement, visit [www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net)).

I was asked to speak to the group about Jesus and nonviolence. That's easy, I said: Nonviolence is the only thing Jesus taught. He did not teach us how to kill or wage war or make money; he taught us how to be nonviolent. In the Sermon on the Mount, he says: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, they are the sons and daughters of God. You have heard it said, thou shall not kill; I say to you, do not even get angry: be reconciled. You have heard it said, an eye for an eye but I say to you, offer no violent resistance to one who does evil... Love your enemies.' These core teachings forbid all violence, including participation in the mortal sin of war. Nowhere does he say: but if your enemies are really bad, and you meet these seven conditions, kill them. There is no just war theory, there are no exceptions. We are not allowed to kill.

For the nonviolent Jesus, there is no cause however noble for which we support the taking of a single human life, much less thousands or millions. He calls us to pursue the endless creativity of

nonviolence. What's even more exciting is that he commands us to love our enemies because we really are sons and daughters of the God who lets his sun rise on the good and the bad and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. In other words, God is nonviolent!

His last words to the church before he died were to the point: 'Put down the sword.' There in the Garden of Gethsemani, where the disciples wanted to kill to protect Jesus and themselves, feeling justified in their violence, they were ordered to put down the sword. They realized that Jesus was deadly serious about nonviolence, so they all abandoned him. He went to his death in perfect nonviolence, and the story goes that he reappeared to them, remained nonviolent, and told them to carry on his mission of nonviolence.

'We believe that there is no "just war," ' we wrote in our statement. 'Too often the "just war theory" has been used to endorse rather than prevent or limit war. Suggesting that a "just war" is possible also undermines the moral imperative to develop tools and capacities for nonviolent transformation of conflict.'

'We call on the Church we love to continue developing Catholic social teaching on nonviolence,' we concluded. In particular, we called upon Pope Francis to write a new encyclical on nonviolence which would abandon the "just war theory" and require Gospel nonviolence to be taught in every Catholic diocese, parish, school, university, seminary, and religious order in the world. Catholics would be urged to promote nonviolent practices and strategies for the abolition of violence, poverty, war and nuclear weapons, and reach out to the whole human race with the wisdom of nonviolence.

'The time has come for our Church to be a living witness and to invest far greater human and financial resources in promoting a spirituality and practice of active nonviolence and in forming and training our Catholic communities in effective nonviolent practices,' we concluded. 'In all of this, Jesus is our inspiration and model.'

If Pope Francis writes such an encyclical, like his environmental encyclical, it would touch not only the world's one billion Catholics, but all Christians and all people. He could help us better understand how war has become obsolete, how nonviolence offers a far better methodology for conflict resolution, and why the time has come to abolish war and nuclear weapons once and for all. 'I believe we are at an important and hopeful turning point in human history,' Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire said after the Rome conference, 'a turning from violence to nonviolence, war to peace.' I hope Christians and Church people everywhere will study our statement, urge their local church leaders to teach Gospel nonviolence, and pray for and call for such an encyclical. so that we can start the world down a new path--toward a new world of peace.

*Fr. John Dear is a world-renowned speaker and writer on nonviolence. Reprinted with kind permission*

## Tortoise Poem

Slow, Uncle Sheldon. Tell again  
the Tale, the way you told me when  
I crawled back home with teary eyes  
the day my father cruelly died.

Under one hundred angry, padded feet  
Under flashing eyes and slashing teeth.  
So fast their fur flew all about  
Slowly his end was all drawn out.

You sat me down and dried my eyeballs.  
Then opening up the family Bible  
You told me: It won't always be so,  
The winners cup goes to the slow.

That simple Tortoise inch by inch  
outstripped that dashing Hare!  
And not by speed or might or wit  
but humble, steady, fine and fare.

Tell the tale your Father told you  
in his days of noble contemplation  
before his brothers broke his back  
for having ideas above his station.

Quickly Uncle. Before sundown.  
Then quick again, this candles burning out.  
Come Sun up I'll go and face the gallows  
and slow, steady humble stick my neck out.

*Westley Ingram*

## Nobodies

Nobody plots against us.  
There is Nobody to resist.  
Brother wind and Sister water  
have no malice in their fists.

The water now turned brackish  
is as clear as in my childhood.  
The storms are still as beautiful,  
the ocean still as dark as blood.

Life was hard, just ask my parents.  
And life is hard now, Ask my kids.  
Nobody can tell the difference  
and there is Nobody to forgive.

The waters will soon claim us  
and our homes and we'll be gone.  
And Nobody will mourn us  
as there is Nobody to mourn.

*Wesley Ingram*

*Westley Ingram recently joined the live-in community at Giuseppe Conlon House. He is also an active member of Christian Climate Action*

# The real presence of Christ amongst us

*Martin Newell*

We at the London Catholic Worker are part of the international Catholic Worker movement, founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. Our movement is based around the practice of hospitality, community and non-violent resistance, and our communities are based in houses of hospitality as places to do the works of mercy. Our houses are also places to organize our peace and justice work, the 'spiritual works of mercy', on behalf of those least in whom Christ is also present, the poor, the oppressed, the exploited, the invaded and the occupied, the marginalized, the left out.

At Giuseppe Conlon House, we offer hospitality and a safe place to stay to 20 men. All our guests have immigration issues which leave them unable to work or claim any government support or benefits, and most are refused asylum seekers. We provide a healthy and nutritious evening meal, a safe and comfortable place to sleep, breakfast, and food to take away during the day. These days, we remain open for the Christmas period. Previously our guests had gone to CRISIS at Christmas for a week, to give the live-in community a break. With the closure of other projects, this is now not necessary.

In the last two years, we were able to build on foundations already laid and move much more in the direction of shared community living between the guests and the live-in community. Creative thought and imagination, building on the work already done and changes in the live-in community, enabled the almost complete re-organisation of the living space, such that all our guests have proper beds and bedrooms, and the hall is now a large living room for the whole community. This has much improved their quality of life. We have also continued to extend the daily opening times, and increasingly to involve our guests in running their own home. Shortly after the big re-organisation, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster Diocese (the Archdiocese generously lease us the use of the building for a peppercorn rent) visited as part of an ecumenical Lent campaign "Listen to God, Hear the Poor". This affirmation on the part of the Church of our work, witness and vision of discipleship was a grace from God after a difficult time.

We continue make sure as much as possible that our guests are able to pursue their case with the immigration authorities, through advocacy and sign posting to other organisations. However, the increasing hostility to migrants and changing attitude of the Home Office has made it harder for our guests to obtain Leave to Remain in the UK.

Despite much individual aid, hospitality and welcome, there is still a strong sense that our friends and guests remain unwelcome in the UK.

We also meet many migrants at the 'Urban Table' drop-in soup kitchen in Hackney on Sunday afternoons. The Urban Table has been a partnership with the URC Round Chapel and the Redeemed Christian Church of God there, since we started it as our first hospitality project in 2005. We continue in our attempt to imitate Jesus as we welcome to our table our friends in Hackney who are homeless, lonely, isolated, and struggling with often deeply painful wounds. We welcome 40 to 60 guests each week.

Our life and work continues to thrive on a financial shoe string. We are in many ways happy with this, as a witness to the possibilities of life lived differently, lived lightly on the earth. On the other hand, our guests deserve far better given the enormous wealth of the UK, with riches increasingly visible and flagrant in London, at the same time as visible poverty and homelessness continues and even increases in its midst. We continue to cry out against this injustice. As Dorothy Day said, we oppose poverty, and we advocate it, and this is a mystery. For us, this means living to a large extent in the 'gift economy' where there is little, but always enough for life for all, rather than in the capitalist economy of surplus but never enough for many.

Our work of witnessing to the peace and justice of Christ on the streets began in 2014 to focus on what has since been called the 'refugee crisis', (which could more appropriately be called the 'European hospitality crisis') with vigils at the Home Office and Foreign Office. We have also continued our opposition to UK's Trident nuclear weapons and drone warfare, and worked together with the Catholic Worker Farm, Oxford Catholic Worker, Veterans for Peace, Pax Christi, and others.

There is a new live-in community and a new energy since a few years ago, but the faithful witness continues in the same vein. Nora, Mirjam and Roland are the stable core of our broad family and community. An image has been used over the years: of a rocket being put into orbit. Dorothy Day House was perhaps the 'launch vehicle'. Giuseppe Conlon House seems now to be in a sustainable orbit. For this I thank God, and pray that God's grace continues to paper over the cracks of our faults and failings, to make diamonds out of the rough raw material of our lives.

Our hope and prayer is that those who encounter our community and our work see Christ present here with us, and the rumour of God is kept alive in our society.

*Martin Newell is a founder member of the London Catholic Worker and a member of the Passionists of St. Joseph's Province and has a house of hospitality, Austin Smith House, in Birmingham .*

# GIUSEPPE CONLON HOUSE - *UPDATE*



Catholic Workers from the UK, Germany, France and Holland at the annual Euro Gathering at Dulmen, Germany *photo: Sophie Jansen*

We have just come back from a few days in Dulmen, Germany. Mirjam, Fr. Martin, Westley, Nora, Lynn from Mary House in Austin, Texas, and Marga from the Calais Catholic Worker travelled to the Catholic Worker European Gathering in Dulmen, Germany. There we met new and old friends with community experience.

At the gathering there were people from the two German Catholic Worker communities, from Amsterdam, and some people who have previously lived in community, for example Arvid a former volunteer here in London. We spent five wonderful if exhausting days by a lakeside, sharing our thoughts, joys and struggles, catching up with other Christian communities and sharing ideas and experiences at workshops and around the camp fire.

On the way down in the car we visited Br Johannes Maertens in Calais who unfortunately couldn't come to the gathering. It was good to see his house of hospitality, Maria Skobtsova House.

Since the last issue a couple of our guests have been able to move into other accommodation, which is great news!

Two of our volunteers, Max and Veronica have moved on to new adventures. We are grateful for their contribution to the community and wish them all the best. And we welcome new volunteers Giusy, Westley and Theresa.

The bike workshop "Baisikel" that operates from our basement, after some less active months, has new life with old and new skilled volunteers. Baisikel refurbishes donated bikes to give to destitute migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, sometimes our own guests.

On the 3rd of May Catholic Workers joined Sisters Against the Arms Trade to shut down a missile factory for the day. The MBDA factory at Henlow, Bedfordshire, produces the Brimstone missiles that are released in air strikes over Syria and Iraq. The action was taken in solidarity with Syrian women and civilians living in besieged areas.

A couple of days later Heba from Syria Solidarity UK joined us for our monthly round-table discussion, talking about the experiences and roles of women in Syria and solidarity actions taking place here in the UK.



Catholic Workers join Sisters Against Arms Trade to blockade MBDA factory, Bedfordshire. *photo: Campaign Against the Arms Trade*



A wet start for Christian Climate Action and their supporters outside Hammersmith Magistrate's Court last week *photo: Henrietta Cullinan*

Two Catholic Workers, Westley Ingram and Martin Newell together with three others were found guilty this month of causing criminal damage when they whitewashed the walls of the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC), and rebranded it in black paint.

Speaking after the verdict, Fr. Martin Newell said: Pope Francis has called on Christians to go further in opposing climate change and we have tried to answer that call. As a Catholic I believe in the power of symbols and our actions symbolically highlighted that this department is whitewashing the truth. This is urgent-climate change is already happening and people are already dying.'

# Catholic Worker Recipe 'Sister Stew'

*For this edition of the Catholic Worker Recipe, Nora Ziegler interviewed Sister Anastasia and Sister Eileen, of the Servite Sisters, who cook for us every Friday evening.*

**NZ: So for how long have you been cooking at GCH?**

Ana: I think we started in October 2011, so more than 4 years now. When we started they were just painting the sitting room there, the hall as you call it.

**NZ: And how did you end up volunteering here?**

Ana: How it all happened? Mm...

Eileen: You were working in the Café weren't you?

Ana: Oh yes I was working at the café in Dalston and Father Martin was there. I came here when it first opened and they told me about the Café so I started working there twice a week. I was there for three years.

Eileen: Then I also came to an open evening one time and I said I was interested in helping and they told me to speak to Conor. So then we started cooking here on Fridays.

**NZ: So do you always make stew?**

Ana: No I think Dan [Viesnik] started calling us the Stew Sisters (laughs). But sometimes we make pasta or curries...

Eileen: But stew is a good way of using up what is there so we like to do that.

**NZ: How do you make a good stew?**

Ana: We try to use all the vegetables that are available. We use onions and all sorts of vegetables. And we put in some sort of lentils, or beans, or chickpeas to make it nutritious. Oh and sometimes we use fish, some tuna, sometimes we bring our own fish and make a side dish with that.

**NZ: Do you throw everything in together?**

Ana: No we fry the onions first and then fry the vegetables bit by bit. That brings out the flavour better.

**NZ: And are there any spices or herbs you like to use?**

Ana: Oh yes, we use oregano, mixed herbs, chillies and we use curry powder

**NZ: How do you serve the stew?**

Ana: We usually serve it with rice, sometimes pasta. It depends on what you had the night before, I always enquire about that. We try to make it as tasty as possible and as nutritious as possible.

**NZ: How is it you've been coming here so long?**

Ana: We enjoy coming here. We feel it is a support for you as well. We like to support the Catholic Worker. Is that right Eileen?

Eileen: Yes absolutely.

Ana: We think you do good work here, that's certain.

Eileen: And we've enjoyed meeting all the different members of the community from people from different countries.

## Our Ethical Wish List..

tinned tomatoes  
nuts  
raisins  
cheese  
tuna  
chilli sauce  
rice  
couscous  
pulses

### olive oil

cooking oil  
vinegar  
mayonnaise  
spices  
sugar  
sunflower seeds  
low-fat spread

fruit juice  
herbal teabags  
hot chocolate powder  
instant coffee  
cereal, muesli, jam,  
marmalade,  
honey  
peanut butter,  
chocolate spread  
stock cubes

### toilet paper

shampoo  
liquid soap  
deodorant  
shaving products  
body lotion  
cleaning products

incense sticks  
tealights

Deliver to:

**Giuseppe Conlon House, 49  
Mattison Road, Londn N4  
1BG.**

We can also collect donations  
from north and north east  
London.

**Call 020 8348 8212**

*Please NO tinned soup,  
tinned spaghetti, baked  
beans and NO pork*

## Regular events

Giuseppe Conlon House, 49 Mattison Road, London N4 1 BG

**Daily Prayers** Monday – Saturday 9:00 am

**Clarification of Thought** First Thursday of the month, 6:30 pm

**Bible Study** Second and Fourth Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm

**Monthly Prayer** Third Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm

**Rosary of the Oppressed** Last Friday of the Month 6:30 pm

**Vigil for Refugees** First Tuesday of the month, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, King Charles Street, Third Tuesday of the month at the Home Office, Marsham Street, 12:30pm

All welcome. Call 020 8348 8212 for details

## Donate to Calais Catholic Worker

To donate via BAC please use the details below

Association Maria Skobtsova

IBAN: FR7615629026250002172700193

BIC: CMCIFR2A

Bank: Credit Mutuel, CCM Calais, 85 rue Mollien, 62100 Calais, France

For info please contact Br. Johannes Maertens  
email: johanmaertens@hotmail.com

## Upcoming Events

**Tuesday 21st June** Refugee Week vigil, Downing Street, 12:30—02:30 pm

**Monday 27th June Disarm** 'No Faith in Trident' day of witness and direct action at AWE Burghfield, Reading, Berkshire, 9am to 5pm

Programme:

9:00 am Peace Walk around the AWE site  
10:00 am Prayers with Christian CND  
11:00 am Quaker Meeting for Worship  
1:00 pm Prayer Liturgy with Pax Christi  
2:00 pm Worship with Anglican Peace Fellowship  
3:00 pm Litany of Resistance with CPT  
4:00 pm Wake Up workshop on Thich Nhat Hanh and Plum Village

**Thursday 7th July** Andrea Needham author of 'The Hammer Blow: how 10 women disarmed a war plane' Giuseppe Conlon House, 6:30pm

**For more information**

Email: londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk  
or call +44 (0) 20 8348 8212 for more details

## Giuseppe Conlon House volunteers

If you want to live simply, in community with the poor, and work for peace and justice, then this could be for you! Live-in volunteers join a community of hospitality and non violent resistance, for three months or more. They take part in accompanying the guests, in the daily tasks of hospitality, housekeeping, collecting food donations, building repairs, gardening, administration, organizing and taking part in events and vigils and creative projects. We offer free accommodation and meals. The benefits are gaining experience of living in solidarity with the poor, joining with acts of resistance, exploring Catholic Worker spirituality.

**Volunteering** There are many other ways of getting involved if you want to be part of our extended community. We have regular volunteers who come in to help cook in the evenings, pick up food donations or help us run the Urban Table soup kitchen in Hackney on Sundays. We also rely on volunteers to help us with different aspects of our work by sharing their time, knowledge and skills. For example, we often need help with DIY, plumbing, book keeping, fundraising, IT, and publishing this newsletter.

**Sign up** to our email and mailing lists for regular updates and to our mailing list to receive our free newsletter.

Email: londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk

*Works of Mercy—Feeding the Hungry*, wood cut by Ade Bethune who made many illustrations to the Catholic Worker newspaper, including the Catholic Worker logo on the front of this paper



# Support Our Work with the crucified of today's world

**We are a part** of the radical, Christian, pacifist Catholic Worker movement started in 1933 in New York by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. There are now over 150 houses and communities in the United States and in other countries. Catholic Worker houses are independent financially. There are no headquarters, nor is there a central organization. More information is available on the U.S website [www.catholicworker.com](http://www.catholicworker.com).

At Giuseppe Conlon House we run a house of hospitality for twenty homeless and destitute asylum seekers who are not allowed to work or claim benefits. In collaboration with two local churches we also serve a meal for up to fifty people in Hackney on Sunday afternoons.

## Cash Donations

We are not paid for this work. We receive nothing from the government. For reasons to do with our political witness, we are not a registered charity. We are all volunteers, so we are able to make the best possible use of what we are given, for the benefit of those in need.

**Bills!** We rely on our readers' donations to pay all utility bills, building repairs, volunteer and guest expenses, printing and household supplies.

If you would like to support our work at the house please consider sending us a donation or setting

up a standing order.

- 20 pounds will pay for one day of heating at Giuseppe Conlon House
- 30 pounds cover the costs of one Urban Table meal for 60 guests
- 50 pounds covers one week's housekeeping including items like milk, sugar, margarine, toilet paper and cleaning products
- 150 pounds will pay for a volunteer's monthly expenses including transport
- 250 pounds is enough to take van load of supplies to Calais

## Ways to donate

**Cheque:** payable to 'London Catholic Worker', to Giuseppe Conlon House, 49 Mattison Road, London N4 1 BG

**Online:** London Catholic Worker, Triodos Bank, Account No. 20066996 Sort Code: 16 58 10

**Paypal:** a 'donate button' is on the front page of our website [www.londoncatholicworker.org](http://www.londoncatholicworker.org)

Please consider setting up a regular donation. You can use the **Standing Order Form** provided below. We would be very grateful for any help you can give us.

***Our accounts are available on request***

## Standing Order Form Please use block letters

I wish to pay the London Catholic Worker £10/ £20/£40/other amount \_\_\_\_\_ per month/ other \_\_\_\_\_

Payments to be made monthly/ other First Payment to be made on: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 16 and monthly thereafter

Name of your bank \_\_\_\_\_

Address of your bank \_\_\_\_\_

Your account name \_\_\_\_\_

Your account number \_\_\_\_\_

Your bank sort code \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay: For the Credit of: London Catholic Worker

Triodos Bank Account Number 20066996

Deanery Road Sort Code: 16 58 10

Until further notice the sum of the value indicated above

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to :

London Catholic Worker

49 Mattison Road

London N4 1BG

Your Name and Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_