

CATHOLIC WORKER

Prophetic or Pathetic? Reflections on the Aldermaston Big Blockade

On Sunday 26th October a merry band of peace activists unpacked themselves from a stuffed minibus upon arrival at the 'Warehouse' in Reading. Among the group was a fresh-faced graduate who had just moved into the Dorothy Day House as a residential volunteer – me! I was apprehensive to say the least. We were gathering for the Aldermaston Big Blockade which would take place early the next morning, and this was my first direct action.

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Arrival At The Catholic Worker Farm

When searching for community we sometimes wonder in what direction this path will take us and whom we may meet along the way. I come to this Catholic Worker Farm from Weathersfield, Vermont as a supplicant, and a volunteer to help out for a few weeks. I find myself sharing a 12th century English farmhouse with a very dedicated couple who's family includes two sons and a diverse mix of faces, languages, and spirits. I awake in the morning with a sense of confusion over what has led me here, my own impulse, or the hand of God. Perhaps both. Then I feel a deep sense of gratitude. To my husband who understands my quest, to Scott and Maria for having me, to the beauty of this place where the corner room I stay in overlooks the lake and garden. I am especially grateful to the guests with whom we share this mystery of life.

We attended Mass at Saint Paul's this morning and Father Stan spoke about kinds of prayer. He gave us a vision of standing in the water at dawn, waiting to catch a glimpse of the birds as they rouse to meet the new day. Or simply seeing a donkey standing and waiting. There are so many forms of prayer and we must work hard to both recognize and practice them daily.

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Diane Walsh, café volunteer, becomes acquainted with the police at the 2008 Aldermaston Big Blockade

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Learning the Language of the Broken

It has been nearly 18 months since Peters Cafe opened and slowly but surely we are becoming busy. Many who come to us are broken and vulnerable people. Often they are more hungry to be listened to, than to eat the food that we have placed before them. With this in mind, I have reflected very deeply of what it means for me to be

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London Catholic Worker:

We are: Angela Broome, Simon Watson, Henrietta Cullinan, Chris Goodchild, Scott and Maria Albrecht, Zelda Jeffers, Martin Newell, Eddie Jarvis, Clare Bissell, Diane Walsh

Dorothy Day House

16 De Beauvoir Road,
De Beauvoir Town
London N1 5SU
tel: 020 7249 0041

We are: Zelda Jeffers, Martin Newell & Clare Bissell

Dorothy Day House offers hospitality to destitute refugees, usually men. We run Peter's Community Café and the Urban Table Soup Kitchen. We also do a weekly local anti-war vigil organise regular non-violent resistance, as well as producing this newsletter.

Catholic Worker

Farmhouse:

Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Road,
West Hyde, Hertfordshire, WD3
9XJ tel: 01923 777 201

We are: Scott & Maria Albrecht and family

The Farmhouse offers hospitality to destitute women and children. We vigil regularly at the nearby Northwood Joint Forces Military HQ. We also grow some vegetables in our garden.

Peter's Community Café:

Open Mon-Weds 12noon-7pm
The Crypt, St Peter's Church, Northchurch Terrace, De Beauvoir Town,
London 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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I moved into Dorothy Day House seeking a community which I could contribute to and receive from. Little did I realise that five days into my time here, I would be lying in a road proclaiming peace, surrounded by joy, hope and creative action, and a few dozen police men threatening us with handcuffs!

On arrival at the 'Warehouse' I did not intend to risk arrest. I planned to have a non-arrestable role as a First Aider or Legal Observer; to bring a cheerful disposition, encourage blockaders, sing peace songs, and dance upon injustice. I took part in the non-violence workshops mainly to make the most of the time together – I'm keen to learn, and I did not really think I would be putting the lesson into practice the next day. However, that evening I made friends with some beautiful, inspiring Angels of the North – three women my age who had campaigned on behalf of 'Speak' at Faslane and in other peace protests. I shared with them my internal discussion about what role I should take, whether I was willing to be arrested, and my worries about getting a criminal record. They were very understanding and had felt similarly to me when they did their first actions. I was really surprised by the lack of peer pressure – no one tried to convince me either way, they were just happy that I would be part of their affinity group in whatever way I felt comfortable with.

As we sat with cups of tea sharing our concerns and encouraging each other, we were joined by another girl on her first direct action and an experienced veteran of peace protesting. Together we hatched a plan: the six of us would dress as angels, link our arms, superglue our hands together, and lie in the road in a prayer-like position. Our affinity group gathered to pray together and then I stayed up late to make banners. When I finally got to bed I hardly slept – I was so scared, and felt an acute sense of the Powers That Be at play. I spent most of the night drifting in and out of sleep, prayer and thoughts about liberation and peace.

The Prophetic Voice

One of the reasons I became interested in the Catholic Workers was their commitment to living alongside the poor and marginalized, and campaigning for justice on a systemic level. As I've been getting to know the men who stay with us in the house I have been reflecting on the importance of relationship being the foundation for action – that out of practically loving the poor, and sharing in life's joys and sorrows, there grows a desire to respond not only to the need, but to act to alleviate the causes of the poverty and injustice.

Direct action is a form of protest used by many different campaigning groups, seen more often recently among the green movements. The Catholic Worker movement has always held non-violent resistance as a core value, and seeks to outwork this through the different houses of hospitality around the world. What stands out in the CWs however, is the focus on speaking prophetically into situations through actions, prayer and words.

At the Big Blockade I was very conscious of needing to capture this prophetic edge. We were facing powers of all kinds – the weapons themselves, the Ministry of Defense which pushes a nuclear agenda, the wider government which continues to allow their production, and the police who ironically talk of keeping the public safe whilst accepting the presence of WMDs inside the iron fencing!

Speaking in a prophetic way means speaking truth – highlighting the present darkness and the potential for change and redemption. It involves naming and

unmasking the Powers (see Walter Wink, liberation theologian) so that they can be seen for what they really are, and believing that they can be redeemed into a spirit of service and peace. If non-violent direct action is prophetic, it does not draw attention towards individual protesters or campaign groups, but rather directs attention towards the bigger picture and everyone's place within that, including individuals, companies, and governments. It should cause passers-by to pause and think about their own position, offering perhaps a new perspective which leads to hope and the possibility of wholeness.

Furthermore, the prophetic voice which is rooted in personal relationships can be the starting place for reconnection of all peoples and nations. The London CW houses host people from war-torn countries where the effects of the arms trade is very real, often first-hand experience, and horrific. By opening our homes to these people we begin to enter into relationships of trust, connecting us with their families and communities in those countries. We are moved to take direct action to give our brothers and sisters a voice. If these are carried out prophetically, highlighting truth, hope and speaking out the potential for peace, we extend our personal connections to the general public, and the powers which uphold current injustice. This offers a way for them to recognize their place within the web of global relationships and challenges everyone to become part of the change.



The Angels
proclaim
“Shalom” lying
across Tadley
gate

From left to right:
Clare, Rebecca,
Nina, Rebecca,
John and Helen.

Photo credits:
newburyto-
day.co.uk

Do not be afraid

With all these half-formed thoughts dominating my dreams, I awoke on the Monday morning at 4.30am still very scared! We got up fairly quickly and piled onto a coach which drove us to Tadley gate where our affinity group of angels had been assigned. I did not feel prophetic at this point, or indeed at any point! I felt nervous, intimidated by the police, worried about being arrested, unsure what we were doing and whether it could possibly make a difference. I felt pathetic. I was cold, exhausted, shaky... not your typical direct action hero! I hadn't made up my mind about whether to risk arrest, but my angel friends were very supportive, saying I could play it by ear and do whatever felt right at the time.

We were dressed in angel costumes deliberately. In the New Testament, angels are messengers of God bringing 'Good News' or 'Glad Tidings'. They appeared to Mary and Elizabeth announcing peace, claiming their situations and the wider context for God's shalom kingdom. Ched Meyers argues that in Mark's Gospel, the phrase 'good news' was a directed political statement, acting as a contrast to the Roman use of the same words during public notices. The angels' "good news" marked the beginning to the upturning of the dominant, oppressive religious and political systems. And this kingdom of God, where the first shall be last and the poor are blessed, is not something to fear as the angels command us "Do not be afraid".

At 6am we arrived at the Tadley gate, and there were police officers and horses already waiting. I felt immediately intimidated. There were lots of workers arriving by car, and after a little time standing with

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involved in the work at the Cafe, and my part in meeting this great need for peoples stories to be heard.

Having recently qualified as a Spiritual director, and having spent much of this time seeking to understand the world of those who are broken or closed in on themselves, I have learned and continue to learn, that it is in the owning of my own woundedness, that enables me to meet others in theirs.

Karl Jung enters into this subject in great depth when he said, "Whether I feed the hungry, forgive an insult, or love my enemy in the name of Christ, all these acts are a sign of great virtue. Whatever I do unto the least of these, my brothers and sisters, that I do unto Christ.....But, what if I discover that in fact the least of all, the poorest of all the beggars, the most shameless of offenders, my real enemy-all of these live within me, and that I need the help of my own kindness: that I too, am the enemy who needs to be loved?"

Over the years I have deeply reflected on the folly of the peace activist and contemplative at war within themselves, out of such reflection, I find myself questioning, how can we really give to others what we have yet to fully integrate in ourselves? And don't we as Christians have a duty in taking responsibility to manage the tension between our own personal egos and shadows?

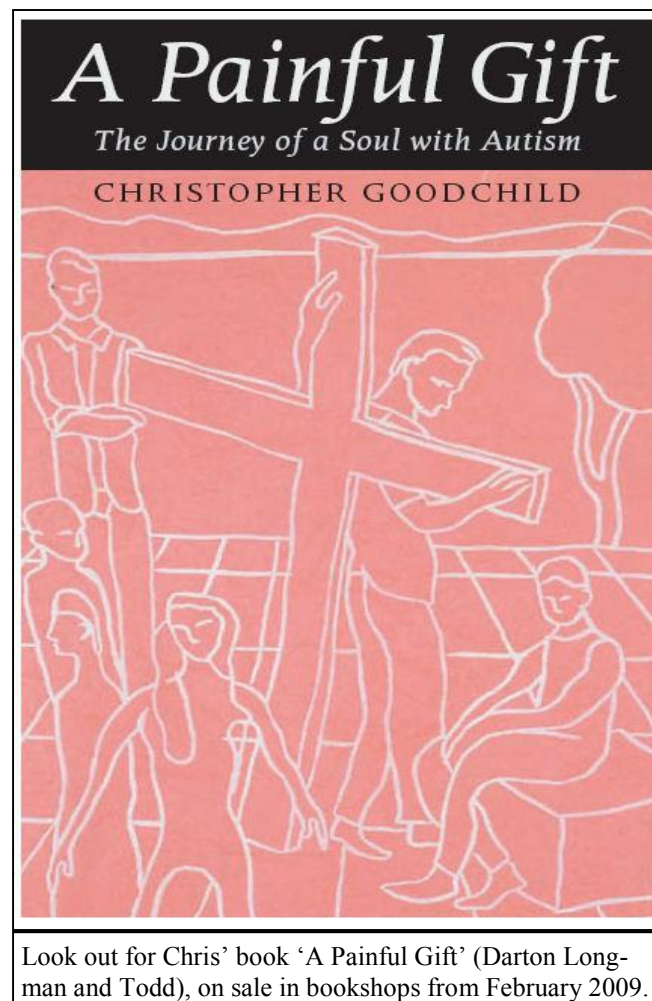
Most of us do not like to look at people who are deformed, disabled or destitute, we don't wish to hear their loneliness, grief and helplessness. Yet paradoxically what we seek to avoid invariably presents itself to us sooner or later..... that is, if we have the willingness to go deeper into ourselves. Having recently been diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, I now reflect on how I have spent a life-time conforming to societal norms and expectations as my way of coping with my disability. I also understand well what it feels like to be condemned, not by my 'difference', but by the worlds indifference to my way of being, that can appear at times not of this world.

I have a disability and a 'difference'a different and unique way of seeing the world, but only in silence am I able to move beyond my habitual reaction to a world that is naturally overwhelming for me, and thus break out of neurologically determined patterns that have woven their way into my very being.

My role in the cafe has been to listen to people. This might seem very strange for some people to hear that a man with autism can be able to offer empathic listening and affirm another with warmth and tenderness, (this was a motivating factor in me writing my book 'A Painful Gift', published by Darton Longman and Todd) But natural empathy is a sense not a virtue, and because people in the autistic spectrum can have difficulties with this natural response, we generally overcompensate in other areas and often this forces us down into hidden depths in order to connect with others.

A useful image here would be that of a water pump, for while the average person has a natural and effortless supply of natural empathy (I might be pushing it here) I on the other hand, would have to work this system manually and with great effort. As my emotional routing is well used (from years spent in psychotherapy) I have as much capacity to empathise as most people, but it is from the well of emotion and experienced feelings.

However, this connectedness to another, and my ability to listen to others well, was becoming increasingly difficult as the demands of the cafe became greater. The florescent lights screaming, the sounds continuously echoing, the lack of space and unregulated movements of bodies, all blended into one. The autistic



brain has little filtering, so I would inevitably be flooded by a tidal wave of sensation. The success of Peters Cafe, was now proving too great for me to bare. I decided to take some time out, and to reflect on the idea of offering structured listening and emotional support in one of the quiet rooms deeper into the crypt at St Peters. This way, I would be able to engage with people, and offer my listening skills at no cost to my well being.

It did not take long before everyone could see the value in having a quiet room, to offer people a space to be listened to, within an informal yet safe and affirming structure. There was no need to make any preparations, all we needed was two chairs and the all clear from the church, and we were off. In the same way that Dorothy Day said “Where there is crust there is companionship” I would like to add that “Where there is silence there is communion” It is very early days for us all at Peters Cafe, but what is very clear to be seen, is the enormous need for companionship as well as communion amongst us all.

St Paul in his letter to the Corinthians Cor 1:27-29 beautifully captures all of what I feel Peters Cafe is all about, and I feel it fitting that I leave you with his words.

*God has chosen the foolish of the world
to shame the so-called wise;
God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong;
God has chosen what is low and despised,
people who are nobodies,
in order to reduce to “nobodies” those who are “somebody”*

Chris Goodchild
Café Volunteer

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banners six of us decided, in a sort of unclear way, that we would cross the road and lie down to blockade. The next thing I knew we were doing it! I hardly had time to think, but just got down straight away, and together we blocked half the road! We had made two banners – one simply said “Shalom”, which lay in front of us on the road; the other read “do not be afraid” and a couple of other protesters held it behind us. And there we lay for nearly two hours, trying in our non-violent symbolic angelic presence to claim that site for peace and justice.

I was the only one of our group to not be arrested. The main reason was because I hadn’t superglued my hands – I couldn’t get the glue out of my pocket in time, and later found it sticking my pocket together! When the police threatened arrest for the final time I decided to move voluntarily. Another group had locked on in front of us after we had initiated it, the whole gate was blockaded for a couple of hours, and it seemed our job was done. I’m glad I wasn’t arrested. I think there is a risk of direct action being judged by how many arrests are made as opposed to how much truth it speaks.

Final thoughts on the Big Blockade? It was a great experience, I feel privileged to have the opportunity to get to know some very beautiful people and I will definitely continue some involvement as I seek to live out my faith. It was an protest that was inspired not only by my faith, but also by the relationships I’m beginning to build with the guests at Dorothy Day House. We blockaded half of Tadley gate for over two hours, other gates were also out of action, one until 11.30am. Individually we could have done very little, but 400 of us all working together created one body, powerfully vulnerable against the backdrop of Aldermaston and the police force. Was it prophetic or pathetic? Maybe the words of Alastair McIntosh can help you decide:

“So yes, I told Tom, I would participate in his experiment [in blockading Aldermaston], half-baked and idealistic though it may appear. Indeed, it was more than just that: it was outrageous and perhaps a lost cause from the start. But then, if we only do what we’re sure will succeed, we condemn ourselves to very boring lives; and worse than that, if we only fight the battles we’re sure we’ll win, we generally find ourselves standing on the same conservatively safe side as the oppressor.”

Clare Bissell
Residential Volunteer

News from Displaced People in South Africa

On an annual visit to Cape Town, my hometown, in July this year, following xenophobic attacks on ‘foreigners’ erupted and spread across South Africa in May this year when the country was convulsed, I went to Soetwater, one of the temporary camps where people displaced by the attacks were sheltering. I wanted to find out what, if anything, people wanted campaigners in other countries to do in support and hoped to be able to transmit accounts of what happened there beyond the borders of the country, to raise awareness and to build links between people struggling in exile here in the UK. Many people in the camps in South Africa have family somewhere in the UK with whom maintaining communication is not always possible, given their precarious lives.

After the attacks started, miraculously and spontaneously civil society swung into action with many ordinary people performing extraordinary acts that prevented further heavy loss of life. Many continue to campaign and bear witness months later, never having imagined they would still be travelling along this road.



March against Xenophobia, Inner-city Johannesburg, May 2008

Winters in the Western Cape are cold, wet and windy and this winter was one of the coldest, living up to the name Cape of Storms. There was also a severe strain of flu circulating. People displaced in the May attacks were spending their second month sleeping in flimsy tents perched on the edge of the stormy peninsula. The days I visited the camp were not warm but they were sunny and the rain had temporarily abated, so I didn't really experience what it was like during the many days of incessant rain and wind.

We drove to the isolated camping resort, turned refugee camp, and after smoothing a few bureaucratic wrinkles were allowed in by the guards, who seemed uncertain about their role. We parked inside the entrance and walked down what had become the main pathway dissecting rows of tents. The camp was smaller than anticipated. Since the government had announced the imminent closure of the camps most people had panicked and moved on somehow. A friend who accompanied us knew people living there and so we were introduced and went to different tents to listen to peoples' experiences.

The predominant nationalities in that camp were Somali and Congolese, with smaller groups of Rwandans, Burundians, Ethiopians and one isolated Zimbabwean family - a grandmother, her daughter and 18 month-old granddaughter. There were many more Zimbabweans in other camps.

I had imagined enormous, military-style tarpaulin tents, taughly pegged to the ground but these were brightly striped, made of a thin, laundry-bag plastic, more like garden party gazebos, with pretend white window frames encompassing panes of transparent plastic. Carpet strips from the floors of the tents had been taken up and laid outside on the roofs in an attempt to anchor them in the wind.

One tent had been designated a mosque, another a church. The rest were used for sleeping and eating. Inside those tents were flung rows of mattresses, some propped up high, others on the ground. Children ran in and out whilst adults cooked over electric hotplates on the ground. People were attempting here and there to create orderly living conditions but privacy was impossible as couples and their children were forced to sleep alongside strangers, sharing one blanket between two.

People latched on to me as a new face, hoping that this person might perform the miracle of whisking them away to a safe and secure life. I repeatedly told people that I am a very ordinary grassroots campaigner without special powers or links to wealth or influence, but that I would do my best to make sure that they do not remain invisible, that their stories are heard as far across the world as possible.

'Arriving at the Farmhouse' continued from page 1

And so this old, yet new farm requires much work. Volunteers arrive to help with the building of the "Hermitage", (I think of the Russian Museum with its priceless and countless pieces of art), on the edge of the lake. The lake is a result of quarry mining and the construction of a channel from Birmingham to London to supply coal and iron ore for the city. Apparently the lake is quite deep and inhabited by huge carp that are caught repeatedly by paying fishermen looking for a pleasant country pastime. We are always seeking a return to nature in this modern world of noise, pollution, and loss of the natural habitat. The lake is refuge to many ducks, geese, swans, and herons; they can be seen gliding silently across the water in the morning mist. It is such a blessing to be staying near this body of living water.

Other farm projects include preparing the garden for the winter fallow, completing the poly tunnel (we call them hoop greenhouses in Vermont), to extend the growing season. The greenhouse and very old farmhouse are in need of never ending repairs. Life is always full of tasks that must be done in order to support the community and guests. It is important to remember to pace oneself in this work, to be humble and always pray for strength and guidance.

I can't write about my journey coming here to participate in the Catholic Worker Farm community without considering the context of our current world situation. The global financial markets teeter on the brink of chaos, and the US presidential race nears Election Day. It feels as though those who are aware of what is happening are holding their collective breath while others toil on in pain and oblivion. I completed early voting before leaving the States but I am always left with a feeling of having blood on my hands, trying to be a "responsible" citizen in a so-called democracy. The recent American bailout of the corporate criminals is a theft from the people who need housing, healthcare, and education. The horrific war that has been visited on the Iraqi people has turned on its perpetrators. And now people of faith who mount nonviolent protest to these atrocities are being branded as "terrorists" by the domestic security apparatus. How to maintain faith, hope and love with such dark times ahead? Dorothy and Peter are our guides to help us live a Catholic life, pursuing social justice, sharing with the homeless, and attempting to be more self-sufficient on the land.

We devote ourselves to the practice of the Works of Mercy as our salvation in the face of economic collapse, racial tension, class war, and the loss of meaningful, sustaining work. We see both college graduates and immigrants struggling to find work. The community life has much to offer a diverse group of people.

When I return home I will be participating in the launching of the next action to shut down Guantanamo Bay Military Prison come January in Washington DC. We aim to hold the next administration accountable for closing the prison, ending torture at the hands of the US military and CIA, restoring habeas corpus, maintaining a physical presence at the White House, and educating Congress. This "First 100 Days" campaign will begin with a nine day fast starting January 11th, the seventh anniversary of the opening of Guantanamo as part of the so-called "war on terror". We hope there are people in the European CW community along with others who can find the resources to come for part of this time. It should be quite eventful!

I recall a quote from William Miller who wrote Dorothy's biography. *"Having researched the Catholic Worker phenomenon I might very well have concluded, on the basis of the evidence, that the*

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Staten Island, N.Y. April 1955

Tamar Hennessy and Dorothy Day celebrate the 10th birthday of Becky, the eldest, on April 4th, 1955 in Staten Island, New York. Tamar is pregnant with Martha. Children L-R: Nicholas, Mary, Susie, Maggie, Becky and Eric.

Mixing it with the Catholic Chaplain for British Military Land Forces

Yesterday I was asked to a sort of debate at the Sixth Form Theology Conference at St Mary's School, Ascot. The other speaker was Mgr J S Alker Assistant British Military Chaplain for the General Land Forces, and Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain in England. As it turns out, it wasn't much of a debate—I spoke first and couldn't rebut. It was more like an exchange of views on the Pacifist V Just War position in the Catholic church (see the movie "The Mission" for an interesting take on this debate!)

I met with the Monsignor in the hall after our presentations and we had a good exchange of views. He was dressed in military chaplain uniform with epitlaps—quite a contrast to my dreads and worn, cigar-burn-hole Pitstop ploughshares t-shirt. I remarked to him that we looked straight out of central casting! He agreed. As part of our verbal exchange in the hall I gave Mgr Alker a copy of an article written by Catholic Worker Tom Cornel. Here, Cornel, formerly a Vietnam War draft card burner now pastor, reflects on the dilemma of Catholic Chaplains in the U.S. army. You may also be interested to read it:

<http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?arti...11215>

There were approx 120 high school students, very bright from the quality of questions (could be a few future prosecutors and judges in there, if so hopefully they'll remember me kindly!), and at least one young guy who is being put through sixth form by the British military. The Russians and the British are the only Euro countries that recruit at 16. I had a lot of good exchanges with these kids at coffee breaks and lunch.

At the outset of my presentation I pointed that all of them had been born after my last haircut in 1988. I got that haircut in Boggo Rd. Jail in Brisbane where I was imprisoned for blockading the crew of the nuclear warship U.S.S. Hoel. It had called in to Brisbane on its way back from supporting Saddam Hussein in the Persian Gulf. This was around the time Bin Laden and friends were being supported and armed by the American CIA and Pakistani Intelligence. Good friends of the US/UK, now the new enemies.

In my talk I pointed out that there has been three responses to the issues of war and violence in church history. Firstly, Pacifism, which was practised and taught by Jesus living under the Roman colonisers and the Herodian collaborators. This view dominated for the first three centuries of Christianity, and is embraced today by the Catholic Worker movement and other remnants of radical discipleship.

Secondly, the Just War theory thought up by Augustine after the 3rd. century Constantine shift. This was around the time when the church was legalised, patronised by the emperor and fast-tracked to become basic to Roman citizenship. This "Constantine Shift" turned Christian ethics on its head. How do you run the Roman (British, Portuguese, Spanish, any empire) in a Christian way? This should never have been our problem. Similarly, how do you run a firing squad in a Christian way? Again, this ethical question misses the point. Both recent popes have mused that given the nature of modern warfare technology, the a Just War may now be an impossibility (eg. your not supposed to kill civilians for starters!)

The third significant era was the Crusades - "kill em all and let God sort them out". This is theologically discredited in the Catholic tradition. However, there are parallels to be made between the Crusades and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—with modern theology of nuclear weapons, aerial and naval bombardment being key to these illegal invasions.

Quite poetically, the conference was gathered at Ascot which was once the fringe of the Roman empire with all the brutality and oppression that went with that. Later it had become the centre of the British empire that stretched all the way to my hometown of Brisbane 12,000 miles away, liquidating the local tribe. As theologian Ched Myers points out, where we are situated in empire effects how we do our theology and radical Christian praxis. From the oppressed Third World will come a "Theology of Liberation" from the entitled First World will come a "Theology of Repentance and Resistance".

LCW...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...

Scott Albrecht and friends at the Farmhouse are vigiling in Northwood town centre engaging with the public about the presence of a major military base in their midst.

Martin Newell served a seven day sentence in Pentonville Prison for refusing to pay a fine for criminal damage after the Holy Innocents action.

Zelda Jeffers is helping to start "Open Space", where people refused asylum but not deported who have to register at Communications House can drop in before and after signing so that someone can be alerted if they do not come out. Sometimes people go in and are detained to be deported. It is hoped the Space will develop as users wish. So far there is information, a chance to chat and a cup of tea available.

Clare Bissell moved into Dorothy Day House in October as a fulltime volunteer. She soon got stuck in, literally, making marmalade and other culinary delights, whilst working at the café and urban table.

New volunteers We especially welcome Diane Walsh and Ronak, who faithfully volunteer at the café, and the recent influx of students and Mennonites helping at the Urban Table.

Dates for your Diary

Holy Innocents Faith and Resistance Retreat
Catholic Worker Farmhouse, 28th-30th December

National Climate March
Saturday 6th December, meeting at Grosvenor Square (near 'Speakers Corner', Hyde Park) at 12noon. See www.campaigncc.org for more info.

Catholic Worker Euro Gathering 2009

More info to follow

Advent Vigil at Communications House
210 Old Street, EC1V

Every Tuesday 8am-9.30am during advent. At Communications House people refused asylum but not deported need to register weekly in order to gain their very small benefit allowance. Sometimes people are detained without notice. Throughout advent we are vigiling against this treatment of people, calling for peace and care of everyone this Christmas. Join us with a festive feel to hand out leaflets to employees and refugees, spreading real Christmas cheer.

For more information about any of the above, please contact Dorothy Day House on 02072490041.

** BOOKS AND FILMS FOR SALE **

Fool for Christ - the best introduction to Dorothy Day on film.
AVAILABLE from Dorothy Day House for just £10!



Harry Browne: Hammered by the Irish
how the Pitstop Ploughshares disabled a US warplane with Ireland's blessing.
AK Press ISBN 9781 9048 59901
AVAILABLE from Dorothy Day House for just £10



In order to purchase please call 020 72490041.

'Mixing it with the Chaplin' continued from page 8

As the Chaplain pointed out, the 40th. British soldier killed in the Iraq/Afghan wars this year was arriving back today. One of the first in 2003 was from Ballyfermot/Dublin, and the recent 300th was from County Mayo. The sad reality is that we don't know and don't care about British, Iraqi, American Afghani deaths. We live in Western societies disengaged from the wars being waged in our names. I believe this is no coincidence. It seems the governments have learnt the lessons from Vietnam - how to market and manage wars on the home front. All they want is our silence and sedation, and we serve it up in spades. In terms of recent anti-war activity, there's been hardly a peep from the church, the campus, youth culture and little beyond the usual opportunism from the left and professional NGO sector. This generation is victim of sophisticated socialisation techniques that we didn't have to deal with in the '60's and '70's.

On the morning of my talk I had woken up in the Catholic Worker hospitality house in Hackney. Some of the men living here have fled from wars and military oppression in the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Algeria, Iran. On the bus to Waterloo Station we passed many monuments to wars and warriors that had built the British empire. As I travelled on the train from Waterloo there were constant security messages about suspicious packages etc. Commuters seemed as disengaged to these alerts as they are to the war in general.

It is our choice to remain awake or asleep to the times we're in. The state requests us to remain asleep to troop movements through Shannon Airport, and the cries from Iraq and Afghanistan and military families. Those who continue to resist shake and awake us to our own responsibilities of solidarity and resistance. Check out www.couragetoresist.org www.witnesstorutre.org and www.soaw.org.

In preparation for my talk, I had emailed round my networks with a request for help. Gary MacLennan had written in his reply "One of my very favourite speeches and certainly one I would use if I were speaking, is the Roman historian Tacitus' version of the speech by the leader of the Caledonians just before they went into battle at Mons Graupius against Agricola. Tacitus almost certainly made this up but it is a timeless characterization of war and imperialism. He called the Romans

"Brigands of the world, they have exhausted the land by their indiscriminate plunder and now they ransack the sea. The wealth of an enemy excites their cupidity, his poverty their lust of power. East and West have failed to glut their maw. They are unique in being as violently tempted to attack the poor as the wealthy. Robbery, butchery, rapine, with false names they call Empire; and they make a wilderness and call it peace. "

The challenge to us, as I summarised to the fresh-faced 17/18 year olds: do we wake up and become part of the solution, or do we continue to turn a blind eye, silently consenting to the horrific injustice that we are so entwined in.

Ciaron O'Reilly
Catholic Worker/Ploughshares

Peter Maurin 'Easy Essay'

A Few Englishmen

R.H Tawney said that the Englishmen wear blinkers. Because they wear blinkers the Englishmen lack vision. Because they lack vision the Englishmen are very strong for supervision. And supervision is not a substitute for vision

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'Arriving at the Farmhouse' continued from page 7

movement was a well intentioned but ineffectual pietistic activism. On the basis of the same evidence I might have also concluded that it was a flight from reality and was thus madness. But I have come to view the Worker movement as expressing an idea that comes truly out of the midst of life and gives to the human spirit its highest due".

In the face of unspeakable suffering experienced by the guests of our Catholic Worker communities, we will continue to pray for the grace to open our minds and act with faith in our efforts with the work of penance and resistance.

Martha Hennessy
Catholic Worker Farm Volunteer

'News from South Africa' continued from page 6

It was agreed to deliver paper and pens so people could write their stories that I would then collect shortly before leaving the country. A friend drove me there a few days before my departure to fetch the statements. I didn't want to be too optimistic as we hadn't allowed much time to write and with all the rumours flying around as to what government was or was not about to do, I would not have blamed anyone for telling me to butt out but most people were ready and waiting to hand over their statements. There is very little trust in the South African authorities and people are pinning their hopes to help from outside. I did stress how difficult life is for refugees in the UK, Europe and everywhere but people were not ready to hear that, preferring to keep alive the dream of a peaceful, welcoming home somewhere on this earth.

Since my visit in July the government of South Africa closed many of the camps and people who did not feel safe enough to reintegrate into communities that expelled them moved into the remaining few camps. Then on Friday 7th November, 2008, the government (with the blessing of UNHCR) turned off the water and electricity and stopped food being transported into the remaining camps. The people remaining are those for whom repatriation to the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, is impossible because of the violence in those countries or because of mass starvation.

Many people who have tried to reintegrate into townships have been beaten up, some have been murdered and there have been rapes also. Sadly, Abdi Sirej, an Ethiopian Oromo man I met at Soetwater has been shot dead. The communities that expelled them are under severe economic stress and the refugees do not have enough money to afford to rent elsewhere. When I last phoned about a week ago, people were refusing to leave the camps as they felt at least their lives were safer there even without power or water, and they are now trying to exist with the help of volunteers and the Red Cross.

For daily updates on the situation please read the eMzantsi Ubuntu Coalition blog: <http://emuc.ilocals.info/>
 Pictures of anti-xenophobia marches and news of current grassroots struggles in South Africa are available on the Anti-Privatisation Forum web site:
http://apf.org.za/article.php3?id_article=285

Megan Redmond
 Urban Table Volunteer

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

Please fill in the form in **BLOCK LETTERS**. Filling out this form enables us to set up a monthly standing order with your bank. It can be stopped at any time by informing your bank.

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

Payments to be made monthly / other First payment to be made on: ... / ... / 08 and monthly thereafter.

Your Bank Name.....

Your Bank Address.....POST CODE.....

Your account name:.....

Your account number:..... Your sort code:.....

Please pay: Triodos Bank **Credit of:**
 Brunel House, London Catholic Worker
 11 The Promenade Sort Code: 16 58 10
 BS8 3NN A/C No: 20066996

Until further notice, the sum of the value indicated above.

SIGNED:..... DATE:...../...../ 08

PLEASE RETURN TO "London Catholic Worker"
 at: 14 Deal Street, London E1 5AH
 YOUR NAME & ADDRESS:.....

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CONTACT US	I want to receive the London CW Newsletter. [I enclose stamps/donation payable to "London Catholic Worker"]
Postal Address: 16 De Beauvoir Road London N1 5SU Tel: 020 7249 0041 E: londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk Website: www.londoncatholicworker.org	NAME ADDRESS:..... POST CODE:.....

Dorothy Day House & Urban Table Soup Kitchen Needs

FOOD:

- Dry goods, rice
- Instant coffee
- Tuna, corned beef, cheese
- Sugar & salt & pepper
- Tinned tomatoes & other cans
- Herbs & spices etc

OTHER

- Handyman / woman
- Soap, razors, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.
- Men's Clothes
- New members and volunteers
- MONEY! - see p11 for standing order form.
- Box File

OFFICE:

- Help with IT maintenance
- Help with producing and sending out newsletter

HOUSEHOLD GOODS:

- A working computer/laptop
- Fresh A4 Printing Paper
- Pressure cooker and Frying Pan
- Small gardening tools
- Bike locks & bike lights
- Single duvet covers
- Working laptop

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

CW FARMHOUSE NEEDS:

- Food, esp. juice, rice, porridge oats, dairy products, cooking oil
- New members & help with gardening, cleaning, cooking, DIY
- MONEY! -and of course your prayers.

While our finances are improving, we continue to rely on our supporters and readers donations, to pay the rent on houses and other costs. We need a total of at least £30,000 a year. Currently we are still using up the capital that enabled us to begin. Please give generously to support our work with the crucified of today's world. "You will have your reward". (Luke 16:39)

SUPPORT OUR WORK

The **London CW** is part of the radical, pacifist Catholic Worker movement started in 1933 in New York & inspired by the Gospel vision and practice of our founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. There are now over 150 CW houses in the US and about 10 other countries. Come and 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 House** make your cheque to "London Catholic Worker".

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

**WANTED:
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
& VOLUNTEERS**

At **LCW** we need people to share our life and work, and we always need more support for our acts of witness. If you feel God is calling you, or if you simply want to get involved, contact us. Details on p2 and above.

Oxford Catholic Worker are also in similar need. Contact them at: 227 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 tel: 01865 248 288 and see their page on **LCW** website.