



An Icon for Our Times by Martin Newell



On the altar we have in the chapel of Giuseppe Conlon House, there is a large icon officially entitled 'Christ of Maryknoll'. When I moved back here in October, my eyes were unerringly drawn to this image during our prayer times. It shows an unusual Jesus looking the viewer in the eye through barbed wire. This Jesus has brown curly hair, an olive-coloured face, a trim beard and is shown wearing a t-shirt. He resembles many of those faces we have seen peering at us through barbed wire across the world. Including Napier Barracks in Kent, of course. He is gazing through the fence, pinning the viewer with an enigmatic gaze that appears

to me both sad and questioning, as well as compassionate and piercing. As if he is asking, 'Why are you there, and I am here? Why is there this barrier between us?'

I first came across this icon during the height of the Syrian refugee crisis. A few days before I had seen a photo of a man looking through barbed wire at a refugee camp. The connection was striking. I had just seen Jesus among all those who were fleeing the destruction, violence and death in Syria: men, women and children. Those whom we wanted to welcome, and those who we did not. This connection explains why this icon has always been the singular image of 'Refugee Jesus' for me.

However, as I meditated on the icon during my prayer last year, it acquired a new dimension. As is common with icons, the background is yellow, or gold. In iconography this signifies heaven. But the background to this large version was uneven, a bit cloudy. I was struck by the similarity of these yellow clouds to those we have seen billowing up from wildfires and forest fires in Australia, California and else-



Continued on p. 2

Inside this issue: *An Icon for Our Times* by Martin Newell, p.1; *The Powerhouse of the Resurrection* by Alex Holmes, p. 3; *New Arrival* by Paul Norris, p. 4; *House Update* by Martin Newell, p. 5; *Bruce Kent Obituary* by Barbara Kentish, p. 6; *A Well for Healing* by Brother Johannes Maertens, p. 7; *Migrants Need Dignity* by Barbara Kentish, p. 8; *An Easy Essay* by Peter Maurin, p. 9; *Refugee Tales Walk* by Anne M. Jones, p. 10.



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At Giuseppe Conlon House we run a house of hospitality for homeless and destitute asylum seekers who are not allowed to work or claim benefits, as well as organizing acts of prayer, witness and nonviolent resistance.

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The Farmhouse offers hospitality, accommodation and support to destitute women and children, and have a postcard and hermitage retreat.

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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 – 1:00. and a soup kitchen on Friday nights. We keep a regular vigil at Faslane Nuclear Base as well as having monthly meetings and prayers.

where in recent years, illuminated by the yellow flames that ate up the ground and everything in their path.

And so this icon became a prophetic image of a possible apocalyptic future, as well as a present tragedy. A future where the fires of the climate emergency have driven ever more millions of 'the least of these' (Matthew 25) to leave their homes in search of refuge. Only to find barbed wire barring their way. While those of us on the other side of the fence cower in fear or harden our hearts as we seek to protect our own comfort and lifestyle.

I used to know Abdel, a refugee who grew up in 1970s Lebanon. He compared the affluent lifestyle of wealthy Lebanese back then to that of Europeans in recent decades. He said 'Both have lived in paradise, but this cannot continue indefinitely, indifferent to the suffering around them', the 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' outside the gates. (Jesus, Mt 25:30). There will be an implosion, a Divine Judgment. 'What did you do to me, and to the least of these?'

The interpretation text for the icon says it 'does not make clear which side of the fence Christ is on. Is He imprisoned, or are we?' Indeed. Is He asking us 'Why didn't you do anything to stop this burning Earth becoming a reality?' Or perhaps, 'Why have you built all these fences to keep me out, along with my sisters and brothers who are suffering so much?' Or perhaps he looks at us in pity and sorrow, knowing that we have built a prison, and incarcerated ourselves and our hearts, condemning ourselves to fear of the other – as well as to fear of the Other who created us all, and all that is. Can the gaze pierce our hearts and convert us?

For me, the question remains: how am I to respond in the face of this challenge, this potential coming catastrophe, the 'wrath that is to come' in the words of John the Baptist (Luke 3:7), that has in fact already begun, but the worst of which can be avoided? To what do these questions call me now? Right now, I don't have the answers. It was living and working with refugees and asylum seekers that awakened me to the urgency of action on the climate emergency in the first place, as I tried to listen and understand the realities of their lives, and those of their families. Perhaps I am back here now at Giuseppe Conlon House to go back to the beginning, to learn once more how God's voice is speaking to me now.

*God does not need great pathos or great works, but
He needs greatness of hearts. He cannot calculate
with zeroes. When man is confronted with who he is,
He wants him to accept himself entirely, to commit
himself totally and to contribute what he can.'*

Alfred Delp S.J., executed by the Nazis on 2 February 1945

The Powerhouse of the Resurrection

By Alex Holmes



© Robyn Sand Anderson

Easter. The Risen Christ. He displays no visible wounds yet his face conveys a profound strain, supreme concentration battling barely suppressed pain. Bread is broken into two for the two disciples in Emmaus, an outward expression of the agony and brokenness of the crucifixion that he carries within him. Speaking of the genesis of his painting 'Road to Emmaus', Robyn Sand Anderson said. 'It became what it needed to be to tell the story of loss, human grief, our journeys and the promise embodied in God's resurrecting power.'

Night-time in Calais, northern France. A group of young exiles from Eritrea circles the fireside. Finely chopped onions sizzle in the charred saucepan; soon it will be dinner time. Yusef emerges from the darkness into the glow of the fire, his face creased in pain. He's been pepper sprayed by the CRS, the French Riot Police. Handed a small carton of milk, he lets the contents dribble down over his closed stinging eyes. As the pain lessens and the milk dries, his face becomes a blotch of dark skin and white. Gradually he begins to smile. His spoken English is near fluent. 'There are good times here and I can be happy. We look after each other. If you

listen to your body, you are never satisfied. The body always wants more. You must listen to your soul. Your soul is with God. If you listen to your soul, you will want to do good to others, and that will make them happy, and make you happy.' Suddenly he's gone, reappearing a few minutes later with a black bin bag which he slits open and puts around my shoulders. It has started to rain.

Yusef was imprisoned in Eritrea after attempting to flee the country to avoid indefinite military conscription. He eventually escaped in a mass breakout and walked for six days with no food, no shoes, terrified he would be informed on if he knocked at a door to ask for help. He eventually made it home, only to be caught and imprisoned after a second failed attempt at escaping the country. This time he persuaded the prison staff that he was underage and after a month his mother was able to collect him. The third time of trying, he told nobody. He successfully made it across the border into Ethiopia. With the UK his goal, he eventually reached Calais. One year later he and his friends rowed across the Channel. They were a little flotilla of four inflatable kayaks. None of them had been in a kayak before. None of them had life jackets; Yusef can't swim. They paddled their kayaks for eleven hours before finally being rescued by UK coast guards and brought ashore.

A message comes up on my phone. It's Fikru with another 'I'm fine', the single piece of a jigsaw puzzle, most often the only one. Where are the other pieces? Gradually, over time, they emerge. 'It has been very bad. How can I stay? I am very suffering.' 'Pray for me and what will come now. I cannot work, I cannot learn'. He writes of a 'storm, like a sea storm'. It's hard to keep in touch; every few months, a new phone number, a new Facebook account. Every few months he's transferred to a new London address by the Home Office; Thornton Heath, Hayes, Beckenham, a hotel near Heathrow.

Continued on p. 4

Continued from page 3.

Then came this message, 'I decided to return back to Eritrea. More than 6 months I have been in a hotel with a lot of suffering and difficult problems, without rights and freedom. I struggle so much but now it's more than my ability. I pray to God for forgiveness. God bless you.' Since then, silence.

Mewael has been in the UK for more than two years. Like Yusef, he has excellent command of the English language. He has leave to stay in the UK and if things go to plan, this year he'll start studying for a diploma in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. Whilst everything looks good on paper, Mewael has countless struggles to contend with. 'The most challenging thing since I arrived Bhas been the post-traumatic stress from my experiences in Libya (the torture, forced labour, the harsh journey through the Sahara desert and across the Mediterranean sea). I could not help myself uncontrollably thinking about every single event. Also, the time I spent in prison in Eritrea, the military training and duty at the age of 16. Those things haunted me for quite some time, and were utterly challenging to my carrying on a basic daily life. The detention when I first got to UK really gave me vivid flashbacks of detention in Libya and prison time in Eritrea. That makes the memories even fresher. The wait for the interview from the Home Office was agonizing while battling with all these challenges. And waiting for the decision after the substantive asylum interview was unbelievably painful. Contacting my family also contributes to the ongoing problems. Phoning my family and not being able to talk for longer periods of time and selecting words to just not risk then from getting arrested or harmed by the government. Phoning every time, it's a matter of luck if someone can find them, because they don't have a phone and the connection is terrible as well. Even though every day life is a battle to survive, by the help of God every hour is the path to the next improvement. And I'm so grateful for that.'

Easter. The Risen Christ.

The painting by Bramantino from 1490, in Madrid's Museo Thyssen, stops me dead in my tracks. Christ stares straight out at you, his facial expression bearing still the agonies of his crucifixion. The wounds in his hands and side seem almost bloodless. It's night-time, yet despite the source of light, the distant full moon, being behind him, a radiant glow flows from his battered body and burial shroud. Depicted here, the mysterious union of pain and luminescence, the living powerhouse that is the Resurrection, then and now.



Bramantino's *The Risen Christ* photographed by Lluís Ribes Mateu (CCBYNC2.0)

APOLOGIES

Alert readers will notice that we missed at least one edition of this newsletter: the last one was Advent 2021. This is due to the many changes and turnover we have been through in the last few months, which you can read about in the "LCW Update" column on the next page. Perhaps like everyone else, with Covid and lockdowns these last years. So much seems not to be working as well, or in the case of the Home Office, as poorly, as it did before. Including ourselves. Such traumas have their consequences. Let's pray for each other.

LCW Update *By Martin Newell*

Giuseppe Conlon House has seen plenty of change in the last few months. Like wheat grown from seed, a harvest is reaped, and fresh grain is sown in its stead. One thing's for certain: nothing stays the same; our prayer is for new life to be found upon the earth, as Jesus prayed.

When we started here in 2010, the hospitality we could offer was a very basic emergency night shelter for up to 20 men, who slept on mattresses on the floor of the former parish hall. Over the years, conditions improved so the men were able to have a proper bed in shared rooms of 3 or 4. The opening hours extended but we still operated as a night shelter, closing in the afternoon, and volunteers came in to cook.

Then the pandemic came, shortly after we had begun a visioning process to try to discern what changes God might be calling us to make. Both those things have resulted in a new start here. Most of the men living here moved out into government-provided hotels to maintain social distancing. For once it seemed that there was plenty of room at the inn. Most of those who lived in hotels have been able to move on, including some receiving their papers. Thank God. For those who remained, they, like everyone, have had to stay inside during successive lockdowns. So a new way of living started here then, which we have now embraced.

This 'new way' means of weekly house or community meetings, where we share out the cooking and the cleaning. As a result, we get to sample the cuisines of the men we share our house with. The new way means the domestic work is less of a burden on the Catholic Workers in the house. It means there are fewer of us, thirteen so far, even if this is partly because we are still gradually re-opening after the pandemic. We now have four men from east Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan), three from west Africa, one from the former Soviet Union and one from Algeria, as well as those of us here who are Catholic Workers. We have also had a few guests who have come for a brief stay due to an emergency situation.

We have begun partitioning our space to create more bedrooms. We are aiming for everyone to have single rooms. To do this we will have to work hard on fundraising. Any offers of help will be gratefully received. We have been moving in this direction for a long time, away from running a basic night shelter towards a shared community house. Our hope is that this more fully reflects unity of God's human family, the justice of God, and the vision of sharing life together across all borders and boundaries that might divide us.

At the same time as we made these decisions, the Catholic Worker community has been changing. Roland and Mirjam, the bedrock of the community for many years, have moved on, but are still living

locally, as is Sam Ziegler, and Bramble moved to Scotland. Tom is taking a break to finish his studies. In the other direction, Johannes moved back in, as has Martin Newell, and Paul and Paul have both joined us for a while, in addition to Colette Joyce, Westminster Diocese Justice and Peace worker. Martin still has Passionist and family responsibilities, and Johannes continues with his ministry of street presence with Eritreans and Ethiopians in the Finsbury Park neighbourhood. As a result some of them come to the house as they trust Johannes to help them with their housing and other troubles.

Meanwhile, the Urban Table soup kitchen we began over 15 years ago is now completely independent. We still share our surplus bread with them, as well as with a local food bank and the St James's Soup Kitchen. As Dorothy Day said, 'there is always bread.' Perhaps this is both a practical truth and a Eucharistic mystery, that when we share there is always enough, even for 5,000.

Amidst these changes we continue to try to witness to the Gospel of peace, justice and life. We have revived our monthly prayer and witness at the Home Office. Numbers have grown as this Gospel witness is now a shared endeavour with Westminster Diocese Justice and Peace, thanks to Barbara and Colette. Martin has been in court twice this year. He has been found 'not guilty' by the jury for the Extinction Rebellion DLR action in 2019, and paid a fine for his more recent participation in the Insulate Britain protests in 2021, although one court case is still ongoing. And we hosted ISM (International Solidarity Movement) nonviolence training. More generally our activism has retreated from view as we feel called to focus on the corporal works of mercy welcoming the stranger, the migrant and the homeless. There are seasons of life as well as of faith, and to recognise these seasons is to read the weather as Jesus said, with its skies and its winds, as well as its climate. We are grateful for your prayers. Please continue to pray with us, as we seek for the guidance and inspiration to faithfully discern our path from here.



Above: at the monthly prayer vigil at the Home Office

Bruce Kent RIP

By Barbara Kentish

The peace activist Bruce Kent died on Wednesday 8 June, aged 92. Obituaries in the national press have documented his enduring witness to peace. As General Secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, he was constantly in the public eye in Britain. But he worked on an international level too, initiating the UK wing of the international Catholic movement Pax Christi and serving as a member of the International Peace Bureau. His Christian standpoint led him on a decades-long journey, culminating him and his wife, Valerie receiving the Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism from the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2021, for:

‘Exceptional, tireless and lifelong dedication to the Christian ecumenical search for peace, both individually and together.’

His simple, though not simplistic, Christianity best explains his staggering contribution to public life.

Here are a few notes about his witness in our corner of London, particularly in Justice and Peace work. He remained an unmissable regular at local gatherings. While he maintained his national work, his local activism was equally passionate. He supported the Finsbury Park Mosque, the Citizens UK anti-knife crime campaign and whole host of other campaigns – undaunted by their challenges. He and Valerie, his wife, started a Justice and Peace group in their Tollington Park parish in North London, where they excelled in finding practical ways to raise awareness of global injustices. A fundraiser for the Comboni Sisters’ nursery in Bethany highlighted the Palestinian conflict, while a Remembrance Day service commemorated the two world wars, calling attention to the victims of international conflicts today. No task was too meagre – he supported the ESOL classes I ran at his parish by unlocking doors and ensuring the heating was on!

In political activism, he confronted a nervous David Lammy, MP for Tottenham, on the renewal of Trident. Not willing to jeopardise his ministerial position, Lammy stuck to supporting Trident. He recanted later – in Opposition!

Bruce wholeheartedly believed that the laity should participate in the running of the church – both he and Valerie served on their parish council for many

years. A sense of humour perfectly complemented his serious commitment to social justice.

This lighter touch came through in his campaigning for peace and anti-militarism. Many will have fond memories of the annual Children’s Peace Walk he helped organize, where, dressed as Sherlock Holmes, he would encourage children and their parents to ‘Search for Peace’! Even more joy could be found at his picnic party games in Finsbury Park.

A fortunate opportunity arose around eleven years ago, when a parish faced closure, making church buildings available. With Fr Joe Ryan and Westminster Justice and Peace, Bruce facilitated the arrival of the London Catholic Worker hospitality house for refugees in Haringey. It would draw on the support of many local parishes and individuals, inspiring many to reach out destitute asylum seekers.

As a diocesan Justice and Peace fieldworker, I came across (ill-informed) hostility to his politics early on: at a deanery meeting, one priest told me that ‘Bruce Kent and his boys’ should be demonstrating outside the Pakistani embassy, not the South Africa House, for the right of Christians to practise their faith in safety. The apartheid regime had already fallen and Bruce was in fact privately supporting a Pakistani prisoner.

In every aspect of this work, of course, Valerie Flesati, his wife, was a constant collaborator and an initiator in every scheme. All were delighted when they jointly received the Lambeth Cross in 2021. Their endeavours have changed lives in their neighbourhood, parish and diocese.

For Bruce, as for all the Justice and Peace movement, justice was indivisible: whether the cause was nuclear weapons, apartheid, freedom of religion, the rights of prisoners, or those of the laity: he brought his astonishing energy and intellect to all of it. He leaves a huge gap.

Below: Bruce (seated, centre) with community and friends and Giuseppe Conlon House



A Well for Healing

By Brother Johannes Maertens

A forty-minute drive from Frankfurt, Saint Antonius Coptic Orthodox Monastery lies in between beautiful woodland and grazing fields. The monastery has all the facilities of a monastery in Egypt, Egyptian monks included. But it also has a basic football field, a basketball pitch, a small playground and a very large guesthouse (300 beds).

On arrival, the church is full of people and Mass has started. So, we quietly find a place in the church. On average, a church service takes around two and a half hours. After the service, I am introduced to the abbot of the community, who is also the bishop for South Germany. I try to pronounce the proper Arabic greeting '*barhour sineyet*', which translates to something akin to 'bless me, your grace.' On which the bishop-abbot gives me a blessing and invites me to have breakfast with him and the monks within the cloister walls.

Thirty years ago, Abbot Mikhael came from the great Monastery of Saint Anthony in the Egyptian desert to this place. Starting with a simple farmhouse, on a plot of land. Nowadays, one of the fifteen monks, Abouna Samuel, welcomes the many guests arriving every day and assigns them to a guest room. One of the three novices runs the hectic guest-kitchen with volunteers, and Deacon Fr. George, who is gifted with speaking seven languages, has his work cut out, bringing people to the pharmacy, the doctor or the train station, or looking into refugees' individual casework.

After breakfast, a very friendly Egyptian family greet me at the door, who immediately make me feel welcome in one of the guesthouses. Fr. George explains that they are one of three refugee families who are staying here under the church asylum scheme.

The monks here live a traditional Orthodox monastic life of prayer and hard work. While many Christians from different countries like Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Iraq and Armenia find their way here. Refugees and asylum seekers come here to be away from the troubles of the world, for time of respite and prayer and to stay for a couple of days. Fr. George always says 'The church is like a hospital for people.' And also some German people find their way to this 'well of healing'. Although it is very peaceful here, you probably can guess it isn't silent like in a Benedictine abbey: children play, families gather, parish groups arrive, the faithful come and go from far in and outside Germany.

'In order to have a Christian social order we must first have Christians ... Fr. Lallemand talks about how dangerous active work is without a long preparation of prayer.'

Dorothy Day

Early, every morning (7 a.m.), the young boys congregate around the altar with the deacons and priests, or with the monks in the choir. The girls, young woman and mothers gather on the right side in the church to pray, sing and praise God. The monks already start their prayers around 4 a.m.

For Christians who had to flee the Middle East or Africa from Islamist violence, this is a place where they can keep their faith and traditions and pass them on to their children. For refugees who suffered torture, who are traumatised, feel alienated or are victims of racism this place heals wounds and aches. Suitably, on the wall near the entrance of the monastery, the words of Jesus are written '*Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.*'

For me this place has been good, I really could stay here. The German language I could easily learn; the Arabic and Coptic might be another story. But like my friend Fr. George, who is called four days a week to work outside the monastery amongst destitute refugees in South Germany, so my calling lies amongst refugees in London and in a few days, I will need to leave again.

The fourteen monks here, under the guidance of Bishop Mikhael, open their hearts, prayer and monastery for those who are seeking healing. We truly need more places like this.



Migrants need dignity – and that needs funding

By Barbara Kentish

My lockdown friend has been helping at a food bank near Finsbury Park throughout the pandemic, going out twice a week to pack, hand out food parcels and serve hot meals. She's one of thousands up and down the country providing a service, which, even before COVID, was worth £30 million per year in unpaid work, claims the Trussell Trust, the largest food bank network. A lot of food banks, then! A recent radio programme told us that there are more food banks in the UK than McDonalds' outlets: around 1500 of the latter, and 2200 (1300 in the Trussell Trust scheme, and 900 independent) of the former. McD's has found unlikely competition in St John the Evangelist food bank. If you open up a map of Haringey food banks, at least twenty icons pop up, offering a variety of services: hot meals on a Thursday, parcels on a Tuesday, open sessions three times a week, and so on, in faith and community premises. A great service if you have the energy and resources to trek around the borough every day.

Food bank users will consist of some on low incomes, others on benefits, while over 10% have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) – generally people whose visas are out of date or invalid, or asylum seekers. This group, a million in the UK, is not allowed to work, and must rely on friends, charity or scrape by some other way.

A report from the Trussell Trust and the All-Parliamentary Group recommended that Government should build on the work of local authorities during the pandemic to increase the accessibility of Local Welfare Assistance Schemes (LWAS) to support those with NRPF. Guests from Giuseppe Conlon House benefited from this fund by being housed by the local authority in nearby hotels and bed-and-breakfasts, with single rooms. But this is now being phased out, leaving many again with a precarious future. Hotel living (and many Afghans arriving in the UK last year are still housed like this) comes with its own disadvantaging, one being that cooking is forbidden, so food banks can't help much. Precious cash (asylum seekers' allow-

ance, or hardship gifts), can be spent on fast food, which is hot at least. The hot meals offered across our part of North London gains importance. My lockdown friend reports serving up to 40–50 meals at their twice-weekly openings.

It is not only hot meals that are needed, but also the dignity that goes with sitting down with others to eat. The Giuseppe Conlon House volunteers have helped to run the Urban Table in in the Round Chapel, Hackney for many years, knowing how crucial this is, and some of the goods donated by shops and churches to the House are used at the Urban Table.

Welcoming strangers involves many things, with perhaps the most important being respecting their dignity. This is why prohibiting work is so demeaning. Not being able to provide for oneself and/or one's family is humiliating for young and healthy people. And restoring the dignity of working surely goes along with the dignity of sitting with others to eat, and even preparing one's own food. While food banks provide much-needed sustenance for millions, facilitated by thousands of dedicated people like my friend, they fill a gap created by a national catalogue of low benefits, low wages and a deliberately hostile environment for migrants and refugees.



A prayer vigil at the Home Office, to remember those who have died seeking refugee

As the Trussell Trust's own report states 'Food banks are a crisis support, not a replacement for addressing people's underlying needs.' What refugees and asylum seekers need are in need of, are the rights to work and live in dignity while they wait for their papers to be assessed.

New Arrival

By Paul Norris

I moved into the Catholic Worker house in Haringay on the feast of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, a talented student and avid mountaineer who, in his short life, worked tirelessly against poverty, inequality and fascism. Frassati died of polio in 1925, at the same age as I am now: 24. I have achieved far less than Frassati in the same time, having spent almost my entire life in an ivory tower, studying English Literature, mostly from the seventeenth century.

Though himself a great scholar, Robert Burton, one of my favourite writers from that time, wrote that too much learning 'dulls and diminisheth the spirits'. Already I feel the truth of this and appreciate the contemplative riches of simple work. Whereas at university my bed was (bizarrely) made for me each week, now making others' beds is part of my own weekly routine.

To get to choose this kind of work is a privilege, and the pace of tasks at the house is not too arduous. Sometimes, particularly when turning my unsteady hand at carpentry, if I am 'helping' anyone, it is really only myself, by feeling a bit more useful. But feeling useful is why I came here, after a long time working hard, but in arcane, abstract ways.

Though I am only here for a short while, before I begin my PhD in October, I hope that my time here is more than an interlude. University life is busy and full of different people, but it is easy to feel that everyone is living alone together, pursuing their own interests in parallel. In contrast, the community here is united by a shared mission. I hope to keep up this mission even outside the house, to remain part of the community which it unites, and by doing so to imitate Pier Giorgio in most things—excluding longevity.



Above: Paul in the kitchen at Giuseppe Conlon House

What Makes Us Human

An Easy Essay by Peter Maurin

- 1. To give and not to take
that is what makes us human.**
- 2. To serve and not to rule
that is what makes us human.**
- 3. To help and not to crush
that is what makes us human.**
- 4. To nourish and not to devour
that is what makes us human.**
- 5. And if need be to die and not to live
that is what makes us human.**
- 6. Ideals and not deals
that is what makes us human.**
- 7. Creed and not greed
that is what makes us human.**

Refugee Tales Walk

By Anne M. Jones

The fifth annual Refugee Tales walk took place in early July, inspired by the thirteenth-century account by Geoffrey Chaucer of pilgrims who walked from London to Canterbury, now recreated by Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group. Just like it was eight hundred years ago, each evening ends merrily, with music and life stories, but now the tales are those of refugees. We walk alongside refugees, exchanging our stories as we cover the twelve or fifteen miles each day, absorbing the beauty of the landscape around, respecting each other's private moments when the tales become too painful, supporting the less able when legs become weak. Each tale I heard began on a triumphant note – 'I have already accomplished my training as a plumber and have my own business,' – before descending into darkness:

'I was detained in Gatwick for almost four years after being trafficked here...I don't know what I would have done without the weekly support from the volunteer. Her and my faith in a good God.' For this refugee, the battle had only just begun; after obtaining leave to Remain, he faced the extremely difficult task of finding somewhere to live. Thanks to a family at his church, he now has a fixed address.

Authors and musicians filled our evenings – Kamila Shamsie, Rihab Azar on the oud, Amelia Gentleman, Shappi Khorsandi and Shami Chakrabarti were some of the people giving us their time. We walked the North Downs Way, from Merstham to Dorking, to Guildford, to Farnham and then onto Winchester, and in each town were offered a warm welcome and a church hall floor to sleep on.

'To understand a man, walk a few miles in his shoes' is an old saying but people like me cannot do that- we struggle even to imagine being driven from our families and country by preju-

dice, war or trafficking. But walking alongside another, in a spirit of shared friendship and equality, chatting or admiring the myriad of wildflowers, or feeling awed by majestic ancient trees in a woodland, strengthens human bonds, and reinforces my determination to continue to fight against the 'hostile environment'.

Extract from 'Love is the Measure'

By Dorothy Day

'What we would like to do is change the world – make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And to a certain extent, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, of the poor, of the destitute – the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor in other words, we can to a certain extent change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world. We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world. We can give away an onion.

We repeat, there is nothing that we can do but love, and dear God—please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as well as our friend.'



Christ of the Soup Kitchen by Fritz Eichenberg

Be A Catholic Worker!?

For many years before we had a house, there was a Catholic Worker group in London. What you might call a 'dispersed community'. We did not all live in one house, or all do one kind of work together. What we tried to do was practice in our lives, individually and to some extent together as a group, the themes of Catholic Worker life.

We are hoping to re-start this group. To pray, study Scripture and the world around us, build community, and practice nonviolence and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. To grow together in the practice of community, hospitality and resistance.

If you are interested in being part of this experiment, get in touch.

Johannes was among those who took part in a prayer vigil in Dover for those who have drowned crossing the English channel. Flowers were laid at plaques in memory of those who died.



When did we see you a stranger Lord, and not welcome you? (Matthew 25)

May they Rest in Peace, and Rise in Glory.



Below: members of London Catholic Worker attended the Annual May Day Migrants Mass at Westminster Cathedral

DONATION WISH LIST:

Please no alcohol or pork

***Tinned tomatoes ***

Red and green lentils

Cooking oil, Olive oil,

Tinned fish, Sugar

Long life milk / long life soya milk

Fruit juice, low fat spread

Breakfast cereal, marmalade, honey

Peanut butter, chocolate spread,

Toiletries: Shampoo, Toothpaste,

Deodorant, Shaving products,

Household cleaning products,

Toilet rolls

Please bring to Giuseppe Conlon House.

Please phone or email beforehand to make sure someone will be around to open the door.

We can also collect larger donations / collections from north and north east London. **Call 0208 348 8212**



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 based website www.catholicworker.com.

We need your help:

- **your expertise:**
- **help us with:** DIY, building & maintenance skills, all kinds of professional skills and knowledge needed for a charitable organisation: IT skills. Etc etc.
- and ... we need your prayers -

‘without prayer, all the rest is useless’

Please Support Our Work:

Cash Donations. We would be very grateful for any help you can give us. 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 our work and mission. See page 11 for our **“FOOD DONATIONS WISH LIST”**

Heating We rely on our readers’ donations to pay heating bills, internet, water and other costs.

Please consider setting up a regular donation, or send your donation to:

London Catholic Worker, Triodos Bank

Account Number 20066996 : Sort Code: 16 58 10

A Standing Order Form is provided below.

Alternatively send a cheque, payable to ‘**London Catholic Worker**’, to **GCH, 49 Mattison Road, London N4 1 BG**

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: _____ / _____ / 14 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
Bristol BS1 5AS	Until further notice the sum of the value indicated above

Signed _____ Date _____

Your email address: _____

Your Name and Address _____

Please return to :
London Catholic Worker
49 Mattison Road
London N4 1BG