CATHOLIC AGITATOR

HENNACY HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

632 BRITTANIA STREET A HISTORY

KINGS BAY PLOWSHARES 7 UPDATE p.7
I often think about the expression “if walls could talk” and imagine what stories our 130+ year-old house would tell. Every person who resided on this patch of earth has left their mark, seeding a part of their vision, joys, and struggles into the bone marrow of this building.

By MATT HARPER

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In the newspaper article, the group declared their desire to get the death penalty abolished so that “the state may no longer swell the list of murders by becoming itself a murderer.” It worked to shift public opinion so that the “reformation of offenders,” not revenge, might be the law’s guiding principle. And, it extended an invitation for all to join. Not only did these values come back to life with our moving in almost 70 years later, but Rees also started a tradition of 632 Britannia St. residents using a newspaper as a tool of education, agitation, and mobilization.

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By MAGGIE MILLER

Before we begin assembling trays of beans, salad, and bread for the Skid Row community, Matt Harper reminds us to “remember all the people who have grown and harvested the food we have enjoyed comparing theirs to...”

Girls decided it was time to leave that house, the property eventually found its way into the hands of a 30-year-old retired M.D. Meeting Victor Barancio, an Offenberger heard echoes of his own vision of community ruled by the theory of “more.” “Responsible housing was available to Martin, but when Barancio articulated his similar vision for living the life one wants without the societal constraints and expectations that have become so normalized, Martin was hooked.”

Don’t want to do a job you signed up for? Don’t want to go back to bed? Don’t want to move from old ovens with new ones and both worked endlessly to turn the house carpet covered in dog poop. They worked for it in 1970: $35,000). When it entered the market, a shouting, laughing, I gently explain, just as I had predictably suggested a lettuce chopping machine at the Hippie Kitchen. But rather than pointing and laughing, I gently explain, just as someone had to explain to me when

Matt Harper is a Catholic Worker community member and member of the Agitator.
We know from Church history living an alternative way is possible. The Church in the first 300+ years of our history held fast to Jesus’ example and utterly rejected and resisted support for and participation in empire. 

Reflect and Resist Empire

By MIKE WISNIEWSKI

Reflecting on this nation’s horrific and scandalous political affairs over the past several years, I have to wonder if this is not a decisive time to stop and reflect upon what it means to live as Christians in the midst of empire.

In the early Church, while it stood as a nation that claims superiority, both militarily and economically, over other nations. It is oppressed and steeped in violence, corruption, and abuses its power in order to increase its authority and domination over other nations. The Church, in this becomes idolatrous and blasphemes as it worshiped and served the false gods, thus violating the First Commandment.

When this happens, empires have been in existence for several millennia. Indeed, Jesus lived in and under one. However, He refused to align himself with its practices and culture. He chose, instead (and un­mistakably), to become exemplar par excellence regarding all political and spiritual matters. Therefore, if we examine Luke 4:5-8, it should stand as the foundation and answer to the question and quandary of Christian life in and support of empire.

In this key passage Jesus is taken to a mountaintop and the devil shows Jesus all the empire in human history and invites him to ally with God’s minons, and by consenting, worship the ruling demonic principalities and powers. It is important to note that Jesus does not refute Satan’s claim that He (Satan) believes the empire is the foundation and answer to the question and quandary of Christian life in and support of empire. Jesus knows the threat of torture and death, the chance to openly worship, preach, and proselytize in exchange for their loyalty. It became a quid pro quo. For this “freedom,” they now had to serve to serve empire in whichever manner demanded. Hence, Christians began participating in usurpation, imperial wars, law enforcement, political office, voting, etc., and in many instances became the perpetrators rather than the persecuted—all in the name of Christ crucified by empire nonetheless.

Therefore, I must question: if Jesus is our exemplar, as he was for the early Church, how can we legitimately justify voting for someone in service to the U.S. Empire and therefore to Satan? In service and dedicated to keeping the imperial war machine going full speed ahead, as well as suppress our rights, privacy, and social services?

In service to an empire whose quest is global and cosmic hegemony—at all costs! In service to an empire that exploits people and nature? In service to an empire to destroy the planet? In service to an empire that has absolutely no moral or ethical vision? It seems to me, to do so is diabolical insanity.

Voting is merely one example of how we choose to be complicit with empire, yet a significant example; a brief list of other ways include buying products and services from companies known to exploit people and nature; taking government aid or grants, among many other ways. Some are necessary, but should we not make an attempt to limit our participation as best we can?

Bear in mind, the U.S. Empire, with more than 700 offshore military bases, is the most oppressive and violent empire in human history. In fact, our national top priority is weapons, while violence is our primary export. It has been in perpetual war (either directly or by proxy) since WWIl, and its responsibility for the death of more than 20 million human beings—all of whom were created in God’s image and likeness. Also, since the U.S. Empire’s “War on Terror” began, more than 37 million people have been permanently displaced, particularly children. It is the only nation to use and threaten to again use nuclear weapons to demonstrate its power and willingness to destroy the entirety of God’s “good” creation; something to ponder. For this reason alone, to vote in and pledge our allegiance to the U.S. Empire is to become enslaved to the idolatry, blasphemy, violence, death, and destruction at its core.

Add that to the corporate influence that has been tacit approval to act in our name. To quote Ammon Hennacy (whose name adorns our house of hospitality): “When we take any part in government voting for legislative, judi­cial, and executive officials, we make these people our arm by which we cast a stone (John 8:7b), and deny the Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5:3). He, like Dorothy Day (who also did not vote), believed that “Our problems stem from our acceptance of the filthy rotten system.” Dorothy also believed that “there is nothing so radi­cal, or so subversive as Christianity.”

Voting suggests people have a voice, but I believe it unambiguously clear that democracy is essentially nonexistent in this nation. We cannot have both a democracy and an oligarchy. It is one or the other. It appears the impact of voting was abrogated decades ago when big money began flowing into legislatures coffers thus allowing corporate interests to heavily influence legislative decisions in their favor rather than in service to the common good. In this, political remains passive. As a result, we now suffer the greatest economic inequality in the industrialized world, which is only worsening.

Additionally, this corruption of action became solidified in 2010 with the U.S. Citizens United v. F.E.C., which ruled corporations are people and have a First Amendment right to spend vast amounts of money on elections—and they have spent tens, if not hundreds of millions of dollars in each so-called “election.” Thus entire system—political, economic, and judicial—is utterly corrupt and bankrupt.

Although millions fought and greatly suffered for the privilege to right to vote, I find it unreasonable to believe we have an obligation to protect it considering what has been betrayed. Matters today are completely different. Today, the ruling corporate elite, the oligarchy, controls the entire system. Hence, their interests will win in one way or another. They decide and choose whom to decide will best serve their interests. Our vote, then, is utterly meaningless. This reality should have become unambiguously clear with both the 2000 “selection” of G.W.B, and the 2016 “appointment” of Trump. Yes, they are in full control, and the principal beneficiaries of nearly every aspect of this corrupt system. We cannot capitulate to the temptation to live in denial.

Living in denial can be lethal. Remember also, the only modern sitting president who attempted to subvert the ruling elite’s agenda to the change is the murder of John F. Kennedy by the CIA. He chose, instead (and un­mistakably), to become exemplar par excellence regarding all political and spiritual matters. Hence, Christians began participating in usurpation, imperial wars, law enforcement, political office, voting, etc., and in many instances became the perpetrators rather than the persecuted—all in the name of Christ crucified by empire nonetheless.

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In this present climate, Black people can and are able to respond to the call to be the signposts of new possibilities for our Church. The humanity of Black people remains the right vehicle for Black African American evangelism in efforts to provide media equipment to journalists on the ground, and to collect and send medical supplies and other items to those who need it. We need to ask: In what ways has the pandemic affected us? What issues are united and refuse to be divided, “the we” who are black, brown, white, and other races.

\[\text{**LET THE CHURCH ROLL ON!**}\]

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Trump, though an abomination and demonically possessed, was NOT the root problem — the entire filthy system. His ascent to the White House was certainly predictable in this failed system. Though we see the forces behind him, we need not dwell on him to understand how we get there. We teach us what in the end is foolishness and foolishness and lead us on the way we should go (Isaiah 48:17).

In truth, Trump was a mirror held up to this society to illustrate who and what we are at the core. The parts of our collective selves that we have tacitly accepted: the greed, violence, arrogance, bullying, corruption, lies, envy, vanity, racism, fascism, and more. This is our reality. Like Trump, Obama, and with assaulting poor, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people we now have in cities across the country who are resistant to help or get involved?

IN THE END, THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS IS NOT A VIOLENT REVOLUTION. CAN WE BEGIN NOW — and fulfill Peter’s prayer and vision. Looking backward we teach us about what lies ahead, hence, in the big picture, there cannot be major changes that serve the common good regardless of party changes, but nevertheless the same overall. We are trapped in a system nominally fair and wickedness.

Consequently, then, if Luke 4:5-6 is understood and taken seriously, and we grap the diabolical madness of this age, we will know how to resist and humbly, to prosecute, to save these nations to its catastrophic demise. This is biblical truth — all of you” can be for the international community. When we choose life, when we choose to serve two master — God and empire.

Our faith mandates that we be the alternative to empire, not participate in and support it, remembering that apart from God we can do nothing. If we abide by God’s word and live by the scriptures, we will accomplish anything. Jesus clearly expects us to be attentive to empire’s destructive, suicidal, and societal ways as he asks, “Why do you not know how to interpret the present time, why not judge for yourself what is right?” (Luke 12:55-67).

Our task then, as Christians, is to stand in resistance, refuse to cooperate with unjust structures, and proclaim truth to power, remembering that we cannot simultaneously serve two master — God and empire (Luke 16:13). We must “come out of empire, form community, and build solidarity. We need each other—and the Spirit—to get a new thing going. Though the journey may be difficult, we have many guides to lead us, including Jesus, the early Church, and the prophetic witness of the Plowshares movement. Let us not be unrepentant imperialistic peoples).

In my belief, this can only be accomplished with a nonviolent revolution. We can begin anew and fulfill Peter’s prayer and the Spirit’s vision to “create a new society in the shell of the old.”

In closing, is it not past time to seek out the prudential wisdom of the early Catholic Church and return to our faith’s roots? Undeniably, Yahweh invites us “to return to me” (Is. 44:22; Joel 2:12-17; Mal. 3:6). Indeed, Yahweh invites us to “return to me” (Is. 44:22; Joel 2:12-17; Mal. 3:6).

I believe you, I recognize that this does not mean that we will not have problems and imperfections, but we will have grace and love at the center, and the Holy Spirit as our guide.

A nonviolent revolution happen? I personally do not believe that it can happen unless farmworkers are treated with dignity and respect. Food as a human right will not come until we acknowledge your pain. Food as a human right will not come until farmworkers are treated with dignity and respect. Food as a human right will not come until we acknowledge your pain. Food as a human right will not come until farmworkers are treated with dignity and respect.
Baraitser ruled against extradition because Assange, who is suffering from mental health issues, would be at too high a suicide risk in the U.S. dracoon prison system. The U.S. has appealed the decision, and Assange's sentencing is now scheduled for election interference. Mary Elizabeth Aupper, 39, daughter of Cardinal Edward Egan, and Bryan Aupper, passed away January 14 after a long battle with cancer. Mary was a U.S. Navy veteran, lost her life due to exposure to toxic burn pits in Afghanistan. Mary was a dedicated fan of bull riding and has a bull named after her. Her determination, grace, and kindness impacted countless people in and outside the sport. She was also dedicated to her family. Her friends, an animal lover, especially horses and dogs. Mary passed away surrounded by her mother, father, two sisters—Meghan and Francesca—and partner Becky. She is, and will continue to be, completely eliminated and forgotten by all and any accomplices in this weapons of mass destruction. According to International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), this treaty is “the beginning of the end of nuclear weapons.” It is up to us to be the people to pressure the government to sign the treaty. 

CLIMATE CRISIS PROTEST

On Friday, December 11, the fifth anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement, a coalition of Extinction Rebellion (XR) groups blocked the entrance to MoD centre in north Bristol in the U.K. Dozens of activists from XR Bristol, Christian Climate Action, XR Peace, and others blocked all three vehicle entrances to the complex. The protest was in part against the U.S. military, the largest polluter on the planet and largest consumer of fossil fuels. Scientists are warning that the 1.5°C limit imagined at that summit is now a pipe dream, and preparations should be made for a 4°C rise in global temperatures. At that point, or sooner, society will collapse as the oceans rise, soil dries, and total war envelopes the planet. The Climate Crisis will create another generation of refugees. 

NUCLEAR WEAPONS OUTLAWED

On October 24, 2020, Honduras became the 50th nation to ratify the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The treaty entered into force on January 22, 2021, becoming legally binding for all nations that have agreed to it. The U.S. is not yet a signatory. From this day forward, signatory nations will be required to completely eliminate and forgo any and all nuclear weapons. According to International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), this treaty is “the beginning of the end of nuclear weapons.” It is up to us to be the people to pressure the government to sign the treaty. 


time or otherwise, financially able or otherwise, to claim their bodies or ashes. We also virtually attended the yearly memorial for those who died on Skad Row. Joining others from the Skad Row community, Catherine was able to share sweet memories of a number of people whom we have had the pleasure of knowing from the Hippie Kitchen. Events migrating to the internet allowed us the chance not only to attend the local Maryknoll commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the murder of church women in El Salvador, but we also were a part of a gathering of the Maryknoll community and friends around the world. 

We have continued to host our own in-home liturgy, broadcasted from our windows to join us in surrounding our Christmas tree. Matt Harper set up his keyboard in the bed of the truck, while others climbed on top of the vehicles to troll the ancient, and temporary, Yuletide carols as “Team House” rocked the night away indoors. After road tripping across the U.S.A., our new visitor, Meg Lyczak was released from her two-week quarantine just in time to join us for Christmas. Having always been Catholic Worker-curious, she is getting the chance to try out communal life after she left her work in a migrant shelter on the Mexico-Guatemala border due to the pandemic. Despite the unfortunate circumstances, we are glad she is here to test the waters with us during this challenging time. Keeping with our Christmas Eve traditions, housemate Maria Lopez pulled off a feast of chicken, tamales, fish, beans, and homemade salsas. After dinner, we gathered around the Christmas tree to open gifts from Santa and Santa’s little helper, Monty the dog. Monty, owned by Dr. Ken Hardiman and occasionally by Mary Ann O’Connor, wanted to spread some cheer to our LACF family with skillfully wrapped gifts, each complete with a little doggy gift tag. 

We woke Christmas morning to a pipe dream, and preparations should be made for a 4°C rise in global temperatures. At that point, or sooner, society will collapse as the oceans rise, soil dries, and total war envelopes the planet. The Climate Crisis will create another generation of refugees.

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**A HEARTFELT THANK-YOU**

To everyone who sent us items anonymously. We received many packages with various items enclosed but no indication of who sent it, so we cannot send a personal thank-you card. Please note that we **DO NOT** need any more socks. We had a huge donation of several thousands pairs that will keep us stocked for several months. However, we **DO** need disposable razors. Please send them to Hennacy House, 632 N. Brittania St., Los Angeles, CA 90033-1722. Thank you. Blessings.

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    - (323) 267-8789
  - Hospitality Kitchen (aka Hippie Kitchen)
    - 821 E. 6th St., Los Angeles, CA 90021
    - (213) 614-9615
- **ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY**
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  - (702) 647-0728 – [https://lvcw.org](https://lvcw.org)
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