

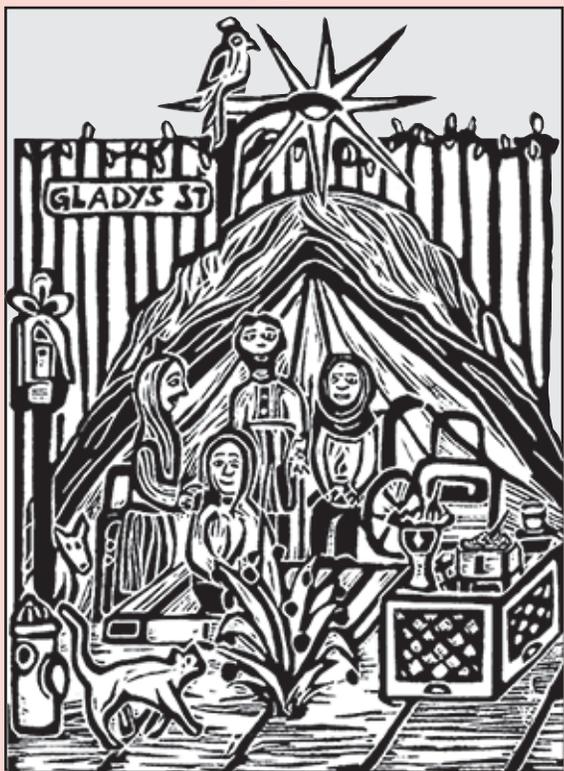
# A CATHOLIC AGITATOR

## CHRISTMAS APPEAL

### WE CANNOT DO THIS ALONE WE NEED YOUR MIRACLE IN THIS UN-MIRACULOUS TIME

“When I first landed on Skid Row, I loved eating here,” Chris says, looking longingly towards our COVID-19 closed Hippie Kitchen garden. “But, I’m glad I took my tent away from all this.” Gesturing at the worsening conditions around us, she pauses, “But I sure do miss your beans, and SALAD!” Her voice catches, “And your smiles. Every time I visited, your kindness and smiles made me feel welcomed and wanted, not like many places down here.” Domestic violence forced Chris to give

up stable housing six years ago, and only recently she connected to interim housing—a miracle during an un-miraculous time. We cannot meet all of the needs that arise on Skid Row alone, but we offer what we can—to-go containers, toiletries, love, and faithfulness—while praying for others to fill the many gaps our capacity cannot plug. Many have joined with us, but never enough. Looking toward 2021, we know we cannot do this alone, and so we ask and pray for your miracle in this un-miraculous time. Peace and blessings to all.



The Skid Row Nativity by Becky McIntyre

*The Los Angeles Catholic Worker Community*

WE ARE  
CONNECTED

## IMPORTANT, YET INTERDEPENDENT

By MATT HARPER

The Catholic Worker is part of a movement ecosystem that, at its best, is not only aware of its interdependence with other organized work, but committed to symbiosis. Like the Earth, each entity is tasked with locating the role, responsibilities, and function that it is uniquely built to meet, finding our niche in the interconnected efforts needed for a transformed, healthy, and vibrant world.

As adrienne maree brown reflects in *Emergent Strategy*, in a world where creatures that favor “isolated ferocity and alpha power” are going extinct, “collaborative life forms

continue to proliferate, survive, grow.” But though collaboration is deeply instinctual, getting there is not a process that happens easily. “There is an art to flocking,” she suggests, “staying separate enough not to crowd each other, aligned enough to maintain a shared direction, and cohesive enough to always move towards each other.”

That notion is at the heart of this *Agitator* edition. We believe the Los Angeles Catholic Worker has a unique and important role to play in the Los Angeles landscape, yes. But we are not fools to think we alone can meet all the needs that arise, not arrogant enough to suggest we do not have things to learn, nor ignorant to

the power of synergy. When we are connected, working in relation, our efforts are much more than just the sum of our individual parts.

So, what are some of the parts that others strategically play that deserve some notice, what are some of the sacred gifts in this sacred season? The following articles tell the story. Ω



*Matt Harper is a Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member and an editor of the Agitator.*

*The program will offer workshops on organizing and crisis response, training participants in first aid, mental health first aid, how to respond to situations of overdose, and other situations.*

## FINDING ALTERNATIVES TO POLICE

By BECKY McINTYRE

The Los Angeles Catholic Worker has long had a “do not call the police” policy at our downtown soup kitchen. Knowing the history our guests have with law enforcement, the almost guaranteed assurance that police will only escalate the situations we encounter, and our belief that relationships can solve problems better than threats, we have tried to imagine a world that resolves conflicts differently.

Similarly, *Alternatives to Policing* is a pilot project in Los Angeles that will be launched in 2021 through White People 4 Black Lives (WP4BL). Liz Sutton, an organizer with WP4BL, has been instrumental in the formation of this project. The goal of the project, she shares, is to get white people to stop calling the police and instead use neighborhood organizing to build a rapid response team for times of crisis. In addition to identifying where some of those skills already exist in neighborhoods, the program will offer workshops on organizing and crisis response, training participants in first aid, mental health first aid, how to respond to situations of overdose, and other situations. Equipped with these skills, individuals can return to their neighborhoods better able to meet some of the needs that arise.

This project was born out of a multi-racial organizing project called *CAT 911* (Community Action Teams) through the Chuco’s Justice Center. Liz and other organizers attended a conference about *CAT 911* a year and a half ago that set the tone for the *Alternatives to Policing* project. Liz

explained that the reason it is built as a separate project is because of the particular history and relationship that white people have with calling the police and for white people to be intentional about the race factor in policing. The hope is that people will go through this program and then plug into the *CAT 911* project in their respective neighborhoods.

Liz shared from her experience with de-escalation work as a social worker about how many folks end up getting arrested because they are not de-escalated properly by someone who is trained, thus increasing the large number of people incarcerated due to mental health issues. Tied in with her work on another project, *Alternatives to Incarceration*, she shared the ways in which she has personally seen how incarceration harms people and makes their lives harder, further exacerbating their mental health and substance abuse struggles due to a lack of treatment. “Treatment is not available because we put so much money into policing and incarceration. Being in jail makes people more traumatized and takes away more resources and opportunities,” she says. She went on to talk about the importance of the different approach of this project. “The answer is not to retrain cops. They did not go into their job to become mental health responders. You have to love this job to be good at it,” she shares. “The community can come out quicker than the police or an ambulance or a crisis response team, and in the community you know each others’ skills, you can do advocacy work together to make change,

and the relationships are there. You do better work and respond better to people you have relationships with. This is at the center of transformative justice. Just because harm happens does not mean we put people in jail; jail does not equal accountability. But it also does not mean that we do not expect people to be held accountable because harm is still happening,” she says.

“People think defunding the police means that people are going to run around and commit crimes, but that is not how people will act. It is imperative that we invest in communities so that people’s needs are met, and then much of the current crime will cease to exist. We need to redefine accountability, and there is no one clear-cut definition. It is case by case. If you have experienced harm, what you need to believe is that resolution will look different for each person. If you committed the harm you need to sit down with the person who experienced the harm and take responsibility and talk about it.” Liz and her work emphasizes the need to change the culture of calling 911 and instead invest in community care.

Many call 911 because they do not know a better alternative. As Maya Angelou offered, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then, when you know better, do better.” What a gift to have the chance to be a part of doing better. Ω



*Becky McIntyre is an extended Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member.*

## FIGHTING FOR TOMORROW'S SKID ROW

By MAGGIE MILLER

For the first time in my life, I am excited for Fall. As a devout endless summer kind of girl, I am rather shocked by this new anticipation for hot tea, soup, and curling up under heaps of blankets. But upon a bit of introspection, I think the underlying reason is the pure desire for the end of this dreadful year.

I have spent the majority of 2020 with my head down, honed in on daily tasks like repeatedly scooping beans into trays at the Hippy Kitchen, or alternatively at home lost in fantastical worlds on Netflix. And while I have been stuck trying to survive 2020, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning (DCP) has been looking ahead to 2040!

The Downtown Community Plan (DTLA 2040) is a complex document comprised of policies, plans, programs, and zoning codes that outline a vision for the redevelopment of downtown Los Angeles and immediate surrounding area. Once approved it will dictate the uses and styles of any future developments. The Community Plan update began back in 2014 with data gathering and now that the drafts have been released, this is a key moment for stakeholder feedback before plan adoption in 2021.

The DTLA 2040 plan touts its ability to “improve access to jobs, open space, services, and cultural resources; and provide housing for all income levels.” This is an idyllic vision for Los Angeles worth pausing Netflix for. I read these words and imagine more parks, bike lanes, public restrooms and hygiene stations, and most importantly, more no-income and deeply low-income housing for our friends on Skid Row.

However, I must remind myself that the individuals who drafted this plan do not spend their days at the corner of 6th St. and Gladys Ave. like I do. Rather, they sit blocks away, inundated by the loud, unrelenting voices of business interests. And where I see great potential to address the pressing needs of the Skid Row community, they may only see the allure of dollar signs and political clout.

Thankfully, stakeholders in the Skid Row community including members from Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD), Los Angeles Catholic Worker, Unity Coalition East Prevention Project, Inner City Law Center and others have united to form the SKID ROW NOW & 2040 coalition to ensure the city honors the voices of community members so often overlooked or outright rejected.

The first battle is getting heard at all, which is further exacerbated by the pandemic. Skid Row residents have been denied their own Neighborhood Council and without reliable access to computers or the internet, Skid Row residents cannot even access Department of City Planning meetings to provide their invaluable perspectives.

The next fight is getting the necessary language and programs like “No Net Loss of Affordable Housing,” “Anti-Displacement Protection,” and “Affordable Housing Financing,” to name a few, in the text of the DTLA 2040 plan. Though this design period is the most crucial part of the process,

this work does not end when the plan is passed. SKID ROW NOW & 2040 will continue to put pressure on city officials to hold them accountable.

It seems odd to me that the city is continuing with this process during the pandemic, especially given Skid Row’s primary stakeholders face endless barriers to participation. But it is a reminder that there is a future beyond 2020 worth fighting for! I am so grateful for the individuals who have remained grounded in their advocacy work, challenging the city’s use of the pandemic time to plan the decimation of Skid Row. And it is not too late for me to show my appreciation, to use the resources at my disposal to get educated on the issues, and to make my voice heard! Will you join us? E-mail us today at [info@lacatholicworker.org](mailto:info@lacatholicworker.org) ☪



Maggie Miller is a Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member.

## A SPECTRUM OF RESISTANCE

By MATT HARPER

For many, COVID-19 was just the next wave in what have been years-long attacks to their stability. But recognizing the potential scale of the crisis at hand, Kait Ziegler and Ground Game L.A. dared to get ambitious and bold. Ten months later and their effort, Mutual Aid Network L.A., has raised over \$400,000 and mobilized hundreds of volunteers to meet the immediate needs of Angelinos.

Now mutual aid is nothing new. Impacted communities have used this organic practice since the day systems and structures started throwing them away.

Though the Black Panther Party famously institutionalized it, mutual aid is something we all do. It does not require a title or organization. When we knock on a neighbor’s door because there are newspapers piled outside their home, or join a meal train for someone coming out of surgery, that is mutual aid. This deeply human act, to care for someone in our community regardless of whether or not we know them, is a radical act of resistance.

Ground Game L.A. was able to institutionalize mutual aid because they have been building localized grassroots community power for three years by investing in relationships, listening to the needs that exist in neighborhoods, and building a wide net of

relationships rooted in the lived realities of people’s lives.

Utilizing the knowledge and networks of organizations already on the ground doing aid work, Mutual Aid Network L.A. redistributed resources and supplies directly to those who knew what was needed. The L.A. Catholic Worker was able to provide cold bottled water to the Skid Row community during the hottest months in part because of this effort.

“Local to federal governments should be addressing needs mutual aid can’t,” Kait was clear to articulate. “Their responses pre- and intra-COVID have, on every level, been tragically inadequate and immoral. As they fail to provide the conditions that would keep people safe and cared for, our own mutual aid has to exist as an act of political resistance.”

And addressing this failure of local government is also part of Ground Game L.A.’s larger vision, too.

A government made of people funded by big money with no connections to the local community has long crafted policies and practices that communities had to resist. “Progressive movements are running the risk of burning ourselves out, always playing defense,” Meghan Choi of Ground Game reflected. So, Ground Game visioned how they could impact political structures in a way to work towards transformation.

They returned to those same grassroots organizations and offered to run their leaders for local office, knowing that only grounded and connected organizers know the real needs of their neighborhoods.

Seeking leaders from the communities, with expansive networks of relationships, Ground Game began to support the work to let communities represent themselves. Refusing to take corporate or non-individual donations, their logic reflected the idea that, if the community wants a person to represent them, they will help that person get elected.

And that has proven to be true. They recently mobilized 2,000 volunteers during COVID for a L.A. City Council election without accepting a cent from police unions, fossil fuel corporations or developers to beat an incumbent democrat. They introduced people to the true power we are not told we have access to, and they wielded it to impact their local communities.

And because these leaders are embedded and entrenched in organizing communities, they have deep practices of accountability with those who put them there. And, as organizations, like the Justice Collaborative, and truly progressive candidates, build networks of power, a new community of accountability and support is born.

And with this, the political sphere moves toward co-governing. Policy,

*Continued on page 6*

## THE GIFT OF HOUSING

By BECKY McINTYRE

After a rapid increase of homeless encampments in Las Vegas due to the onset of COVID-19, Las Vegas Catholic Worker Robert Majors, in tandem with other like-minded individuals in the area, decided to use his skilled background in building and design to respond to the situation. Majors and friends saw the idea of these portable Conestoga huts being built for unhoused folks in other regions so they took it and designed their own, adapting it to Las Vegas’s monsoon weather.

Coining their name due to their semblance to Conestoga wagons, the huts are 40-square-feet of living space that provide folks with a door, a window, protection from the elements, at a cost of about \$600 each to make. “What we accomplished did not take anything special. We had the resources and just did it—and anybody can do it,” says Robert.

“The whole process of construction to installation takes about six hours with a group of about ten volunteers, and our group has been dedicating our Fridays each week to the process. Thus far 23 huts have been built.



Completed Conestoga Huts

The project has grown organically the past few months alongside an increase of many other service providers administering additional services to the growing encampment, and it has become entirely community funded. Previously, police frequently raided the encampment; but the raids have become less frequent since the pandemic—and the police and politicians alike have come to admire the huts being installed.”

Robert acknowledged that building these huts is not nearly the final step in providing housing to folks, but rather an accessible medium to work through to meet an immediate need, especially during these times. “The huts change things for people because it is a safe place. Folks are still on the street experiencing daily troubles, but now they have a place to at least store their belongings—and ownership is a big thing with housing. People care for things more if they own it rather than renting.”

He stressed that the need to do something is so important—indicating that the perspective of personalism endorsed by the Catholic Worker movement invites us all to acknowledge the personal responsibility we each have to take care of each other using our individual skills and talents.

Robert shared how the huts demonstrate the hospitality of the Catholic Worker model: “It’s in everyone’s ability if they have a home to share that home with everyone. You can build someone a home for \$600, which is not super expensive. It is effective and gives someone a safe place to stay.

Housing is extremely important; it is a human right. It is a resource that we give to a privileged group of people, but for the poor and homeless,

*Continued on page 6*

Photo by Robert Majors

**CATHOLIC** DECEMBER 2020 Vol. 50 No.6  
**AGITATOR**

**Publisher:** Catherine Morris  
**Editors:** Mike Wisniewski, and Matt Harper,  
**Editors Emeritus:** Jeff Dietrich and Martha Lewis  
**Managing Editor:** Donald Nollar  
**Staff:** Rev. Elizabeth Griswold, Susan Dietrich, and Becky McIntyre  
 The *Catholic Agitator* (ISSN-0045-5970) is published bi-monthly  
 February, April, June, August, October, and December for \$1 per year by the  
**Los Angeles Catholic Worker, 632 N. Britannia St., Los Angeles, CA 90033-1722**  
 \*\*\*\*\*  
 Periodical Postage paid at Los Angeles, CA  
 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:  
 The *Catholic Agitator*, 632 N. Britannia St., Los Angeles, CA 90033-1722  
 The LACW is not a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and donations to the LACW are not  
 tax-exempt. Editorial communications, new subscriptions, and address changes to:  
**632 N. Britannia St., Los Angeles, CA 90033-1722**  
**323-267-8789 • <https://lacatholicworker.org> • [info@lacatholicworker.org](mailto:info@lacatholicworker.org)**

*It seems that “goodness and mercy” did indeed follow and continued to follow Murphy throughout her life and her illness. The power of prayer, solidarity, and community, did “make a way where there was no way.”*

# SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY



## MURPHY DAVIS - R.I.P. - March 5, 1948 - October 22, 2020

“Immediate sainthood” were the first words out of my wife Catherine’s mouth when we heard the news of Murphy Davis’s death. Murphy passed away on October 22, at home in hospice care with her family at her side. As you will read in the book review below, Murphy and her husband Ed Loring were both ordained Presbyterian ministers and co-founders of the Open Door Community, in Atlanta GA, a self-described “protestant Catholic Worker” serving the poor and advocating for the humanity of death row inmates. Through prayer, community, and solidarity with the homeless and death row inmates, she became for me, in her weakness and vulnerability, a symbol of Christ and a living saint. Murphy’s book, reviewed below, is a living testament to that witness of her struggle. The greatest gift that you could give to Murphy, to those who mourn her, and to yourselves, is to order and read her book, *Surely Goodness and Mercy*.

Photo courtesy of Open Door Community

**Book Review:**  
*Surely Goodness and Mercy:*  
*A Journey into Illness and Solidarity*  
By Murphy Davis  
Open Door Community Press,  
Baltimore, MD - Price \$15 - 174 pages

By JEFF DIETRICH

I was in federal prison in Los Angeles when I received a letter in 2016 saying that the Open Door Community in Atlanta was closing its doors after thirty-five years of service to the poor and resistance to the powers that be. It was particularly painful because at the time the L.A. Catholic Worker was a community of eleven people, more than half over the age of fifty and facing the same problems of old age and ill health as our friends, Murphy Davis and Ed Loring, at the Open Door were facing: the problem of death.

Murphy Davis’ book, *Surely Goodness and Mercy*, is about her thirty-five year “near death struggle” with cancer and is a must read for all of us who live in the shadow of death during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we attempt to navigate our path during a time of estrangement from friends and family, the limits and resources of human scientific authorities, the need for a human touch, and the necessity of masks, gloves, and quarantine, and further, as we contemplate our own possible death, and death of family and friends, we need Murphy’s story of death, community, prayer, crucifixion, and resurrection, now more than ever.

Murphy and her husband, Ed Loring, founded the Open Door Community in 1981. Giving up personal salaries, bank accounts, health insurance and retirement plans to live in community and in solidarity, serve the poor and minister to the needs of death row inmates. They became a powerhouse in the Atlanta area, serving daily meals, providing showers, clothing, medical and foot care, as well as staging protests and sit-ins for justice and lobbying for the poor.

In 1996, Murphy was diagnosed with Burkitt’s lymphoma and given her death sentence. “The doctor told me that I could reasonably expect to live another six to eighteen months. Another doctor told me to get my affairs in order.”

She writes: “In the days that followed I wondered why I was not tied in anxious frightened knots... But it was also the case that when death stalked me I recognized it. Death was a powerful presence I had met again and again in prisons and execution chambers, on the streets, and in the cat holes of the homeless, in the deadly decisions and unctuous proclamations of the bureaucrats of the

state and the church.... [But] “I clung to the assurance that closes Psalm 23, “Surely grace and mercy have run after me my whole life long.”

It seems that “goodness and mercy” did indeed follow and continued to follow Murphy throughout her life and her illness. The power of prayer, solidarity, and community did “make a way where there was no way.” “After two and a half years of tests, scans, radiation, surgeries, ER visits and numerous scars, I saw Dr. Sam Newcomb for my regular clinic visit. He walked into the examining room, all smiles and slapped my chart on the table and said, ‘I don’t know why we don’t just call you cured.’ Cured? Did he actually use that word? Once again, I remembered the death sentence I had been given two and a half years before...and wondered are you talking to me?”

But Murphy would not forget the many months of solitary suffering, suspended between the life of the living and that of God’s whispering dream world in which the all and important “labor of illness” takes place. “I found Kate Duff (author of *Alchemy of Illness*) a helpful guide in discerning. She wrote that one of the requirements of healing is to ‘reclaim one’s soul’... ‘soul retrieval is work. Our bodies bear memories that our minds have ignored and forgotten and it takes time to listen as they find space to come to consciousness’”(p.68).

After a serious and very prolonged illness, Murphy writes it is “God’s reset button.” These times of prolonged isolation that take us to the edge of death have a way of forcing us to examine our lives with more intensity. Helping us to come back to ourselves more fully formed, more fully human, more fully alive, and more acutely appreciative of the gift and mystery of life.

When Murphy’s husband Ed read an Op Ed piece in the local newspaper by Dr. Sam Newcomb, Murphy’s personal physician, about being “promoted” out of his position at Grady Hospital because of “funding issues,” the community threw themselves into a campaign to save Grady Hospital. For Murphy the campaign made, “The political personal, and the personal political.” It was a matter of “life and death” for her.

The community organized the “most diverse coalition since the Civil Rights struggle” of white, black, Asian, Latino, doctors, lawyers, professional, and civil rights activists, which Dr. Sam Newsome joined on the first day of their picket line in front of city hall. After a meeting with the Governor of Georgia, the coalition was ultimately successful

in saving Grady Hospital, the largest “safety net” hospital for the indigent poor in the region.

As a result of saving the hospital, Murphy had achieved her goal of living to see their daughter Hanna graduate from high school. It would be a great book if it ended right there. But it goes on. Because her body had been assaulted by the powers of death, her immune system, ravaged by radiation, poisoned by chemotherapy, and diminished by serial surgeries, Murphy developed fungal pneumonia, which was a primary killer of AIDS patients in the 1980s who suffered from diminished immune systems.

Murphy at this point was in desperate need of a bone marrow transplant as well, but it had to be postponed when she developed the fungal infection, which brought her to the point of death. In fact, Murphy was in such a state of delirium that her husband had to give his permission to administer the experimental drug, Posaconazole.

“I started on Posaconazole and began to get well: palpable providence. It just so happened that I was a patient of Amy’s (Dr. Amelia Langston) in a hospital where she was heading trials of a new life-saving drug without access to Posaconazole, or I surely would have died of fungal pneumonia.” Murphy believes that it was a “combination of prayer, providence, community, an experimental drug, and inscrutable mysterious mystery.”

Upon recovering from pneumonia, Murphy experienced a few years of good health in which she was able to resume much of her work with the Open Door community. Her monthly trips to Georgia’s death row were the most personally important, even more so since she had been living under a death sentence herself. And the support of the death row prisoners, offering bone marrow donations, prayers, and sympathy cards touched her deeply. Around this time Murphy and Ed lost two of their death row friends to execution. They had known Jack Alderman for 30 of his 34 years on death row. Till the end he maintained his innocence, forgiving the man who put him there and making a “useful life” out of his years in prison. “When I heard the news,” Murphy wrote, “I felt like I had been run over by a Mack truck.”

The following week they received news that another death row friend, Troy Davis, had also received an execution notice. Groups such as Amnesty International, the NAACP, and individuals such as Jimmy Carter, and Bishop Desmond Tutu, had advocated on his behalf. But three years later Troy was executed in a gruesome manner. Unable to find a

vein, the executioners cut a direct line into his aorta. The process, usually done only in emergencies and under anesthesia, took three hours; but it was successful. The deaths were a heavy blow to Murphy and the community, but an inevitability for those who choose to accompany friends on death row and live in the shadow of death.

In 2016 the Open Door Community sent out that fateful letter that they were closing. In the intervening years Murphy had multiple surgeries, the removal of her gall bladder, and a mastectomy, as well as more chemo and immune therapy.

Murphy and Ed had hoped to live out their lives in the community that they had founded, but as the leadership group grew older with attendant medical issues, and no younger members stepped forward to take their place, they reached the reluctant decision to sell the Open Door property.

Murphy and Ed, along with another community member, moved to Baltimore to be near their daughter Hanna, and their grandchild, Mi-chaela, and also to continue ministry in that city. In the meantime, death continued to pursue Murphy. Shortly after they arrived in Baltimore she had major surgery to remove a tumor on her scalp. Fearing that it might penetrate her skull, the surgeons had to dig deep. The surgery left a major wound that required a skin graft from Murphy’s thigh and extensive wound care.

The community’s work continues in Baltimore, serving two meals two days a week at a subway station. And the “labor of illness” continues for Murphy as well. She writes: “Until we can face death we do not begin to live fully and freely... So I am packing up, preparing, getting ready.”

Murphy Davis knows that through prayer, family, community, miracle, and medical science, she has “beaten the odds.”

Even as she continued to live fully, she was prepared to die. For all of us who live in the solitude of staying home and social distancing in the shadow of COVID-19 death, Murphy has done us a great service. She has given us a guidebook, a “preparedness manual,” if you will, for living fully in the face of death. Ω

**MURPHY DAVIS – ¡PRESENTE!**



Jeff Dietrich is editor emeritus of the Catholic Agitator, and Scholar-in-Residence, Affiliate Professor at Loyola Marymount University.

Continued on page 6

I am no stranger to the typical U.S. courtroom where the “law” is treated as God while justice takes a back seat; where even the most fundamental morals are ignored for the sake of upholding the system designed to maintain idolatry to the Pentagon; where witnesses are sworn in with the admonition “to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God,” and then essentially gagged in front of a jury of their peers through motions *In Limine*, denied the ability to speak the truth about why they did what they did, the horrors they are confronting and the spirituality behind their actions.

# KINGS BAY PLOWSHARES 7 SENTENCING UPDATE

By MIKE WISNIEWSKI

On October 15, Judge Lisa Godbey Wood, presiding over the trial and sentencing of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 in Brunswick, GA, sentenced Fr. Steve Kelly, S.J. to 33 months in federal prison, minus the two and a half years already served in Glynn County Jail, which equates to approximately another three months more. However, it is unclear if he will get credit for good behavior while in county jail. If he does, then it should count as time served.

Plus he is ordered to pay \$33,503.51 restitution for damage done, payable in monthly payments of no less than \$25 per month, no interest and no fines imposed. Plus a \$310 special court assessment due immediately. Plus three years supervised probation upon release from prison, including monthly DNA samples. Steve will be transferred to Seattle, WA for a previous action at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor.

On October 16, Kings Bay Plowshares 7 activist Patrick O’Neill, from the Fr. Charlie Mulholland Catholic Worker in Garner, N.C. was sentenced to 14 months in federal prison to run concurrently with another six month sentence for a misdemeanor charge. He also, like his two other codefendants (Fr. Steve Kelly and Elizabeth McAlister), has a restitution of \$33,603.51 that must be made in payments, no interest or fines, along with a \$310 special court assessment due immediately. Plus three years supervised probation upon release, including DNA samples. Patrick immediately appealed and will self-surrender to a prison near where he lives in 90 days.

On November 12, Carmen Trotta of the New York City Catholic Worker, was sentenced to 14 months in prison, with credit for time served (approximately 40 days) in two Georgia county jails following the action in April 2018, plus three years supervised probation, and \$33,503.51 restitution. He will self-surrender at a yet to be determined federal prison on December 12.

Also on November 12, Judge Wood sentenced Clare Grady from the Ithaca, N.Y. Catholic Worker, to 12 months and one day in prison, with credit for three months time served in two Georgia county jails following the action in April 2018, plus three years supervised probation, and \$33,503.51 restitution.

On November 13, Martha Hennessy, from the New York City Catholic Worker (granddaughter of Catholic Worker co-founder Dorothy Day), was sentenced to 10 months in prison, with credit for time served in two Georgia county jails following the action in April 2018, 3 years supervised probation, and \$33,503.51 restitution. She will self-surrender on December 13.

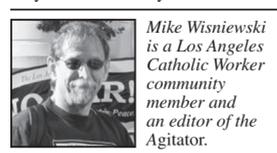
The remaining KB Plowshares activist, Mark Colville, of the Amistad Catholic Worker, in New Haven Connecticut, will be sentenced on December 18.



Mark Colville, Martha Hennessy, Clare Grady, Patrick O’Neill, Elizabeth McAlister, Fr. Steve Kelly, S.J., Carmen Trotta

system. Indeed, Fr. Steve refused to stand and approach the bench while sentencing was pronounced. He had to be escorted by U.S. marshals and a chair placed in front of the bench for him to be seated.

Although Judge Wood’s sentencing was far lower than anyone expected (maximum of 25 years), this is in no way just. Rather, it is a subversion and mockery of justice. Indeed, an absolute miscarriage of justice. The real and abominable crime is U.S. nuclear weapons and U.S. imperial policy to use them in a pre-emptive strike, destroying all life on the planet. As became clear in court, the certain use of the most diabolical weapons ever made in human history, will be carried out legally by U.S. imperial laws. Nuclear weapons, specifically Trident, is the real crime. Pure idolatry, blasphemy, and a crime against God and humanity. May God have mercy on US. Ω



Mike Wisniewski is a Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member and an editor of the Agitator.

## CHARACTER WITNESS STATEMENT FOR FR. STEVE KELLY, S.J.

Below is Guadalupe, California Catholic Worker Dennis Apele’s character witness statement for Fr. Steve Kelly, S.J. read prior to sentencing. Sentencing statements and character witness statements off for all other defendants can be read at their website: [kingsbayplowshares7.org](http://kingsbayplowshares7.org)

By DENNIS APELE

I was asked by Fr. Steve Kelly to be a character witness at his sentencing. While I am more than honored to do so, I want to be clear regarding my intent. I am not trying to affect the sentencing. My fantasy would be to have Fr. Steve’s

character precipitate a conversion among those present in the courtroom. As anyone who has been involved in this case is aware, if you believe that Steve Kelly is operating from deeply held convictions and a radical faith in the gospels, he is a prophet. If you don’t believe him, he is just an opinionated criminal. As someone who knows Steve well, I assure you that the first assessment is the truth and the second is false.

I am no stranger to the typical U.S. courtroom where the “law” is treated as God while justice takes a back seat; where even the most fundamental morals are ignored for the sake of upholding the system designed to maintain idolatry to the Pentagon; where witnesses are sworn in with the admonition “to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God” and then essentially gagged in front of a jury of their peers through motions *In Limine*, denied the ability to speak the truth about why they did what they did, the horrors they are confronting and the spirituality behind their actions. Prosecutors assume the role of protecting the military as if the most powerful military in the history of humankind were not able to protect itself.

Prosecutors assume the role of establishing the motives and character of those they designate as criminals and of whom they have not the slightest clue regarding their true character or motivations. Nor do they care to learn because, in our system, character and motives are irrelevant. The character of the accused is no more relevant to the purpose of the law than is the will of God. Entire careers and livelihoods are based solely on convictions and sentences. In what kind of system could a person with the spirituality, conviction and love of God’s children that Fr. Steve Kelly has, be dismissed as a criminal and left to languish for two and a half years in a county jail, while his basic message is expunged in the courtroom; the message that the most horrific and abominable weapons designed by human technology, weapons that have and will

visit unfathomable horrors on the children of God and likely exterminate God’s creation, are allowed to exist and proliferate while the most basic of reasonable detractors are gagged and put away. As Steve often reminds us, “When the nuclear holocaust comes, it will be completely legal.”

Fr. Steve Kelly is a man of deep faith who speaks truth to power and accepts the consequences. That is his character. Any other assessment of his character is false. I know this because I have known Steve for decades. He has spent more than 10 years of his life behind bars, giving up the warm embrace and camaraderie of loved ones as well as the comforts of a truly accessible easy life, to instead speak the truth that God sees nuclear weapons as an abomination. I defy anyone in this courtroom to make a case for a God who embraces weapons of indiscriminate destruction and human misery. It’s not complicated. We who accept nuclear weapons are wrong, wrong, wrong. Fr. Steve just says that with his life and body. That is his character. He has taken up his cross to follow Jesus, pure and simple. We dismiss that fact at our own peril.

So, the question before this court is, “What to do with Fr. Steve Kelly; what is the proper punishment? What shall we impose so that he and others of his ilk are deterred? How can we maintain the order and protect the military from those like Fr. Steve who may want to shine a light on a crime infinitely more serious than trespass and vandalism, namely the extermination of the human race?” The answer is, it doesn’t matter the punishment. Steve will accept it and continue his prophetic mission. The question ought not to be how to punish Steve but rather what is it going to take for those who have ears to hear but cannot hear, and eyes to see but cannot see, to give up their idolatry to weapons of mass destruction and turn toward the God of love; to once and for all beat their swords into plowshares and study war no more? My advice to those in

Continued on page 6

## PICK A SIDE

By NOLYMPICS L.A.

You cannot support both the Olympics and the movement for Black Lives. That was the central argument put forth at the “Pick a Side Town Hall,” hosted on October 21 by NOLYMPICS L.A.

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department (LASD) already constitute “one of the country’s deadliest police systems” with Black people disproportionately numbered among the victims. They are notorious for engaging in racial profiling, building fraudulent gang databases, using unethical predictive policing tactics, producing the nation’s largest incarcerated population, and harassing and violating the rights and wellbeing of unhoused people. The 2028 Olympics promise to expand both departments’ personnel, arsenal of military-grade weaponry, surveillance capacities, and authority.



NOLympics L.A. Protest

At a moment when the Black Lives Matter-led movement has successfully organized to pressure the City of L.A. to consider unprecedented police budget cuts, the 2028 Olympics threaten to prevent or undo any gains made towards reimaging public safety.

As Dr. Melina Abdullah from Black Lives Matter Los Angeles stated at the Town Hall, “the idea of bringing in more policing to maintain safety—we know that means safety for some at the expense of the rest of us. Safety for white affluent communities, for people who want to roll into our city. And it means less resources, and also more repression, for Black, Brown, unhoused, and poor folks.”

LAPD has plans to add 3,000 officers ahead of 2028, while L.A. County Sheriff Alex Villanueva has spoken of his department’s “projected future growth” for the Olympics. Like the sheriff, leaders of the L.A. Police Protective League (police union) have used the Olympics to argue that L.A. cannot afford to cut police budgets now. As NOLympics L.A.’s new “Pick a Side L.A.” website asserts, however, “the Olympics do not create an actual need for more police. They are used to justify the expansion of police.”

Abdullah explained: “When you

talk about putting 3,000 more officers on the streets, you are really talking about occupying Black communities.” Indeed, this was the experience of predominantly Black communities ahead of the Rio 2016 Olympics, when favelas were subjected to years-long occupations by Military Police units, and ahead of the London 2012 Olympics, when Black and Brown low-income boroughs were subjected to intensified restrictions and profiling. This kind of occupation, Abdullah continued, “is not about keeping people safe, but it is about repressing the potential for organizing, it is about repressing the potential for resistance, it is about repressing our radical imaginations.” In contrast, she added, “What keeps us safe is actually the expansion of resources, the diverting of dollars away from police. We should be cutting LAPD, not spending more on LAPD.”

Hamid Khan, from the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, also underscored the spatial nature of police expansion, expressing concern about “predictive policing and various types of methodologies that are deeming whole neighborhoods as sites of criminality.” Connecting policing to ongoing projects to displace and gentrify low-income communities of

## IN DEFENSE OF HOUSING

By MATT HARPER

Every day people are surviving systems that are set up to make their lives nearly impossible, and organizations like the L.A. Tenants’ Union (LATU) are part of visioning a different world with priorities of care over profits. And let’s imagine that future for a second, one with accountable and supportive neighborly relations, where housing is a human right and no one is beholden to a landlord.

Though I had heard of LATU years before, it was not until I received a phone call about a family about to be evicted just down the street from our Catholic Worker home that their work really entered my radar. Through no fault of their own, the Mesa’s found themselves at the whim of a landlord who was trying to evict multiple families from a number of his properties. With the skyrocketing property values in L.A., this landlord had decided these families were a hindrance towards his wealth.

It is hard to understand the stress of being a working class renter in a city with soaring housing costs if you are not one yourself. Our culture teaches us that if you have money you are allowed to do whatever you want.

When Loyola High School purchased and planned to demolish 100 units of rent controlled housing in preparation for a new sports complex, many alumnae saw this as permissible. But talking with Lydia, who was raising six children in the shadow of this ever-encroaching Jesuit institution, I heard a different story. “We have community and support here: neighbors, church, school, work. If we have to leave this house we will not be able to find, let alone afford, another place in L.A. again.”

As I spoke with Zephyr about their work with LATU, I found myself drawn into an understanding of being a renter I could not fathom. I was humbled when I thought about the courage of families who refuse to be treated like garbage. I found myself inspired when I thought about the strategy and coordination of those who organize these anti-eviction defense efforts. To challenge landlords, and police, and judges, and an entire system that has prioritized property over people is a courageous act of resistance that is happening daily around L.A. and, most importantly, is saving lives.

Evictions truly are violence. Regardless of whether they are illegal (like many that recently took place during the COVID eviction moratorium in California) or court ordered, they are forced displacement, stripping people of housing security, severing community connections and supports, aiding gentrification, and more.

And the most powerful deterrent to systems of dehumanization is organized people power. When we gather to witness, stand with, and remain firm in our convictions, these

Continued on page 6

## FUNDING HUMAN NEEDS

By MATT HARPER

Doctor Kristen Ochoa became connected to the L.A. Catholic Worker twenty years ago doing needle exchange in our free clinic. Shaped by the devastation of the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco, her work continues to be guided by the priority of harm reduction and the Works of Mercy. Thus her stumbling into the role of Medical Director for the Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) is a predictable unpredictability.

The ODR came to life in 2015 with the invitation to Los Angeles County to re-imagine their allegiance to incarceration. Thirty million dollars was directed into the ODR project to connect those being released from jail to housing and supportive services, yes, but more importantly, to work creatively with lawyers and judges to get people—who had never been considered—released.

Operating under the promise of, “We will take care of you,” ODR makes a (hopefully lifelong) commitment to support the medical, housing, and care needs of those released. With a bulk of their budget dedicated to their housing first commitment, they provide the structure for people to get stable, grounded, and in community without risk of being displaced of.

And it clearly works: 6,006 people have been diverted and, according to a Rand Study completed in 2019, only 14% have recidivated. But more numbers tell more of the story. The L.A. Sheriff Department spends approximately \$600 a day to house someone in Men’s Central Jail. That amounts to \$4,200 each week, and does not include: costs for court, transportation, booking, arrest, medication, or access to a social worker. ODR, on the other hand, spends \$100-150 a day.

When asked about the difference between LACW work and ODR work, Dr. Ochoa was very clear: “It is all the same work; it just comes in different forms. And, none of it is rocket science: see the person and give them the basics, even if the world is falling apart.”

But the ODR principles and practices are more than just organizationally useful. Imagine if society was grounded on the belief that: “All the people we take care of are no different from us. And none of us should have conditions set that inhibit us from getting what we deserve as human beings: care, love, and a home.”

Now, to be clear, I have significant skepticism of government offices. And the LACW has a long history of watching incredible work get swallowed up, bureaucratized, and fall out of accountability with the community it serves. But I also know these systems currently exist, they

Continued on page 6

Photo courtesy of KB Plowshares

Photo by NOLympics L.A.

# THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

By JOSH FLAUGHER

All four gospels in the New Testament start with an overture, inside which one finds the entire gospel to follow summarized in miniature. Matthew and Luke begin with parabolic overtures, giving us a parable (not a history) about the birth of Jesus. They do this because their gospels are quite different.

Therefore, in order to truly understand these stories we must understand the parables composed by Jesus, himself. We all agree, I assume, that Jesus (or the writers) fabricated his parables. I know no one who is prepared to argue that there really was a Good Samaritan or Prodigal Son; that Jesus was merely reporting what really happened.

Parables are truth-filled, even though they are not historically factual stories. They are about meaning. Therefore, the best way to understand these birth narratives is always to ask the question, "What do these stories mean?"

While the birth narratives should not be read as history, we must always read them as we read any story: within their (first century) historical context.

And when we take these birth narratives back and place them within their context, we find that the stories were just as relevant in the first century as they are today in the 21st century: relevant and poignant. You do not have to do a lot of soul searching or head scratching for the meaning. The birth narratives were anti-imperial messages in the first century and they remain anti-imperial messages today.

The anti-imperial framework of these gospels is apparent from the outset. In Matthew's birth narrative, Herod the Great, the Roman appointed King of the Jews, tries to murder the newborn Jesus by murdering every male child two years old and younger.

In Luke's version, readers are introduced to Jesus with first century titles that were reserved for the Roman Emperor: "The Son of God," "God From God," "God Incarnate," "Lord," "Savior," and "Prince of Peace." To use these imperial titles in reference to a poor, Jewish peasant from lower Galilee, would have been interpreted as they were intended: mocking rebukes of the Roman Empire.

For Christians in our society today,

among whom I include myself, the crucial question becomes: What does it mean for a Christian, in the time of the U.S. Empire, to celebrate Christmas as the story of the birth of a person who stood up against imperialism and was executed by the empire of his time (before, of course, being vindicated by God at Easter)? Such a story requires very serious consideration about whether the true meaning of Christmas, among other things, is to call Christians to take a stand against U.S. imperial foreign policies.

This is not about being anti-American, it is about being anti-imperial; because empires always seek to rule the world through violence, victory, and conquest, and the gospel or "good news" of Jesus calls for the opposite.

So what questions should we be asking ourselves when we consider celebrating this holiday?

Let us begin by considering the slogan or mantra of the Roman Empire (and every empire that has ever existed): peace through war, conquest and victory. Empires always suggest they seek peace, but a peace, they claim, requiring war, conquest, and victory. This is the bankrupted system that has pervaded human civilization for the last six thousand years.

But anyone can see that the vio-

lence of empire does not bring its promised "peace." Rather, it creates a cycle of war, lull, war, lull, war—with each war being more vicious and each lull shorter. The way to get peace on earth (and this is what the Christmas message is about—this is what the angels come down to proclaim in Luke) is through justice. When all of God's children receive a fair share of God's blessing, the earth will know peace. This is the good news of Christmas!

Hence, after six thousand years, why have we not learned from our mistakes? Is it because of the primordial sin of wealth and power? Power, as we know, intrinsically comes with pride, arrogance, and hubris. This is the intrinsic temptation of empire to us, of Satan to Jesus: "If you fall down and worship me I will give you all the kingdoms of the world."

Therefore, the struggle of history is the struggle against the hubris and arrogance of systems of oppression, domination, and empires—and that struggle will continue to go on until all of humanity accepts the alternative offered by the Christmas story: "Justice for All." This truly is the hope of the world.

Note: To be continued next issue. Ω

Josh Flaughner is a Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member.

## HARPER cont'd from p.2

which is often written by detached think tanks, corporate leaders, and isolated academics, now becomes the efforts of community organizations, "a million hand moving to get this done," as Meghan painted it. It is the people with everything to lose who should be deciding city budgets, infrastructure, and projects, no one else.

Maneuvering the political system is messy and one that is fraught with countless perils. But so is running an organization like the L.A. Catholic Worker or Ground Game L.A. But if we ever want to get a break from playing defense, we have to be a part of imagining and building the alternatives. And forming relationships with empowered community members to hold us and others accountable, we just might get closer, together. Ω



Matt Harper is a Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member and an editor of the Agitator.

## DIETRICH cont'd from p.3

To purchase a copy of Murphy's book, send a donation of \$15 per copy, or \$25 to also have a copy sent to someone in prison or a person unable to afford a copy to: OpenDoor Community Press, P.O. Box 10980, Baltimore, MD 21234-0980. E-mail: [opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net](mailto:opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net) or phone 404-290-2047. Ω

## McINTYRE cont'd from p.2

no matter how much money is being thrown at [the problem] we still are not reaching any dignified or humane solution to keep people in a safe place

It should not be as difficult as we make it. We have resources to make people safe and secure and protect themselves from the weather." Robert said that one of their biggest goals is to get everyone to start building a hut on their property to house someone from the street.

So, what do you think? Ω



Becky McIntyre is an extended Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member.

## HARPER (1) cont'd from p.5

structures of harm cannot simply do what they were designed to do. People cannot be ignored when they are united together.

But the anti-eviction defense work of LATU begins long before community members show up to stop the Sheriffs and landlords from physically stripping a person of the housing that keeps them safe. It begins with storytelling, the building of relationships and the fostering of trust, it includes the offering of mutual aid, tenant rights education, legal and court support, and much more. It tries to put all the pieces into place so that no one has to suffer the trauma of evictions, but stands ready to show up—en masse—

whenever community wellbeing is threatened.

"People—not LLCs, property management companies, landlords big or small, corporations, politicians, or state agency representatives—should be the ones in control of their own housing," Zephyr pointed out. The paltry income our society gives to workers' labor, to those relegated to being renters, to those who have to maneuver the crisis, abuse, and exploitation inherent to tenancy, should not be stolen by those who have found ways to get more than their fair share.

Anyone who has ever supported an eviction defense knows the stress and fear that accompanies this unknown. But, as Zephyr reminds me, "There is also a lot of beauty, and moments where you just have to laugh. We reflect on how fortunate we are to be with one another in this fight, to connect with tenants and their families and enter into their lives. To protect the right of dogs to sit in their favorite patch of sun, and humans to have a door to close behind them at night. To forge strong friendships and relationships. These are what will sustain our work, and

protect all of us in the long run." Ω

## APEL cont'd from p.4

this courtroom is to take an honest look at the true character of Fr. Steve Kelly and to try emulate it rather than defile it. Or don't. Ω



Dennis Apel, along with his wife Tensie Hernandez, are the founders of Beatitude House, the Catholic Worker

in Guadalupe, California near Vandenberg AFB on the central coast.

## NOLYMPICS L.A. cont'd from p.5

the Olympics and the movement for Black Lives. You need to pick a side. Learn more at [pickasidela.com](http://pickasidela.com) and [NOLYMPICSLA.com](http://NOLYMPICSLA.com). Ω

NOLYMPICS L.A. is a coalition of organizations across Los Angeles and California fighting displacement, police militarization, and the 2028 Olympics

## HARPER (2) cont'd from p.5

can do more good and less harm than they do, we need housing and diversion programs, and the LACW has neither the resources nor the capacity to do them. Therefore, as we work to abolish systems of harm and rebuild systems of care from the ground up, we root ourselves in the knowledge that we will know them by their fruits.

As we were closing our conversation, Dr. Ochoa reminded me: "The works of mercy fit in any line of work, if we just choose to center them." May we all take inspiration from the Meinrad Craighead image of Matthew 25 sitting above her desk: Come—inheriting the kingdom. We have the Creator's blessing. For I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, I was sick and you cared for me, naked and you clothed me, imprisoned and you came to me. Ω

### STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

TITLE OF PUBLICATION: Catholic Agitator		
PUBLICATION NO.: 0588630 FILING DATE: 09/13/2020		
FREQUENCY OF ISSUE: Bi-Monthly		
NO. OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: 6 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: \$1.00		
COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 632 N. Britannia St., Los Angeles, CA. 90033-1722		
COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF THE HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL BUSINESS OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER: 632 N. Britannia St., Los Angeles, CA. 90033-1722		
FULL NAMES AND COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OR PUBLISHER, EDITOR, AND MANAGING EDITOR: PUBLISHER: Catherine Morris - The Los Angeles Catholic Worker EDITORS: Mike Wisniewski and Matt Harper 632 N. Britannia St., Los Angeles, CA. 90033-1722		
MANAGING EDITOR: Donald Nollar, 632 N. Britannia St., Los Angeles, CA. 90033-1722		
OWNER: The Los Angeles Catholic Worker, 632 N. Britannia St., Los Angeles, CA. 90033-1722		
KNOWING BONDHOLDERS, MORTGAGEES, AND OTHER SECURITY HOLDERS Owning or Holding 1 percent or more of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or other securities: None		
ISSUE DATE FOR CIRCULATION DATA BELOW: AUGUST, 2019		
EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION	Average No. of copies Each issue During Preceding 12 months	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest Filing Date
TOTAL NO. OF COPIES PAID AND/OR REQUESTED CIRC.	7,500	7,500
Mail Subscription Outside-County	3,955	3,883
Mail Subscription In-County	2,560	2,535
Sales through dealers, carriers, vendors, etc.	0	0
Other Classes Mailed Through USPS	350	341
TOTAL PAID AND/OR REQUESTED CIRCULATION	6,865	6,759
FREE DISTRIBUTION by mail or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies	185	179
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION	7,050	6,938
COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED	450	562
RETURN FROM NEWS AGENTS	none	none
TOTAL	7,500	7,500
PERCENT REQUESTED CIRCULATION	97%	97%
I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete: Donald Nollar, Managing Editor		

# ON THE LINE

Photo courtesy of Dominican website

**SR. ARDETH PLATTE, O.P.**  
April 10, 1936 ~ Sept. 30, 2020



Sr. Ardeh Platte, Dominican nun and longtime anti-nuclear and Plowshares activist who spent more than 15 years in jails and prisons for her beliefs, and

who was the inspiration for a character in *Orange is the New Black*, the Netflix series about life in a women's prison, died in her sleep on Sept. 30 at the Dorothy Day House Catholic Worker in Washington, DC. She was 84 with no known medical issues.

Ardeth, along with two other Dominican nuns, Carol Gilbert (her longtime associate), and Jackie Hudson, were also highlighted in the 2006 documentary *Conviction*, about their Plowshares action at a missile silo in Colorado.

The three nuns were also members of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which in 2017 won a Nobel Peace Prize for its work.

Ardeth was born in Lansing, Michigan, and lived much of her life in that area. When she was 12, Ardeth was hospitalized with a life-threatening kidney infection and, she later told Sr. Carol, had an out-of-body experience. "She said, 'Oh, God, if you let me live, I will dedicate myself to you,'" Sister Carol recalled.

Ardeth was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 1999.

Ardeth certainly lived a life dedicated to serving God and humanity, along with the inner yearning to "Speak truth to power." We are grateful for Sr. Ardeth's prophetic life of resistance and activism. May she rest in peace and power.

**SR. ARDETH PLATTE—¡PRESENTE!**

## RESISTANCE UPDATE

The four people (Steve Dear, Br. Charlie Smith, Jim Haber, and Betsy Lamb) arrested at the close of the Pacific Life Community (PLC) Faith and Resistance Retreat on March 2, protesting the Trident nuclear weapons system on the federal side of the line at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor learned on October 7 that their cases were dismissed. —[nukeresister.org](http://nukeresister.org)

## IMMIGRANTS ABANDONED

With migrant deaths approaching levels not seen in years, humanitarian aid volunteers in southern Arizona say that the U.S. Border Patrol is using COVID-19 as a pretext to quietly dump hundreds of immigrants in one of the most remote and potentially dangerous communities in the Sonoran Desert, the Mexican border town of Sasabe.

Volunteers who have visited the dusty community of Sasabe recently say that they have witnessed U.S. immigration agents continually off-loading large groups of people throughout the day, overwhelming

the small town of 2,500 with only one small store and extremely limited immigration resources. There is no migrant shelter in the town, and the influence and power of organized crime in the area is well known.

Overall, 2020 has been a particularly deadly year for migrants attempting to cross the Sonoran Desert. As of October 14, the Pima County (Arizona) medical examiner's office has logged 181 cases of suspected migrant deaths recovered in its area of operations this year. The last time the office saw a higher total was in 2013, when 186 sets of human remains were recovered. The record for most human remains recovered in a single year was set in 2010, when 224 were found. With two and a half months yet to go in the year, advocates worry that 2020 could exceed that grim milestone.

—[theintercept.com](http://theintercept.com)

## BILLIONAIRE WEALTH MULTIPLYS

The collective wealth of the world's 2,189 billionaires has risen to \$10.2 trillion, an increase of nearly \$1.3 trillion in the past three years, according to a new report by the Swiss bank UBS and PricewaterhouseCoopers. The unprecedented surge in wealth takes place amidst a global pandemic that has killed more than 1.4 million people worldwide, including more than 260,000 in the United States alone.

The U.S. continues to have the largest concentration of billionaire wealth, accounting for 36 percent of

the world's total, or \$3.6 trillion.

For a household earning the average U.S. median income, it would take over 16 million years to accumulate \$1 trillion, not even enough to cover what has been collectively usurped from global society in less than three years.

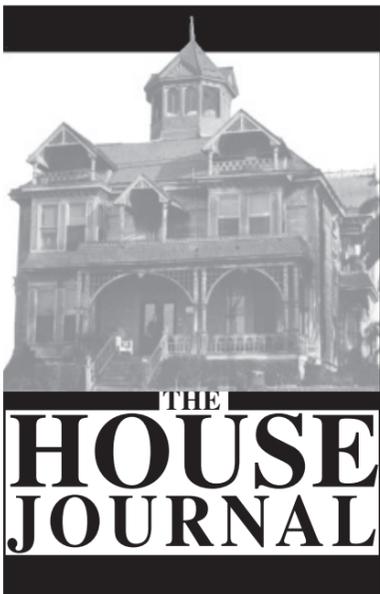
—[wsws.org](http://wsws.org)

## INTERESTING FACTS

- Hypothetical median income of full-time U.S. workers if income were distributed as evenly as it was in 1975: \$92,000
- Actual median income of full-time U.S. workers: \$50,000
- Percentage of U.S. population aged 18 to 29 who live with one or both parents: 52
- Percentage of unpaid taxes that are owed by the richest one percent of the U.S. population: 52
- Metric tons by which Trump's deregulatory policies will increase greenhouse-gas concentrations by 2035: 1,800,000,000
- Portion of utility companies worldwide that are expanding the production of gas or coal more quickly than renewables: 9/10
- Portion of U.S. population who have been exposed to unhealthy air this year as a result of wildfires: 1/7
- Number of the twenty largest wildfires in California's history that occurred this year: 5

—*Harpers Index December, 2020*

*On The Line* is compiled and edited by Mike Wisniewski.



As unbearably hot, late summer days quickly turn to crisp cool autumn, our insulated home (that is, from the virus—definitely not from the cold!) and community is given the opportunity to focus inward and celebrate the life around us.

Early October, second-generation Hippy Kitchen volunteer, **Carol Taunton** showed up at our house to drop off two beautiful bunt cakes. "This was supposed to be the 50th Anniversary Party weekend!" she reminded us. We ended up marking the long life of the LACW community in a much different way than we had originally planned this year, with just those of us in our hospitality house, separate from those of us running the kitchen who live in the apartment above the garage, and even more distant from all the extended community of volunteers, previous community

members, supporters, and the endless folks that make up the LACW family.

October brought us many more celebrations, which broke up the monotony and gave us good reason to appreciate and uplift those who are in our lives. October is a month of birthdays for this current iteration of people living in the Hennacy House!

Inspired by a grand English baking show, **Clare Bellefeuille-Rice** has spent her time on "team house" leavening her baking skills. With around two birthdays a week, she put those skills to the test, creating the most elegant birthday treat for each honoree. For **Matt Harper**, she designed a rainbow sherbet cheesecake, which we all enjoyed after running around the compound doing an LACW inspired scavenger hunt. Retired community member, **Jesse Lewis** requested his favorite, lemon meringue pie, which a few of us delivered to him and spent the morning visiting our community in Santa Clarita. For her birthday, **Susan Dietrich** had the best carrot cake that anyone in attendance had ever had, and had to dance late into the night on the back porch to burn off all the excess energy. **Demetrius Martin** went for a long hike for his birthday and was greeted with a double chocolate cake when he returned home. **Donald Nollar**, a real anchor for this community, was awarded a sweet potato pie.

We could not overlook the resident pastry chef's own birthday. **Becky McIntyre** attempted (and succeeded!) to make a fresh ginger cake for Clare's birthday, which we observed by playing lawn games out in the yard (with a miraculously acquired corn hole set).

We learned of a new October birthday, and a new addition to the LACW extended family. One of our most distant, dearest-friend of the community, **Elena Klett** from Germany had a

baby girl! We cannot wait for the day when they can visit, to have little **Sofie** running around Hennacy House!

As October wound down, we reach the apex of this honoring life season, and we began to build our Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) altar. As we dug through the four boxes of framed photographs, **Catherine Morris** told us the names and stories of each cherished friend, activist, community member, volunteer, and former guest of the Hippy Kitchen. We held our annual Dia de Muertos liturgy on the first Wednesday of November, presided (on Zoom) by **Fr. Chris Ponnet**, chaplain at L.A. County Hospital. Added to our altar this year (among too many) were: Hippy Kitchen volunteer **Sam Dumond**, former community member **Steve Fischer**, protestant Catholic Worker **Murphy Davis** of the Open Door Community in Baltimore, and bright, cheerful Hippy Kitchen friend **Johnnie Mae** - ¡PRESENTE!

In addition to the endless festivities, we also found small ways to appreciate our time together. Former community member, **Iris Vazquez-Howard** sent us a care package of pampering items that inspired an in-house spa day! We hung sheer curtains, lit candles, played spa music, and took turns massaging feet, wearing facemasks, and laughing at ourselves. We also made time to go on a socially distant hike as a community; the two "teams" met up at a trailhead and enjoyed the outdoors for an afternoon. Community member and resident theologian, **Josh Flaughter** threw a Halloween party; we all dressed up for an outdoor screening of *Young Frankenstein* and painted pumpkins. Rest assured those pumpkins did not go to waste, as they have been carved up by Clare and turned into pie for Thanksgiving! These calmer activities helped restore

the energy to keep us going through our work and play together.

The party did not stop as November rushed in. The birthday cakes continued with houseguest **Arnal Kennedy** and clinic manager **Ann Boden** sharing a birthday (german chocolate cake and chocolate roulade, respectively).

Like most others throughout this country, our Thanksgiving Day will look and feel a lot different this year. For us this means, instead of a meal for upwards of 75 people (community, friends from Skid Row, volunteers, etc.), we will have two socially distant meals on our compound. The kitchen team and a couple volunteers will be dining al fresco under the clothes lines as the 12 of us living in the house will be feasting in our newly painted, fall-colored dining room.

Along with all the joyous occasions, we had a few somber farewells. Our amazing graphic artist **Becky McIntyre** had to cut her stay with us a couple months short to return home to be with family. Also, longtime community member, **Sarah Fuller**, after spending a month with our sister house in Guadalupe, CA, is feeling called to try new things and share her talents elsewhere for some time. Their absence from our community will be felt daily, but we look forward to their hopeful returns, whenever that may be. We are also sustained by the knowledge that one-day, we will again be reunited with all those from our extensive LACW community. We look forward to joining together in future festivities with each of you soon!

May your holidays be safe, and may we all enjoy many blessings and see an end to this virus in the coming new year.

*House Journal* is written by Megan Ramsey.

# RAINY SEASON NEEDS

With the rainy season upon us, our friends on the street are in need of inexpensive lightweight disposable rain ponchos to protect themselves, and tarps to protect their meager possessions. If you can provide either or both, please send or deliver them to **632 N. Britannia St. L.A. 90033-1722.**

*We also need wood and adjustable metal canes (used or new), knit gloves, scarves, and hats.*

We, and our friends, would greatly appreciate your generosity. Thank you.

Also, thank you for the socks, but **PLEASE, DO NOT SEND SOCKS.**

Your generosity provided us with more than we can handle for awhile.

## SAVE THE DATES - MOST LIKELY A ZOOM EVENT

Pacific Life Community Faith & Resistance Retreat,

March 5–March 7, 2021, in Las Vegas.

For further info and to register contact: Las Vegas Catholic Worker - mail@lvcw.org

**STAND AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS and KILLER DRONES**

## THE LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC WORKER

The Los Angeles Catholic Worker, founded in 1970, is part of the international Catholic Worker Movement, which was founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933. We are a resistance community that operates a soup kitchen in Skid Row, a house of hospitality in Boyle Heights, and publishes this bi-monthly publication—the *Catholic Agitator*. Visit our website - <https://lacatholicworker.org>.



*In these difficult times, for a mere **dollar** you can give friends and family a gift with meaning—a one-year subscription to the subversive Catholic Agitator, along with a card announcing your gift.*

Recipient Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Donor Name:

Send to: *Catholic Agitator*, 632 N. Britannia St., L.A., CA 90033-1722

# AGITATE

## YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS

# CATHOLIC AGITATOR

DECEMBER 2020 Vol. 50/No. 6

## SISTER HOUSE NETWORK:

### LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC WORKER:

<https://lacatholicworker.org>

1. Ammon Hennacy House of Hospitality  
632 N. Britannia St., Los Angeles, CA 90033-1722  
(323) 267-8789
2. Hospitality Kitchen (aka Hippie Kitchen)  
821 E. 6th St., Los Angeles, CA 90021  
(213) 614-9615

### ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

500 W. VanBuren Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89106  
(702) 647-0728 <https://lvcw.org>

### ISAIAH HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

316 S. Cypress Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92701  
(714) 835-6304 <https://ocatholicworker.org>

### SADAKO SASAKI HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

1321 W. 38th St., Norfolk, VA 23508  
(757) 423-5420

### HOUSE OF GRACE CATHOLIC WORKER

1826 E. Lehigh Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19125  
(215) 426-0364

### KIERAN PRATHER HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

672 2nd Ave., San Bruno, CA 94066  
(650) 827-0706

<https://catholicworkerhospitalityhouse.org>

### BEATITUDE HOUSE

267 Campodonico Ave., Guadalupe, CA 93434-1501  
(805) 343-6322

### ST. BENEDICT HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

4022 N. Cheryl Ave., Fresno, CA 93705  
(559) 229-6410 <http://sbew.org> – lizaOSB@aol.com

### CASA COLIBRÌ CATHOLIC WORKER

Ocampo #2 Hostotipaquillo, Jalisco Mexico C.P. 46440  
<http://casacolibricw.com>  
011-52 - 386 - 744-5063 – casacolibricw@gmail.com

### AMANI HOUSE - NAIROBI, KENYA, AFRICA

[mdavidomondi@gmail.com](mailto:mdavidomondi@gmail.com)

### NEW JERSEY CATHOLIC WORKER

9 Caldwell Pl. #3, Elizabeth, NJ 07201  
NJCW@riseup.net – (323) 704-9960

### NEW ORLEANS CATHOLIC WORKER

1910 Constance St., New Orleans, LA 70130  
(504) 457-8062 – nocw@yahoo.com  
<https://neworleanscatholicworker.weebly.com>

### VENICE CATHOLIC WORKER

<https://venicecatholicworker.org>