

CATHOLIC **AGITATOR**

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SAINT
DOROTHY
DAY
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“Dove in Flight” by Ben Borden

— NO —
TO CANONIZATION

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THE FIGURE OF DOROTHY DAY HAS OFTEN BEEN HELD UP AS AN ICON TO BE VENERATED RATHER THAN A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE TO BE FOLLOWED

SAINT
DOROTHY
DAY

In the last years of her life, when I knew her, Dorothy Day was often irritated by the personality cult that was already growing up around her.

NO
TO CANONIZATION

By BRIAN TERRELL

In September, 2015, Pope Francis spoke to the assembled United States Congress: "In these times when social concerns are so important, I cannot fail to mention the Servant of God Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker movement. Her social activism, passion for justice and the cause of the oppressed, were inspired by the Gospel, her faith, and the example of the saints." Since that day the process toward having Dorothy Day canonized, officially declared a saint by the Church, that began 15 years earlier has received much public attention.

Many among those who knew Dorothy and members of the Catholic Worker movement she and Peter Maurin founded welcome this attention and support the work of the "Dorothy Day Guild" toward her canonization, but not all. While articles sometimes mention that there are some in the movement who are ambivalent or even opposed to the Church naming Dorothy a saint, those reservations are usually not articulated. It has largely been left a mystery, how Catholics who knew her personally or who came later and dedicated their lives to the movement she co-founded might not be enthusiastically in favor of having her sanctity officially recognized by the Vatican. By listing some of those reservations I do not intend to argue with good friends who do not share them or to cast aspersions on their good intentions, nor do I wish to derail or even to influence the process, even if I could. I write this in the spirit of "clarification of thought" that Peter and Dorothy called an essential facet of the Catholic Worker, and I hope that it is not a cause for offense.

In the last years of her life, when I knew her, Dorothy Day was often irritated by the personality cult that was already growing up around her. The admiration of strangers was not a balm to her, to say the least. "Why do they want to talk with me?" she sometimes complained about the well-wishers she attracted. She was "just an old woman who lives upstairs," she said. If these admirers were not motivated by idle curiosity but were truly interested in the work and vision of the Catholic Worker, Dorothy reasoned, they would be more interested in talking with the young people who were making the soup, planting the garden, putting out the newspaper, walking the picket line, or going to jail, than with her. She could be more gracious, some-



"That's the way people try to dismiss you," Dorothy told a reporter for The Chicago Tribune in 1977. "If you're a saint, then you must be impractical and utopian, and nobody has to pay any attention to you. That kind of talk makes me sick."

times, responding to the angry abuse of demented or intoxicated guests at our table than to the pious adulation of the good people who read in a magazine that she was a "living saint" and wanted to get a look at her while they still could. In the former she recognized "Christ in His most distressing disguise" deserving of her patience and deference. The latter were just wasting her time and their own.

"That's the way people try to dismiss you," Dorothy told a reporter for *The Chicago Tribune* in 1977. "If you're a saint, then you must be impractical and utopian, and nobody has to pay any attention to you. That kind of talk makes me sick." For someone who did not want to be regarded as a saint, though, Dorothy's own devotion to the saints was

boundless and she herself never dismissed them. She kept the saints in her thoughts, prayers, conversations and writings and they were ever present to her as exemplars, intercessors, comrades and friends.

The parishes I attended as a child, the Catholic high school I graduated from, and the Catholic college I dropped out of, all taught me to pray to and honor and venerate the saints. It was only at the Catholic Worker, though, that the option of trying to be like them or to do as they did was even raised. This was a shocking new perception to me as a young man. The devotion to the saints that imbued the house was not so much one of overbearing piety as of easy familiarity. The icons and other images of the saints on the walls were interspersed at random with photos of friends and community members. One vivid memory of walking into St. Joseph House for the first time is seeing a crucifix flanked by the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on one side and a poster of Che Guevara on the other.

The list of saints that Dorothy revered and emulated was not limited to those who had been officially recognized by the ecclesial institution through a canonical process. Some of those included in her calendar of saints were unknown or even disapproved of by that establishment. We might even include the saintly Father Zossima amongst her circle of holy men and women, though he was not Catholic and was a fictional character in Dostoyevsky's great novel *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Historically, the Church of Rome did not canonize anybody until the tenth century and it was another couple hundred of years before it established even a limited monopoly on the practice. Before this, the naming of saints was a homegrown affair. Sometimes a bishop would proclaim a local deceased person's sanctity and sometimes that saint's reputation spread to other places. Other times a saint was named by a popular acclamation of the laity that left the clergy no choice but to join in. None of the apostles or evangelists nor the Roman martyrs were canonized. Not St. Nicholas, not St. Patrick, not St. Martin of Tours, not the Blessed Mother and not St. Joseph, whom Dorothy "picketed" to pay the bills—not one of these is a canonized saint.

Sometimes, the Church has gone back in its files to make an old saint official. Dorothy's beloved Saint

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Photo by Bob Fitch

THE CANONIZATION PROCESS ITSELF IS A TOP DOWN PATRIARCHAL, STULTIFYING, EXPENSIVE, MISOGYNOUS, AND ARCANE ACCRETION ON THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

**BILL HOARD
1945–2021 R.I.P.**

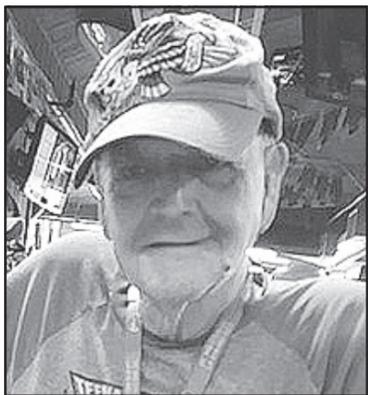


Photo by Alex Adesso

By JEFF DIETRICH

Bill Hoard has always claimed that he was the first person to eat in our soup kitchen, so that means that Bill has been a part of our lives for more than 50 years. I first met Bill when, after the 1971 Sylmar earthquake, he lost his job as an orderly at the VA Hospital. He was at work at the time and had to hide under a sink to avoid collapsing debris, and rescue workers had to dig him out of the rubble.

That was the last steady job that Bill had. Mostly he “walked papers,” walking door-to-door attaching handbills and advertising supplements to peoples’ mailboxes with rubber bands. At the time, Bill lived in the Elysian Park area of L.A. and ate in our soup kitchen.

In 1973 Bill joined our blood strike campaign against the Blood Bank for a higher amount for Skid Row blood donors, who at that time received five dollars for a pint of blood that the blood banks sold to hospitals for

sixty dollars. We strikers all ate at the soup kitchen and slept in the kitchen basement. We did this for three months—with mixed results.

Bill was born in Northern California. When he was very young, his parents died in a car accident. He then lived with his grandparents until they also died, at which time he was sent to Boys Republic. When he turned 18 and “aged out” of Boys Republic, he joined the U.S. Navy.

Many years later, when we tried to help him apply for veterans’ benefits, we were told that he had only been in the Navy for one month; but Bill told us that he was in the Navy for two years and worked for Naval intelligence. His assignment was to pose as a new recruit to investigate allegations of abuse at various boot camps.

Sometime in the 90s he came to the garden complaining of severe headaches. So, Catherine brought him home and we put him in a room on the first floor. Late that night Catherine woke saying she heard a noise. We went downstairs and found Bill passed out on the floor in a pool of blood and vomit. We called an ambulance and rushed him to the hospital. He was in a coma for fifty days. In fact, one day when we visited him we encountered our friend and hospital chaplain Fr. Chris as he was coming out of Bill’s room saying, “I just gave him the Last Rites.”

When he finally came out of the coma, the doctor told me that he had a rare disease that caused a weakening of the blood vessels in the brain and that he could go at any moment from a brain hemorrhage. Bill spent the last twenty-five years in various nursing homes. Before the heart attack he suffered five years ago, we would bring him to the kitchen every Saturday to sit and chat with other

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**SR. DIANNA
ORTIZ
1958–2021 R.I.P.**



By MIKE WISNIEWSKI

Sister Dianna Ortiz, an Ursuline nun from New Mexico, joined the Heavenly Cloud of Witnesses on February 19, 2021, in Washington, D.C., after a short battle with cancer at age 62.

Sr. Dianna is remembered for her steadfast work on behalf of torture victims, after she herself was brutally abducted, raped, and tortured at the hands of U.S.-backed Guatemalan security forces in 1989. Sr. Dianna was committed to working tirelessly for human rights, peace, justice, and human dignity throughout her life.

From an early age she wanted to become a nun and joined the Ursulines in 1978. She taught in Catholic schools in Kentucky before moving to Guatemala in 1987, at age 28, to work with indigenous Mayan children. Dianna explained that she wanted “to teach young indigenous children to read and write...and to understand the Bible in their culture.”

It was perilous work at a teacher-

ous time. Guatemala was ravaged by decades of civil war that followed a 1954 C.I.A.-backed coup. Throughout the following decades U.S.-backed right-wing military dictatorships perpetrated genocidal violence against the nation’s Mayan population.

By early 1989 Ortiz was receiving threatening letters warning her to leave Guatemala. She eventually did depart to the Ursuline motherhouse in Kentucky. But only for a short period, as she had a great love for the Guatemalans and returned that September.

In October, she again began receiving death threats. For her safety, Dianna decided to seek refuge at a convent and religious retreat center 170 miles away. However, on November 2, her life was forever changed. As she sat reading in a garden, two men approached from behind and abducted her at gunpoint. They forced her onto a bus, then into a police car where they blindfolded her and drove a long distance. When they finally came to the intended building, they led her to a dark cell where they accused her of being a guerrilla and began interrogating her. For every answer she gave them, they burned her back and chest with cigarettes. Afterwards, they repeatedly gang-raped her. This and other vile and heinous treatment, with a U.S. agent present, lasted for several days before she escaped.

After returning to New Mexico and many years of recovery, she was influential in uncovering the U.S. role in her own kidnapping and torture, as well as the disappearances of hundreds of thousands of Guatemalans during the country’s 36-year civil war.

In the 1990s, Sr. Dianna served as an organizer for the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission, and went on to found and serve as the executive

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Benedict, for example, died in 543 CE and was long revered as a saint before he was finally canonized in the year 1220. The visionary St. Hildegard of Bingen lived until 1179 and from the time of her death, people called her a saint. Even though countless churches, monasteries and baby girls were named for St. Hildegard the world over, she was not canonized until Pope Benedict XVI did the honors in 2012. With few exceptions, though, any person that the Church calls a saint who lived in the first millennium and some who came after, were recognized by a process other than canonization.

“In all history popes and bishops and father abbots seem to have been blind and power loving and greedy. I never expected leadership from them. It is the saints that keep appearing all through history who keep things going,” Dorothy said. She did not look to the popes and bishops to tell her who is a saint and she did not need them to instruct her concerning from whom to seek intercession. One did not need to be a Catholic, or even a Christian, to be held up by her for veneration: “There is no public figure who has more conformed his life to the life of Jesus Christ than Gandhi,” Dorothy wrote in her column when he died in 1948. “There is no man who has carried about him more consistently the aura of divized humanity, who has added his sacrifice to the sacrifice of Christ, whose life has had a more fitting end than that of Gandhi.” Preempting any such proclamation that might have come (but of course, did not come) from Pope Pius XII, Dorothy took that authority upon herself as one of the faithful to announce, “Truly he is one of those who has

added his own sufferings to those of Christ, whose sacrifice and martyrdom will forever be offered to the Eternal Father as compensating for those things lacking in the Passion of Christ. In him we have a new intercessor with Christ; a modern Francis, a pacifist martyr.”

In her early autobiography recounting her conversion, *From Union Square to Rome*, Dorothy justified her belief that labor organizers struck down in their defense of poor working people, even those who were nonbelievers, are martyrs who died for Christ. “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,” she quoted Jesus. She also cited novelist François Mauriac’s assurance, “What glorious hope! There are those who will discover that their neighbor is Jesus himself, although they belong to the mass of those who do not know Christ or who have forgotten Him.... It is impossible for any one of those who have real charity

in his heart not to serve Christ. Even some of those who think that they hate Him have consecrated their lives to Him.” Dorothy regarded the places where these radical saints were murdered by the agents of capitalism, “places like Everett, Ludlow, Bisbee, South Chicago, Imperial Valley, Elaine, Arkansas, and all other places where they have suffered and died” as holy ground. “This,” she said even as a Catholic, “I still firmly believe.”

In his book *Making Saints*, Kenneth Woodward describes in detail how the Vatican’s Congregation for the Causes of Saints goes about the drawn-out procedure of canonization and he suggests that perhaps Dorothy is too good for that process! I agree with him, but this is beside the point. This is not about Dorothy Day—the canonization process itself is a top-down patriarchal, stultifying, expensive, misogynous, and arcane accretion on the Catholic tradition

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**THE COVER
ART**

By UZOAMAKA MADUKA

When I think of Ben Borden’s cover artwork, I think of the embedded command that concludes the Nicene Creed—“Look forward to the life of the world to come.” This command imparts, among many things, an essential insight: that even as secular systems and society breaks down, or fatal fissures seem to emerge, there exists a kernel of radicality, a sacred kernel, which is itself the hint or trace of the world to come.

We can only perceive this trace by and through patience. Patience, which is opposed to despair, because it is the helpmeet of hope and belief. The truly radical action is actually sitting with the breaking, patiently attending to the image of the future, which reveals itself as the present world falls away.

That is the tension of activism in the Catholic tradition—creating the future we also have to wait for, while not allowing impatience or anxiety to take over and cause us to abandon our acts of mercy, nor to rush them artificially or judge their efficacy on worldly terms. Is anything happening when it feels like nothing is happening? Yes. Just wait, be patient, and keep attending - however you are called to do so. Ω



Uzoamaka Maduka is a friend of the Los Angeles Catholic Worker.

Photo courtesy of Pax Christi USA

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PRINCIPALITIES IN PARTICULAR

Book Review:

Principalities In Particular: A Practical Theology of the Powers That Be
By Bill Wylie-Kellerman
Fortress Press, 2017, 314 pages, \$29.

By MIKE WISNIEWSKI

If you have studied, as I have, the Bible, William Stringfellow, Walter Wink, Jacques Ellul, and Daniel Berrigan, then you will be exceptionally enthusiastic and comfortable reading *Principalities in Particular*. Bill Wylie-Kellerman, longtime justice and peace activist associated with the Detroit Catholic Worker, an author of many articles and four books, and a recently retired United Methodist minister in inner city Detroit, studied under Stringfellow and Wink, and to a large extent studied Ellul and corresponded with and was mentored by Berrigan.

If you have yet to read any or much of the above, then this book will certainly whet your appetite and wholly inspire you to study further and obtain a deep(er) understanding of the principalities and powers at work in the U.S. Empire, and “what constitutes a true spiritual threat to life” (Forward xvi).

St. Paul, in his Letter to the Ephesians, wrote, “For our struggle is not against enemies of flesh and blood, but with principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens” (Eph. 6:12). It is with these unseen spiritual principalities and powers, angels—both fallen or failed at their station, and those saved—that seek to (and always do in some manner) control matters in human life that Wylie-Kellerman names and keenly describes in various places and circumstances, including within our personal and family life, all institutions—including the church, the government, military, business, economy, policies, ideologies, assorted movements, gatherings, sports, indeed everything that exists in our milieu in life. There are angels for each city, state, nation, and each one of us that live on this planet. It is a truly fascinating study.

The book covers certain people and events over the past fifty years, beginning with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s profound and prophetic speech against the Vietnam War, and “naming the reigning ‘triplets,’ the dominating powers, of U.S. culture—racism, militarism, and extreme materialism” (Introduction xxix). It also involves people and events up to 2017 inclusive, including Trump’s rise to power.

Wylie-Kellerman states, “This book raises a series of questions: Can an understanding of the principalities and powers serve concretely the works of ministry and movement ethics? Can such a reading of the biblical texts edify our political engagements—or even vice versa? Can it help us see the invisible dimension of power that forms us and drags us along, often helpless, in its spiritual wake? Can such a reading of the times and the text enable a resistance that is formed, discerning, and effectively faithful? Could it facilitate transformation in ourselves and even this bizarrely wayward world? I practically pray, yes” (Introduction xxx). Stating further, “In fact, this book is a lived exploration of those questions and that prayer. It gathers up, each in its historical moment,

some of my own published articles naming diverse principalities and the struggles to resist, rebuke, and transform them” (Introduction xxxi).

He deals with issues, events, situations, and the people involved and victimized by evil present in various injustices like racism, white supremacy and slavery, war and weapons of war and the resistance against them, economic injustice, drugs, drug dealers, and drug abuse, healing and hospital ministry, social media, families, domestic violence, church and congregational issues, theology and theologians, various disastrous policies in Detroit, and elsewhere, and the resistance efforts against them, labor unions and related labor issues, corporations, law and government, environmental disasters, hurricanes, the surveillance state, public education, neighborhoods, and much more.

In relation to these he states, “Proximate to the discernment of signs is the discernment of spirits. This gift enables the people of God to distinguish and recognize, identify and expose, report and rebuke the power of death incarnate in nations and institutions or other creatures, or possessing persons, while they also affirm the Word of God incarnate in all life, exemplified preeminently in Jesus Christ.” Further asserting, “This gift exposes and rebukes idolatry. This is the gift which confounds and undoes blasphemy. Similar to the discernment of signs, the discernment of spirits is inherently political while in practice it has specifically to do with pastoral care, with healing, with the nurture of human life, and with the fulfillment of all life” (3).

The early chapters enlighten the reader about his mentors, Stringfellow, Ellul, and Wink, who propelled the theological discussion of the principalities and powers and how and why many of them fell from grace. Wylie-Kellerman lists some of his mentors’ works and the impact they had on the discussion, quoting them extensively on various topics, and he also describes his personal relationship with them (mentors) and how they and their work impacted his life, and the theological sphere. He also highlights Dan Berrigan in another chapter and their discussions that touched on death and resurrection, war, nuclear weapons, and acts of resistance—and those involved. He then begins the principalities and powers discussion with the two biblical creation stories and opposing imperial creation mythologies, as well as Jesus and the cross and its power that disarmed the principalities and powers. From there within each of the remaining chapters he takes the reader on a journey in time, locations, and situations that detail the different powers, good and bad, and their effect on life’s various situations.

He judiciously explains that, “A recurrent stumbling block to comprehending the principalities exists for many people... Human beings are reluctant to acknowledge institutions—or any of the other principalities—as creatures having their own existence, personality, and mode of life. Yet the Bible consistently speaks of the principalities as creatures” (45).

In the chapter describing Church (*eklesia*) as a Power, Wylie-Kellerman deals with the current state of affairs as he writes, “To be *eklesia*, to be church as exemplary power in this present moment is to be freed of

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MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE CATHOLIC WORKER

By ANDRÉS GIESEMANN

At the (hopefully small) risk of oversimplifying, I have come to understand “growing up” as the setting of expectations for my own behavior and the finding of ways to live up to them. A brief survey of official reports of depression and suicide rates, especially among young people, reveals a worrying upward trend, suggesting there are increasingly debilitating obstacles to reaching stable maturity.

At age 22, I have seen more than I would care to of the reality reflected by the official figures, both in my own experience and those of my peers, but I believe that, through my two-months-and-counting with the Los Angeles Catholic Worker, I have discovered that the need for a lived acknowledgement of the interdependence of all life lies at the heart of both the problem and its solution.

My efforts to form meaningful expectations for myself, a necessary first step to maturity, were hindered by the contradictory nature of the stated ideals handed to me, and the implicit expectations that I internalized from a society based on competitive self-interest. My time in Catholic high school meant that I heard endlessly of the virtues of selfless behavior and was expected to enact them in volunteer work and academic integrity, yet this behavior always felt instrumental: in a college prep school, students naturally come to see activities as valuable insofar as they are attractive to admissions departments.

I have experienced much of college as a continuation of these disheartening contradictions. Again I was presented with lofty ideals of holistic education, that of the liberatory potential of truth, and I again encountered a shrewder logic running counter to the advertised narrative.

As a student in a professional school at a liberal arts college, I found that fellow students viewed most of the

general education as useless or a harmful impediment to their goal: becoming hireable by getting a professional degree. This aim could not keep sustaining me; there was something hollow about the end goal of material independence and “fulfilling” work in the midst of a whirlwind of news about the declining state of the world and those living in it.

But that dissatisfaction was hard not to misinterpret as some personal failing or deficiency inherent to me and anyone else who could not get with the program. The expectations are impossible for so many to fulfill because they are irreconcilable with a seemingly forgotten human need to support and be supported that cannot end at the arbitrary boundaries of family or nation.

My time with the L.A. Catholic Worker has radically challenged this hollow version of life, in which the outward appearance of virtue trumps its diligent practice, and has given me an alternative. It is tremendously relieving to be in a community where hard work, kindness, modesty and dependability are expected for the sole reason that they make life possible and worthwhile, where the concern is less with appearance than it is with action, and where the duty for moral independence arises naturally from lived acknowledgement of a fundamental interdependence and interconnectedness.

I aim to preserve the beautiful example that I have witnessed here as a standard by which to live my own life and from which to demand more from a dangerously amoral world. Ω



Andrés Giesemann is a Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member.

FOXES & DENS, BIRDS & NESTS, THE SON OF MAN, AND AMMON

BY KALEB HAVENS

Ammon Hennacy is a big part of why I have stuck with the Catholic Worker movement. I first picked up *The Book of Ammon* because I heard the Hennacy House’s namesake was an Atheist (not exactly, though, I later found out). Not being Catholic myself, it was very disorienting when I was first plunged headfirst into the unfamiliar trappings of Catholicism and Catholic Worker-isms all at once. But there had always been Atheist volunteers at the Hippie Kitchen, like Polish Paul. And Micah moved in shortly after I transitioned from casual Saturday volunteer (John Perez’s lackey a few hours a week), to full-time Hennacy House resident via the famous summer internship. There was rockstar Mennonite Sarah Fuller, and the ineffable Jed Poole, both my upperclassmen mentors/LACW core community members for the better part of a decade, and neither had been even a little bit Catholic.

Not that there is anything wrong with being Catholic; most Catholic Worker work is done by Catholics, and I am sure most people reading

this could find their names in their diocesan baptismal registry. I would not have had the opportunity to do this work if it were not for Jeff and Catherine, and all the other Catholic CWs I have learned from. But having other people around with more aggressive anti-theist, or at least less “Catholic” worldviews than mine, made me feel that the religious soup in which I brined was eclectic enough for me to blend in. The taste of my recovering-Evangelical-quasi-mystic-Buddhist-Jedi-“agnostic adjacent”-“sometimes follower of Christ’s teachings” mantra/code/spirituality/soul thingy did not stand out *too* much in our flavor palate. It seemed like I added nuance and balance instead of being an odd outlier. As one of the most prominent (sometimes) non-Catholic Catholic Workers, Ammon Hennacy, gave me a template, a precedent for how I could bring my talents and passion to the work of liberation in the Catholic Worker tradition even if I do not regularly partake in Sacraments or attend Mass. (For more on Ammon, see our interview with his friend Anna

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Yes, change is inevitable. However, change is driven by some who most benefit at the expense of the many who do not.

THE DISPLACEMENT OF BOYLE HEIGHTS

By MATT HARPER

When we talk about gentrification in Los Angeles, we cannot not talk about Boyle Heights. Yet when an L.A. historian suggested that this was simply "part of a longer trajectory of change...that began 120-130 years ago," I questioned the depth of his analysis. Yes, change is inevitable. However, change is driven by some who most benefit at the expense of the many who do not.

The first colonizers to arrive in what we now call the United States came to grow their influence, resources, and wealth. Land was, and in many ways still is, as Mildred Campbell wrote, "the greatest inducement the New World had to offer." Therefore, we, and our predecessors, have had to find ways to displace, detain, disempower, or decimate those on the land before us.

This is the history of Boyle Heights, as well as the history of so much of Los Angeles, and maybe, by exploring what this history has looked like and means in this one place, those with racial and class privilege can begin to change our legacies and impacts throughout L.A. moving forward.

In 1845, after devastation wreaked by the Catholic Mission system, Mexico denied the claim of the Tongva to the last remnant of their ancient community, Yaanga, near downtown Los Angeles. The City Council forced this indigenous community to relocate (for a third time) to Puelbrito in Paredon Blanco, an area now known as Boyle Heights.

Two years later, these Native communities were forced to move again as white immigrants and the downtown elite sought this proximal land. With the construction of a bridge connecting the city core to Paredon Blanco, these new displacers began moving their families to this "suburban retreat" in the late 1800s. The construction of Hollenbeck Park offered an oasis to this community, but with the advent of the automobile, wealthy Angelenos moved onward, fueling the first wave of white flight out of Boyle Heights in the 1920s.

But these white communities were not interested in diversifying their new neighborhoods, something the growing rail lines and streetcars made possible. Racial housing covenants and community associations throughout Los Angeles forced Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian and other discriminated-against communities to find other pockets within the city that might permit them room at the inn.

It was during this time that Boyle Heights first became a multicultural, multiracial, working and middle class community, where descendants from Africa lived alongside Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Polish, and Slavick neighbors, where Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant immigrants raised their children together, or at least adjacently.

But larger national forces were at work that would wreak havoc within the next decades. After the collapse of the economy in 1929, Nativists began to scapegoat Mexicans and Mexican Americans, suggested they were stealing "American" jobs. So, from 1931 to 1934, almost one-third of the Angelenos of (predominantly) Mexican origin, about 50,000 individuals, were expelled: some by

deportation, some by repatriation, and some by banishment.

The internment of Japanese Americans after the 1941 Pearl Harbor bombing also stole more than 35,000 neighbors from East L.A. and roughly one-third of Roosevelt High School's students. Though some neighbors and landlords helped care for the houses of their neighbors, many Angelenos exploited the situation: buying the Japanese' belongings and land for pennies. Most of these Japanese residents would never again return to Boyle Heights, except for a small few, 200 of whom now await displacement yet again from the Sakura Gardens care facility so that Boyle Heights can get more high-end lofts.

Out of these national practices of hate came another: redlining. This national practice intentionally directed private investment and bank loans to be based off of neighborhood demographics, penalizing non-white and poor communities. And with the clumping of redlined neighborhoods in East L.A., Boyle Heights was identified as "ideal for a slum clearance project." With the destruction of roughly 2,000 houses for the construction and expansion of four major freeways beginning in 1956, Boyle Heights was decimated so suburbanites could live outside the city and still get into the downtown core.

Despite Boyle Heights' history of radical politics and unions, when the Jewish, Greek, Italian, and Eastern European communities were invited into whiteness, many fled into the broader contours of suburbia: from Pasadena to the Westside. Aided by the G.I. Bill and urban renewal, many white folks had access to the more they had always wanted at the expense of the diverse Boyle Heights community that is now spoken of so fondly. This urban renewal proved to be minority removal.

But with newly emptied space, Boyle Heights became a home to a range of displaced communities: those stripped from Chavez Ravine (for Dodger Stadium), those forced to flee the U.S.-backed Central American wars, the victims of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), those evicted from local public housing, and more.

Though racial housing covenants were deemed illegal by the Supreme Court in 1948, there was little risk of these non-white folks moving to the suburbs. Unlegislated "Sundown Towns" arose across the entirety of Los Angeles, wielding intimidation and the threat of violence to enforce all-white neighborhoods.

Despite all the work the new Boyle Heights community, now predominantly Latino/a and Chicano/a, did to create a place to raise their families, their wellbeing and stability continued to be sacrificed by an unrelenting assault by local and national authorities. It was from these communities that the U.S. military disproportionately pulled troops for Vietnam. It was here that zoning permitted lead-spewing battery recycling plants. It was here that local women were sterilized by the county hospital. It was here that low-income housing was seized and destroyed for private hospital expansion.

Interspersed throughout these attacks were the "wars" against poor and working class communities of color: the war on poverty, the war on



Meg Lyczak

drugs, the war on crime, the war on gangs. These became further excuses to disproportionately surveil, criminalize, defund poverty and dark skin.

However, unsurprisingly, the assault on Boyle Heights has not yet finished. The re-redlining (predatory lending, concentrated foreclosures, lack of access to mortgage lending credit and more) of the 21st century has been devastating. Additionally, the privatization of public services (like charter schools) continues to take money from public goods and put them into private coffers. The construction of public transportation light rails uses the money of poor bus riders for the primary benefit of upper income suburbanites. And with the investment in beautification projects like the revitalization of the L.A. River, the city has made it clear it has launched an effort to make L.A. the bastion for the rich and white it has always tried to be.

The story would be incomplete, though, not to give inches to the resilient, creative, and courageous resistance of those who have continued to be told they do not belong here. Each successive assault on the systemically vulnerable of Boyle Heights has been met with fierce resistance. From Toypurina's fight against the Spanish Missions, to the community fight against the displacement by freeways, to organizations fighting today's gentrification, there has been no shortage of bold action. From individuals to neighborhoods to community organizations, the attempts to build power, push back, and survive has remained inspiringly constant.

This is just a glimpse, the big pieces, the easy to find, frequently documented, structural and cultural practices that have continued to harm the poor and working class and non-white residents of Boyle Heights. The people of Boyle Heights had their experiences so that my family could have its experience in Torrance, San Marino, and La Cañada. Let us commit to learning more of our history and our neighbors'; let us commit to acting with an awareness of the interconnected nature of our stories; let us commit to a future that heals past harms and makes everyone's future success more probable. And we can start by standing against the displacement of Japanese elders of Sakura Gardens. Ω



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

COMMITMENT TO FARMING

The following interview was conducted with/by three L.A. Catholic Worker community members who have experience, interest in, or a commitment to farming. Andrés Gieseemann is 22 years old, from Portland, OR, has spent three seasons on organic vegetable farms and four months at the L.A.C.W. Meg Lyczak is 23 years old, from Keene, NH, has spent three seasons on organic vegetable farms and four months at the L.A.C.W. Maggie Miller is 27 years old, from Manhattan Beach, CA, and is preparing to spend five months at the Mustard Seed Community Farm and Catholic Worker in Ames, IA after spending one year at the L.A.C.W.

AGITATOR: When/how did you first become interested in farming?

GIESEMANN: This interest is new for me. In the spring of 2020, I was taking a literature course on the portrayal of nature in German Romanticism, and the authors I read often addressed the alienation of people from nature that came from industrialization. For my semester project, I researched a farming method called permaculture, which aims to cultivate sustainable food-bearing ecosystems, and proposed it as a method of reconciling that alienation. COVID-19's beginning in the middle of that semester both made this subject dramatically relevant and disrupted my existing plans, so I contacted an organic farm near Ashland, OR and beelined there after final exams.

LYCZAK: My first memories of farming are of gardening in the backyard with my dad. We bonded over picking tomato varieties from the seed catalog, then planting and watching them grow. At 8 years old I was given my own row in our family garden and dreamed of setting up a farm stand and becoming rich off the profits (I was not yet an anti-capitalist). This early love for digging in the dirt continued through high school, and I worked for two summers at The Food Project, a social justice and food justice farm in Boston, MA. My experience in Boston inspired my journey towards social justice. However, this past spring I was out of work and feeling like the world was falling around me and I returned to farming, and spent the season on a large scale organic CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) in New Hampshire.

MILLER: My fifth grade class did a "What do you want to be when you grow up?" project, and my answer was a farmer. Part of me just wanted to be different than all the other kids. But I also had a very clear vision of a potato farm with a stand selling every type of french fry, and a large pack of dogs running around. Frankly, it still sounds awesome.

AGITATOR: What aspects of farming are attractive to you?

GIESEMANN: I was drawn partly by the desire for a more sustainable way of living, but mostly sought to escape the increasingly alienating conditions of my own life and "find myself." Sensing I was unable to fit into "society," I saw organic farming as a radical alternative.

LYCZAK: Farming at its best combines physical labor with land and

food with justice. When I am farming, I love the strength that comes from working hard with a group of people for a goal greater than ourselves. This experience is not unlike a good day at the kitchen on Skid Row. The feeling that, with this day, I have done something tangible and accomplished a task, and maybe made the world a better place is why I keep farming.

MILLER: On a personal level, farming appeals to my desires to spend time outdoors, to strengthen my body, and to see, feel, and eat the tangible results of my hard work. On a systemic level, I hope regenerative farming can help heal the Earth, provide healthy food for those who need it, and create a respite from consumerism.

AGITATOR: What surprised you about working on a farm? What met or did not meet your expectations?

GIESEMANN: The first big surprise to me was the political conviction: I had never met a committed communist before then! They gave new and more concrete expression to many of my own frustrations, but I bristled at what I thought to be a de-spiritualized worldview. Aside from the politics, my desire for connection was largely fulfilled by the highly social labor, which brought me into a closer existence with the land and those with whom I worked it. My aspiration for sustainability was frustrated as I saw the impossibility of my hope for some idealized community that exists completely apart from big, bad, polluting society and yet contributes to its fixing. Long car trips to the market and plastic use in crop covers and irrigation were just a few of the painful reminders of participation in unsustainable systems.

LYCZAK: This past summer I worked from 6am to 5pm and the physical toll on my body was surprising, overwhelming and exhausting. However, as my body became accustomed to the work, I began to enjoy the early mornings and found a physical satisfaction as well as some spiritual connection. Some mornings as the sun rises, every bunch of kale, every cherry tomato, every earthworm is a prayer for forgiveness. An acknowledgement of the harm my relatives have done to the land and to the Abenaki peoples who lived in NH before we came. For me, regenerative agriculture is a way I can ask for forgiveness.

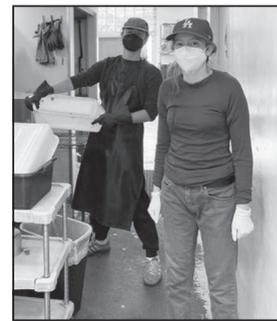
AGITATOR: Are there parallels of living/working at a Catholic Worker and living/working on a farm? If so, what?

GIESEMANN: Strength of community and hope for a better world are essential to my experience of farming and working at the L.A.C.W. I believe that both projects are necessary components of the new society to be built in the shell of the old. I also appreciate the communities' shared passion for books!

LYCZAK: As a farmer your livelihood depends on the weather, and the community that consumes the produce grown. All small ethical farmers understand that they will never be rich. They choose morals over profit and make the radical choice to live by what they believe



On March 23 we hosted a vaccination event at our soup kitchen.



Andrés Gieseemann and Meg Lyczak

rather than what society worships. This is a clear connection between the Catholic Worker movement and the life my farmer friends choose, a rejection of capitalism in hopes of a better world.

MILLER: I anticipate a commitment to simple living will be the most obvious connection. However, in a few months when I am living at Mustard Seed Farm, a Catholic Worker farm in Ames, Iowa, I am sure I will have much more to report here.

AGITATOR: Lessons learned from time on the farm?

GIESEMANN: I came to understand and feel the need for strong community with earth and life, human and non-human alike. This understanding is largely what guided me to the LACW, where it has been deepened and affirmed as an orienting principle for my aspiration towards a better world.

LYCZAK: This past summer I worked on a crew with four men from Mexico working under temporary visas for agricultural workers (H-2A program). I learned a lot about efficiency and hard work from them. The experience of working with these men reminded me that so much of the food we eat is grown by Mexican laborers, and that the U.S. maintains an exploitive and inhumane system of cheap labor for profit. These men taught me many tricks to work faster and more efficiently. In their spare time they watched Youtube videos on harvesting techniques, and worked 12-hour days 6 days a week. Skilled versus unskilled labor is an oppressive false value system in our country. These men held such knowledge and skill, and yet as a society we consider them unskilled, and place little value in their labor. Now when I eat an apple I say a prayer of thanks for all the hands that helped get this food to my plate. Ω

HAVENS cont'd from p.3

in the December 2019 *Catholic Agitator* or any of Ammon's writings. Also, Ani DiFranco & Utah Phillips' song *Anarchy*, about Ammon, is a great way to spend five minutes).

Learning about Ammon's one-man protests, as well as getting to know life-long Detroit Catholic Worker Fr. Tom Lumpkin and his Lenten Vietnam Hunger Strike, inspired me to go without food and shelter while chained to a fence around a vacant building throughout Lent in 2018. I had hoped to draw attention to our low-income housing shortage in downtown L.A., and since then Mayor Garcetti's people brought a non-profit from South L.A. to a town hall in Skid Row promising to convert the site into more than 90 units of low income housing for Skid Row residents. Sounds lovely, but we are still waiting.

I want to thank the N.Y. Catholic Worker and Fr. Tom when discussing this resistance heritage—a "non-church" Christian Anarchist, a Catholic Priest, and a Millennial Jedi, separated by time and space and beliefs, arriving at the same decision to meet escalating state-sanctioned violence with escalated response.

It is necessary to discuss why this is important to me; but to be clear I do not claim to have any of the qualities of those whose examples I followed. I will never be as compassionate or hard-working as Fr. Tom, or as vegan or possessed with conviction as Ammon. Besides, even Mayor Garcetti did a hunger strike with other college students to protest California's Proposition 187 in 1994 (CA ballot measure denying immigrant children school and healthcare). Refusing to eat, as an act in and of itself, does not make anyone a moral person or a person worth emulating; but I do think it can be done for moral reasons if you are surrendering privilege to uplift unprivileged voices, which gets slippery fast because the spotlight always drifts toward the former.

But I believe it important to somehow, however we are able, bear witness to injustice in proportion to the injustice being committed. Every tool in an activists' arsenal has its use, but atrocities deserve more than picket signs, chants, and social media awareness.

My attempts to follow in Ammon's footsteps continue today, sadly, however, not at the Hippy Kitchen, but not too far away either. Once I was confident that the transition to a COVID serving model had been successful, I set out on the road between L.A. and the high desert, working odd construction, handyman, or simple day labor, while planning a model that integrates sustainable housing, permaculture, and radical feeding into a system of living and working together that meets everyone according to their abilities and needs. I have faith this can be done in harmony with the world God created (or did not; I am not here to convince you) and through the Works of Mercy we are called to carry out daily. I have met many desert activists with similar goals, and I recently toured a promising live-work site for my first indoor permaculture beds—Instagram photos forthcoming @ *thekalebhavens*. I still return as often as I can, sometimes painting, sometimes helping Jed and longtime

LACW friend Ken Stack keep Hennacy House from falling apart, sometimes appearing before appointed members of the state for Kafka-esque rituals intended to imitate justice.

Court appearances drag on from Mike Wiz' and my arrest during LACW's December 2019 action demanding Prudential Investment divest from Geo Group's immigrant detention centers. The judge initially ordered that I pay \$30,000 in restitution (Catherine remarked "that is more than the Kings Bay Plowshares got for painting on a Nuclear Submarine Base" for my crime of leaving little sharpie notes on their office walls... "stop putting kids in cages!" But of course Mike and I only did three days each in County lock up, and I hope by the time this is printed Fr. Steve Kelly will finally be able to read this in the comfort of his home. Thank you, Steve, for your witness, as well as the other Kings Bay Plowshares activists!

Finally, after many appearances at world-famous Van Nuys Courthouse (Home of the Rodney King verdict!) through masks and raised glass dividers and bureaucratic snafus (straight out of Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*), they determined that my jet-setting Catholic Worker \$25 per week lifestyle offered me little chance to pay Prudential back anytime this century. I am legally obligated to pay \$25 per month for the next two years of my probation, but I will be grateful for any prayers you could offer that they do not come after the lion's share of the balance in civil court.

My other court duty is community service in a park not far from Hennacy House. I clean public restrooms and pick up trash (during L.A.'s COVID surges... whilst unvaccinated...) and help them do "sweeps" when they have decided homeless guests have lingered too long inside the park and on sidewalks near park entrances. Because I offer cigarettes and help them move when I deliver this bad news, even though I hate being the agent of the state exerting control over land God granted to us all (or did not, see above), I take advantage of the opportunity to handle the tension humanely to the satisfaction of my Parks & Rec overlords and the safety of the guys I meet on the street. You have to look for the little blessings in the shit heaps.

I am often reminded to look for Jesus in every homeless person I meet, which releases me from the shame I might feel for sometimes living out of my trusty Toyota Tacoma (a gift from my globe-trotting tech mogul sister, thanks Kendra!) or for not always eating locally-sourced, organic, fair-trade, non-gmo vegan soup every meal. With a son on the way in June, my concern for my ability to meet my own basic needs is at an all-time high. Too often my concern for my own den and nest eclipses any thought of helping others. It is difficult to live without a place to lay your head, and I am very fortunate that I do not have to worry about it nearly as often as the majority of our Hippy Kitchen guests. In fact, I am certain I have more and think of others less than many people living in tents on the sidewalks of L.A.

However, in writing this, I have decided if Jesus and Ammon, and many of my comrades, refuse to let their

Continued on page 6

BETTER KNOW A VOLUNTEER
BEN BORDEN



Photo by Jed Poole

When I walked into our Skid Row soup kitchen before the sun had risen that day, I could already smell the garlic, herbs, and spices wafting in the air because Ben had arrived a few hours before the rest of us to fill the pots, load the beans, and contemplate what the taste to come would be of our soup du jour.

Ben Borden found the L.A. Catholic Worker by way of coming across the writings of our beloved co-founder, Dorothy Day. Born and raised in the coastal prairie town of Corpus Christi, Texas, Ben spent much of his youth just hanging out at the beach and conducting explorations of the old abandoned buildings around town, which were quite plentiful. After high school, he followed his childhood dream (as many of us have) of getting as far away from home as possible.

McGill University in Montreal, Canada was apparently far enough from the Gulf of Mexico for him. There he studied urban planning, religious studies, and started experi-

menting further with music. From there Ben went to Europe, on tour with a band playing the synthesizer and whatever other electronics he could find to use as instruments.

After returning to the States in 2016, he decided to move to Los Angeles where he accepted a job at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, where he still teaches. It was also around this time he started volunteering at the Hippie Kitchen, and has written a few articles in past editions of the *Agitator*.

Since the start of the pandemic, Ben has been working with us non-stop as a crucial part of keeping our operations running, all while still teaching via the Internet. Whether it is prepping the salad, making the dressing from scratch, or cooking, he, like many others, blurs the line for some of us “full-timers” here at the L.A.C.W. of what it truly means to be a community member. You can currently find him working on many of his days off here at the Hennessey House, helping out with our reconstruction efforts.

But on any given kitchen day, there he is again, at the dishwashing station where he finds the most joy. That is, at least until there is a little more of the much awaited change we are all looking forward to, so he can fly home to Corpus Christi to visit his parents for the first time in more than a year and take that much desired vacation we all need and deserve. Ω

Better Know A Volunteer is written by Jed Poole.

appealing to the ecclesial institution than the person as she existed in history. The U.S. Catholic Bishops, meeting together in November 2012, further canonically compromised Dorothy’s memory when they unanimously voted to support her canonization. Chicago’s Cardinal Francis George, it was reported, “drew applause on Tuesday as he promoted Day’s canonization by enlisting her in the bishops’ battle against the Obama administration’s contraception mandate and endorsement of gay rights.” “As we struggle at this opportune moment to try to show how we are losing our freedoms in the name of individual rights,” he said, “Dorothy Day is a good woman to have on our side.”

As early as 1935, less than two years after the Catholic Worker’s founding, Dorothy Day wrote to the archdiocesan censor in response to his suspicions about the editorial line of the newspaper she edited: While *The Catholic Worker* supports “all that is being done to give free, or reasonably cheap care to mothers in the way of clinics and hospitals, prenatal and post-natal care,” she was also adamant that “we are not going into the subject of birth control at all as a matter of fact.”

I arrived at the Catholic Worker in 1975, seven years after the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* condemned artificial birth control and only two years after the U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Roe v Wade*, made abortion legal, and these were hot topics for the Catholic press in those days. *The Catholic Worker* was an exception and the paper largely kept Dorothy’s forty-year-old resolution not to go into the subject of birth control at all. Dorothy clearly saw abortion as a tremendous tragedy, but in her lifetime her opinion on this matter was almost as privately held as was the fact that as a young woman, she herself had an abortion.

Dorothy’s insistence that “we need to overthrow this rotten, decadent, putrid industrial capitalist system,” is more imperative today than ever. At this critical juncture, the world does not need more Dorothy Day admirers, nor does it need Dorothy’s posthumous patronage of the bishops’ cultural agenda. The world desperately needs coworkers in her holy work, and I fear that this talk of canonization is a distraction from that.

Let us acclaim Dorothy Day as a saint, but let us do as she did and bypass the canonization process altogether. Let us reclaim the more ancient (and cheaper) tradition of the people acclaiming the saints who have lived among us. Let us do this quickly and get back to work. If it takes the popes and bishops a few centuries to catch up and certify her holiness (assuming we even have that time) it would not bother Dorothy and it should not bother us.

Saint Dorothy Day, pray for us. Ω



Brian Terrell is a longtime Catholic Worker and peace activist who lives and works at Strangers and Guests Farm in Maloy, Iowa.

WISNIEWSKI cont’d from p.2

director of the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International. In 2010, she joined the Pax Christi U.S.A. staff as interim director and deputy director, before stepping into the role of Education for Justice editor from 2012-2018. In March 2020, she returned to Pax Christi U.S.A. to serve as deputy director.

In 2002, Sr. Dianna co-authored a memoir titled, *The Blindfold’s Eyes: My Journey From Torture to Truth*. I highly recommend it. It is a chilling and infuriating book that documents not only her torture and quest for truth, but also U.S. imperial policy that funds, trains, and equips Latin American death squads.

This gentle woman dedicated to truth and nonviolence will be greatly missed. Even though she officially died of cancer, she was, in my opinion, a martyr because of the brutal and cold-blooded torture to which she was subjected that took part of her life because of her beliefs. Ω

**SR. DIANNA ORTIZ –
¡PRESENTE!**



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

WISNIEWSKI cont’d from p.3

white supremacy, patriarchy, idolatrous patriotism, homophobia, heterocentrism, mammon, militarism, consumer materialism, all the divisions and ideologies of domination. But in fact...these are the very powers that have insinuated themselves into the structures and fabric of our churches. It’s an empirical measure of the fall” (251-252). This is a very cogent argument when recent Black Lives Matter protests, LGBTQ issues, and the “elections” are considered.

For me, *Principalities In Particular* was enlightening and fascinating in many respects, particularly in Wylie-Kellerman’s stories about the many difficulties and injustices, and the struggle against them, in Detroit, my hometown. Many of the horrific descriptive stories outraged me, brought me to tears, as well as much joy in how the people reflected on and were able to name the principalities and powers present and act accordingly. The book is an easy read, and often difficult to put down. It is absorbing, informative, enjoyable, and thus well worth the time, as well as a sound investment for your library. Good reading. Ω

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

HAVENS cont’d from p.5

housing status define them, neither should I. I located a kitchen where I can cook beans and oatmeal, I found land where I can build on, and I found other compassionate anarchists who want to “create a new world in the shell of the old.” Ammon would tell me that I came into this world armed to the teeth with an arsenal of privilege, and I have to use it to help people who do not have it or I am no better than the system I rage against.

In a departure from my characteristic resistance to quoting my least favorite apostle, I close by asking that if you are running the race and keeping the faith in ways that are similar to those I have described here, do drop me a line so we can stay in touch. In this time when digital relationships have become our primary social sustenance, it will help all of us to take care of each other and stay the course. Ω



Kaleb Havens is a friend, co-conspirator and former LACW community member, reachable at: khavens@gmail.com

DIETRICH cont’d from p.2

guests. Bill had many friends among the volunteers and guests at the kitchen. He loved teddy bears, and never complained about anything. On March 8, he joined the angels in heaven and is now at peace. Ω

BILL HOARD – ¡PRESENTE!



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

TERRELL cont’d from p.2

that should not have survived the Second Vatican Council.

Canonization is no more useful or edifying an institution than the Index of Forbidden Books or the popes’ red shoes. The recent revelations that came to light about Pope John Paul II only after his fast-track canonization have raised further reservations about the efficacy of the practice. Attaching Dorothy’s good name to this process runs the risk of giving it credibility that it does not otherwise have and does not deserve.

“I loved the Church for Christ made visible,” Dorothy wrote, “not for itself, because it was so often a scandal to me.” She loved the Church as the Church of the poor and for its saints and sacraments. Out of charity and gratitude, perhaps, she did not list all the institutions of the Church itself that she did not love and that so often were a scandal to her. I cannot but wonder, though, if those ecclesial bureaucracies that, for a price, bequeath the title “Saint” might be among these. When she mourned, “I believe that over and over again in history the

Church has become so corrupt it just cries out to heaven for vengeance,” might not the profligate machinations of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints be included in her grievance?

Like many of the saints before her, in the process toward her canonization the figure of Dorothy Day has often been held up as an icon to be venerated rather than a practical example to be followed. *The New York Times* columnist David Brooks is highly respected by the pro-canonization Dorothy Day Guild for his admiration of Dorothy. In his 2015 book, *The Road to Character*, Brooks praises the virtues of Dorothy Day along with those of the war-makers Dwight D. Eisenhower and George Marshall. Likewise, Samantha Power, United States Ambassador to the United Nations and member of the Security Council under President Obama, admires both Dorothy Day and Henry Kissinger at the same time! Brooks is convinced that the world is better off for the Iraq War and insists that “free trade reduces world suffering,” and Power served as an official apologist for drone assassinations, the war on Yemen, and the destruction of Libya. Yet both claim to be inspired by Dorothy Day.

These two prominent figures are among many Catholics who venerate the saints, including those who would add Dorothy to their number, without being inconvenienced by the “impractical and utopian” aspects of their lives and teachings. They are following in a tradition of dismissal that Dorothy recognized long ago, and it is not my intention to single them out.

In introducing Dorothy’s “cause” for canonization in 2000, the late Cardinal John O’Connor promoted her by exaggerating some aspects of her life and omitting others altogether, making a construct more

ON THE LINE

KINGS BAY PLOWSHARES 7 UPDATE

On March 19, Fr. Steve Kelly was able to make a phone call saying he was fine and in Pahrump, Nevada, as the U.S. Bureau of Prisons ever so slowly transfers him from Georgia (December 15) to Tacoma, WA where he will have a court appearance for a previous trespass action at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor.

Clare Grady self-surrendered on February 10.

Mark Colville, the last of the KBP7 activists to be sentenced, will be sentenced on April 9.

If you care to write to the other KBP7 activists, letters must be on white paper with blue or black ink, but no drawings. Use your full name in the return address. These are their addresses:

Carmen Trotta #22561-021
FCI Otisville
Satellite Camp
PO Box 1000
Otisville, NY 10963

Martha Hennessy #22560-021
FCI Danbury
Route 37
Danbury, CT 06811

Patrick O'Neill #14924-018
FCI Elkton
P.O. Box 10
Lisbon, OH 44432

Clare Grady #01264-052
FPC Alderson
Glenn Ray Road, Box A
Alderson, WV 24910

BRITISH NUKES

The United Kingdom announced, on March 16, that it will increase its nuclear arsenal limits for the first time in decades. Instead of maintaining a cap of 180 warheads (as previously stated), the U.K. will increase its stockpile cap to 260 warheads – a 40% increase. The review also broadens the role of nuclear weapons to include the possible use of nuclear weapons to address emerging technologies (cyber attacks).

Also, the U.K. leases the Trident II D5 missiles (manufactured by Lockheed Martin Aerospace), deployed on its four Trident submarines, from the U.S. Those submarines return regularly to the U.S. Trident submarine base in King's Bay, Georgia, for the maintenance and replacement of missiles. As of 2017, the U.K. paid an annual payment of approximately \$16.7 million towards Kings Bay operations. —gzcenter.org

MIGRATION TRAGEDY

According to Humane Borders, 2020 was deadliest year for migrants/ asylum seekers crossing into the U.S. via Arizona. The remains of 227 migrants were found last year, while more than 7,000 have died along the Arizona-Mexico border since 1998, although that amount may be much higher as records are imprecise. And, according to the Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network advocacy group in Texas,

another deadly migrant corridor, at least another 3,000 people lost their lives during the same period.

When the remains of two migrants were found in the desert of southwestern Arizona last July, one body lay next to an arrow drawn in the sand, pointing north, with the word "HELP" written beneath.

As the U.S. walled more of its southern border during the Trump regime, the risks to those still determined to make the journey only increased.

—theguardian.com/us-news

MINIMUM WAGE

The Raise the Wage Act of 2021 would help eliminate poverty-level wages by raising the national minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2025. The raise is long overdue and would deliver broad benefits to more than 32 million workers (21% of the workforce) and the economy.

- The current federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour and has not been raised in over 10 years. A full-time federal minimum wage worker today earns 18% less than what her counterpart earned at the time of the last increase, after adjusting for rising costs of living (\$15,080 annually in 2021 versus \$18,458 in 2009).

- In 1968, a minimum wage worker earned \$10.59 per hour in inflation-adjusted terms, 46% more than today's \$7.25 federal minimum wage. The minimum wage today would be over \$22 per hour had it tracked productivity increases over the last five decades. —epi.org

MINOR MIGRANT CHILDREN

Nearly 5000 migrant children being detained at a Border Patrol facility in south Texas face severely overcrowded conditions, with some held for as long as seven days without seeing sunlight, and at least 822 held in custody more than ten days past the three-day legal limit.

Neha Desai, a lawyer representing migrant youth in U.S. government custody, said she interviewed children who said they were hungry, as well as minors who only showered once in seven days. "Some of the boys said that conditions were so overcrowded that they had to take turns sleeping on the floor."

Each of the eight "pods" in the facility has a 260-per person capacity, yet each is holding more than 400 unaccompanied male minors.

—cbsnews.com

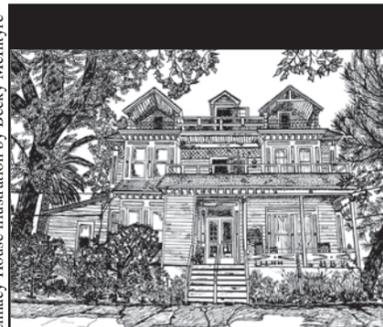
INTERESTING FACTS

- Percentage of U.S. adults who are in therapy: 47
- Who went to therapy for the first time last year: 17
- Who believe the pandemic has meaningfully damaged their mental health: 62
- Number of days a man stayed at Chicago's O'Hare Airport because he was fearful of flying during the pandemic: 89

—Harpers Index, April 2021

On The Line is compiled and edited by Mike Wisniewski.

Hennacy House illustration by Becky McIntyre



THE HOUSE JOURNAL

Life has carried on much as it has for the past year for Hennacy House residents. Lots of games are played, we watch TV and movies, share tasty meals together as a community, and sometimes visit our friend **Farmer Nick** to pick fruit!

Thanks to the generosity of our financial supporters, we have decided our home deserves some (long overdue) work to ensure it will still be standing for another 50 years! Community friends **Ken Stack**, **Bert**, **Kaleb** (and sometimes volunteer **Ben Borden**) have been peeling away and replacing crumbling walls. Future winters will be no match (we hope) for the new insulation and siding. However, every day unveils more needed work.

In the last month, we have (involuntarily) given hospitality to a young family of rats in our garage. Fortunately, **Clare Bellefeuille-Rice** led a brigade to end this hospitality. It was bittersweet to go through decades of

old protest signs, banners, and surplus *Agitator* issues, being reminded of old efforts; many of which, sadly, are still relevant today.

Hippie Kitchen volunteer **Andrés Giesemann** decided to move in and continue to work with us before he returns to school at University of Portland next fall. He joined "Team Kitchen" in January, but has since traded places with **Meg Lyczak** on "Team House." Also trying out "Team House" is Hippie Kitchen rat-catcher, **Maurice**. This beloved orange tabby has spent the last two months wearing a cone at Hennacy House, which has (thankfully) not stopped him from catching mice.

And we continue to find joy in many places. We continue our living room (Zoom) liturgies every other Wednesday. Community member **Josh Flaughter** has led sermons on the historical times leading up to Jesus' life and the God of Moses (a God of justice and liberation). **Catherine Morris** led a "Liturgy of the Word," celebrating **Jeff Dietrich's** 75th birthday by telling stories of inspiration from his life and reading selections of his writings from his books. **Fr. Chris Ponnet** continues to celebrate Mass on the first Wednesday of the month. At Fr. Chris' invitation, a couple of us joined Pax Christi in their Lenten speaker series on Mary the "Undoer of Knots," with speakers including **Fr. John Dear** and **Sr. Helen Prejean**. It was wonderful.

The more adventurous folks from the divided teams have found hikes as the perfect way to safely spend time outdoors together. Meeting up at a trailhead, we have enjoyed seeing the top half of each other's faces, and the wilderness beauty and quiet on L.A.'s outskirts.

Because of the age of many of our houseguests, and the work we do, we

qualified for the COVID-19 vaccine. At this point, the majority of our household is fully vaccinated, which has given us much relief. Clare did the majority of negotiating and refreshing of the city's website to get us appointments, which proved to be the worst part of the process. Getting the vaccine itself has been a rather smooth process, and only a few of us ended up with any side effects.

As we enter this period of quasi-vaccination, both in the community and larger world, we continue to have meetings and assess new information and consider if the boundaries we have set, and the logistics we are following continue to hold up. Though part of our day is spent explaining to others why we have chosen the lines we have, we continue to make the decisions we believe necessary.

Part of our work has also included working to get people on Skid Row vaccinated. **Maggie** has been attending meetings and is in conversation with the Department of Health Services and on March 23, we were able to host a vaccine clinic for our friends downtown. Working with **Studio 526**, **Maggie** was also able to coordinate an art contest. Skid Row artists submitted button designs, and the winners were then printed and distributed to anyone who gets vaccinated on Skid Row.

And though we work to get Skid Row residents safer, we still face the sad reality that too many of our kitchen guests die because of the complexities of unstable housing. Specifically since the last *Agitator*, **Jim Thompson** (a longtime friend of the Worker), **Teresa**, **Al Sabo**, and **Bill Hoard** passed on, not to mention others whose names we do not know. Also, a local kitten we befriended (**Lentil**) also recently died—not a parallel, but painful nonetheless.

Yet we continue our services as best we can to make a dent in the many needs around us. On a positive note, our kitchen serving transitioned to higher-quality environmentally friendly containers so as to meet the diverse needs of our downtown kitchen guests.

Our longtime volunteer **Audrey Gasporovic** introduced our famous tuna noodle recipe to the **Church of the Good Shepherd's Martha's Kitchen Ministry**. And we have also found ways to share some of our excess food with a food pantry in a Los Angeles area Catholic parish as well as with the **Hollywood Food Coalition**. Unfortunately, however, some still finds its way into the trash (as our composts are packed to the brim). We do our best.

Some community members recently attended parts of the **Pacific Life Community** annual retreat (yet another Zoom event), working for a nuclear weapon-and-war-free world.

Work continues to protect Skid Row from rezoning efforts in the downtown area. And, on a more fun note, we were able to lend our (currently empty) kitchen garden to **Urban Voices** for a Skid Row art project they are creating.

As we transition out of this first year of COVID, we celebrate the return of two longtime volunteers, **Ramon** and **Corey**, to our kitchen after being vaccinated. We also sincerely thank all who have volunteered throughout this pandemic. We could not have continued serving without you. We look forward to the time when all who have volunteered pre-COVID can return. And for those who cannot join us, know that we cannot wait to reconnect in whatever ways we can in the future.

House Journal is written by Matt Harper.

👉 SPECIAL NEEDS 👈

We are in need of disposable razors.
Also, CANES—preferably adjustable metal canes, used or new.
Thank you. Many blessings.

WILL YOU HELP PLANT SEEDS?

Many of our hard-working volunteers have blessed us over the years, but with each *Catholic Agitator* issue printed, our mailing list dwindles. We need, and would greatly appreciate, your assistance scattering seeds of faith that these works of mercy might carry on no matter what crises sweep the world. Please help us keep growing by sharing this issue with someone, or e-mail info@lacatholicworker.org if you do not yet receive this newspaper or if you need extra copies to hand out. Thank you.

SHARE YOUR EXCESS BACKYARD FRUIT

If you have fruit trees, specifically citrus fruits, on your property and have an excess, our kitchen guests would certainly appreciate whatever you will not use, especially during this pandemic. Citrus fruits help strengthen the immune system. Please consider donating. Thank you. Many blessings.

HAPPY 88th BIRTHDAY

On May 1, the Catholic Worker movement will celebrate its 88th year in existence. In 1933, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin began this magnificent prophetic movement of radical gospel living, choosing solidarity with the marginalized, and resistance to empire. We give God thanks and praise for this amazing gift and pray that, as long as there are poor among us, the movement will have the grace to continue comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable, calling for a more just and equitable order where peace may prevail.

THE LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC WORKER

The Los Angeles Catholic Worker, founded in 1970, is part of the international Catholic Worker movement. We are a resistance community that operates a free soup kitchen in Skid Row, a house of hospitality in Boyle Heights for some of our unhoused friends from the Row, and publishes this bi-monthly publication—the *Catholic Agitator*. Visit our website - <https://lacatholicworker.org>.

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2. Hospitality Kitchen (aka Hippie Kitchen)
821 E. 6th St., Los Angeles, CA 90021
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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

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ISAIAH HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY

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