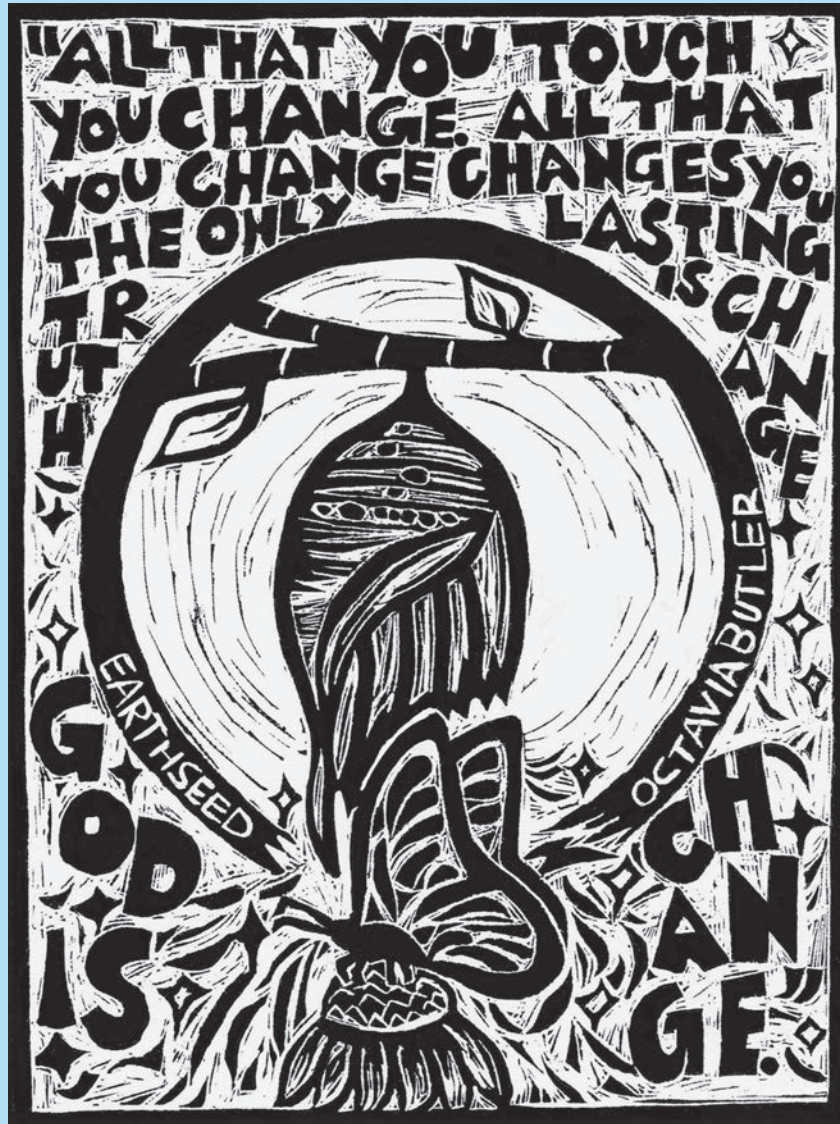


# CATHOLIC AGITATOR

OUR SACRED  
WORK



BUILDING THE KIN-DOM  
TOGETHER

GET INVOLVED - COMPLETE OUR SURVEY, p.2

OUR SACRED  
WORK

*After watching our system's structures crumble, after watching how quickly so many were thrown away and left alone, I cannot help but wish more people had what I had during these months of unimaginable hardships. What a gift and blessing it has been to wake up each day and live this life.*

COMING THROUGH THE  
PANDEMIC

By MATT HARPER

The Los Angeles Catholic Worker has long committed itself to the Catholic Worker movement's ambitious values and charisms. In my five years here, it seems as if we have tried to do them all.

We have faithfully worked to continue our soup kitchen service and to meet the many diverse needs of our friends on Skid Row. We have extended hospitality in our home and sought to meet the expanding needs of an aging community. We have continued to publish this newspaper, as well as to resist and protest against unjust systems and structures. We have created spaces for the clarification of thought, and for personal and communal spiritual activities. And to seek some balance, we have also sought spaces for relaxation, joy, celebration, and connection with the earth.

When I first thought about joining the L.A. Catholic Worker, I was excited to finally find a space that seemed to be working hard to weave together many important values and works: a place that might bridge my spiritual values and political analysis, that offered room for transformation based on experiences and relationships, that invited me to live simply and committed to community life.

After 18 months of this pandemic, I find myself reflecting on how grateful I am to be able to do this work. After watching our systems' structures crumble, after watching how quickly so many were thrown away and left alone, I cannot help but wish more people had what I had during these months of unimaginable hardships. What a gift and blessing it has been to wake up each day and live this life.

When the pandemic descended upon us, we, like everyone else, had to make some major adjustments. Despite the beauty of the work and the shifts we made, keeping it all going proved difficult. We know our recovery process will extend well past the "end" of these surges, but our resolve and faith remain high, our commitment to continue this diverse work remains steadfast. We are doing our best to live in the tension.

However, one thing became exceptionally clear to me as the world recoiled from the uncertainty of an invisible and deadly virus. As Sarah Fuller wrote in our April 2019 "Stone Soup" *Agitator* issue, "We exist due to the generosity of a community of people who contribute their time,



*We have faithfully worked to continue our soup kitchen service and to meet the many diverse needs of our friends on Skid Row. We have extended hospitality in our home and sought to meet the expanding needs of an aging community. We have continued to publish this newspaper, as well as to resist and protest against unjust systems and structures. We have created spaces for the clarification of thought, and for personal and communal spiritual activities.*

money, skills, and resources to the creation of this work." Our ability to continue and expand this work depends on the extended community that surrounds us. This has never changed.

Our interdependence has become unmistakable during these many months. Some people had to draw back and others were called to step forward, but through it all, there has always been "enough."

But something else has arisen during these times of pandemic, uprisings, and altered lives. In conversation after conversation I often hear people articulating a desire to get "more involved" as we move forward: in their neighborhoods, with local organizations, using and building their skills.

Considering that point, where does that leave the L.A. Catholic Worker? A place offering sacred work that requires an ever-expanding community of people who want to be involved in creating the new society we dream about.

I am not sure I have dreamed big enough as a Catholic Worker. I am not sure I have thoughtfully considered how our incredible network of Catholic Workers (which includes YOU) could help us build the kingdom together.

If we Catholic Workers are truly committed to making the biggest impact possible (while still holding onto our values), then we need to find more ways to invite people into our efforts. We need to get people thinking creatively about the gifts they have and where they might fit. Rest assured, this is not about demanding more or pressuring people who have already reached their capacity. Rather, it is about offering clear invitations to individuals looking for more but who do not know where to turn. (See survey on page 2)

So, if you are one of the individuals who have come through these last 18 months with a drive to find new ways to be involved, consider our work on the Row, or in our home, or in prophetic resistance, or anywhere else, as one possible place to keep plugging in. (In a world more virtual than ever, distance need not be a hindrance to join us.) But look, too, at the other places that speak to your heart, that fill you with hope, that make you appreciate how powerful you are. Ω

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

*SURVEY on page 2*

CONSIDER OUR WORK ON THE ROW, OR IN OUR HOME, OR IN PROPHETIC RESISTANCE, OR ANYWHERE ELSE





## BUILDING THE KIN-DOM TOGETHER

### SURVEY

If you are interested in getting involved or learning more, please take a moment to fill out our online survey at: [bit.ly/LACWSupport](http://bit.ly/LACWSupport) or return the one below to 632 N. Britannia St., L.A., CA 90033-1722 and we will reach out to you as soon as possible.

NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE:

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE:

E-MAIL:

### CORE VALUES OF INTEREST:

*Which Catholic Worker pillars/work are you interested in connected to?*

Works of Mercy - The one-to-one work to meet the needs of others.

Outreach - The work to build connections with and interest from individuals and organizations.

Resistance - Prophetic action to shift structures and policies so as to create a more loving and equitable world.

Spirituality - Individual and community practices to ground us and inform our work.

Clarification of Thought (Learning)—Efforts to grow and sharpen our understanding of the world around us.

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Our main service is meal prep and service at our Skid Row soup kitchen. If you would like to find another way to volunteer in-person with us (now or in the future), please check this box.

### OUTREACH:

Are you connected to a group or organization that might be interested in our work? Check here.

### PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT:

Many of our readers have jobs/skills that could directly support our work and services we provide (ex. graphic artist, contractor, attorney, etc.). If you have any professional skills you would be willing to share (even if you do not know how it would be helpful), please list them here.

\_\_\_\_\_

## THE LAST WEEK

Book Review:

*The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem*

By Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan, Harper One, 2006, 240 pages, \$16.99

By MIKE WISNIEWSKI

A few months ago I came across another gem that was published some years ago, but still widely available. Ched Myers referred to it in a webinar he gave earlier this year titled "The Theater of Palm Sunday," and I was amazed with its content.

Suffice to say, *The Last Week* is a brilliant chronicle of what the authors believe actually occurred (politically and spiritually) in Jerusalem during Jesus's last week, using Mark's gospel as the source from which Borg and Crossan insightfully tell the story.

In *The Last Week* the authors meticulously explain what was happening in the background, and the meaning of Jesus's day-to-day activities from his entrance into Jerusalem on Palm/Passion Sunday to Easter. Each chapter covers each day of the week in detail, hence, eight chapters. Their profound and meaningful insights are truly good news to all who believe there is an inherent political aspect to Jesus's life and the kingdom of God.

The first matter they clarify, of which I was unaware, is that there were two simultaneous processions entering Jerusalem on that spring day in the year 30 C.E., "One was a peasant procession, the other an imperial procession. From the east, Jesus rode a donkey down the Mount of Olives cheered by his followers (a political demonstration)...On the opposite side of the city, from the west, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Idumea, Judea, and Samaria, entered Jerusalem at the head of a column of imperial cavalry and soldiers. Jesus's procession proclaimed the kingdom of God; Pilate's proclaimed the power of empire. The two processions embody the central conflict of the week that led to Jesus's crucifixion" (2).

According to the authors, Jesus was well aware of Pilate's annual entrance into the city, saying, "It was standard practice of Roman governors of Judea to be in Jerusalem for the major Jewish festivals...in case there was trouble. There often was, especially at Passover, a festival that celebrated the Jewish people's liberation from an earlier empire" (2). This context affirms the Gospel's

palpable and deep political reality, along with the inevitable conflict between the two competing powers.

"Jesus's procession deliberately countered what was happening on the other side of the city" (4). "Pilate's procession embodied the power, glory and violence of the empire that ruled the world. Jesus's procession embodied an alternative vision, the (nonviolent) kingdom of God (4).

For the rest of the chapter, the authors provide a concise history of Jerusalem, the Jewish people, Jesus, and the Roman Empire's occupation. It also dispels the false notion that the Jewish people are responsible for Jesus's torturous death, which has caused much hatred and anti-Semitism within Christianity over the centuries. The authors clearly demonstrate that the Roman Empire was solely responsible for Jesus's death.

Each chapter offers much to ponder and appreciate. In chapter two, the authors explain how "Mark's gospel often contains pairs of incidents that are intended to be interpreted in light of the other. In the narrative sequence they vibrate together, each reflecting meaning upon the other" (32). Here they refer to the two incidents presented in Mark 11:12-21 concerning the cursing of the fig tree, the temple incident, and the return to the withered fig tree. "Mark, in other words, wants hearers or readers to consider those two incidents together, so that what happened to the fig tree and what happened in the temple interpret each other" (35).

Further explaining, "Taken as a parable, the fig tree's failure is a cipher (symbol) for that of the temple.

*Continued on page 6*

## LET US DREAM

Book Review:

*Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*

By Pope Francis  
Simon & Schuster, 2020, 49 pages, \$17.99

By DAVID DeCOSSE

What comes after the COVID-19 pandemic? In his wise, clear book, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, Pope Francis challenges the church and world not to waste this perilous moment but to build a better future. In every crisis, he says, there is always a way out.

To insist on the importance of dreaming (as the title suggests) may seem fanciful in the face of the pandemic's harsh realities; of climate change-caused wildfires, storms, and floods; of the rising popularity of race-baiting, authoritarian populism; and more. But in this book, Pope Francis squarely faces these realities. He turns to the metaphor of dreaming not to avoid this world, but to see more deeply into what is always there at the margins, if often missed: the dignity of each person and the power of divine love.

Pope Francis has often said that "time is greater than space" by which he has meant that it is better to focus on processes than on outcomes. This book is a reflection on the best processes for a new world to emerge from the pandemic. At the heart of its argument is an adaptation of the classic "see, judge, act" interpretive model of Catholic social thought (which in his hands becomes "see, discern, act").

For Pope Francis, we have come to

the end of a road and the pandemic has laid bare the exhausted global state of our structural injustices and cultural failings. The chief culprit here is an out-of-control individualism that has caused us to forget that we are responsible for each other. We see this individualism parade across our stage in characters like vaccine refuseniks, and in hard moral facts like the weakening of institutions compelled to forego care for the common good in favor of deference to the individual whims of the wealthy. The root sin, Francis says, is the rejection of the limits that love requires. We fail to see the value of ourselves, of others, of the earth. Instead, we want for our sake alone to "possess and exploit that which we do not value as a gift."

Our first step in dreaming of a better world is to see anew. Here the biblical story of the Good Samaritan is central to the Pope's argument (as it is in his argument in his recent encyclical called *Fratelli Tutti*). Everyone in that account sees the man lying by the side of the road. But what the Samaritan does that the others in the story do not do is allow himself to be moved and to recognize in the wounded a human being exactly like himself. For Francis, our way forward lies more in such loving encounters than in debating ideas. Indeed, the creation of cultures of encounter is an essential step into a re-imagined future. He also insists in such encounters on the importance of "closeness." We are embodied beings and presence, touch, and proximity are privileged ways by which God has chosen to mediate divine love to our world. I read this section of the book with my experience at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker's soup kitchen in mind: How well do I fare in recognizing my shared humanity with the women and men and trans persons with whom we share a meal?

The second step for Pope Francis is the call for the widespread development of the practice of discernment. Here Francis speaks especially as the Jesuit spiritual director that he is—but with a twist. His emphasis is not only on the Ignatian tradition's subtle analysis of good and evil spirits—which is the heart of discernment—but on how such a process can foster the creation of a community or, in his terminology, a "people." We live in a Twittering world where what Francis calls "contrapositions" are

*Continued on page 6*

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# DOING RIGHT BY JUBILEE

By MATT HARPER

As a Catholic and an Angeleno, my story cannot be neatly untangled from that of the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel. Founded in 1771, this Los Angeles Mission was the first place that began to “share” the faith I profess on the unceded land I now call home. As a result, it became deeply personal when I heard the Catholic community of Los Angeles was beginning a yearlong celebration of the Mission’s founding on September 11.

Now, in my 18 years of Catholic education and my subsequent years teaching in the Los Angeles Catholic School system, I was seldom given the opportunity to consider—let alone to meaningfully engage in—the complex history of the 21 missions dotting our coastal El Camino Real. In an effort to uplift a self-promoting narrative, our short and glossy remembrances ignored facts, sanitized truths, and erased people.

In my five years helping run a Catholic Worker soup kitchen on Skid Row, the long-term impacts of the centuries-old violence done to Native communities has been undeniable. Like the Black community, Native Americans have long been disproportionately disposed of: relegated to our streets, thrown into our jails, and given seemingly insurmountable odds. I cannot help but wonder how my Church—the first colonizing contact many Native communities had—might have begun this cycle.

A few weekends ago, the Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese began a “Jubilee Year” to mark the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel. Despite Archbishop Gomez’s recognition that “we cannot learn history’s lessons or heal old wounds unless we understand what really happened, how it happened, and why,” this leader of the L.A. Archdiocese has committed us to a year that “is not about the past.” Rather, this celebration will look “Forward in Mission” in the hopes of inspiring a new wave of “missionary disciples” and bestowing special graces and “plenary indulgences” on our Catholic community.

What could have been the perfect moment to invite collective engagement and accountability has instead become a continued deflection of our responsibility. It has become a time to center the evangelization and conversion of non-Catholics at seemingly any cost.

But honestly, how can we move forward (in conscience or with evangelization) when our Catholic community has not explored the full legacy of the missions? What does it say if we intentionally ignore the things that suggest we might, in fact, have some deep reckoning to do? Why would we not fully value the voices of those whose ancestors built these missions (and died en masse because of them)? And ultimately, what might happen if the Jubilee Year to which we are committed sought, instead, to restore relationships, redistribute the land, and set all oppressed people free as our Scripture prescribes (Lev. 25:8-55)? Might these practices support a Christ-inspired healing process for both the Native community and for us Catholics?

Our Church seems to have gotten distracted defending missionaries (and their statues) and belittling those whose beliefs deviate from

the institution’s, who question that which we have never been trusted to engage. We have failed to see the forest for the one Junípero.

Therefore, we are invited to consider how we, the Church, the people of God, will choose to respond to this “providential moment...in the history of salvation.” A team of Catholic Workers, Catholics, and other people of faith have begun to gather to ask tough questions and to attempt to reckon with our Mission legacy.

We are preparing ourselves to wade into our history: the papal bulls, the scriptural justifications, the letters of St. Junípero Serra, the accounts of native people and historical visitors, and the details unearthed by historians and anthropologists. We seek to discover what it means to be a good guest on someone else’s land and are preparing to seek guidance from those who stewarded this specific land long before our spiritual and biological settler relatives arrived.

But this cannot be a small undertaking. It requires both an individual commitment, yes, but also an institutional one. We seek participation from our shepherds as this is our Church’s responsibility to bear. And so we reach out. But as long as the Church celebrates a Jubilee Year, we will engage in our own, seeking the restoration required of an authentic Jubilee whether our Church joins us or not.

Maybe we will reclaim the faith gifted to us by a humble man who was executed by a colonial state. Maybe, like that very Jesus of Nazareth, we will take down Isaiah’s scroll and reaffirm our roots and North Star: “Bring good news to the oppressed, bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of Jubilee” (Is. 61:1-2). Maybe grace will find its way to help us heal. Will you join us? Ω



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

Due to an error in the August 2021 Agitator issue, we are including the corrected version of Alberto Oropeza’s poem “Solar Portrait” and sincerely apologize for the error.

## SOLAR PORTRAIT

By ALBERTO OROPEZA

When it is still dark  
before dawn  
walk outside and stand there  
with your feet  
your heart  
your one eye  
and allow the sun to paint a portrait  
of you  
with hope in your face

When it is still dark, go outside  
and feel the sun giving a massage  
to your heart  
with the pulse of a new day

When it is still dark, go outside  
and see above your head:  
A crescent moon  
becomes the fingertip of the sky  
pointing to the Birthplace of the sun,  
The Nascence of the world. Ω

# DEMANDING MORE OF OUR SAINTS

By DAVID DeCOSSE

On September 11, the Los Angeles Archdiocese launched a Jubilee Year to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of Mission San Gabriel, the first ecclesiastical outpost in what is now the sprawling Catholic world of L.A. It is a fitting moment to reflect on the canonization in 2015 of the 18th-century Franciscan Friar Junípero Serra, founder of the mission system of Alta California.

I write this reflection as one step in a yearlong effort by the L.A. Catholic Worker community to invite the archdiocese during this Jubilee Year to a deeper engagement with the complexities of the mission system. We are calling this effort People of Faith Reckoning With Our Mission History.

Serra lives on as a symbol, historical figure, and saint. For many of his devotees, he is an icon of civilization over native backwardness and Judeo-Christian values over contemporary secularism. For many of his detractors, he culpably brought genocide to the indigenous of California. And for many others, he is an inspiration to Christian faith.

As the Archdiocese launches its Jubilee Year, it is more important to look at the Mission system than to focus on Serra alone. Indeed, discussions about him can quickly erase his complexity as a person, lapsing into hagiography or erasure. Whatever the precise historical details, he becomes a proxy for larger matters. And it is the larger matters of the mission system that especially require our scrutiny. As the late and great contemporary historian of California Kevin Starr, has said: “It is difficult, in short, to see the whole Mission system as resulting in anything other than wholesale anthropological devastation, whatever the sincerely felt evangelical intent of the missionaries and the civilizing goals of the Laws of the Indies.”

Still, a few words about the problem of Serra’s canonization are in order. Three key concerns, each having to do with systemic issues, are paramount.

First, Serra is celebrated as a saint almost always with little more than a few bland asides about difficulties that happened in the Mission system (no person and no entity is identified as responsible for these difficulties). This failure to engage or even name anything like the “wholesale anthropological devastation” noted by Starr is not credible and rightly undermines the celebration of his sainthood. Should the Catholic Church today really be honoring a man who, whatever his intent, presided over such devastation?

A second problem is related to this practice of historical avoidance: The separation of Serra from the structural and cultural concerns of the mission system. At the heart of the proclamation of Serra’s saintliness are his personal virtues of holiness. He gave up a prestigious academic position in Europe to come to the lands known as the Americas. He defended native women from the predation of Spanish soldiers. He was rigorously penitential and inspired by divine love.

However, all of these descriptions of saintly virtues leave him floating above the coercive fray that characterized the entire mission system: The man who helped to create the

system seems serenely oblivious to its overarching logic of force. It is essential to remember the offer that could not be refused that the Spanish gave to the indigenous: We will take your land by force and thereby strip you of what is yours and of your livelihood and in return we will offer you Christian faith. It may have taken until 1965 at the Second Vatican Council for the Catholic Church to codify the human right to religious freedom. But even at the time of Serra it was formal Catholic doctrine that the act of Christian faith was by nature free: such an act could not in principle be compelled and still be considered faith. Serra, the individualistic saint of heroic virtue, is never tainted by this coercive superstructure.

Finally, there is the problem of being enclosed within a system so that one is not able to see a better world beyond. Perhaps the strongest argument in favor of Serra’s canonization has been to say that Serra was a man of his time. Yes, this line of argument goes, he may have used floggings on native persons but he did so from a motive of love and correction—even if today we find such floggings for any motive to be abhorrent. I think the opponents to Serra’s canonization can dismiss this argument too quickly. Too often they either do not focus on the man himself (seeing him purely as a function of a system) or they do not see him in his own time (transporting today’s standards back to the 18th century).

But even so, I think a more fundamental argument can be made against Serra’s canonization: Saints should be individuals who transcend their times. To be a saint is to participate in the divine life in such a way that one is able to see, even indistinctly, a better world. Whatever Serra’s personal virtues may have been, there is no doubt that he never stepped outside the essentially coercive nature of the mission system. He never saw that native peoples were not “children” in need of correction, but human beings fully equal in dignity to himself and to all of his co-religionists. It may be unfair to condemn people of the past with the morality of today, but we can surely celebrate (and canonize) them because they pointed toward what we have come to see today as right and just.

By way of contrast, consider the beatification in 2018 of Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador. Among other ways of specifying Romero’s holiness, one is to say that he saw into a future in which the structures of Salvadoran society would not oppress the equal dignity of thousands of poor women and men, but serve it. And this vision was the cause of his martyrdom. By comparison, Serra had no such expansive vision. We can only say he was a man of his times. But we can also say that, in our saints, we want more than that. Ω



Professor David DeCosse is spending his sabbatical from Santa Clara University with the Los Angeles Catholic Worker.





Frames are mental structures that we use in thinking. All words are defined relative to frames. An example of this would be the expression "tax relief."

# FRAMING THE "WAR ON TERROR"

As the last U.S. ground troops have left Afghanistan, we reprint this article from 2004 to remember two things: First, this departure does not promise an end to U.S. imperial violence in Afghanistan or elsewhere. Wars are more than mere ground troops and, as tools for obscene profits and power, so we must bring a more critical lens to U.S. actions abroad. And second, our ability to see and name the "frames" in our lives will help us make sure both that we are supporting things in line with our values and also that we can rightfully name when those things disconnect.

By PAUL GROSS

It has been almost a year since the world's only super-power invaded Iraq, after weakening them for eleven years with bombings and sanctions. No weapons of mass destruction have been found, and the whole idea that Saddam Hussein presented an "imminent threat" to this country seems more and more like a pipe dream. It seems that hardly a week goes by without another scandal about Cheney's Halliburton Corporation ripping off the taxpayers. Tax cuts for the wealthy have provided more capital for corporations to move their operations overseas where the real profits can be made, and even high tech jobs are being outsourced to places like India, while our federal deficit continues to skyrocket.

Due to all this, Bush's approval rating has started to drop. As you can probably guess, he did not have a very high approval rating here at the Catholic Worker from the outset. We have also been rather frustrated by why the American public could not see what has seemed so obvious to us over the last couple of years. Then I stumbled across the answer—we have all been framed, says George Lakoff, Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley. Lakoff is the author of *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*, and several compelling articles on this subject, including "Framing the Dems" in the *The American Prospect's* September, 2003 issue, which is quoted in this article.

Frames are mental structures that we use in thinking. All words are defined relative to frames. An example of this would be the expression "tax relief." As soon as George W. Bush took office, these words started appearing in White House communiques. What does this term imply? According to Lakoff, "In order for there to be relief, there has to be a blameless, afflicted person with whom we identify and whose affliction has been imposed by some external cause. Relief is the taking away of the pain or harm, thanks to some reliever...The term 'tax relief' evokes all of this and more. It presupposes a conceptual metaphor: Taxes are an affliction, proponents of taxes are the causes of affliction (the villains), the taxpayer is the afflicted (the victim), and the proponents of tax relief are the heroes who deserve the taxpayers' gratitude. Those who oppose tax relief are bad guys who want to keep relief from the victim of the affliction, the taxpayer." Sounds great! Of course we all

know that their resulting tax cuts overwhelmingly benefited the wealthy. At the same time \$421 billion, 51.4% of all discretionary spending in the 2005 Federal budget is targeted for the military, whose main purpose at this time seems to be keeping the trade routes open for globalization. Who benefits from this? You guessed it.

It is easy to see how the frame "War on Terror" fits Lakoff's concept. If you are not for the "War on Terror," then you must be "Pro-Terror." If you are a politician with any hopes of being re-elected, this is not a comfortable position to take.

How does this explain Bush's continued popularity? To understand we must go a little deeper. According to Lakoff, we all have competing worldviews in the very synapses of our brains. Whether we identify as conservatives or progressives depends upon which model is active at that given time. As a metaphor for these worldviews, Lakoff uses the models of "strict father families" and "nurturant parent families."

In the strict father family worldview, "the world is a dangerous and difficult place, there is tangible evil in the world and children have to be made good. To stand up to evil, one must be morally strong—disciplined. The father's job is to protect and support the family. His moral duty is to teach his children right from wrong. Physical discipline in childhood will develop the internal discipline adults need to be moral people and to succeed. The child's duty is to obey. Punishment is required to balance the moral books. If you do wrong, there must be a consequence."

"The strict father, as moral authority, is responsible for controlling the women of the family, especially in matters of sexuality and reproduction. Children are to become self-reliant through discipline and the pursuit of self-interest. Pursuit of self-interest is moral: If everybody pursues their own self-interest, the self-interest of all will be maximized."

"Without competition, people would not have to develop discipline and so would not become moral beings. Worldly success is an indicator of sufficient moral strength; lack of success suggests lack of sufficient discipline. Those who are not successful should not be coddled; they should be forced to acquire self-discipline. This means (among other things) favoring those who control corporate wealth and power (those seen as the best people) over those who are victims (those seen as morally weak). It means removing government regulations, which get in the way of those who are disciplined. Nature is seen as a resource to be exploited. One-way communication translates into government secrecy. The highest moral value is to preserve and extend the domain of strict morality itself, which translates into bringing the values of strict father morality into every aspect of life, both public and private, domestic and foreign.

"America is seen as more moral than other nations and hence more deserving of power; it has earned the right to be hegemonic and must never yield its sovereignty, or its overwhelming military and economic power. The role of government,

then, is to protect the country and its interests, to promote maximally unimpeded economic activity, and maintain order and discipline.

From this perspective, conservative policies cohere and make sense as instances of strict father morality. Social programs give people things they have not earned, promoting dependency and lack of discipline, and are therefore immoral. The "good people"—those who have become self-reliant through discipline and pursuit of self-interest—deserve their wealth as a reward. Rewarding people who are doing the right thing is moral. Taxing them is punishment, an affliction, and is therefore immoral. Girls who get pregnant through illicit sex must face the consequences of their actions and bear the child. They become responsible for the child, and social programs for pre and postnatal care just make them dependent. Guns are how the strict father protects his family from the world's dangers. Environmental regulations get in the way of the "good people," the disciplined ones pursuing their own self-interest. Nature, being lower on the moral hierarchy, is there to serve human beings as a resource. The Endangered Species Act gets in the way of people fulfilling their interests and is therefore immoral; people making money are more important than owls surviving as a species. And just as a strict father would never give up his authority, so a strong moral nation such as the United States should never give up its sovereignty to lesser authorities. It is a neatly tied-up package."

On the other hand, in the nurturant parent family worldview, "It is assumed that the world *should* be a nurturant place. The job of parents is to nurture their children and raise their children to be nurturers. To be a nurturer you have to be empathetic and responsible (for yourself and others). Empathy and responsibility have many implications: Responsibility implies protection, competence, education, hard work, and social connectedness; empathy requires freedom, fairness and honesty, two-way communication, a fulfilled life (unhappy, unfulfilled people are less likely to want others to be happy) and restitution rather than retribution to balance the moral books. Social responsibility requires cooperation and community building over competition. In the place of specific strict rules, there is a general 'ethics of care' that says, 'Help, don't harm.' To be of good character is to be empathetic and responsible, in all of the above ways. Empathy and responsibility are the central values, implying other values: freedom, protection, fairness, cooperation, open communication, competence, happiness, mutual respect, and restitution as opposed to retribution.

"In this view, the job of government is to care for, serve, and protect the population (especially those who are helpless), to guarantee democracy (the equal sharing of political power), to promote the well-being of all, and to ensure fairness for all. The economy should be a means to these moral ends. There should be openness in government. Nature is seen as a

resource to be used for the benefit of all. The economy should be a means to these moral ends. There should be openness in government. Nature is seen as a

resource to be used for the benefit of all. The economy should be a means to these moral ends. There should be openness in government. Nature is seen as a

Continued on page 6

## EMERGING FROM A CHRYSLIS

By MEGAN RAMESEY

It was late spring that we were getting ahead and coming up with ideas for themes of future *Catholic Agitator* issues. For this October issue we thought, surely in six months, after vaccines are widely available, we would be coming out of the other end of this—maybe even like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis, transformed. We were overly optimistic. Here we are and the metamorphosis seems incomplete, and we are not quite ready for takeoff.

The pandemic flipped the script on everything that we do. In response, we adapted and sought out assistance and guidance from our extensive community of friends and supporters. There was a point last summer that I mentioned this whole pandemic seemed like an outlandish team-building exercise. What we have learned from this time has changed us as a community. Knowing we were likely not alone, I asked our Sister House Communities for stories from their time in the chrysalis and this is what we have to share.



### TAKE PAUSE

Months before the pandemic, I was inspired to use the assortment of river rocks scattered about the yard to create a labyrinth. By the time the pandemic hit, the stones that outlined the labyrinth were getting lost in the color of dirt they sat upon. Day one of the lockdown I decided I was going to paint the stones a sky blue that would make walking the circuits easier. It was a task that would have low priority before the forced shelter-in-place. It suddenly became important. I was motivated by an understanding that shoring up the rituals and rhythms of prayer and contemplation were the very thing needed to meet the moment. Grateful for the "excuse" to slow down my pace and have time to be present to the Presence, is a takeaway from the pandemic that I hope I will continue to cultivate. (Las Vegas Catholic Worker)



### SHED

The only service we halted when the pandemic began was to stop offering shower services to our guests.

Folks were really upset, as we are the only place in our immediate area offering free showers to the homeless. We were not happy about stopping this valued service either, but what could we do? At last year's Sister House Retreat I heard how Johanna and Mary Beth of the Philly CW were still offering shower services to their guests. During a break I questioned them about this and they told me a doctor friend told them how to do it safely. The next week we resumed offering showers to our dining room guests. You do not always need to reinvent the wheel (or shower service protocol). Just listen and learn from the experience of other Catholic Workers. (San Bruno Catholic Worker)



### ENTRUST

With fewer community members holding the responsibilities downtown, we had to rely on workers who do not live in our house to organize, cook, and shop for the kitchen. The people that stepped into the positions have always been vital to our functioning, but as times have caused us to share these formerly community-member-held jobs, we are able to envision new ways of sharing the work with the wonderful people who commit to showing up day after day, week after week, year after year. (Los Angeles Catholic Worker)



### BE HUMBLE

It no longer made sense to use our new commercial space where we had been serving because of COVID regulations. We went back to the benches where we began. Back to serving on the street. It has been humbling. Before the pandemic it seemed like we were finally making strides, but now we have gone back to our beginning. In recent months, other groups have started serving in the same spot. But I am sure we can get the space back when we're ready to serve indoors again. (Elizabeth, New Jersey CW)

We have found COVID a big challenge to our concept of hospitality. So much of how we had done things were based on a place—our house. But the worry we had for both our house-guests and street folks' health

meant that gathering here was, and still remains, hard to do in ways that communicate care. So we have done more mendicant hospitality, connecting to smaller groups of people living outside, working with individuals and small groups, and supporting mutual aid efforts through food and other donations we had or have on site. In consolation we recall that the first act of the Good Samaritan was to leave home, and our travels on the streets of O.C. have given us more chances than we like to tend the wounds of those harmed by structures of sin and greed that cause so much pain. It is our hope that we soon can gather around a table together to sing songs of hope, to fill all with good food, and to witness to love and faithfulness. (Orange County Catholic Worker)



### CONTINUE TO FORM OUR COMMUNITY

We have been made aware of the necessity of intentional social time in our house, and with volunteers and extended community members. All work and no play makes communal life pretty bleak. We have had regular "happy hours" down at the kitchen after serving and cleanup is done and a number of times we have hosted volunteers at the house for outdoor movie nights on the lawn. But when we did not prioritize spending non-work time together, our relationships began to diminish. We have set a new intention with our Friday nights at the house, to socialize as a community with a happy hour or have a household movie night as often as we can. (Los Angeles Catholic Worker)



### ALLOW NEW PROJECTS TO BUD AND FLOWER

One side benefit of staying open was that our donations skyrocketed. People want to help in a time of crisis. By staying open, their generosity was directed towards us. As a result, we were able to save up a large amount of money, which gave us the financial confidence to finally build the auxiliary dwelling unit (ADU, "in-law" unit) in the backyard of our Second Ave. boarding house. This new ADU will enable us to provide more permanent affordable housing to those we serve. Construction began on this project on September 8, 2021. (San Bruno Catholic Worker)

A couple of months ago, some women began volunteering and asked if they could bring and distribute

clothes. Now they have started a whole clothing program with just a couple of tables where we serve. (Elizabeth, New Jersey Catholic Worker)



When butterflies first emerge, they are not quite ready to fly. After breaking free of the chrysalis, a butterfly is disproportionate. Before it can take off it needs to inflate its wings from fluid stored in its abdomen. Perhaps this is the stage we are at in this moment. This global crisis demanded flexibility and creativity from each of us. It has revealed who we are and how we can come together to take on the obstacles before us. It has transformed us. We will continue to adapt and grow, and hope that the lessons we take away from this time will help us expand our wings and take flight. Ω



Megan Ramsey is a Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member.

## CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

By MAGGIE MILLER

Conversations during harvest mornings at Mustard Seed Community Farm in Ames, Iowa sound a lot like chopping block talk back at the LACW's Hippy Kitchen. They ebb in and out of lighthearted small talk covering everybody's weekly activities off of the farm, hard-hitting culture critiques, and admirations of the abundant produce or sometimes equally abundant pests.

During one such spontaneous culture critique whilst weeding the onions and lamenting the hyper-individualism of U.S. society, a new volunteer offered a revelatory thought. She cited anthropologist Margaret Mead's assertion that civilization began 15,000 years ago with the evidence of a human femur bone that had fractured and then healed. The healed bone signifies another person had cared for and tended to the injured person, rather than leaving them to the animal kingdom fate of starving to death or becoming prey. "So independence is actually the antithesis of civilization" remarked the first-time volunteer. And right there, in the onions, my mind was blown. I often think about our nation's em-

phasis on achieving independence. While it is said to have started as a collective goal of freedom from religious persecution and tyranny, it has pervaded our culture and soured into a toxic individualism. I feel pressured by society to achieve "independence" in my personal life. As if independence is a precursor to success or even success itself. I am supposed to move out of my parents' house at the ripe young age of 18 never to need them again, get a corporate job straight out of college in order to have health benefits and not rely on the government, and eventually buy a house to be free of the rental market.

If I jumped aboard the capitalist train to independence town and achieved this American dream, would I really be free? At the risk of stating the obvious, no. Unless I am an off-the-grid homesteader (reminder: not our society's ideal), I will continue to be reliant on the people who grow my food, make my clothes, drill the oil that powers my lights and my car, not to mention reliant on the Earth itself that provides all our natural resources. For the record, this list could go on, but I will spare you.

While I have regarded questing after something as unattainable as independence as foolish, I had never before considered it as the unravelling of civilization. I had somehow been indoctrinated into the idea that civilization was in opposition to wildness or nature, not in opposition to individualism.

Perhaps that notion stemmed from elementary textbooks with a definition of civilization as the advent of agriculture or even from the Bible with the expulsion from Eden after eating from the tree of knowledge. Regardless, I am switching to my fellow Margaret's definition, that civilization exists when we set aside our own self-interest and take care of each other.

I will readily admit that there are some discrepancies when or if Margaret Mead actually said this or whether it is truly what she believed. However, between the climate change crisis and political polarization, it seems as if our civilization is crumbling beneath us and this definition offers us a solution.

The path forward is acknowledging our interdependence, nourishing community, and reconnecting with the land. This is what we practice at Mustard Seed Community Farm.

Our harvest mornings begin with the arrival of volunteers, announcements and introductions. Then we head out into the field with empty buckets and open minds, ready to gather food for our bodies and to feed our souls through connection.

We finish our harvests by each sharing a rose, a bud, and a thorn. A rose is something good, a bud something new, and a thorn something challenging. No matter how tired or frazzled after harvest, this tradition is never skipped. It is intentional time set aside to show that we care about one another. We are more than individual volunteers picking produce, we are growing a culture of wellbeing that travels out from our 11 acres in the country back to surrounding towns through each person that visits our farm.

I look forward to hearing each per-

Continued on page 6

Graphics by Megan Ramsey





BETTER KNOW A VOLUNTEER  
DICK HEISER

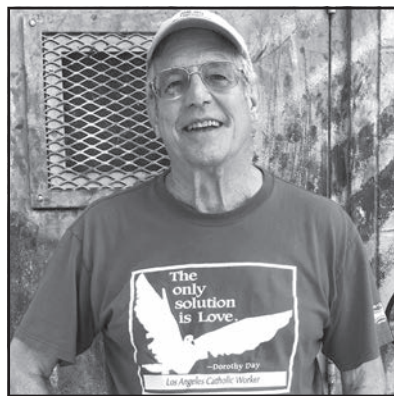


Photo by Jed Poole

Dick Heiser is a volunteer who certainly needs no introduction to anyone who has spent a good amount of time at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker in the past 30-plus years. But for those who do not work at our kitchen or live in southern California, here is a bit of history on one of our most consistent and dedicated volunteers and supporters.

He was born in Redding, Pennsylvania, and attended high school and college in Houston, Texas. As a child he was greatly fascinated with the Sputnik satellite, which sparked a heavy interest in the scientific field. He attended Rice University where he received a BA in Chemistry.

In 1963 he started working for IBM Corp. After nearly five years working as a project manager, he moved to California. Here he started working for McDonnell Douglas before starting his own company.

In 1975, Dick opened "The Computer Store" in Santa Monica, which was the first computer store in the world. Prior to that there was nowhere else you could walk into a store with cash in hand and purchase a computer from a storefront. During this time he also worked with John C. Lilly in the neuroscience field, where they were attempting to establish cognitive communication with dolphins.

After selling his startup in 1981, he started teaching various engineering short courses across Europe, Canada, and Mexico until taking on a full-

time position in 1987 teaching math and science at Fairfax High School.

It was in 1984 when he first came to the LACW. Shortly after connecting with us, he set out to the Nevada Nuclear Test Site to support the abolishment of nuclear arms. In 1986 he and his wife Loretta participated in the Great Peace March for Nuclear Disarmament. The walk started in Los Angeles and ended in Washington D.C. for a total of roughly 3700 miles. Dick credits this nine-month period of his life for his true understanding and appreciation for the meaning and importance of community living.

After becoming a docent at the new Getty Museum in 1998, he started working with the "Friends Outside" program in 2000, which visited inmates at the local correctional facilities and assisted with orientation programs upon release to help those in need of transition after serving time. This work was followed in 2012 at The New Way of Life Foundation helping people get their criminal histories expunged, creating more job opportunities for those with records.

These days he still volunteers at our kitchen on a weekly basis and continues his social justice work with the formerly incarcerated. He is both a big advocate of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), promoting a lifetime of never-ending free education and knowledge building, as well as a longtime member of The Plato Society of Los Angeles, which promotes open discussion and classes on a revolving number of topics. He still works as a Weisman Foundation docent where he gives tours of one of the best art collections to be found on this side of the world. Dick highly encourages anyone interested in The Plato Society or anyone who would love to be given a tour to reach out!

Dick may be contacted at dick.heiser@gmail.com

Better Know A Volunteer is written by Jed Poole

WISNIEWSKI cont'd from p.2

The temple is not being cleansed, but symbolically destroyed and that, in both cases, the problem is a lack of the "fruit" that Jesus expected to be present" (35). Quite astonishing! I had never before imagined it from that perspective.

The entire book presents similar arguments, and each is very convincing. I learned much from its 240 pages, and it greatly intensified my understanding of the nonviolent Kin-dom Jesus came to reveal and our struggle against empire.

In chapter eight, Borg and Crossan point out, "The archetypal pattern produced by Good Friday and Easter is both personal and political... We need personal transformation and political transformation" (210). Further stating, "But when only the personal meaning is emphasized, we betray the passion for which Jesus was willing to risk his life. That passion was the kingdom of God, and it led him to Jerusalem as the place of confrontation with the domination system of his time, execution, and vindication. The political meaning of Good Friday and Easter sees the human problem as injustice, and the solution as God's justice" (211).

In closing, I again quote the authors, "This deep centering also involves loyalty, allegiance, and commitment to God as disclosed in

Jesus. Such loyalty is the opposite of idolatry, of giving oneself to a lesser good. It also involves loyalty and commitment to God's passion as disclosed in Jesus, a passion for compassion, justice, and nonviolence... Jesus's last week challenges the domination system of this world even as it also invites us upon a journey through death to resurrection, journeying with the risen Jesus, the risen Christ." The authors ask two final questions, "Do you accept Jesus as your personal and political Lord and Savior?" (215) And, "Which journey, and which procession are we in" (216)?



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

DeCOSSE cont'd from p.2

often mistaken for "contradictions;" where fundamentalists demand uniform compliance with the truth they claim to have; and where postmodernists reject the possibility of truth at all. Instead discernment offers a way "to navigate changing contexts and specific situations as we seek the truth." At the heart of discernment is the intersection of speech

and Spirit out of which lasting community is created.

For Francis, the final step toward the creation of a better world is action and the primary action demanded is to go to the margins. "When God wanted to regenerate creation," the Pope says, "he chose to go to the margins—to places of sin and misery, of exclusion and suffering, of illness—and solitude—because they were also places full of possibility." By pointing to the margins, Francis indicates the kind of Catholic Church he desires: One dedicated to presence at the margins; both poor and with the poor; in the tradition of the Last Supper, both letting one's feet be washed and washing feet. But he also signals a more complex, hopeful matter than the simple washing of feet might suggest. For Francis, such merciful service helps to create the power of change for justice because it connects the previously isolated and helps to recover the dignity of all. Pope Francis has been a longtime supporter of popular movements that arise from impoverished margins around the world and he puts great hope for our future in the agency of such groups on behalf of justice. "We cannot dream of the future while continuing to ignore the lives of practically a third of the world's population rather than seeing them as a resource," he says.

Catholic Worker co-founder Peter Maurin invited us to create a new society from the shell of the old. Catholic Worker houses around the United States and the world are trying to do this in great and small ways. This short, accessible book by Pope Francis is an excellent conversation partner for this work in the time of COVID-19.

Professor David DeCosse is spending his sabbatical from Santa Clara University with the Los Angeles Catholic Worker.

GROSS cont'd from p.5

source of nurture to be respected and preserved. Empathy and responsibility are to be promoted in every area of life, public and private. Art and education are parts of self-fulfillment and therefore moral necessities."

The 9/11 attacks gave the Bush regime a perfect mechanism for maintaining power. They declared an unending war on terror. The frame of the "War on Terror" presupposes that the populace should be terrified. Orange alerts and other measures and rhetoric keep the "Terror" frame active. Fear and uncertainty then naturally activate the strict father-frame in a majority of people, leading the electorate to see politics in conservative terms.

Having done some research on the neo-conservatives and their agenda for world domination, I agree that we are due for a regime change in this country. Please remember though that, during the Clinton era, we continued to bomb Iraq and enforce the sanctions at a great cost of human life and suffering. If you are a poor person in a third world country, imperialism in the name of globalization does not feel much different than imperialism in the name of the War on Terror.

Here at the Catholic Worker, we do not consider ourselves to be conservatives or progressives. In Luke 8:21, Jesus says, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." That is the family of which we strive to be part.

Our family values are articulated in the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49). This sermon serves to identify and develop a vision of

the new world—and with it new behaviors—that Jesus proclaims and introduces. This is a new world grounded in the scriptural affirmation of God as the Merciful One and in the perspective that God's children reflect this graciousness in their own lives. The blessings and woes provide a way of thinking at odds with what many imagine to be the case in the world, but this is precisely the point. Here Jesus cultivates a new way of making sense of the world in which salvation is characterized as a reversal of fortunes. This discourse comes to a close with a series of sayings urging us not only to listen, but to really hear and obey his message—that is, with the need for changed dispositions and commitments to manifest themselves in changed behavior.

Our work with the poor reminds us daily how far we are from reaching these goals. But Bible study, prayer, and reflection reinforce our need to stay the course, even in a world that seems upside down. Here at the L.A. Catholic Worker, that is our "frame." Ω

Paul Gross was a Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member who joined the Heavenly Cloud of Witnesses in March 2011.

MILLER cont'd from p.5

son's rose. "Just being here" is probably the most common response. "Just being here." Wow. How often in our daily lives are we truly present enough to recognize that just being here is the gift? Imagine our world if that was always our answer.

Stewarding the land and being in nature demand presence. So much of farming is observing, listening, and responding to the land. This was especially challenging for me when I first arrived at the farm. I have never, never considered myself particularly observant, but in retrospect I think I have just been distracted. Distracted by television, the constantly refreshing news feeds on my phone, and by thoughts of the past or future.

These days I spend almost all of my time outdoors. I work outside, cook outside, eat outside, read outside, talk on the phone outside, everything except sleep. This has given me the opportunity to appreciate what I have always taken for granted. On multiple occasions I have found myself saying "thank you" aloud to the trees, when no one else is around, for holding me up while I sway in my hammock or providing shade on long, hot bike rides.

Mustard Seed Community Farm is a beautiful place, and I am exceedingly blessed to live and work here. Surrounded by hundreds of acres of corn and soybeans, our 11 acres of diversified vegetables, fruit trees, and prairie restoration are a visual reminder of the new society we are building in the shell of the old.

While it is improbable that everyone will have the opportunity to live on a community farm, acknowledging our interdependence, nourishing community, and reconnecting with the land are all entirely possible in cities.

Here are a couple ideas to get you going: plant some veggies or herbs, talk to farmers at the market, share food, go for a walk, listen to the birds and bugs, thank a tree. You will not regret it. Ω



Maggie Miller is a former Los Angeles Catholic Worker community member who is now with the Mustard Seed Community Farm in Ames, IA.



# ON THE LINE

## KINGS BAY PLOWSHARES 7 UPDATE

Mark Colville, the last to be incarcerated, was released from prison on September 10. Others are either in house confinement or a halfway house, except for Fr. Steve Kelly, SJ, who served his full sentence, but is on probation.

On August 13, the 11th District Court of Appeals heard oral arguments on appeals of KBP7 activists Clare Grady, Martha Hennessy, and Carmen Trotta. The appeal challenges the way the District Court denied the KBP7 their right to use the Religious Freedom Restoration Act as a defense in their cases. The court's decision is forthcoming. Patrick O'Neill and Mark Colville's cases are to be decided later. Liz McAlister and Fr. Steve Kelly, SJ did not appeal. See their website: [kingsbayplowshares7.org](http://kingsbayplowshares7.org) or the *Kings Bay Plowshares* Facebook page for more info and updates.

## CLIMATE JUSTICE

On September 15, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to begin to phase out all oil drilling in L.A. County (which includes over 1600 oil wells and the largest urban oil field in the country, Inglewood Oil Field), and implement a just transition which will ensure that the workers and communities most impacted will have a say in the process. But the fight to end oil drilling in L.A. is not over—this is the first of

many votes. Pressure on the Board of Supervisors will have to continue to make sure they follow through on their commitment to phase out oil.  
—*Climate Reality Los Angeles*

## NEW RESISTANCE FILM

A new film focusing on nuclear disarmament activists in the Plowshares movement was recently released called *The Nuns, The Priests, And The Bombs*—Are they criminals or prophets sending the world a wake-up call? See the trailer and info at:  
—[nunspriestsbombsfilm.com](http://nunspriestsbombsfilm.com)

## FOSSIL FUEL RESISTANCE

Jessica Reznicek, the Dakota Access Pipeline activist sentenced to eight years in prison, who committed her act of nonviolent civil disobedience in order to protect the land and water from industrial pollution and to stand in solidarity with the NODAPL resistance camps, now has supporters who began a campaign to "Free Jessica." Her eight-year sentence under terrorism charges is a chilling sign for the future of resistance to the fossil fuel industry. There are a few ways we can help:

**Free Jessica Reznicek e-mail:**  
[freejessicareznicek@gmail.com](mailto:freejessicareznicek@gmail.com)

**Free Jessica Reznicek Facebook page:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/freejessrez>

**Free Jessica Reznicek Web Page:**  
<https://supportjessicareznicek.com/>

Write Jessica at: **Jessica Reznicek #19293-030**  
**FCI Waseca**  
**P.O. Box 1731**  
**Waseca, MN 56093**

## HOMELESS CRISIS

Los Angeles, the homeless capital of the nation, has more than 66,400 unhoused people in L.A. County, with more than 41,200 of those in the City of Los Angeles as of September 2020. With the eviction moratorium about to expire on September 30 in Los Angeles County, those numbers are expected to increase exponentially. A recent analysis of California's rental debt from Policy Link, an Oakland-based research firm, found that more than 246,000 homes are behind in rent in L.A. County with residents owing a cumulative \$867,364,000. This spells catastrophe.  
—*lbpost.com*

## THE FINANCIAL COST OF BEING EMPIRE

The Pentagon paid the arms industry at least \$4.4 trillion since 9/11/2001. The top five war profiteers included Lockheed Martin, Boeing, General Dynamics, Raytheon, and Northrop Grumman.

Brown University's Costs of War Project released a new report on September 13, detailing post-9/11 spending by the Pentagon. The study found

that of the more than \$14 trillion spent by the Pentagon since the start of the war in Afghanistan, one-third to one-half went to private military contractors. The report indicated \$4.4 trillion of the total spending went towards weapons procurement and research and development, a category that directly benefits corporate military contractors. Private contractors are also paid through other funds, like operations and maintenance, but those numbers are harder to determine.  
—*informationclearinghouse.info*

## CLIMATE EMERGENCY

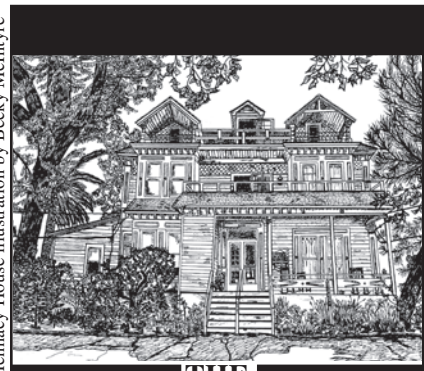
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has indicated that July and August 2021 were the hottest months ever recorded on Earth, a finding that comes just days after a United Nations scientific panel warned that humanity is running out of time to prevent the worst consequences of the climate emergency. NOAA also stated, "It remains very likely that 2021 will rank among the world's 10 warmest years on record."  
—*commondream.org*

## TRAGIC FACT

Percentage decline in California's monarch butterfly population since the 1980s: 99.7 —*Harpers Index, September 2021*

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

Hennacy House illustration by Becky McIntyre



## THE HOUSE JOURNAL

After such an uprooting year-and-a-half, and time seemingly slipping by unnoted, I take joy in returning to former traditions and routines that connect me both to this community's legacy, and to the people who are currently here.

Liturgies held under our clothesline area have become quite the custom! **Fr. Brendan Busse, SJ, Fr. Frank Buckley, SJ, Fr. Chris Ponnett,** and our own **Susan Dietrich** have each taken their turn leading us in service—alongside choruses of barking dogs, the hymns of ice cream trucks, and the timbre of overhead helicopters. But truly, coming together in prayer under our fig tree followed by a potluck meal al fresco has been quite a treat granted to us by the upsetting pandemic.

We returned to a couple of our old summer traditions that we missed doing last year. We travelled to Vanden-

berg Space Force Base on August 6, the 76th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing. **Tensie Hernandez** and **Dennis Apel** of the **Guadalupe Catholic Worker** welcomed us into their home for the weekend. It was a much-needed retreat full of discussion, prayer, nature, and bonfires.

Longtime friend and supporter **Mary Nalick** hosted a micro-pool party for us. We were holding our breath, hoping to be able to plunge back into our summer festivities and invite volunteers to an annual pool party. But as the time came closer it was evident that an event of that size was still not recommended. So, only our household went to beat the summer heat for an afternoon by the pool.

Another routine we have returned to is morning prayer. We gather once a week in our front living room for a period of silence, reflection, and ritual.

We are also happy to be joined by three new visiting workers! **Mark Vinzani**, who is trying out a little of everything in life, is here to get a taste of the Catholic Worker lifestyle. Whether buttering bread at the Hippie Kitchen, rolling paint on Hennacy House, or scrubbing pots at the dishwashing sink—he keeps good conversation going and has cheerfully brightened our summer.

Longtime visitor, now a community member, **Professor David DeCosse** is spending his sabbatical from Santa Clara University working with us for five months. We look forward to the enthusiasm and intention he brought with him in his past shorter visits heartening us in the coming months.

**Lauren Calka** met us when she volunteered at our soup kitchen for a day this past spring. She was leading a **Christ in the City** mission group from

Denver to Los Angeles. Interested in seeing more of what we do, and more of Los Angeles, Lauren has joined us for a month before she returns to Denver where she plans to open a new house of hospitality.

2018 Summer Intern, **Angelica Brown**, visited us from Portland for a short time. It was delightful to have her back, if just for a long weekend.

We have had a variety of activities for a bit of entertainment, both around the house and out. **Jeff Dietrich, Catherine Morris,** and **Susan Dietrich** have attended backyard concerts at the home of former community member (from the early days) **Dave Lumian**.

We had a well-attended in-home poetry reading evening, which we plan to continue as long as housemates continue to share a passion for poems. It has been a great way to share a little more about ourselves through the poems we pick to share.

With the close of summer has come the excitement for baseball. We tuned into a Dodgers vs. Cardinals game from our home, heckling from afar former community member and Cardinals fan **Theo Kayser**, who was watching at the stadium in St. Louis. Recently, some of us went to the Dodger vs Arizona Diamondbacks game at Dodger Stadium, taking our own hot dogs, peanuts, and Cracker Jacks to save a small fortune on concessions.

Community member **Mike Wisniewski** and his wife, **Bonnie**, recently celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary. They received a community blessing at Dolores Mission Church in Boyle Heights. We pray that they may be blessed with and enjoy many more years together.

We have kicked off an L.A.-themed film festival here at Hennacy House. Every other Friday evening we plan to watch L.A.-centric movies. We began with *Singing in the Rain*, followed by *Chinatown*, with an end-less list of movies in the future. Movie night draws a crowd; we love spotting familiar locations on the screen while munching on buttery popcorn.

On the night of the Emmys, some of us Catholic Workers were in Hollywood dancing the evening away at a block party in front of the Chateau Marmont. Organized by **Unite Here!**, the picketing continues until the Chateau re-hires their laid-off workers and commits to treating them with more respect. With a DJ, party lights, and a huge crowd, we surely caught the attention of passersby on Sunset Blvd, and may have discouraged celebrities from ending their big night at the Chateau.

For those of you who come straight to our *House Journal* for the latest bit of community news, we have some really big news to share this month. Community member **Megan Ramsey** and longtime partner **Josh Sgarlata** are now engaged! The household lifted glasses of sparkling cider as **Catherine Morris** gave a toast that our union may be a sign of hope in such desperate times.

We truly thank each of you for being part of the tradition of caring and supporting us. Without your prayers, financial support, or your time at the Hippie Kitchen, we would not be here continuing the work, prayer, and play of the Catholic Worker. Many Blessings.

*House Journal* is written by Megan Ramsey.

# CHRISTMAS ON SKID ROW

**WE NEED CANES, STAMPS, ENGLISH CHRISTMAS CARDS, RAZORS, CALENDARS, RAIN PONCHOS, TARPS, AND BACKPACKS**

- **CANES:** Our kitchen guests constantly ask us for canes. Please help us fill their need by donating (new or used) wooden or adjustable metal canes.
- **STAMPS:** Please send “Forever” and “Global Forever” stamps for our annual Christmas card project. And, we need only **ENGLISH** Christmas cards this year.
- **CALENDARS:** Our friends downtown appreciate calendars. If you have extras, please send them as a New Year’s treat.
- **OTHER NEEDS:** Inexpensive lightweight rain ponchos. Tarps. New or used backpacks. Disposable razors. **NEW** reading glasses with a strength between +1.0 and +3.5.

**LIVE OUT OF THE AREA AND WOULD LIKE TO SAVE ON SHIPPING COSTS?**  
Simply write a check payable to the Los Angeles Catholic Worker and place your request on the memo line, and we will shop for you. **THANK YOU. MANY BLESSINGS.**



On December 2, 1980, four U.S. churchwomen working with the poor in El Salvador – Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, and lay missionary Jean Donovan – were kidnapped, raped, and murdered by the U.S.-backed military of El Salvador. In the end they met the same fate as thousands of unnamed Salvadoran poor who were killed or disappeared.

Join us **virtually** in commemorating their 41st anniversary.

**Thursday, December 2**  
**Please check the LACW website in late November for time and Zoom link info.**

The Los Angeles Catholic Worker, founded in 1970, is part of the international Catholic Worker movement founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. We are a resistance community that operates a free soup kitchen on 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> and Los Angeles Catholic Worker on Facebook.



## 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://occatholicworker.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://sbcw.org> – [lizaOSB@aol.com](mailto:lizaOSB@aol.com)

### CASA COLIBRÌ CATHOLIC WORKER

Ocampo #2 Hostotipaquillo, Jalisco Mexico C.P. 46440  
<http://casacolibriv.com>

011-52 - 386 - 744-5063 - [casacolibriv@gmail.com](mailto:casacolibriv@gmail.com)

### AMANI HOUSE - NAIROBI, KENYA, AFRICA

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

### NEW JERSEY CATHOLIC WORKER

P.O. Box 2203, Elizabeth, NJ 07207  
[NJCW@riseup.net](mailto:NJCW@riseup.net) – (323) 704-9960

### NEW ORLEANS CATHOLIC WORKER

1910 Constance St., New Orleans, LA 70130  
(504) 457-8062 – [nocw@yahoo.com](mailto:nocw@yahoo.com)

<https://neworleanscatholicworker.weebly.com>

### VENICE CATHOLIC WORKER

<https://venicecatholicworker.org>