

CATHOLIC WORKER

COMMUNITY, HOSPITALITY, RESISTANCE

Let Your Love Come to Me and I Shall Live

Harry Wills on the treasure of the resurrection

Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious about your life, what you should eat or drink, nor about your body, what you should wear. Is life not more than food and the body more than clothing? Behold the birds of the sky, that they do not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them... Now, who among you by being anxious can add a single hour to his lifespan? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not labour nor do they spin. I say to you, however, that not even Solomon in all his glory was adorned like one of these. (Matt. 6:25-29)

Easter is here and the LCW is not only rejoicing in the resurrection of Christ but also of a night shelter, which you can read about in the House Update. Grief has brought life and resurrection to my mind too, but so has the arrival of Spring and the seasonal resurrection of life, the perfect season to be beholding the birds and considering the lilies and to be reminded of the consolation of God:

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. (Ps. 23:1-4)

Continued on p. 3



Great Resurrection, Woodcut, Wassily Kandinsky, 1913

Oily Money Out!

Naomi Orrell on fighting for climate justice

Every week across the City of London, oil and gas companies, climate deniers and far-right lobbyists meet for conferences, dinners and drink receptions. As they pop champagne corks and toast to their obscene profits, we are seeing the effects of their actions across the world: extreme weather events, climate breakdown, and destruction of biodiversity. The climate crisis is being orchestrated in London.

Fossil Free London—a group that I have been organising with since joining LCW—refuse to let this happen. Our group exists to make our city inhospitable to the oil and gas industry by disrupting their events and confronting them with the reality of the climate crisis.

Continued on p. 5

This Issue: Treasure in heaven pp. 1, 3-4; Oily Money Out pp. 1-5; House Update p. 2; Notes On Failure pp. 6-7; Life in GCH; pp. 8-9; Brian Quail Obituary pp. 10-11; Mystery of the Poor pp. 12-13; Easy Essay p. 13; Sacrament of Brotherhood pp. 14-16; Tides of Life p. 17; Poem p. 18

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GCH House Update

We recently had one of our fortnightly Bible studies on the subject of 1 Corinthians 13, in which St Paul describes Christian love, in all its power and generosity. Both of the guests who were there reflected on their culture shock when they first came to Britain, which immediately seemed a less loving country than the East African countries where they had grown up. They recalled how drivers would offer lifts to anyone they saw walking by the road, or how, if you saw someone picking mangoes from a tree outside your house, rather than warning them about trespass, you'd offer them a ladder so they could get to the higher ones! I am very grateful for our little outpost of community in a grey and unfriendly city, and pray that it spreads. After all, as Dorothy Day wrote, 'God meant for things to be much easier than we have made them.'

We are happy to have been able to re-open our night shelter, now as a joint project with our friend Conor from Martha House, to operate through the winter. In preparation



for the re-opening, Conor and Harry worked miracles in the hall through January, installing new curtains, a dividing wall, and heat and sound insulation, which will make this winter shelter—and any future hospitality in the hall—much warmer, and much cheaper to keep warm. The shelter is already filling up, and a small army of volunteers have returned to cook and do shifts in it.

We had to say goodbye to James in November, who has returned to Australia to pursue his degree in social work; we are beyond grateful for all his work and his unfailingly warm, joyful presence here. Just before Christmas, we were joined by Eva, who will be a volunteer here until the summer. She has settled in well and, to our great relief, is undertaking much-needed work in the garden. One of the guests in the house, who had been detained by the Home Office and threatened with deportation, is back with us. We are very happy that he is back here, but his imprisonment was pointless and cruel, and in a decent country would never have happened in the first place.

Moya spent January at Maria Skobtsova House in Calais. While there she was able to see the new Sojourner Truth House, a house of hospitality in Calais inspired by the Catholic Worker which she has set up with four other Quakers, which hopes to start welcoming guests in the Spring. We're looking forward to maintaining close links.

Finally, we want to express our immense gratitude to Brian Arthur, who, having passed away last year, left us a very substantial legacy. We were glad to have been able to meet and get to know him in the last part of his life, and hope we will be able to use his legacy in a way befitting of his trust and generosity. Please keep him in your prayers.



All Saints, Woodcut, Wassily Kandinsky, 1913

does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 Jn. 4:7-8) Eternal life, then, lies in love, and to *abide in love is to abide in God.* (1 Jn. 4:16) We are also told that *man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God* (Matt. 4:4). These ‘words’ culminate in this command: *that you love one another, as I have loved you* (Jn. 13:34; Matt. 7:12; 22:40) and we must remember that *His command leads to eternal life* (Jn. 12:50).

He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor—His righteousness endures forever. (Ps. 112:9)

Let’s return to the birds and lilies. Saint Basil of Caesarea said that *the more you abound in wealth the more you lack in love*, because the measure of our superfluity is a measure of our inequity and, therefore, a sign of our neglect of neighbour and God. Divine love is self-giving, self-sacrificial (Jn. 15:13) but if we are anxious about our earthly means, we will be reluctant to participate in it. Maybe the *true wealth* that cannot be stolen is the wealth we give away, the *cloak of His righteousness* is the cloak with which we cover the naked and shield the vulnerable, the bread that *endures to eternal life* is the food that we share with the hungry. Since we have *received freely*, so should we *give freely*, (Matt. 10:8; 18:21)

Let Your Love Come to Me and I Shall Live

Continued from page 1.

So, considering the birds and the lilies, *if life does not consist in an abundance of possessions*, (Lk. 12:15) what does it consist in? Paul’s answer is to *do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way we will lay up treasure for ourselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that we may take hold of the life that is truly life.* (1 Tim. 6:17-19, cf. Prov. 3:9-10) In other words, to *use worldly wealth to gain friends for ourselves, so that when it is gone, we will be welcomed into*

eternal dwellings. (Lk. 16:9)

Instead of worrying over *food that spoils*, (Jn. 6:27) garments that wear out, (Heb. 1:11) wealth that *vermin destroy and thieves steal*, (Matt. 6:19) we are told to seek the *true bread from heaven, that endures to eternal life*, (Jn. 6:27, 32) *garments of salvation and cloaks of His righteousness*, (Isa. 61:10) the *true wealth.* (Matt. 6:20; 19:21; Lk. 16:11) That is, the *true life.* (1 Tim. 6:19)

Where do we begin the search for this *true life*? The Johannine literature reveals that *eternal life is this, that they know you, the only true God* (Jn. 17:3) and *whoever*

having faith that the love we measure out will be measured back many times over. (Prov. 11:18-19; Matt. 25:14-30; Mk. 10:29-31)

Go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens. And come, follow Me. (Matt. 19:21)

Giving up our attachment to what is earthly is the challenge of love, but also the consolation! He comforted us, saying: *As I live, you also live.*

(Jn. 14:19) Who can deny that Jesus is resurrected in the present, not just as the body of the church, but in our deeds when we live and love in self-giving ways inspired by Him? Also, our relatives, friends, martyrs, and saints, who have passed away, who gave of themselves for us, share in all that life and joy when we love others as they did us. Love endures forever. (1 Co. 13:7) Even in this life we gain much: *A friend loves always, and for adversity a*

brother is born. (Prov. 17:17) Those who love receive life (Lk. 10:27-28; Hab. 2:4) and some, who love as Christ loved, *may not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom* (Matt. 16:28).

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! For there the Lord bestows His blessing, even life forevermore. (Ps. 133:1,3)

There's no profit in possessing the world if we forfeit life, (Matt. 16:26) and we mustn't remain slaves to mammon, as we cannot serve two masters. (Matt. 6:21-24) We will not be free from this slavery, however, unless we start giving, not only from what we can afford, but also from what we can't. (Mk. 12:41-44) How can we bear anything less when faced with Jesus' total sacrifice on the cross? We must do this not only because we are *rewarded according to what we have done*, (Matt. 16:27; 25:14-30) but also: through our own sacrificial love and self-giving, the resurrected Lord abides, alongside the spirit-life of all who have loved us.

Let Your love be ready to console me, according to Your promise to Your servant. Let Your love come to me and I shall live. (Ps. 119:76-7)

Harry Wills



Landscape with Upright White Figure, Woodcut, Wassily Kandinsky, 1913

Oily Money Out!

Continued from page 1.

Our goal is to shut down events that allow companies like Shell, BP or Equinor (to name but a few) to be present, and shatter the facade of their legitimacy. Not only do we refuse to let them party in peace, but we are there to confront them with the consequences of their actions. We tell them stories of the lives that they have destroyed, the biodiversity and communities that have been decimated. We are not there to engage in dialogue as we believe that the time for civilised conversation is over.

Since joining Fossil Free London, I've managed to get into award dinners, conferences about gender equality in the fossil fuel industry, events about the use of AI, even a drinks reception of Republican Party Overseas members. Perhaps the most nerve-racking was when we disrupted a venture capital event where Richard Tice (Deputy Leader of Reform UK) was speaking. It's amazing what manner of mischief you can get up to with a confident stride and a business-like outfit! Our tactics vary depending on the type of event we are disrupting, but our aims remain the same: bring noise and disruption to spaces that

need to hear the truth.

Getting involved with Fossil Free London has made me realise how deep my grief for the climate is. Before every action, we take a moment to remind ourselves why we are here. We hear stories of obscene oil company profits or yet another supercharged climate disaster. We share stories of people we know whose lives have been turned upside down. Often when I go into these actions, I think of our guests, many of whom have travelled from countries that have been torn apart by the climate crisis (or conflicts over natural resources). Indeed, there is something particularly disturbing about how these companies exacerbate the issues that cause people to make dangerous journeys across borders, all the while calling fossil fuel extraction good, plain financial common-sense.

Confronting the very people who are destroying our planet can be challenging: there have been times that I have come back from an action feeling rather shaken up. Perhaps this is because actions like these require you to bring your whole self. Physically, I have to be willing to be manhandled and dragged out of buildings by overly enthusiastic security guards (sometimes

even by disgruntled event attendees). But it also requires you to believe that justice for the climate is intricately bound up in justice for displaced people everywhere. Unlike some climate groups that I have been involved with, Fossil Free London are clear that there cannot be climate justice without justice for Palestine, the destruction of fascism, and the liberation of all workers and people.

Our calling at the London Catholic Worker is to build community with some of the most marginalised people in our society. But we are also, crucially, a community of resistance. Dorothy Day once wrote that “we must cry out against injustice or by our silence consent to it”. For me, our hospitality work is informed and fuelled by our activism and vice versa- indeed, I truly believe that we cannot do one without the other. So while I do bring my rage and grief to these disruptions, I also bring my faith and, in turn, the Catholic Worker's desire to create a new society formed by love and justice out of the shell of the old. I believe that one day we will live in a world where ‘justice [will] roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream’ (Amos 5:24)- but we must fight in order to get there.

Naomi Orrell

Notes on Failure

Thomas Frost on all the work done and all the work left undone

“Certainly the Catholic Worker movement has failed.” Dorothy Day wrote those words in a 1947 editorial reflecting on the movement’s first fifteen years. There are plenty of grounds to contest them—look at the miracle whereby this movement, with no structure, no consistent leadership, and often no money, has persisted for almost a century and now in more than one hundred communities. Countless people have been housed, fed, and clothed, and their dignity upheld, in spite of all the efforts of the State, the economic order, and the devil to deny it. But this, of course, was not Dorothy’s point. She was reflecting on all that had been left undone, and the extent to which the Revolution of the Heart had not been fulfilled—both in the flawed individuals who made up the communities, and in the Church which had largely ignored the movement’s original call for a house of hospitality *in every parish*. The labourers were very few, and not always effective, and the need was unfathomably great.

In addition to our own house of hospitality, we ran our own night shelter between February and November last year. We provided ten beds and accommodated twenty people across the year. Every night without fail we provided a freshly cooked dinner, a warm bed, and breakfast to people who would otherwise have spent most nights on the street. Beside our own work, it was enabled by the many people who gave their time as volunteer cooks, and all those who provide the donations which pay for the heating, water, and food. I am very grateful to all those who made it possible to stay open, and for the privilege of doing a little of God’s work in proclaiming the good news to the poor—all the works of mercy are forms of evangelism, because the good news includes the fact that it is not necessary that anybody



Dorothy Day, Photo by John Orris

in this city should have to sleep outside in the rain, if we love our neighbours enough to invite them into our homes.

Still, we were always conscious of how little we were offering people—a folding bed in a rundown old church hall which we couldn’t keep as warm as we would have liked, with one shower and two toilets down a steep flight of stairs which were difficult for some of the guests, and having every morning to leave until night, whatever the weather. It was much less than they deserved. If we are welcoming Jesus into our house in the guise of the poor, it is surely appropriate to feel a little shame at the paucity of our hospitality for the King of Heaven, even if it is because we have little to offer. Nor were we ever in a position to welcome the guests as equals – with a limited service, there was more conflict, often about use of the shower, and we had to mediate. Ensuring that the guests had an environment in which they felt safe obliged us to wield authority and enforce rules. Catholic Worker communities

generally want, as far as possible, for guests to be equal members of the community, but this is rarely achieved in practice. Certainly, in the night shelter the hierarchy between those giving and those receiving hospitality was always very apparent, so that beside our anxiety about the quality of the service, I felt a less useful anxiety about whether we were being 'real' Catholic Workers, which is, I suspect, more common in our communities than we generally acknowledge.

By October we had come to the very difficult decision that we would not be able to keep the shelter open over the winter. The primary reason was that, straightforwardly, we were running out of money, and while a grant and an exceptionally generous donation have improved our situation in the last couple of months, the extra cost of the shelter, particularly in heating the hall through the winter, might have caused us serious problems. The other reason was that, on top of all our other work, many of us found the shelter exhausting, mentally and emotionally. The shelter was never intended to be



King Solomon in Old Age, Gustave Dore, 1800

permanent, but having extended it from its initial three months to the eventual ten months, it had become part of our life, and while the decision not to open in the first place would have been relatively easy, the decision to close it after nine months of operation was very difficult. I, for my part, was left with a sense of failure, which was to an extent irrational. Considered objectively, we did a very good job with our very limited resources, and the guests expressed humbling gratitude for what we had done. We were, moreover, very happy that all of them moved on to other accommodation rather than the street. Still, those whose cases were not resolved still face an indeterminate period of destitution, reliant on night shelters and the generosity of friends, and at the mercy of an inhumane border regime. Some of them may still be among the many thousands who will sleep on the streets of London this year.

It is difficult to feel a sense of success while these conditions continue. In the face of the vast suffering of this city—let alone the rest of the world—our efforts will always seem insufficient. Dorothy Day more than once reflected that Christ was a failure at the point of his crucifixion, and was victorious precisely in his failure; consequently, if we are setting out to follow him, we can expect to fail too, at least as the world understands it. The call is not to resign ourselves to these problems as though they were insoluble—in fact they are all solvable, and could be solved today if more people had a will to do so!—but to recognise that our sowing is worthwhile regardless of the extent to which we ourselves see or enjoy the reaping. This is almost a consolation. Still, I think it's important for us to acknowledge, and allow ourselves to feel, the failure in our work, rather than strain to maintain an illusion, to ourselves or anyone else, that it is a constant unalloyed success. As Solomon knew, there is a time for mourning as well as a time for rejoicing.

Thomas Frost

Houses of Hospitality

Eva Martinez reflects on her time in two contrasting communities

I am the newest volunteer at GCH, here for a short(ish) stay of six months. I've been invited to write about coming to the community, and I thought of contrasting this place to Camphill, since I volunteered in one of those communities for ten months.

The quickest way to draw out the difference between the two is the following—at the end of January, I was arrested at a Palestine protest. If this happened to me at Camphill, even if I wasn't roundly shown the door, I feel sure that the sense of having committed a grievous faux pas would have made me leave.

Long term Camphillers tend to be left leaning, but socially quite conservative. Everyone knows they are involved in a good work (providing support to adults with learning disabilities), and that is enough to be getting on with.

Large scale disruption of society is not in the Camphill credo. I got the sense that in the early days, the socially conscious sensibilities of the sixties were more prevalent. But with the introduction of the Care Inspectorate, comprehensive legislation around the care of vulnerable adults, and the fact that most



Expulsion of the merchants from the temple, Monreale Cathedral, Palermo

community income now comes directly from government spending, Camphill and revolution aren't compatible.

In contrast, while we agreed we should get better at preparing for the worst when someone goes out to protest, here at GCH, they stand by a comrade in need. Never have I had the sense that everyone is

contemplating what a maladapted hooligan I am.

Here, there is an understanding that we are in a shared struggle against an unjust status quo, each working in whatever capacity suits us best. And that, at the end of the day, a few tables will be upturned in the temple before the kingdom comes.

A further difference between GCH and Camphill is how comfortable I feel here. There were times at Camphill when I felt like my whole personality was a faux pas. I arrived fresh from a Scottish council estate and a chaotic failed attempt at a commune, and the very wholesomeness of Camphill life alienated me.

The typical Camphill volunteer is a middle class German teen. Living there was my first encounter with so many peers from financially stable, two parent families. It seemed like everyone's mother and father were together in holy matrimony, and on top of that, they were both heart surgeons.

The farm was the saving grace of Camphill for me. It was an open space where I could run around, get muddy, wield pitchforks, and generally swear and shout. I had free expression at tea break, messing around with the autistic service users I came to have genuine friendships with. It was the place where I was able to be outspoken and test the boundaries of Camphill social convention. And if I don't flatter myself too much, I think sometimes I cheered things up.

But at the opposite end of that spectrum were whole community social events, which were frequent,

performative, and mandatory. These wholesome gatherings always put me on edge. I felt like a coarse, ill mannered nee forced to imitate, if not quite 'high society', still a type of society I had never experienced. I always felt like a fugitive about to be unmasked and would sneak off for as many cigarettes as would get me through the evening.

In contrast, here at GCH, I genuinely enjoy it when we do things together. And I don't feel like I need to stretch and strain to be something different than who I am. Maybe it's because I'm a few years older and wiser. But I think it's also something hard baked into this community. The whole place is aimed at reaching out to the disenfranchised, people who've been handed way worse cards than me and who don't even have the security of citizenship in the country they live in.

Camphill is also trying to help people, but it does it in a totally different way. Camphill's approach is pedagogical. It ultimately aims at making people with learning disabilities better. Teaching them to do useful work, to feel responsible for others, and to be less chaotic in their interactions.

The approach here couldn't be more different. This

community certainly doesn't see itself as teaching guests how to behave or integrate into British society. It is just an open hand, a point of rest, an attempt to offer compassion.

Maybe that's why I feel so comfortable here. To stay at Camphill, I felt I would have to cut off large parts of myself and let them disappear. Let all my bad memories be overwritten by pleasant dinner parties and cold dips in the loch.

Here, there is no such pressure. This community doesn't turn itself away from the pain of the world, seeking to insulate its members within an ideal, mini society. This community is here to engage with and confront that suffering.

I suppose that is to be expected when the image of a crucified God is at the heart of a place. It is really no wonder I feel comfortable being here with all my wounds.

(Disclaimer: despite my moaning, Camphill is pretty nice. I love going back there as a visitor, it is just not somewhere I would commit my life to. I wouldn't advise anyone against volunteering there.)

Eva Martinez

Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called the children of God

Peace activist Brian Quail died on February 17. He helped to establish Pax Christi Scotland and was involved in many other peace organisations as well. Brian dedicated his life to making this a nonviolent world free from weapons of mass destruction, as fellow Pax Christi Scotland member Ross Ahfeld recalls in this obituary.

He came to mind the way the desert prophets do—a little wind-burned, a little out of step with the world, and wholly unwilling to soften the truth. John the Baptist, with his wild honey and locusts, his rough coat and rougher message, never tried to belong to polite society. He prepared a way. He made straight the path. He unsettled people into honesty. Brian Quail lived like that.

There was in him the same stubborn, luminous refusal to compromise—the same sense that faith was not meant to be tidy or respectable, but alive, inconvenient, and burning. The old Russians had a word for such people: a Fool for Christ. Not foolish in mind, but foolish in the eyes of a world that mistakes comfort for wisdom. The holy fool speaks plainly, lives simply, renounces applause, and becomes, just by existing, a quiet rebuke to complacency. We had one of our own.

I first met Brian on the evening of 19 March 2003, at a Scottish Socialist Party rally in Greenock opposing



the second Iraq War. Within hours, the bombing would begin. Brian, already known as a tireless peace activist, spoke that night with a kind of trembling conviction—not theatrical, not rehearsed, but rising from somewhere deep and immovable. I was captivated. He was impossible to miss: an older man, white-haired, oddly dressed, wearing bright red braces, a CND T-shirt, and Doc Martens. Around his neck hung a large silver Russian cross. That, more than anything, startled me—this hardened left-wing peace campaigner marked so visibly by faith.

Someone in the crowd heckled him: ‘Aye, you’re bangin’ on about peace, but that cross round yer neck is the biggest killin’

machine the world has ever seen!’

Brian looked down at the cross, then back up, and said slowly, gently, ‘This? This is Jesus of Nazareth.’

It would not be the last time I watched him disarm hostility with nothing but simplicity, sincerity, and truth. At that time, I had drifted from Mass and buried myself in Marxism. I did not know Christians like Brian existed, certainly not in left-wing political circles. I sometimes think that if I had not met him that night, I might never have returned to faith at all. Brian did not preach at people. He never demanded heroic gestures or arrests.

Yet his life—steady, stubborn, sacrificial—unsettled our comfortable beliefs. He gave everything to peace, though he never romanticised it. He did not enjoy prison. He did not enjoy cold cells. Once, on our way to Faslane for a four-minute prayer vigil—four minutes, the time it took for Nagasaki to be destroyed—he confessed he felt physically sick every time we went. Courage, in Brian, was not bravado. It was endurance.



Photo by Jamie Simpson

Even in later years, when his body began to fail him, he continued. Arrest, prison, witness—again and again. When he could no longer throw himself beneath military vehicles, he still showed up. Presence, for Brian, was resistance. Yet he was never dour. He could appear in full kilt and Glengarry at republican socialist commemorations, proud and smiling, a man stitched together from faith, politics, and history. At the end of our weekly Catholic Worker meetings, he loved to lead us singing the Regina Caeli in Latin—his voice thin but determined, as if heaven might lean closer if we sang bravely enough.

He had a gift for unsettling rooms. In 2016, at a polished event in St Aloysius' School, he stood mid-lecture and reminded everyone it was the anniversary of Easter 1916, asking Glasgow Catholics of Irish descent to pause and

remember. The air thickened with embarrassment. I felt only pride. He confused people, too—especially secular activists—with his seamless garment ethic: anti-war, anti-nuclear, anti-death penalty, pro-life. To Brian, consistency was not ideology but conscience.

He encouraged my writing, offered ideas, nudged me forward. I will miss him more than words allow. Last August, though frail and gaunt, he joined us once more at Faslane to mark the 80th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He sat on a small stool, worn from a lifetime of resistance, yet still present. Around us hung peace banners. We carried a replica of the Nagasaki Cross—the only thing left standing after the cathedral was destroyed and its faithful incinerated. From ruin, a sign of reconciliation.

Brian often despaired. He could not understand how humanity accepted what he called a portable Auschwitz. Many dismissed him as eccentric, unbalanced—a fool. But he understood something the world prefers to forget: sometimes one must become foolish to be wise. Brian was wise. The madness was never his. He stood, stubborn and gentle, a voice in the wilderness, pointing toward another way—a world beyond violence, made possible through the life and witness of Christ. He believed peacemaking was a calling, even unto imprisonment, trusting that faithfulness, not success, was the measure, and that in the end, resurrection would have the final word. Rest in peace, Brian Quail.

Ross Ahfeld

The Mystery of the Poor

Dorothy Day, in the springtime of 1964, reflects on finding Christ in the poor.

On Holy Thursday, truly a joyful day, I was sitting at the supper table at St. Joseph's House on Chrystie Street and looking around at all the fellow workers and thinking how hopeless it was for us to try to keep up appearances. The walls are painted a warm yellow, the ceiling has been done by generous volunteers, and there are large, brightly colored ikon-like paintings on wood and some colorful banners with texts (now fading out) and the great crucifix brought in by some anonymous friend with the request that we hang it in the room where the breadline eats. (Some well-meaning guest tried to improve on the black iron by gilding it, and I always intend to do something about it and restore its former grim glory.)

I looked around and the general appearance of the place was, as usual, home-like, informal, noisy, and comfortably warm on a cold evening. And yet, looked at with the eyes of a visitor, our place must look dingy indeed, filled as it always is with men and women, some children too, all of whom bear the unmistakable mark of misery and destitution. Aren't we deceiving ourselves, I am sure many of them think, in the works we are doing? What are we accomplishing for them anyway, or for the world or for the common good? 'Are these people being rehabilitated?' is the question we get almost daily from visitors or from our readers (who seem to be great letter writers). One priest had his catechism classes write us questions as to our work after they had the assignment in religion class to read my book *The Long Loneliness*.

The majority of them asked the same question: 'How can you see Christ in people?' And we only say: It is an act of faith, constantly repeated. It is an act of love, resulting from an act of faith. It is an act of hope, that we can awaken these same acts in their hearts, too, with the help of God, and the Works of Mercy, which you, our readers, help us to do, day in and day out over the years.

On Easter Day, on awakening late after the long midnight services in our parish church, I read over the last chapter of the four Gospels and felt that I had received great light and understanding with the reading of them. 'They have taken the Lord out of His tomb and we do not know where they have laid Him,' Mary Magdalene said, and we can say this with her in times



The Christ of the Breadlines, Fritz Eichenberg, 1951

of doubt and questioning. How do we know we believe? How do we know we indeed have faith? Because we have seen His hands and His feet in the poor around us. He has shown Himself to us in them. We start by loving them for Him, and we soon love them for themselves, each one a unique person, most special!

In that last glorious chapter of St. Luke, Jesus told His followers, 'Why are you so perturbed? Why do questions arise in your minds? Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself. Touch Me and see. No ghost has flesh and bones as you can see I have.' They were still unconvinced, for it seemed too good to be true. 'So He asked them, "Have you anything to eat?" They offered Him a piece of fish

they had cooked which He took and ate before their eyes.'

How can I help but think of these things every time I sit down at Chrystie Street or Peter Maurin Farm and look around at the tables filled with the unutterably poor who are going through their long-continuing crucifixion. It is most surely an exercise of faith for us to see Christ in each other. But it is through such exercise that we grow and the joy of our vocation assures us we are on the right path.

Most certainly, it is easier to believe now that the sun warms us, and we know that buds will appear on the sycamore trees in the wasteland across from the Catholic Worker office, that

life will spring out of the dull clods of that littered park across the way. There are wars and rumors of war, poverty and plague, hunger and pain. Still, the sap is rising, again there is the resurrection of spring, God's continuing promise to us that He is with us always, with His comfort and joy, if we will only ask.

The mystery of the poor is this: That they are Jesus, and what you do for them you do for Him. It is the only way we have of knowing and believing in our love. The mystery of poverty is that by sharing in it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge of and belief in love.

Dorothy Day

Tradition or Catholic Action

Peter Maurin on the eternal gift of Calvary

The central act of devotional life in the Catholic Church is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the unbloody repetition of the Sacrifice of the Cross. On the Cross of Calvary Christ gave His life to redeem the world. The life of Christ was a life of sacrifice. The life of a Christian must be a life of sacrifice. We cannot imitate the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary by trying to get all we can. We can only imitate the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary by trying to give all we can.



Eternal Calvary, Fernand Hertenberg, 1927

The Sacrament of Brother

Br Johannes Maertens meditates on the call to love our neighbour

Less than two weeks ago, I was in the refugee camp in Dunkirk, speaking with a young man from West Africa. He told me how he had tried to cross from Libya to Italy on a small boat—perhaps a fishing boat. The crossing went wrong. In the middle of the Mediterranean, people around him were crying, fading away, slipping into the deep cold silence. He and fourteen others survived. Around a hundred people disappeared into the water. That experience has marked or perhaps scarred his life forever. Next year, we may well be standing here naming some of those very people.



When I stand here outside the Home Office, this is not, for me, a political action. It is not driven by anger, even though righteous anger has its place. What we do here is liturgy; prayer, lament. Not hidden away in private, but in public, so that society can see and hear that there is real reason to lament.

And why here? Because this is the place where decisions about borders, belonging, and human life are made every day. For many of our refugee friends, this building symbolises waiting, anxiety, and judgment: judgment on their lives, their stories, and

their casework. That is why we keep vigil here.

Here, too, we proclaim the Gospel. Jesus never told us to keep the Good News inside the church walls. He told us to bring it to those who need it. Our Gospel today speaks with disarming clarity. And I hope the people inside this building can hear these words—especially those who are people of faith, of any faith.

Jesus is asked: “Which commandment is the first of all?” He answers by quoting the Shema, the heartbeat of Jewish prayer:

‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’

And then He closes this off with a verse from Leviticus: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’

He is not adding a second idea. He is revealing the visible form of the first. The Shema becomes flesh in the neighbour.

Jesus binds the two together

as one movement of the heart. To love God is to love the neighbour. To love the neighbour is to love God. Because God is love, and without love, we do not know God at all.

It is vital to emphasise this double command today, not least because there are people in this country, in the United States, in Russia, and elsewhere who are hijacking religious symbols, the name of Christ, and the very word 'Christianity' to drive an anti-Christ agenda, to launder their racism and their nationalism in the language of faith.

Mother Maria Skobtsova understood this with prophetic sharpness. She challenges us! What we do in church, at Mass or, as the Orthodox call it, 'the Divine Liturgy', where we celebrate Christ's self-giving love, Christ's self-emptying on the Cross, she links directly to what we do outside the church walls.

She wrote: 'If at the centre of the Church's life there is this self-giving Eucharistic love, then where are the Church's boundaries? Where is the periphery of this centre? ... The whole world becomes the single altar of a single temple, and for this universal liturgy we must offer our hearts, like bread and wine, so that they may be transformed into Christ's love ... and given as

food for the world.'

For her, the altar is never confined to stone and sanctuary. The whole world is the altar.

Every street, every detention centre, every refugee hotel, every immigration office (and we can extend this to every prison, hospital, homeless shelter, or family where abuse happens) - every place where a human being waits in fear or hope, these are the places where Christ walks out of the

church and into the world. And if He walks there, then we must walk there too.

To quote these powerful words of Pope Francis: 'The Church (and this is all of us Christians) is called to come out of herself and go to the peripheries, not only the geographical ones, but also the existential peripheries: those of the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents, and of all forms of misery.'



Mother Maria Yelizaveta Skobtsova, 1932-1933

Mother Maria believed the Eucharist is not only something we receive; it is something we become. The bread and wine are transformed so that we may be transformed, our hearts offered, our lives broken open in love, our presence given as nourishment to those who hunger for dignity, safety, and recognition.

So as we stand here, we are not outside the liturgy or the sacred. We are in its very heart. This piece of pavement here becomes our altar. The people whose names we speak, whose stories we honour, whose suffering we refuse to ignore, they are not interruptions to our prayer. They are the icons through whom God looks back at us.

To love God with all our heart means returning again and again to the Source, letting God's mercy shape our inner being, praying with honesty, even praying with our unbelief. But that love cannot remain interior. It must spill outward. It must take the shape of hospitality, gentleness, solidarity, and practical care. It must take the shape of sleeves rolled up, of advocacy, of refusing to walk past those wounded by systems that should protect them.

To love God and to love neighbour is not sentiment. It is incarnation. It is the conviction that every person—



man, woman, trans, straight, gay, refugee, migrant, detainee, survivor, stranger—is a sacrament of Christ's presence. In them is the 'very icon of God', as Mother Maria Skobtsova said: 'every poor person is the very icon of God incarnate in the world'.

And as a Church, when we remember the Passion—the suffering of Christ—when we hold up the Crucifix or the Cross, it is a symbol not of identity, but of struggle. As Fr Donald Senior CP wrote: 'To remember the Passion is to stand with the crucified peoples of the world.'

So the question before us is simple and searching: what does love look like here? Not in theory, but on this pavement, in this city, in this moment.

Love looks like showing up. Love looks like refusing to abandon people who are neglected and suffering. Love looks like bearing witness when others turn away. Love looks like insisting that every human being is our

brother, our sister, our kin. Love looks like believing that the boundaries of compassion are always wider than the boundaries of policy, borders, politics...

If the whole world is the altar, then every act of mercy is liturgy.

Every gesture of solidarity—or meaningful compassion—is Eucharistic. Every defence of the vulnerable is a hymn of praise. Every insistence on human dignity is a prayer that rises like incense. As we keep vigil, we offer our hearts like bread and wine.

We ask God to transform them into something capable of sustaining others—into 'God-manly hearts,' as Mother Maria said, hearts that carry Christ's love into the places where it is most needed.

This is the sacrament of brother. This is the Gospel lived in the street.

This is the commandment that holds the whole Law and the Prophets—and the commandment by which our human laws and policies must be measured:

Love God. Love your neighbour. And let nothing divide the two.
Amen.

Br Johannes Maertens

The Tides of Life

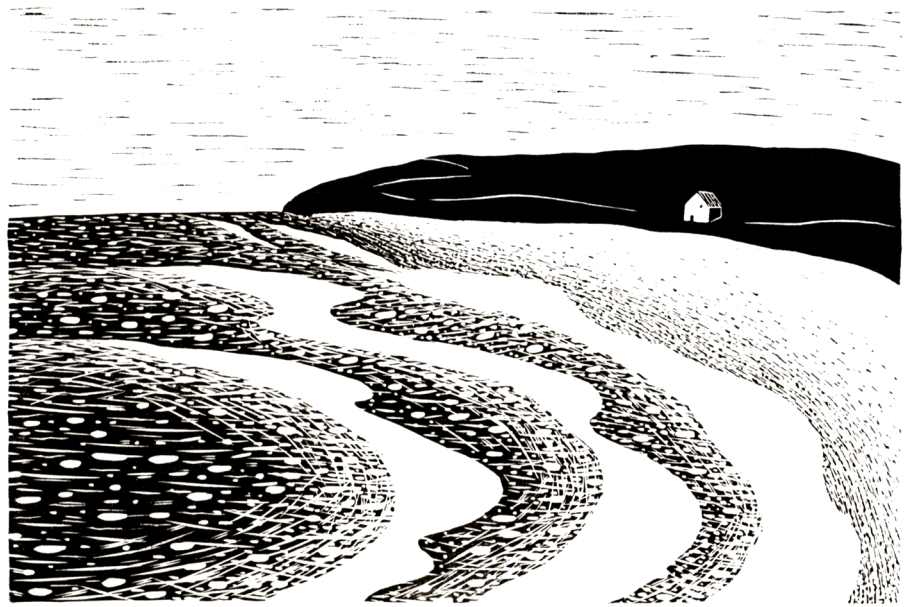
Billy Tendo highlights the hospitality that still persists amidst our hostile environment

Though life unfolds in unplanned ways of moments amidst our lifecycles, each moment presents different challenges, and endurance is the cornerstone of our evolution. The ability to face adversity head-on and adapt could be the moment to test both the strength and weaknesses in human nature.

My topic of writing is taken from the angle of a migrant from the African continent to Europe, which is miles away from the community I was raised in, to a new, advanced, diverse country and another environment with different patterns of weather.

In the new community there was a lot to learn. As life went on, my living day-by-day came to be the reality of the plight of a failed asylum seeker - a status given to those migrants/immigrants the state does not recognise as bona fide residents in the community.

States create complex multi-layered hostile policies and laws making life both unviable and unbearable for new migrants and, in such a situation, puts migrants in a very vulnerable position, and with that shock of fear leads to despair and confusion, continuously disrupting their sense of the future and



Tidal Home, Jay Caskie, 2026

keeping them in uncertainty.

As states turn away from their responsibilities or minimise their help to migrants, there comes support from various worldwide organisations to help and support the needy ones, especially migrants.

The care and support from these non-profit-making organisations, including the London Catholic Worker, the Jesuit Refugee Service, the Refugee Council, the Red Cross, and Islington Refugee Council, offer a lot of support to the vulnerable and needy ones. The organisations' unwavering support and care in connection with other charities of the like has indeed enabled some of us who had no hope to live with dignity.

The support and care I myself

Have received as a guest at one of their family homes, Giuseppe Conlon House, is more than meeting basic needs. I have been able to live with dignity, and it has helped me with that sense of connections and confidence, as well as resilience, further opportunities in life, and the shared power of the community, and in all, with strength, experience and resilience, we are enriching our own Harringay and the surrounding communities.

LONG LIVE THE LONDON CATHOLIC WORKER and all the charities in this cause, and I give my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the great work given by communities worldwide.

Billy Tendo

Laivin Aiberdein Harbour

Christie Williamson helps run Tell it Slant Books in Glasgow. His two collections are published by Luath Press - 'Oo an Feddirs' 2015 and 'Doors tae Newye' 2020. He comes fae Yell.

Syne laivin Aiberdein Harbour
ivvir cost me tears
dey widna keep me
in Fairy Liqueed

an here agien mi taes
is spun sweet
bi da grip
o aniddir year dancin.

Fu mony times
'll du gjit tae lairn
at life
is a habit formin activity

an da best eens
geeng tae da best eens?

Comin doon da steps
tae da back door
dis happy return
sees da compass squared
an wi his 91st circuit underwye
wi fire in his sails
an blyde in his een
da maestir o da hoose
shaas da wye.

I am hom.
He is risen.
Let us rejoice!

laivin - leaving; syne - if; ivvir - ever; dey widna - they wouldn't; agien - again; taes - toes; Fu mony - how many; 'll du gjit - will you get; eens - ones; geeng - go; shaas da wye - shows the way; hom - home



Candle, Moya Barnett, 2025

The Catholic Worker in and around the UK

London Catholic Worker: 49 Mattison Road, London, N4 1BG; 020 8348 8212;
londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk londoncatholicworker.org

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

The Catholic Worker Farm: Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Road, West Hyde, Herts, WD3 9XJ;
0923 777 201; thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk ; catholicworkerfarm.org

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

Glasgow Catholic Worker: glw@catholicworker.org.uk; catholicworker.org.uk

Rimoaine House: The Wirral, Merseyside; 0151 953 0220 ; rimoainehouse@yahoo.com

Rimoaine House is a community house practicing mutual aid and hospitality. As a house we are supported by and involved in the Methodist Church. We are friends of the Catholic Worker movement and would love to be in touch with anyone in our area interested in hospitality, faith and social justice.

Maria Skobtsova House : Calais; +33 6 77 66 03 62; msh.volunteers@gmail.com;
refugeehousecalais.org

Maria Skobtsova House, in the heart of Calais, offers sanctuary and hospitality to vulnerable refugees, in the spirit of Dorothy Day, and Maria Skobtsova, 'Saint Mary of Paris'.

Sojourner Truth House: Calais; quakersolidaritycentre@gmail.com

A house of hospitality for women and families on the France-UK border. Short term volunteers are always needed, please get in touch!

Support our work

The London Catholic Worker, based at Giuseppe Conlon House, is part of the radical, Christian, pacifist Catholic Worker movement started in 1933 in New York by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. For more information visit: www.catholicworker.com.

We receive no money from the government or corporate donors. We are all volunteers, so we are able to make the best possible use of what we are given, for the benefit of those in need. We try, as far as possible, to use donated food that would otherwise go to waste, but we rely on our readers' donations to pay bills, building maintenance, volunteer and guest expenses, and household supplies.

You can donate online via our website, or fill in the standing order form overleaf and send it to the above address. For a one-off donation, you can send a cheque to the above address payable to 'Giuseppe Conlon House CIO'. If you would like to make an online bank transfer, these are our details: Giuseppe Conlon House CIO, CAF Bank, Account No: 00037144, Sort Code: 405240, IBAN: B61CAFB40524000037144.

Thank you for your support!

Giuseppe Conlon House Wishlist

FOOD

Instant coffee
Tinned tomatoes
Cooking oil
Kidney beans
Lentils
Chickpeas
Rice
Herbal tea
Sugar



Peanut butter
Honey
Chilli sauce
Soy sauce
Cereal/Porridge
Long-life milk
Coconut milk
Fruit juice/squash



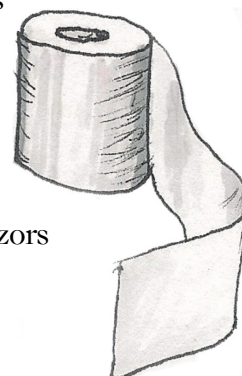
CLEANING

Eco-friendly products
Washing Powder
Anti-bac spray
Cream cleaner
Toilet cleaner
Floor cleaner
Dishwasher tablets
Washing-up liquid



TOILETRIES

Toilet paper
Bars of soap
Toothbrushes
Toothpaste
Shampoo
Shower gel
Deodorant
Disposable razors



Charity Gift Declaration—Multiple Donations

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to GIUSEPPE CONLON HOUSE CIO.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details: Title _____ First name or initial(s) _____

Surname _____ Full Home address _____

Postcode _____ Date _____

Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Standing Order Form

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

I wish to pay Giuseppe Conlon House CIO £10/£20/£40/other amount _____ per month/other _____

First payment to be made on: ___/___/___ and monthly/other thereafter.

Name of your bank: _____

Address of your bank: _____

Your account name: _____

Your account number: _____

Your bank sort code: _____

Please pay: CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ. For the credit of: Giuseppe Conlon House CIO Account number: 00037144 Sort code: 405240

Until further notice the sum of the value indicated above.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return to: Giuseppe Conlon House, 49 Mattison Rd, London, N4 1BG

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

We rely on readers' donations to run our house of hospitality and produce this newsletter. If you can help, please consider filling in this standing order form and posting it to us.

Alternatively, there is information about other ways to donate overleaf, on page 19.

Thank you for your generosity!

Once you have finished with this newsletter, please pass it on to others!