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Dorothy Day House:  
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Provides accommodation & support for destitute refugees, as well as running Peter's Community café and "Urban Table" soup kitchen. Organises regular vigils and significant non-violent resistance to war and injustice, & produce this newsletter.

Catholic Worker Farmhouse  
 Lynsters Farm,  
 West Hyde,  
 Herts, WD3 9XJ

Tel 01923 777 201

The Albrecht family are providing accommodation for destitute refugees, and vigil weekly at Northwood military HQ.

The **London CW** is part of the radical,

pacifist Catholic Worker movement started in 1933 in New York & inspired by the Gospel vision and practice of our founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. Come and visit us!

**We** are a network, not an organisation. Our finances are independent. To donate: - to **Dorothy Day House** make your cheque to "London Catholic Worker". To donate to the **Farmhouse**, make your cheque to "Catholic Worker Farmhouse".

**WANTED: COMMUNITY MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS**

Our houses and projects need people to run them, and we always need more support for our acts of witness. If you feel God is calling you to get involved, get in touch. Details on back page. Oxford Catholic Worker are also in similar need. Contact them at: 227 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 tel: 01865 248 288

I want to [continue to] receive the London Catholic Worker Newsletter. [ I enclose stamps / donation - cheques payable to "London Catholic Worker" ] .

NAME .....

ADDRESS:.....

**Dorothy Day House & Urban Table Soup Kitchen Needs**

**OFFICE:**

- Help with IT maintenance
  - Help with printing
- HOUSEHOLD GOODS:**
- Sheets, blankets, duvets
  - Bike lights

**FOOD:**

- Dry goods, rice & pasta
- Tea bags & instant coffee
- Tuna, corned beef, cheese
- Sugar & salt & pepper pots
- Tinned tomatoes & other cans
- Herbs & spices etc

**OTHER**

- Soap, razors, toothpaste, cleaning materials etc.
- Old books, magazines
- Clothes, towels etc
- MONEY! - see p15 for standing order form.

**"Prayer—without this, all the rest is useless"**

**CW FARMHOUSE NEEDS:**

- Food, esp. juice, rice, porridge oats, dairy products, cooking oil
- Help with gardening, cleaning, cooking, DIY

CHRISTMAS 2007

No. 21

**THE LONDON**

"building a society where it is easier to be good"

**CATHOLIC**



**WORKER**

**No Room at the Inn**

Theo had been sleeping in an empty garage on the massive Wenlock Barn council estate in nearby Hoxton. *Had* been that is, until a council worker threw his stuff out and deliberately broke the garage door so that he could not sleep there any more. Talk about senseless destruction. When I met him his few possessions were stored in a dank cupboard in the bottom of a block of flats. I thought to myself that sleeping in the open would be better, but maybe he felt safer there. Violence against homeless people is bad enough, without the added disadvantage of being a young black man. And then of course, at least it kept the rain off. I thought to myself, "my God, (cont. p2)



Wheelchair blockade at Lockheed

**Lockheed Lock-down at Christmas**

By **Ciaron O'Reilly**

When the Catholic Workers joined the Muriel Lesters (London's Trident Ploughshares group) I got to play a minimal support role. Did my best to maximise the support by dragging along Amy the Aussie visiting the LCW from Perth's Peace Tree community, my cousin heading to work near Victoria and Amanda visiting London from Dublin. Admittedly the cousin and Amanda didn't know what they were going to before they got there, but hey these are the high security "need to know" norties we're in!

The action faction were the Muriel Lester's affinity group of the Trident Ploughshares network! This affinity group, most of whom are in their '60's & '70's, have no concept of a use by date on their activist lives. 40 year old Fr. Martin Newell, appeared quite youthful in such company.

It was a chilly morning (cont'd p3)

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**NO ROOM AT THE INN** (from p1) even Jesus was allowed a stable!" A garage really is the modern equivalent of the stable, the place where the means of transport is kept. Theo's possessions came with him in a couple of small carrier bags. Ivan on the other hand, with his nerves, decided graciously that his well kept garage, where he had electric light, electric heater, mattresses, books, radio and family photos on the wall, as well as most importantly privacy - but no running water or toilet - was preferable to moving into our crowded house.

**DO NOT NEGLECT HOSPITALITY (Hebrews)**

Its not easy living in a house of hospitality, but it is a life full not just of people but also full of grace. Every time we have a bed come free, there are at least three others who could fill it. And every time the result is that we meet a new friend and are graced by a new Christ come among us; "Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me" Jesus reminds us (Matthew 25). This Advent and Christmas season is a reminder that in those for whom there is no room, Christ comes into our lives - invited or not! The poor bring Christ to us more than we can share Christ's welcome, love and justice with the poor. We receive more than we can ever give, "a full measure, pressed down and running over!" It is a grace filled life, but its not a rosy glow - the Word of God, of Christ, is challenging, awkward, untimely. And the receiving is not always welcome!

**A LEARNING CURVE**

The arrival and life of the Christ first time around was not welcomed by everyone - Herod sought to kill the baby, pharisee, saducee and priestly leaders and Roman rulers conspired to execute the man, the crowd and even His friends abandoned Him. And to be really honest, its hard - not to say seemingly impossible— to try to welcome Christ every time into our home, even when He already has a bed and a key to the front door! Our guests are well aware of my failures, of our failures, in hospitality. They share their vulnerability, our frailty. Ciaron and Zelda know my shortcomings in community, in working together and not hoarding knowledge or trying to protect what is mine. When you've spent years trying to strip yourself of possessions and attachments it's a shock to realise know how tightly you hold onto those last few things. But after all we are all called to daily conversions, to keep moving along that learning curve, by the grace of God.

By Martin Newell

**STANDING ORDER MANDATE**

Please fill in the form in **BLOCK LETTERS**. Filling out this form enables us to set up a monthly standing order with your bank. It can be stopped at any time by informing your bank.

**I wish to pay London Catholic Worker £10 / £20 / £40 / other amount**

..... (please specify) per month / other .....

Payments to be made monthly / other .....

First payment to be made on

..... / ..... / 07

And monthly thereafter

Your Bank Name.....

Your Bank Address.....

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.....POST CODE.....

Your account name:.....

Your account number:.....

Your sort code:.....

YOUR NAME .....

Please pay: Triodos Bank Credit of:  
 Brunel House, London Catholic Worker  
 11 The Promenade Sort Code: 16 58 10  
 BS8 3NN A/C No: 20066996

ADDRESS.....

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Until further notice, the sum of the value indicated above.

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SIGNED:..... DATE:...../...../ 07

TEL. NO.....

PLEASE RETURN TO LCW AT: 14 Deal Street, London E1 5AH

**We rely on our supporters and readers donations, to pay the rent on Dorothy Day House and other costs. We need 125 standing orders averaging £20 a month. "You will have your reward". Please give generously at this special time of year.**

**LOCKHEED LOCKDOWN** (from p3) More police arrived and then finally more police with boltcutters. After 45 minutes the chains were snapped and the Lockheed Martin employees made their entrance to produce what? Anything that will satisfy human needs - food, shelter, nourishment - no they have harnessed their intellect and labour for production of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Once the building was accessible the folks blocking access around the back came to the front maintaining vigil, leafletting employees and passers by until 9.30

Father Martin said: "As Christians we are called to follow the Christ who comes into this world at Christmas to bring "Glory to God, peace on earth and good will to all" (Luke 2:14). As a follower of this prince of peace I feel it is my duty oppose the horror of nuclear weapons. Jesus told us to 'put away our weapons', but we are intent on building ever bigger weapons'. Nuclear weapons were first used at Hiroshima, and as Pope John Paul II said: "To remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace."

Zelda Jeffers said: "It is terrible that with so much conflict in the world, firms including Lockheed Martin are developing even more destructive weapons such as the ones that will be worked on at Aldermaston. I wish a Happy Christmas to all who work in the building and hope that those working for Lockheed Martin will find it in their hearts to get jobs whose outcome helps create peace on earth in 2008"

Irene Willis blockader from Essex stated: "Christmas seems an appropriate time of year to reflect upon the horrific effects the arms trade and nuclear weapons have in the world and to ask ourselves whether we really need them." My cousin said, "Wow that was interesting, meet you for a pint tomorrow!" Aussie Amy said, "I haven't done this before, must try this back in Perth!"

The Trident Ploughshares affinity group structure and praxis has always impressed me - whether it be with the high risk disarmament actions, the mass blockades at Faslane or these more decentralised interventions around England and Scotland on varied points of the nuclear war assembly line. Non-violence, direct democracy & direct action can't beat 'em as organising principles. Trident Ploughshares, ten years old and still going strong. The group intends to pay the company another visit in the near future.



**LOCKHEED LOCKDOWN** (FROM P1) as we assembled outside Victoria Station at 7.30 am. Around 8am we hit a critical mass of double figures and made our move. As we hit Lockheed HQ folks spread out. The front entrance was chained shut and those risking arrest disappeared from view around the back to chain and block other entrances. They were really serious about shutting this building down! I was directed to stand on my lonesome at the secured public entrance holding a "Lockheed Martin Nuclear Crime Scene" sign. As Lockheed staff arrived, and began failing to access their usual entrance to their daily grind of WMD production, I tried to muster all my charm to greet, engage and offer leaflets.

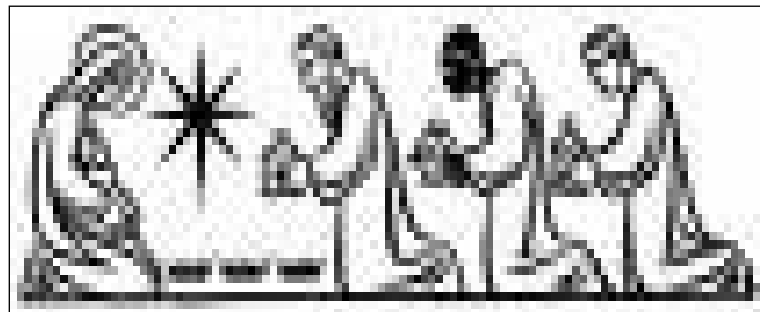
The central London Headquarters of U.S. arms firm Lockheed Martin (slogan "We never forget who we're working (murdering/spying) for!") is an otherwise anonymous building that used to be Cardinal Mannings home (Manning House, 22 Carlisle Place, London. SW1P 1JA), hidden away in a side street near Victoria Station. In Britain, Lockheed Martin makes Trident nuclear weapons (warheads and missiles) and produces surveillance systems used by intelligence services to spy on the public and for commercial espionage.

Belgravia police were called by Lockheed and arrived at the front entrance with quite a flourish. They found the door chained shut, pretty much me on my lonesome and a growing number of disrupted Lockheed Martin workers. Those risking arrest who had chained the front door and strung up a banner were now at the back outta sight outta mind (of the police) securing the building from any possibility of business as usual.

The police initially assumed I was fully responsible for the disruption. I assured them I had just got here before them to be pleasantly surprised by finding the front doors chained. I hoped they would be pleasantly surprised too, they weren't! I humbly declined responsibility for such a serious disruption to the business of Lockheed Martin. I offered one officer a leaflet, he brusquely declined. I said "This could be an important piece of evidence!" He enthusiastically accepted the leaflet. (cont'd p14)

More police arrived and then finally more police with boltcutters. After 45 minutes the chains were snapped and the Lockheed Martin employees made their entrance to produce what? Anything that will satisfy human needs - food, shelter, nourishment - no they have harnessed their intellect and labour for production of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Once the building was accessible the folks blocking access around the back came to the front maintaining vigil, leafletting employees and passers by until 9.30 am.

(cont'd p14)



## Obituary: Peter Lumsdaine: An Unusual Disciple

A good friend of ours died early in the summer. Peter had started a Catholic Worker house in Notting Hill in the 1960's, with the money he received from a legacy. However, according to him, it was taken over and trashed by a heavy metal band who came in and refused to leave! He also tried going over to New York state and bought a farm next to the then Catholic Worker farm. At that time, he also joined the San Francisco to Moscow peace walk for four months. Peter was from a wealthy Catholic family and had been to the elite Catholic public school Ampleforth, but by the time I met him he had given it all away. He said, not long before the end and looking very yellow while sitting in our little flat that was the first CW house of hospitality in London since his, that a neighbour refused to believe that he had no money and was in fact poor, because of his accent. My favourite images of Peter were two black and white pictures I saw of him in a Sunday supplement magazine a few years ago. He was standing at Speakers Corner, as he did almost every Sunday, with a placard around his neck: he had two: one said "Christian Atheist." The other said "Woe to the Rich - Jesus" - quoting of course Luke 6:24 - probably the least popular and least quoted phrase of the beatitudes. His technique was simple, he would stand there and wait for people to approach him.

By the time I met him, Peter's position on religion was that it was a good thing, and he was a follower of Jesus in a practical and moral sense, but that God only 'existed' in people, and not in a personal sense. Hence 'Christian atheist'. He did think the Church had a beneficial role: as an intellectually convinced anarchist, he was fond of saying "Christianity created capitalism - now it must destroy it" and "Amazingly, capitalism was a form of liberation at the time—from feudalism!"

Peter was big on what is called Jesus "open table commensality" - which is to say Jesus - and Peter - would eat with, 'share his table' with, anyone. At the time of Jesus this was a highly controversial act. As John Challoner put it in an obituary he wrote in RENEW magazine, "Peter put this [open table] into practice in his 'soup kitchen' work, where he sat and ate, not with the other 'staff, but with the hungry, to bear witness to the end of hierarchy." He saw it as still being a radical, even revolutionary, political act. An article he wrote about this helped clarify for me a part of what we at the CW are about in sharing our tables, our homes and our lives with God's poor. It was this Peter who was one of the inspirations for starting our community café, and he is one of three Peter's we have named it after (the others being St Peter, the patron of the church we are based below, and Peter Maurin, CW co-founder).

Peter was a good and faithful friend to many in his neighbourhood who needed him. However, it seems his lonely political and religious path took its toll on him, and made life a struggle. I was happy in the last couple of years that he seemed to find some consolation in knowing that the Christian anarchist path continues to be trod, especially here at the London CW, but also at the Jesus Radicals conference which he came to in Leeds last year where he shared his vision. Happily he had seen the

## Jesus was a Refugee at Christmas!

For the Fridays of Advent we are vigilling outside "Communications House" Home Office Asylum Reporting and Removals Centre, as a way to prepare for Christmas, to prepare to welcome Jesus who was himself a refugee. Asylum seekers have to report here regularly to sign the register. Some weekly, some monthly, some daily. Sometimes, a person goes in the door after queuing up down the side, but doesn't come out because they have been detained for 'removal' - that is, deportation. Some asylum seekers are detained there in cells waiting to be deported, making this anonymous building effectively a secret 'refugee prison'. We are calling for an end to all deportations and release for all detained refugees.

### Stay Awake To Fortress Europe!

To 'vigil' means to 'stay awake'. We are trying to stay awake to what is happening to refugees. National and European borders function as the invisible walls of the 'Gated Community' that we live inside in Fortress Europe: they are intended to protect what on a global view are our riches and our privileges by keeping the poor out. Police and immigration forces function like the guns pointing over the walls also keeping the poor out. Meanwhile our military adventures abroad to protect our 'national interests' - that is, access to and control of resources such as oil - that trans-national corporations exploit at the expense of the poor and weak. They help create conditions that force people to become refugees, fleeing poverty, war, persecution and social chaos.

### "I was a foreigner and you took Me in"

At Christmas, Christians and people of many faiths and none celebrate and remember the birth of Jesus. Part of the Christmas story is that Jesus was perceived as a threat by the powerful of his time and place. So His family - Jesus, Mary and Joseph - had to flee their home to seek refuge from King Herod in Egypt. This memory helps Christians to see in each refugee the face of Christ. In fact, Jesus himself said, "I was a stranger (a foreigner) and you took me in", and said that we would be judged on how we treated the poor, the weak and the foreigner ( Matthew 25)

#### UPCOMING EVENTS: DATES FOR YOUR DiARY:

DECEMBER 27TH—28TH—ANNUAL  
FAITH AND RESISTANCE RETREAT FOR  
FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS at Catho-  
lic Worker Farmhouse — PHONE 020 7249  
0041 OR 01923 777 201 FOR DETAILS

JANUARY 11TH 2008 — 6th Anniversary of  
first prisoners at Guantanamo - vigil planned—  
phone 020 7249 0041 or 07950 290 867 for info

**Based on a leaflet given out  
during our weekly Advent  
vigil at the Home Office  
building at 210 Old Street.**

**FASCISM AND THE CHURCH (from p11)** the Church. Everyone has their favourite - or pet-hate - aspect of Vatican II. The outlining of the laity's role must have been one of the most controversial, underplayed, and subsequently quietly resisted proposals. Jesus may have said 'call no man Father', yet we are still firmly in a Church where 'Father knows best'. The natural authoritarian among us may still be drawn towards the spiritual and temporal power of the priesthood, but the calling of the laity has never been intended to mean throwing up our hands and giving up because the priest has the keys to the parish centre. Jesus calls the power-monger to relinquish his power, but if he refuses then the ordinary man and woman are called to 'relinquish' it for him. For one human being to exercise power over others relies on some degree of consent or cooperation.. So ordinary Catholics are called to respond to the Gospel not just in private, but at a corporate, united level, so that the institution of the Church which has so much — and often rightly — been presented as characterised by injustice and inhumanity can be always young and continue to be renewed by the Spirit. This is why Camilo Torres said that "The Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin": or to put it another way "ecclesiae semper reformanda" - "the church is always in need of renewal".

### **Catholics Allowed!**

The split personality is very quickly apparent when we discuss dissent: we Catholics know that 'The Church' means us, all of us, but we soon find ourselves saying that 'the Church allows this' and 'The Church doesn't allow that'. We badly need to decide who we're talking about, and then grow up! The biggest current challenge to the implementation of the vision of Vatican II does not in fact come from the conservatives at all, but from ordinary Catholics who, while lukewarmly supporting the gist of the Council, have failed to embrace the awesome responsibility it presents: to really take the reigns of the Church in its weakness and hope, its sin and its grace, its beauty and customary and props, which can dazzle and bamboozle. We have been weak, decent co-operators and volunteers, too quick to defer to the politics of dogmatists and reactionaries. And yet we can be full of hope when we remember that it is an agonising crucified Jewish preacher who shows us the way — who was neither a priest nor a general — and no form of oppression - be it linguistic, legalistic, sexual, or genocidal - will ever carry the day or the blessing of Christ.

event advertised in our London CW newsletter. Peter's life is a challenge to many of us who *do* profess a faith in a living God: he had followed his guide who "though being rich, became poor for our sakes" (2 Corinthians 8:9): he who had been 'first' became 'last'. I hope and pray that, much to his surprise, he in now one of the 'least' who is now 'first' in the Kingdom of Heaven, in the presence of the living God.. *By Martin Newell*

## Dorothy Day's Act of Faith

If I did not believe,  
if I did not make what is  
called an act of faith  
(and each act of faith  
increases our faith,  
and our capacity for faith),  
if I did not have faith  
that the works of mercy  
do lighten  
the sum total of suffering  
in the world,  
so that those  
who are suffering  
on both sides of this  
ghastly struggle  
somehow mysteriously find  
their pain lifted  
and some balm of  
consolation  
poured on their wounds,  
if I did not believe  
these things,  
the problem of evil  
would indeed  
be overwhelming.

### ***"EASY ESSAY"***

*by Peter Maurin*

#### ***THE CASE FOR UTOPIA***

The world would be better off  
if people tried to become better,  
and people would become better  
if they stopped trying to become  
better off.

For when everyone tries to  
become better off  
nobody is better off.

But when everyone tries to  
become better

everybody is better off.

Everybody would be rich  
if nobody tried to become richer,  
and nobody would be poor  
if everybody tried to be the  
poorest.

And everybody would be what  
they ought to be

If everybody tried to be

What they want the others to be.

## The Early Christians and War by Scott Albrecht

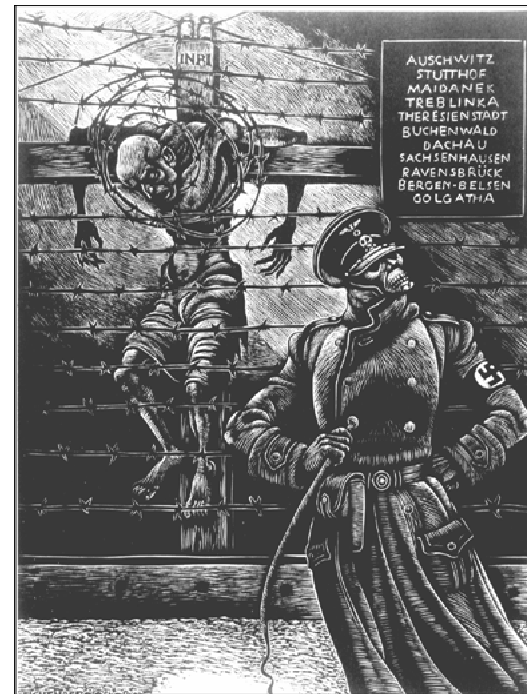
In our time, many Christians throughout the world still believe in war. Whether it is Just War, Pre-emptive War, Total War, The War on Terror, Nuclear Defence or the Natural Right of a Nation to Self Defence. There are Christians in the Military, Military Chaplains, Military Masses the Blessings of Fighter Aircraft, Naval Battleships and Invocations for victory against our enemies. One can assume that because there is so much variety in Christian understanding and belief about organised violence that there is as much variety in our Holy Texts; and to some extent there is. On many occasions I've talked with military personnel, priests, pastors and laymen about whether or not Christians should fight in wars. Or for that matter whether anyone should. As one can imagine everyone has an opinion on this issue.

### What would Churchill do?

The source and summit of the argument for a just war usually goes back to two sources: Augustine and Hitler, one the greatest of Saints the other the greatest of Sinners. It's as if the perennial solution to the Hitler Invasion equation is found in answer to the question, What Would Churchill Do? Now, one cannot underestimate the serious nature of war; the catastrophic effect on human life, rape, forced child soldiers, death and injury (both physical and psychological), the mistrust within and without a State, the destruction and rebuilding of infrastructure, famine and fleeing refugees. Both our Catholic

Worker houses of hospitality offer accommodation to asylum seekers from war torn places like the DR Congo and Sierra Leone; we hear their stories.

I would like to share my own. Every male in my family, my biological father, 2 step fathers, grand father, uncles, cousins and brother-in-law were military. We had either fought in WWII, Vietnam or Sierra Leone or had served throughout the world. We were Airman, Paratroopers, Navy men or Marines. I was a conscript because of a poor education and a violent home. I grew up with an extremely violent father and in 1960/70s Chicago I was certainly not alone, one could see and hear the parental beatings all around the



ABOVE: 'Nazi Crucifixion', woodcut by Fritz Eichenberg:

alliances with Nazism; the hand-in-the-glove with the Latin American dictatorships; paedophilia cover-ups, etc. My Grandmother's anger towards the Catholic Church, being a concentration camp survivor who grew up in 1930s Italy, still outraged at the open complicity of Fascist priests and religious communities, is a shocking thing to experience in 2007. Young Argentinians, to offer another example from personal experience, often and informally articulate their utter distrust of the Church because of its participation in the last dictatorship (1976-1983). They are usually equally aware of the elements of resistance and protest in the Argentinean Church, epitomised by

the Passionist Missionaries of the Santa Cruz church, where the original 'Mothers of the Disappeared' first met and organised, only to be themselves kidnapped from the doorstep of the church, tortured, and thrown live from military planes into the sea. Some of the same priests who accompanied the 'Madres' in their resistance are still deeply committed to the struggle today, and others were themselves 'disappeared'. On the other hand it must be said, without prejudice to those Bishops that have taken the side of the oppressed, that the forces of evil have been accompanied by those clad in purple or red. Sadly, it seems that the public, visible, powerful face of the Church has often aligned itself to abusers and oppressors, and since the believers can live out their religion both publicly and privately it is easy to see why many Catholics distance themselves from the Church without necessarily losing their religion.

### Vatican two be or not to be

The personality split we are most likely to encounter here in Britain would arguably be between the pre- and post-Vatican II visions of (cont'd p10)

# Fascist Skeletons - In Catholic Cupboards

by Eddie Jarvis

*(It is essential, to understand the Church of today, and in order to be committed to this Body of Christ with realistic and 'theological' hope (not optimism!) to know Church history, in all its religious, spiritual, social and political dimensions: to know the Church as both graced and sinful, fallen yet redeemed, and always so. In this spirit of Peter Maurin's 'clarification of thought' we offer the article below)*

Pius XII's conduct in the face of the Holocaust appears to have become a permanent feature of Church debating circles, in spite of a legion of 'definitive' treatments of the issue. Looking at the broader issue, all the right-wing anti-semitic European leaders of the time were Catholics, and one, Slovakia's dictator Josef Tiso, was a priest. That the Catholic Church of the time contained committed Fascists and vehement anti-Fascists simultaneously is probably to be expected as well as scandalous. But, as voices in today's Church continue to call for a return to the comfort zones of the past, we need to remind ourselves of those shameful aspects of our Catholic heritage which are only a generation behind us.

## Whitewash and Ratlines

There are many examples of the attempt to whitewash one faction and present the wartime Church as either Saintly and heroic down to a member or entirely Fascist. The truth is that the Catholic Church neither transformed itself into an international resistance and rescue operation, nor devoted a lot of energy to running the infamous 'ratlines' to shepherd War Criminals to South America on Vatican Passports. It is reasonable and right that the Catholic Church carry the burden for being aligned with Fascism - Edith Stein's niece called it, at the time of her aunt's beatification, "the religion of our persecutors", which is what it was at the time. We cannot change the past, but we can and must be alert to the fact that there is a particularly rigid, authoritarian strand in the church, often linked in with class, capital, and power-broking, that provided easy bedfellows for the Nazis and other Fascists. Like the subject of Pius himself, the issues are complex and the temptation to simplify them is great. The greater sin, however, is to present them as less relevant to our time than they really are, when among those leading the church today are some who were.

## The Church's Anger at the Church

The Church seems to suffer from a split personality in many ways. Those outside the Church are often united with those who have left it, in rejecting or condemning the Church for a whole arsenal of objectively valid reasons:

neighbourhood. When in High School I used the classroom as an opportunity to rest, de-stress - a place of solace. Teachers would ask me why I would rest on my desk with my arms folded and my head buried within them. I would simply reply, "I'm tired". By the age of 17 I desperately needed to leave home. One day recruitment officers from the various armed forces visited our school. They were impressive and chosen by the forces to represent the best they had. Team spirited, in control, a certain presence, physically powerful, intelligent, patriotic and brave is how they appeared. But in reality seeking-out, preying-upon, seducing young men. The U.S. Air force recruiters "wined and dined" me and 2 good friends with bowling, Burger King, active listening and promises of travel and free education. No mention of violence.

## Recruited

When we arrived in Boot Camp at Lackland Air Force Base in Southern Texas, we were stripped of everything, including our clothing and hair. We were openly humiliated in body and mind. Then we were gradually given privileges. All of this was a method of control to foster respect for the chain of command, cohesion among fellow soldiers, and discipline. This environment afforded the opportunity to many a young man to redirect the violence that was visited upon him and direct it outwardly towards the enemy. One did not have to look at oneself, because one had no "self". Orders were given from above. We obeyed, were disciples, we were parts of an organism of death and our idol was Nuclear.

I was a Crew Chief on F111 Fighter Bombers at RAF Lakenheath from 1980-83. I did combat quick-turns in full chemical warfare kit complete with gas-mask and an Epi-pen to stab myself in the thigh with an antidote should the need arise. I also had secret clearance and worked in the alert area with aircraft fully loaded with nuclear bombs targeted at the Soviet Union. All of this because of the U.S and USSR doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction - MAD. This Doctrine ensured that no one State with any inkling of sanity would ever attack another without the redress of total nuclear retaliation. Fear of this retaliation kept two states in a Cold War, at logger heads or as we used to say, in a Mexican standoff with each other.

## Conversion

At the beginning of my third year in the USAF I became a Christian. I like to say that the State taught me the Doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction but Christ teaches us the Doctrine of "Love your Enemies". This changed my view of violence and brotherhood, the lens through which I viewed and interpreted reality. No longer could I see Soviets as enemies and even if they were I was invited by Jesus to love them! I told my First Sergeant that I could no longer do my job and would not obey an order which would directly or indirectly lead to taking human life. I was sent to the base Chaplain, a Methodist (cont'd p8)

(from p7) , who tried to convince me that a Christian could fight in wars as did David, Joshua and Samuel of the Old Testament. I responded, in not so many words, that Jesus changes our vision, that certain human responses such as retributive justice “an eye for an eye” were “formerly told (to you)”. Instead one could not retaliate, one can only love and bless those that attack. Just War Theory is based upon proportional retribution in the event of the need for self defence. I was unsupported by any and all of my Christian brothers within the barracks. I was heard at a military tribunal and could’ve been imprisoned but because I was alone in my position, I wept and they pitied me; they placed me in the snack bar instead. Many have paid a dearer price.

### The Early Church Fathers Rejection of War

Where were the other Christian voices along side mine? Up until 170AD Christians would not join the military. And if a soldier attempted to join the Church he was refused. There is no evidence of Christian soldiers until after 170AD. And that the numbers are minute, some sources suggest as few as 8! What were their reasons for not participating? Here it is

#### LONDON CATHOLIC WORKER ACTIVITIES

##### WEEKLY VIGILS—

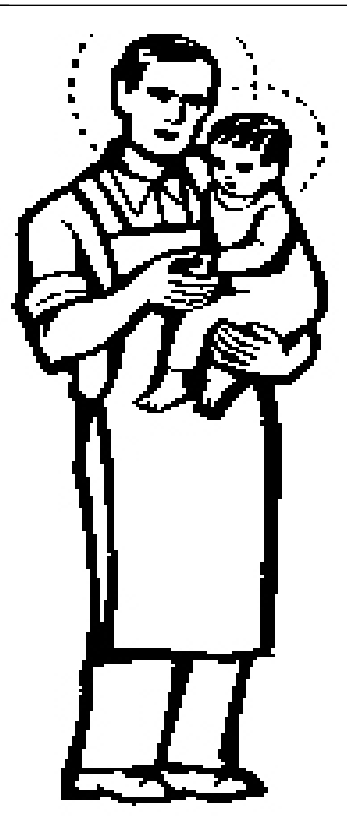
**FORTNIGHTLY MEETINGS—**  
FOR PRAYER & ROUND TABLE  
DISCUSSION—Tuesdays 7.00pm—  
10.00pm—call 020 7249 0041 for  
more info.

**COMMUNITY CAFÉ** - volunteers  
& visitors needed - open Mon, Tues,  
Weds 12pm-7pm, Dalston

**EVERY SUNDAY** - Urban Table  
Soup Kitchen - help needed  
1.30pm -5pm

**REGULAR LITURGY** - phone for  
info - we are planning a monthly lit-  
urgy, likely to be Wednesday evenings

RIGHT: St Joseph and infant Jesus,



better to quote the some of the Early Church Fathers themselves who were unanimous in their condemnation for Christians in the Military. These include Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Lactantius, Archelaus and Hippolytus. I would like leave you with some quotes from the Early Christian Fathers in regard to Christians serving in Military service.

*“Wars are scattered all over the earth with the bloody horror of camps. The whole world is wet with mutual blood. And murder - which is admitted to be a crime in the case of an individual - is called a virtue when it is committed wholesale. Impunity is claimed for the wicked deeds, not because they are guiltless - but because the cruelty is perpetrated on a grand scale!”* (Cyprian, 5.277)  
\_“The hand must not be spotted with the sword and blood - not after the Eucharist is carried in it.” (Cyprian, 5.488)

\_“...and we who were filled with war, and mutual slaughter, and every wickedness, have each through the whole earth changed our warlike weapons,-our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into implements of tillage,-and we cultivate piety, righteousness, philanthropy, faith, and hope, which we have from the Father Himself through Him who was crucified;” (Justin Martyr, 1.254)  
\_“I do not wish to be a king. I am not anxious to be rich. I decline military command”. (Tatian, 2.69)

*“It is not war, but in peace, that we are trained.”* (Clement of Alexandria, 2.234)  
*“We willingly yield to the sword. So what wars would we not be both fit and eager to participate in (even against unequal forces), if in our religion it were not counted better to be slain than to slay?”* (Tertullian, 3.45)

*“How can a man be just who hates, who despoils, who puts to death? Yet, those who strive to be serviceable to their country do all these things ... When they speak of the "duties" relating to warfare, their speech pertains neither to justice nor to true virtue.”* (Lactantius, 7.169)

*"a soldier of the civil authority must be taught not to kill men and to refuse to take an oath. If he is unwilling to comply, he must be rejected for baptism. A military commander or civic magistrate who wears the purple must resign or be rejected. If an applicant or a believer seeks to become a soldier, he must be rejected, for he has despised God.”* (Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition 16*)



Anti - War Jesus by Kevin Larmee