

# THE LONDON CATHOLIC WORKER



free/donation

winter 2019

issue 63

**Alabaster DePlume,**  
*Do you know a human  
being when you see  
one?*

design by Raimond Wong,  
[raimundwong.com](http://raimundwong.com)

**Henrietta Cullinan,**  
*Spirituality at Maria  
Skobtsova House,  
an interview with  
Br. Johannes Maertens,*  
p2

**Bramble O'Brien,** *What  
is a merciful heart? The  
personalist response to  
extinction,* p4

**Dr. Hakim Young,**  
*Our disconnected  
relationships: a social  
emergency,* p5

**Br. Johannes Maertens,**  
*Sharing is happiness,* p6

**Fr. Martin Newell cp,**  
*Angela Broome - a  
faithful disciple,* p8

**Giuseppe Conlon**  
*House update,* p9,

**Richard Barnard,** *Court  
solidarity,* p10

*Wishlist and how to  
donate,* p11-12

DO YOU KNOW  
A HUMAN BEING  
WHEN YOU SEE  
ONE?

could you  
mistake one  
for something else  
something less  
it happens you know  
I've done it  
and it is my failure  
but it's not my fault  
and I'm not a monster  
not yet  
I don't think so  
but you tell me  
I believe you know  
a human being  
when you see one

alabaster  
deplume

[www.londoncatholicworker.org](http://www.londoncatholicworker.org)  
Giuseppe Conlon House  
49, Mattison Road, London N4 1BG  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8348 8212  
[londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk)

## 'This practice ground'

Dorothy Day, 1959

Yes, death confronts us all. And life is precious, this practice ground where we are given such opportunity to use what talents we have, what resources of mind and body, to so order the present that the future will be different and try to make this world, as Peter Maurin said, a place where it is easier to be good.

The message of the Catholic Worker is that simple one for all the rank and file, for the masses, that we have free will, we can make our choice, that our personal responsibility which we exercise is what matters. Ammon, in his non-payment of taxes for war, and his civil disobedience, is bringing that message to countless thousands of people. Judith Gregory is, at present, in Tennessee, working for a while with Highland Folk School, which is fighting injustice and malice and evil on the interracial front. Our friend Bill Horvath, of Hungarian descent, a worker and a bricklayer, is working on the problem of poverty and homelessness in Harlem and using the cooperative approach. The rest of us here at St. Joseph's Loft and in our apartments, are using the works of mercy approach to the problems of our brother. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the harborless, visit the sick, visit the prisoner, bury the dead. And, in that we do this for those who are least regarded by the world as worthy, we are doing it for Jesus Himself, our Brother, our Friend and our Lover.

Life, Grace, Love. Beautiful words to dwell on these fall days.

*Dorothy Day, Month of the Dead, The Catholic Worker, November 1959, 1, 6.*

## Spirituality at Maria Skobtsova House, Calais

Henrietta Cullinan

Interview with Br Johannes Maertens

HC: Tell me how the spiritual life of Maria Skobtsova House began

JM: The spiritual life and work of Maria Skobtsova House really began in the Jungle camp, in the now famous wooden church used by the Eritrean and Ethiopian refugee community. The church stood slightly apart from the main camp. In its beauty, it was a place to find silence, light a candle, say a prayer.

At first I was drawn to the church out of curiosity. There was a furious racket coming from a generator they were using to run the sound system. There was noisy chanting. It was a bit overwhelming, and that day I was

quite emotional. The misery I had seen, people living in the dunes, under plastic sheets, in makeshift dwellings, the dirt and the dust, effected me so much I couldn't pray. I went down on my knees.

Words from the Psalms came into my head,

'We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground. Rise up and help us.' Psalm 44

The next time I went to the church, it was nearly empty. I knelt on the thin carpet and closed my eyes. When I opened them, there were some women on my right, men on my left. Even though I didn't know their language, I knew they were praying the Our Father and Hail Mary. At that moment, I saw my brothers and sisters. I had a very strong feeling that God wanted me to be with my brothers and sisters, because that was where they were, and they were in need. That was the moment that I decided to stay there, in Calais.



I had no idea what work I would do. I thought I would clean and chop vegetables. It was the refugees themselves who said, 'No, come and sit with us. Have a cup of tea.' At first I was a bit uneasy. We couldn't understand each other. Then gradually I learned to just sit. I had one talk with an Arabic Sudanese man. He and I didn't speak a word of each other's language. The only thing we could do was look. These are very precious moments - when one human being recognises another.

HC: Tell me a bit about sharing the spiritual life of the house, day in day out, with the refugees.

JM: We always intended that the guests should feel as if they were coming into a family home, to take their place at a table where people meet, eat, and then also share the prayer life.

It quickly became a large family, with many people around that table. Being older, we volunteers became a bit of a mother or father figure to the guests. We were accepted in that role which also had a spiritual dimension. When a guest came into the house, we were not just there to take care of them. We were also there to think about them in our prayers.

Sometimes the guests would literally ask us to do that. As the guests came home each evening, one might ask, 'Did you pray for me?' It was always our intention, that the house should be a place to return to, as if to a family home. But some guests themselves also wanted to feel that they were part of a community life. That meant,

'You are part of my life and I am part of your life. You pray for me and I think of you in my prayers.'

**Left:** Icon of Maria Skobtsova by Arta Skuja, a volunteer at the house in Calais. Arta writes,

'This is a composition done in the collage technique. It is composed of three layers: the study of Maria Skobtsova's face done in pencil - her physical presence; of written and torn pieces of the notes on Maria Skobtsova's life, creativity and calling - her manifold and not fully researched legacy; and of gold leaf - a sign of the spiritual and eternal reality. It was finished on the 20th December 2018, Maria Skobtsova's birthday.'

It was always a struggle to keep the prayer rhythm more or less constant. It was our choice, as volunteers, to say morning prayer, noon prayer, evening prayer, night prayer. When it went well, some guests joined in, especially for night prayer. With twenty people always around, plus 10 - 15 day visitors, it was a very busy house. To take the time, four times a day, to have prayer, to share a moment of silence with each other, gave structure to the day. It also gave meaning to the day:

I'm not just washing your clothes because they're dirty.

I'm not just cooking for you because you're hungry.

You are my brothers and sisters.

HC: You mention becoming part of each other's lives, through prayer and living in community — something that we should to aspire to.

JM: It is not the easy option, because when we say that we are part of each other's lives, that we share a certain level of responsibility for each other, it's not so easy to step back. When we're not able to help someone it becomes painful. When there are too many people, with too many needs and too many problems, it is easy to become overwhelmed.

That is always a risk because, in a Catholic Worker house, we choose that personal commitment towards each other. It's not about the number of people we have helped; it's about sharing our life with somebody else in God, and that demands personal commitment, that demands sacrifice. Each of us has to find the energy and keep the energy.

And we have accept that not every guest in the house wants that. Many people come because they need help, and they are happy that we give it, but they don't necessarily want us to become their brother or sister. It must be their choice.

HC: Tell me how Maria Skobtsova, the Orthodox saint, helped you in all this.

JM: When we chose Maria Skobtsova as patron saint of the house, we had a vague idea who she was, but when we learnt more about her life, we said 'Wow! This really is a saintly woman. She is going with us along this path.'

[continued on page 7]



## The Catholic Worker in the UK

### London Catholic Worker

Giuseppe Conlon House  
49, Mattison Road, London N4  
1BG

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8348 8212

[londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk)

[www.londoncatholicworker.org](http://www.londoncatholicworker.org)

Twitter: @LndnCathWorker

Facebook: London Catholic Worker

Giuseppe Conlon House offers hospitality to destitute refugees. We also run the Urban Table soup kitchen on Sundays, 2:30 — 4:30 pm at the Round Chapel, London E5 0PU. We organise acts of nonviolent resistance and produce this newsletter.

### The Catholic Worker Farm

Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Road

West Hyde, Herts, WD3 9XJ

Tel: +44 (0) 1923 777 201

[thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk)

[www.thecatholicworkerfarm.org](http://www.thecatholicworkerfarm.org)

The Farm offers hospitality to destitute women. We grow organic vegetables and have a poustinia and hermitage retreat. Mary House also offers a home to four destitute women with children.

### Glasgow Catholic Worker

[glw@catholicworker.org.uk](mailto:glw@catholicworker.org.uk)

[www.catholicworker.org.uk](http://www.catholicworker.org.uk)

We offer a place of welcome for asylum seekers and destitute refugees in the centre of Glasgow at the Garnethill Multicultural Centre, open Saturday 9:00— 1:00pm, and a soup kitchen on Friday nights. We keep a vigil at Faslane Nuclear Base and hold monthly meetings and prayers..

# What is a merciful heart?

## *a personalist response to extinction*

*Bramble O'Brien*

During the October rebellion, Catholic Workers joined XR and Christian Climate Action at nonviolent protests across London, including the 'Faith Bridge' in Lambeth.

Like many others, when I first read the 2018 World Wildlife Trust report, I felt stunned. The report, following on the heels of the IPCC report on climate change, stated that over 60% of animal populations have been destroyed between 1970 and 2014. And those are just the big ones. The ones we know about. I realised that, as Naomi Klein said, this changes everything.

From a personalist perspective, ethics derive from the inviolable and incomparable worth of each person, and to deny the other's centre of experience is the root of injustice. Such a denial is the underlying justification for war and colonisation. For Europe's indifference to the refugee crisis and the deaths in the Mediterranean. For the oppression of the poor and assault on indigenous people the world over. 'You are worth less than I' is the assumption, every time a victim is silenced, a person is told to 'forgive' without justice being sought, or a community is exploited to enrich another. A true personalist could never say to another human, your experience matters less than mine. Your loves are less significant. Your pain means less. Such a response, however subtly given, would be philosophically askew. And just as the sociopath does not see the other human as a centre of consciousness

and experience, so we have been blind to the non-human experience, sociopathic towards all life on this planet.

At some point, it seems, we decided that the experience of non-human animals did not matter. That they do not feel fear, love, hope, and pain, and that our comforts outweigh their survival. I am not only referring to cage farming, although that is the most obvious example: animals kept in a state of continuous physical suffering, so that we can have affordable meat. As soon as we separated ourselves from their lives and deaths – stopped being physically present for rearing and milking and slaughtering – we dissociated ourselves from their experience, making empathy impossible. But perhaps more importantly, I mean the unthinking sprawl of human activity: urban development, rail and airport expansion, industrialised farming, war, and all the causes of deforestation and habitat loss which drives animals to extinction.

For many, waking up to what we've done, the instinctive response is self-loathing. Sir David Attenborough recently declared that, 'Humans are a plague on the earth'. The analogy is self-evident. Never in recorded history has one life form taken so much at the expense of so many. But viewing ourselves as somehow separate from the animal kingdom and the earth's ecology is what got us into this mess in the first place. We saw ourselves as somehow extrinsic to the system, all other aspects of the biosphere resources for our consumption. And now, by viewing humanity as a disease, we risk again making the mistake of seeing ourselves as 'other'.

In contrast, any solution – ethical or practical – to the present crisis must come from the understanding of humanity not as separate from, but intrinsic to, the earth's ecosystem. We are animals among many, and our experience is a shared one. When we destroy them, we destroy ourselves. The difference is that we have a choice in this – and so a moral imperative.



**Left:** The Tree of Life - 6th Mass Extinction, by Nat Morley. [www.natmorley.co.uk](http://www.natmorley.co.uk) **photo with permission**

A true ethical awakening is required in how we view all life, human and non-human. We need an altered perspective, a more realistic one, defined by empathy. This perspective is expressed by personalist philosophers including Nikolai Berdyaev, who described 'salvation' as including 'love for animals and plants, for each thing close by, for stones, for rivers and seas, for hills and fields'. But it is perhaps best articulated in the 7th century by the great Isaac of Syria:

'What is a merciful heart? It is a heart on fire for the whole of creation, for humanity, for the birds, for the animals, for demons, and for all that exists. By the recollection of them, the eyes of a merciful person pour forth tears in abundance. By the strong and vehement mercy that grips such a person's heart, and by such great compassion, the heart is humbled and one cannot bear to hear or to see any injury or slight sorrow in any in creation.'

But how do we respond with a merciful heart?

First, we need to open our eyes to what we have done and what we are doing – the incalculable loss of the creatures that walk and creep and bound and swim and fly on this earth. Painful as it is, we need to see it. And then? Perhaps the deepest, most natural response is grief and anger. I think of Dylan Thomas' 'rage against the dying of the light', of Greta Thunberg's cry of 'betrayal', of the thousands protesting and arrested in XR demonstrations around the world.

And finally comes the hardest part. The personal changes. The figuring out the next step, day by day, choice by choice, how to shift our values and behaviours, how to exist within exploitative systems in a merciful way. How to change those systems. Sometimes – perhaps most times – it feels impossible; the society upon which we depend seems structured on exploitation, set on the crash collision course towards extinction. And yet we can still choose how to respond.

*Bramble O'Brien is a live-in community member at Giuseppe Conlon House*

**Right:** Young Afghan girls attend classes at the Borderfree school for street kids, Kabul. **Photo:** Hakim Young

## Our disconnected relationships: a social emergency

*Dr. Hakim Young*

*The following is a modified text of my presentation at Giuseppe Conlon House, on the 12th of October 2019.*

Greta Thunberg said, 'The politics that's needed to prevent the climate catastrophe doesn't exist today. We need to change the system.'

To use her quote, I would suggest that, 'The politics that's needed to prevent war catastrophes doesn't exist today. We need to change the system.'

Both the climate and war catastrophes represent a social emergency fuelled by our disconnected relationships with the natural world and with one another.

Decades of war have torn Afghan relationships apart, and, since relationships are central to Afghan social fabric, wars are literally cutting off family and community lifelines.

In a letter to the New York Times in 1945, Albert Einstein quoted the words of ex-U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, 'We are faced with the pre-eminent fact that if civilisation is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships - the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together, in the same world at peace.'

I began discovering this 'science of human relationships' while I was working among Afghan refugees in Quetta, Pakistan. I was invited by a Pashtun refugee student to have dinner with his Taliban family and friends. I was worried, but after consulting my Pakistani colleague, we accepted the invitation.

My Taliban acquaintances served us a good Pashtun cuisine of kebabs and *shlombeh* (a type of yoghurt drink). I asked two of the Taliban dinner companions why they were waging the 'holy war'. They each cited anger, and spoke of taking revenge for their loved ones who had been hurt or killed. Why didn't they harm me, an obvious infidel? Instead, they sent me home to my doorstep, because, they said, 'It's not even safe for us (Taliban) to be out at night'.

That evening, my relationships with those demonized by politicians, religious leaders, and the mainstream media shifted. I began to see why Erich Fromm said, 'I carry with myself all of humanity... I am the criminal and the saint.' In the words of British documentary filmmaker, Louis Theroux, 'Even the darkest and ugliest kinds of behaviour spring from places that are either relatable or recognisable.' Dr. Nadir, an Afghan psychiatrist who counselled the Taliban for stress and depression, said, 'I used to treat the Taliban as human beings... Sometimes, they would weep, and I would comfort them.' By design, war dehumanizes and alienates everyone.

[continued on next page]



[continued from page 5]

In September 2019, a US / NATO drone killed 30 Afghan pine nut farmers. These farmers, who had not done any harm to US or UK citizens, were buried by fellow villagers, unnoticed, violated. Surviving family members would never be the same again.

Drones carry Hellfire missiles, each estimated to cost tax-payers \$58,000, and capable of widespread destruction. Fearful Afghan children, living in drone-intense areas, no longer have the ease of mind to engage in their favourite pastime of flying kites. This is why, every Afghan *Nao Roz* (New Years Day), the Afghan Peace Volunteers join UK activists in kite-flying events called 'Fly Kites Not Drones'.

We urgently need to reconnect our social relationships. But does our use of technology and digital devices build or hinder this reconnection?

On my way to Ireland and the UK, to give talks on the work of the Afghan Peace Volunteers, my senses were flooded with consumer products being advertised at London Heathrow Airport. The surveillance system was ever-present; airport staff seemed to distrust me simply because I had travelled from Afghanistan.

I was thinking of Inaam, whose photo is on my desktop. Inaam is

a 10-year old breadwinner who attended the Borderfree Street Kids School run by the Afghan Peace Volunteers. He began polishing boots and washing cars when he was seven. After finishing the three-year programme at the Borderfree School, he continued as a volunteer.

Quite addictively, he played war video games on his family's phone. I downloaded two farming games for him, which he played for just five days, switching back to the 'shooting' games as they were more 'fun'. When he discovered chess, I was glad to play with him, although chess is also a war game!

Then one day, Inaam said that he and his family were going to seek asylum in Canada. Life in Afghanistan, especially for his older brother who was an Afghan soldier, was becoming too dangerous.

When I returned to Kabul after my UK trip, Inaam and his family had left Afghanistan. I may not see them again. I worry about how Inaam, like the 70.2 million climate, economic, and war refugees of today, will be treated by fellow human beings.

We have a social emergency, that we need to address internationally. As such, the Afghan Peace Volunteers and I are organizing the Relational Learning Project [[www.relationallearningproject.com](http://www.relationallearningproject.com)] to pursue more meaningful relationships.

*Dr. Hakim Young works with the Afghan Peace Volunteers, running the Borderfree centre, a peace education project in Kabul.*

## Sharing is happiness

*Br. Johannes Maertens*

Last Sunday I joined a service at the local London Salvation Army mission. It has been many years since I last entered 'Sally Army' premises. The last time was in Brussels, where, aged 17, I joined the lay ranks of the Salvation Army, hoping to do something for homeless people, and to put my faith into action. I volunteered at a homeless shelter, a real barracks-style building, with space for 110 homeless men. Over the intervening years, the homeless population of Brussels has become younger and more diverse. More people with psychological or psychiatric problems have ended up on the streets, and many have moved towards the capital cities where they find some safety in anonymity, as well as more services. But 'street homelessness' itself has not changed: you are mentally vulnerable on the streets, vulnerable to violence, to the cold weather; you often die much younger, and you live a life that is stigmatised.

This Sunday, the prayer service celebrated the harvest festival, thanking God for the many wonderful gifts of the earth. During harvest festival, people bring gifts of dried or tinned food, which the church then gives to a local homeless shelter or a refugee support group. The pantry of our own hospitality house fills up by the end of October with tins, rice, pasta, and all sorts of goods. The efforts of several Catholic schools and churches gives us a reserve for up to a year. I am always amazed and thankful for this wonderful gift.

In the Salvation Army, the pastors, or 'officers' as they are called, had an animated 'sharing song' for the children. It was not the kind of style you would find in an Orthodox or Catholic Church, but it was used for youngsters in a family prayer moment. Yes, I sang along with the easy rhythm of the song, and the YouTube video caught on with some of the younger ones and elders. It reminded me that 'learning to share' is something we instinctively teach children. My grandparents certainly did not want us to grow up selfish or greedy. 'Be happy with what you have' and 'share with people

**Below:** Young women gather for a gender-free bike ride at the Borderfree Centre, Kabul. **Photo:** Hakim Young



around you' were common phrases. But teaching adults to share is a different matter. As we grow older, and sometimes a bit bitter, we find all sorts of reasons not to share, or to become selective with whom we share. We often hide behind the question: does it really make a difference? *Believe me, it does.* I have shared meals with destitute children in camps in southern Africa, with hungry refugees on the streets of our European capitals, with homeless people in London. So, please believe me, I have seen that it does help.

In the words of Saint John Chrysostom:

'If you see anyone in affliction, do not be curious to inquire further. His being in affliction gives him a just claim to your help. For if when you see a donkey choking you lift him up without inquiring whose he is, you certainly ought not to be over-curious about a person. He is God's.'

John Chrysostom himself came from a wealthy background. He became a desert monk in Egypt, leaving behind a privileged life, and later served as a priest in Antioch. His eloquence in preaching gave him the name 'golden-mouthed', although his sermons could also be provocative. Friend and fellow Church Father, Saint Basil the Great, also explores the imperative to share:

'Tell me, which things are yours? Where did you get them from at the beginning of your life? It is like someone who has a seat in the theatre, and who objects when others also take their places. He claims that he owns what is for the common use of all. So too with the rich. They claim in advance that which is common property and make themselves the owners of it ... Did you not come naked out of your mother's womb? Are you not going to return naked to the earth? Where did you get your present possessions from? ... The one who steals clothes off someone's back is called a thief. Why should we refer to the one who does not clothe the naked, while having the means to do so, as anything else?'

Here, Saint Basil provides a different perspective on life, one that reshapes our relationship with each other, our relationship with 'things', and

our relationship with God. Basil points out that we actually don't own anything; it is all God's. Possessing wealth, money, and power makes us even more responsible to care for others and for creation. Jesus' directive to '*sell all you have, give it to the poor and then follow me*' sounds through these words. Basil continues:

'The bread that you have belongs to the hungry, the clothes that are in your cupboard belong to the naked, the shoes that are rotting in your possession belong to the barefooted, the money that you have buried belongs to the destitute.'

As the Salvation Army officer said in her talk, 'There is enough for everybody in the world, if we share it with each other'. In the Gospels, many of the important moments in Jesus' life are about sharing. Many beautiful moments in our own lives are about sharing with friends or family, such as a meal around the table. For me personally the meal with our guests at the hospitality house, whether it is with five or with twenty-five, is always a moment of real joy.

Giving away what you have, 'detaching' as some call it, can be scary at first, but I deeply believe it leads to happiness. One early morning in the hospitality house, I had hidden myself alone in our kitchen with breakfast on my plate, when my Eritrean friend Daniel came down and said, 'Father you shouldn't be eating on your own. Come eat with us; sharing is happiness.'

*Br. Johannes Maertens is a live-in community member at Giuseppe Conlon House.*

## Spirituality at Maria Skobtsova House, Calais

[continued from page 3]

[Maria Skobtsova] also had a big house. She took care of hundreds of refugees at a time, yet she believed that her room needed to be in the heart of the house, so that she was always available; she couldn't hide if someone needed something. I wonder where she found the energy. For her it was personal, the same as for Dorothy Day: being there with and for people.

HC: As a visitor to the house, it seemed that the guests' enthusiasm for prayer varied from week to week.

JM: They prayed more when they were hopeful and had energy. When times were hard, when there was a lot of police brutality and very few were getting to the UK, they would prefer to sleep. We could see how hope had disappeared.

That was why it was important that we, volunteers, kept praying. For them to know that the prayer went on was very important.

When I left Calais, one of the guests, who is now in the UK, asked me, 'And the prayer? Is the prayer going on?' That was very touching. It's still happening. The community still does the four prayers a day. It is a place of miracle. That is where you see that the spirit of Maria Skobtsova is quite alive there.

*This article was first published by Independent Catholic News. Henrietta Cullinan edits this newsletter.*



**Left:** At Maria Skobtsova House, shared Eritrean breakfast of Fata, hot tomato sauce and bread **photo:** Henrietta Cullinan



Above: Angela with blue poncho, Llanwrtyd Wells, in 2012. photo: Zelda Jeffries

## Angela Broome - faithful disciple

*Fr. Martin Newell cp*

We said goodbye, or more accurately 'au revoir' - see you again - to a faithful, founding member of the London Catholic Worker on the 1st of November. It was fitting that Angela's funeral should be on All Saints' Day. All of us at her funeral, held at the beautiful South Downs Natural Burial Site in Hampshire, perhaps learnt that there was more to this remarkable woman than all that we already knew.

My favourite memory of being with Angela was going for a meal in an Eritrean restaurant on Essex Road. We had just signed the lease for what became Dorothy Day House, the first Catholic Worker house to open in London since the 1960s.

I first met her as we were preparing to mark the walls of the Ministry of Defence on Ash Wednesday in the late 90's, and we were arrested together a number of times over the years, whether with Catholic Peace Action, Trident Ploughshares, or the Catholic Worker. She was a veteran already by then. I only found out exactly how much of a veteran at her funeral.

Angela was on the first anti-nuclear Aldermaston March in 1958 and was a member of the Committee of 100 direct action organisation in the 60's, although first she had joined the Christian peace group, Fellowship of Reconciliation, in the early 50's, and remained a member all her life.

Angela's Anglican Christian faith was a quiet, ever-present rock in her life, as were her family; that is to say, her sisters, nephews and nieces, because Angela remained single throughout her life. She lived in a tiny flat in the east end of London and devoted herself to social work with families and children, in what is now Tower Hamlets. She combined this employment with all kinds of good works in the rest of her time. Angela was an active member of her local Labour Party, local CND branch and the Muriel Lesters affinity group of Trident Ploughshares.

In her latter years she was on the committee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, all the while a key member of the London Catholic Worker. Not only that, but Angela was for many years involved with the Christian Socialist Jubilee Group started by the well known Anglo-Catholic priest and author, Kenneth Leech, until it folded in the early years of this century. In the midst of all this, Angela was a faithful member of her local parish church, and kept up strong relations with her family - sisters, nieces, nephews and more, taking the younger ones especially out to plays and concerts.

Angela was steadfast, determined, kind, gentle, thoughtful, patient, quiet without lacking confidence, and inspiring to many. Her only flaw appeared to be her hoarding, embarrassment about which meant that for years she never allowed anyone to visit her at home. It has, however, given her family a treasure trove of material from her younger years, including letters from her

father who lived and worked in India for a few years, during part of which time in Angela's childhood the family had moved there. When I did manage to visit her in her flat after her terminal diagnosis, she remained as dignified, non-self-pitying, and interested in others and what was going on in the world as she had always been.

A few years after we had started Dorothy Day House, then Giuseppe Conlon House, and Scott Albrecht and Maria (then Albrecht) the Catholic Worker Farm, Angela told me she saw these communities as some kind of miracle, 'They shouldn't be possible, but they seem to be'.

Later, since her illness, Angela told me that seeing the Catholic Worker in operation had restored her faith in what was possible: a real living out of God's Kingdom. Well, that's what she meant, although Angela was probably a bit briefer than me. For these things too, I am deeply grateful. I look forward to seeing her again when we meet again in the fullness of time and eternity in the love and presence of the Creator of all. Deo gratias.

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord. May perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul, with all the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen.

*Fr. Martin Newell cp is a founder of the London Catholic Worker. He lives in a house of refugees in Birmingham.*

Below: Angela Broome protesting with the Muriel Lesters outside the offices of Lockheed Martin offices in Regent Street in 2012. photo: Zelda Jeffries





# Giuseppe Conlon House

Amongst our community there have been several comings and goings. Tom has left and Will has moved on to Greece, Sam arrived for six months and Johannes continues to make Giuseppe Conlon House his home.

In October, members of our community joined a gathering of Passionist Partners at Minsteracres Retreat Centre in Northumberland. More than 40 representatives from the growing Passionist Family of St Joseph's Province (England & Wales) - working with the homeless, refugees, people with HIV, former prisoners, and parish projects, as well as running campaigns on social, peace and environmental issues, came to Minsteracres to gather, pray, and share ideas. Also present were friends from the Catholic Worker Farm and Martha House.

In October we held a bring and share music night. Tom, pianist and academic, performed some new work, Margriet sang two Purcell songs, and Mirjam played the clarinet. There were vocal ensembles, solos, and even dancing from community members and guests. It was a gentle, welcoming evening. The audience sank into the warm sofas and drank soup.

**Above:** Bramble and Nora perform at the GCH music night.

**Below:** Writing letters to the Kings Bay Ploughshares.



Later in the same month, Dr. Hakim Young from Kabul came to speak about his work with the Afghan Peace Volunteers in Kabul and share a meal with us. The text of his speech is included on page 5.

Sadly this autumn, Angela Broome, one of our founder members, died. She was instrumental in setting up both Dorothy Day House in Hackney and Giuseppe Conlon House. Her obituary is on page 8.

In November, Margriet Bos and Fr. Martin Newell appeared at Inner London Crown Court for a plea hearing. Also present were Phil Kingston and the Rev. Sue Parfitt. The four are charged with obstruction of a train. They all pleaded not guilty. The trial has been set for September 2020.

This follows an action in which a DLR train was held up at Shadwell station, as part of the XR October uprising in protest against the government's lack of action on climate change.



## Dorothy Day on the Catholic Worker:

Many young people have come here and worked with us, and they tell us after a while that they have learned a lot and are grateful to us, but they disagree with us on various matters

– our pacifism, our opposition to the death penalty,

our interest in small communities,

and our opposition to the coercive power of the state.

You people are impractical, they tell us, nice idealists, but not headed anywhere big and important.

They are right.

We are impractical, as one of us put it, as impractical as Calvary.

There is no point in trying to make us into something we are not.

We are not another community fund group, anxious to help people with some bread and butter and a cup of coffee or tea.

We feed the hungry, yes; we try to shelter the homeless and give them clothes, if we have some, but there is a strong faith at work; we pray.

If an outsider who comes to visit doesn't pay attention to our praying and what that means, then he'll miss the whole point of things.

## Future court dates

Your solidarity is very welcome

*Activists from the Catholic Worker have risked arrest through nonviolent direct action for the sake of peace and God's creation. Please do offer court support when you can.*

**Instro/Elbit protest** during which drone factory was shut down for two days. Trial dates, February 17th - 21st at Folkestone Magistrates Court. Court support/vigil requested for those dates, as well as accommodation in Kent for the 7 defendants and supporters.

**XR protest**, Brazilian Embassy, August 2019, Richard Barnard, July 12th for 3 weeks, Southwark Crown Court, trial.

**DLR action during XR spring uprising**, with **Christian Climate Action**, Richard Barnard, Nick Cooper, Phil Kingston and others, 11th May 2019 for 3 weeks, Inner London Crown Court.

**DLR action during XR October uprising**, Christian Climate Action, Martin Newell, Nick Cooper, Phil Kingston, Rev. Sue Parfitt, 7th September for 5 days, Inner London Crown Court.

**Below:** Suitcases and pallets form part of the two day blockade of the Instro Precision factory in the Discovery Park, Sandwich, Kent **photo: with permission**

## Arms factory occupation

*Richard Barnard*

I am one of seven people who recently attended court in Kent for occupying an Israeli-owned arms factory. We face a week long trial next year, from the 17th to the 21st of February, at Folkestone Magistrates' Court, and a maximum sentence of three months in prison, if we are convicted of aggravated trespass.

We were arrested in August at the Instro Precision arms factory in Sandwich, Kent, after allegedly occupying the site for two days, causing the factory to close. A number of us were injured when we were removed from the site by the police.

Instro Precision's parent company, Elbit Systems, supplies military equipment to Israel and claims that its products are the 'backbone' of Israel's drone fleet, which has been used extensively in attacks on Gaza.

A statement released by Stop Elbit-Instro Defendants Solidarity Campaign said: 'The skilled engineers of Elbit-Instro could work to make the world a better place. Instead they build machines that incinerate children' adding, 'Shame on them all.'

East Kent Campaign Against the Arms Trade said: 'There are urgent questions about whether Israel is using Instro's specialist targeting technology to target Gazan civilians during the Great Return civil rights demonstrations, or maintaining the surveillance of Palestinians.'

'We also contend that Elbit-Instro has a trading relationship with Turkey. Turkey is currently embarked on a bloody war against the Kurdish population, both within its own borders and in Kurdish-held areas of Northern Syria. As a result of Turkey's most recent military offensive, thousands of ISIS supporters managed to escape from military prisons and camps.'

Elbit-Instro is unpopular with the local community following a failed bid to take over the former Manston Airport site.

The firm moved to the Discovery Park from Broadstairs, where it had been the target of numerous protests. This was the second protest at their new site; I was involved in another one, just a month earlier, which had closed the factory for a day.

We are looking for funds to cover costs associated with the trial and action. Donations: <https://chuffed.org/project/support-the-instro-elbit-defendants>

We are also looking for court support, and people to vigil outside the factory. Do get in touch if you can help.



# Giuseppe Conlon House Wish List

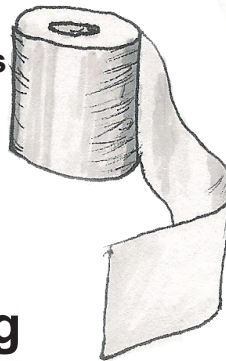
## Food

- Chopped tomatoes
- Peanut butter
- Cooking oil
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Chickpeas
- Easy-cook rice
- Basmati & brown rice
- Oats
- Couscous
- Noodles
- White vinegar
- Hummus
- Nutritional yeast
- Tahini
- Soy sauce
- Spices & herbs
- Honey
- Muesli
- Breakfast cereal
- Fruit juice and squash
- Herbal teabags
- Chilli sauce
- Nuts and seeds



## Toiletries

- Toilet paper
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Shampoo
- Liquid soap
- Razors



## Cleaning

- Eco-friendly products:
- Anti-bacterial spray
- Bicarbonate of soda
- Multi-purpose cleaner
- Toilet cleaner
- Laundry detergent
- Floor cleaner



## Miscellaneous

- NEW Men's underwear M-XL
- Candles and tea lights
- Umbrellas



### Please do not donate pork or pork products!

Many of our guests do not eat pork for religious reasons. Also, please do not donate soup, tinned spaghetti or baked beans as we already have enough.

## Regular Events

Starting from September. Please note earlier start time.

All events at:

**Giuseppe Conlon House, 49, Mattison Road, N4 1BG**

-unless otherwise stated

**Bible Sharing** followed by dinner. Second Thursday of the month, 6:00-7:30pm: We are using *Lectio Divina* and the book 'Come Out My People!: God's Call Out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond' by Wes Howard-Brook

### Refugee Vigil

Third Wednesday of the Month, 12:30 – 1:30pm at the Home Office, 2 Marsham Street SW1P 4DF: *We remember all who have died because of borders and hostile immigration policies.*

**Reading Group** followed by dinner. Fourth Thursday of the month, 6:00 – 7:30pm: *Our God is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigrant Justice* by Ched Myers and Matthew Colwell.

**Urban Table** We provide a sit-down community meal, every other Sunday, 1:00 - 4:30pm at the Roundchapel, Powerscroft Road, London E5 0PU. *Get in touch if you would like to participate.*

**All welcome.** Call 020 8348 8212 for more details

*Unfortunately, our house is not accessible for wheelchair users.*

## Write in

We warmly invite you to comment on what is written here. We will include interesting letters in our next issue.

**GIUSEPPE CONLON HOUSE**  
IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS!

JOIN OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS!

THERE ARE CURRENTLY SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED:

- HELP PREPARE OUR DAILY COMMUNAL EVENING MEAL FOR ABOUT 15 PEOPLE
- URBAN TABLE - TWICE MONTHLY WE SERVE A SUNDAY LUNCH FOR ABOUT 60 PEOPLE IN HACKNEY
- BE THE EVENING HOST, WELCOMING OUR COOKS, SETTING THE TABLE AND DOING FOOD PICKUPS.
- VARIOUS DIY AROUND THE PROPERTY
- JOIN AS A FULL TIME LIVE-IN VOLUNTEER FOR A PERIOD OF 2+ MONTHS.
- JOIN OUR MONTHLY VIGILS OUTSIDE THE HOME OFFICE **Wednesday!**
- HELP WITH THE MAKING AND MAILING OUT OF OUR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE GET IN TOUCH TO ARRANGE A VISIT.

WWW.LONDONCATHOLICWORKER.COM CONTACT: +44(0)2083488212. LONDONCATHOLICWORKER@YAHOO.CO.UK

# Support our work

We are a part of the radical, Christian, pacifist Catholic Worker movement started in 1933 in New York by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. There are now over 150 houses and communities in the United States and in other countries. Catholic Worker houses are financially independent. There are no headquarters, nor is there a central organisation. More information is available on the U.S website [www.catholicworker.com](http://www.catholicworker.com).

At Giuseppe Conlon House we run a house of hospitality for around twenty homeless and destitute asylum seekers who are not allowed to work or claim benefits. In collaboration with two local churches we also serve a meal for up to fifty people in Hackney on Sunday afternoons.

## Cash donations

We are not paid for this work. We receive nothing from the government. For reasons to do with our political witness, we are not a registered charity.

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.

Bills! We rely on our readers' donations to pay all utility bills, building repairs, volunteer and guest expenses, printing and household supplies.

If you would like to support our work at the house please consider sending us a donation or setting up a standing order.

- £20 will pay for one day of heating at Giuseppe Conlon House
- £30 covers the costs of one Urban Table meal for 60 guests
- £50 covers one week's housekeeping including items like milk, sugar, margarine, toilet paper and cleaning products
- £150 will pay for a volunteer's monthly expenses including transport

## Ways to donate

Cheque: payable to 'London Catholic Worker', to Giuseppe Conlon House, 49 Mattison Road, London N4 1 BG

Online: London Catholic Worker, Triodos Bank, Account No. 20066996 Sort Code: 16 58 10

Paypal: a 'donate button' is on the front page of our website [www.londoncatholicworker.org](http://www.londoncatholicworker.org)

Please consider setting up a regular donation. You can use the Standing Order Form provided below

We would be very grateful for any help you can give us. Our accounts are available on request

<b>Standing Order Form</b> Please use block letters	
I wish to pay the London Catholic Worker £10/ £20/£40/other amount per month/ other	
Payments to be made monthly/ other First Payment to be made on: / / 20 and monthly thereafter	
Name of your bank	
Address of your bank	
Your account name	
Your account number	
Your bank sort code	
Please pay: Triodos Bank Deanery Road Bristol BS1 5AS	For the Credit of: London Catholic Worker Account Number 20066996 Sort Code: 16 58 10 Until further notice the sum of the value indicated above
Signed	Date
Please return to : London Catholic Worker 49 Mattison Road London N4 1BG	Your Name and Address
	Email