

THE LONDON CATHOLIC WORKER



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Winter

Free/Donation

A child is born

Johannes Maertens

How often we, Catholic Workers and other peaceful protesters have stood on the steps of St Martins-in-the-Fields, in solidarity with Chelsea Manning. But I, and maybe others, have always been completely unaware that on top of those steps, under the portico, just before the entrance of the church, there stands a very big stone - a sculpture - on top of which lies, carved out of the same stone, a life size baby – baby Jesus - linked by umbilical cord to the earth.

This stone, in its hardness and massiveness, strongly contrasts with the little new born child on its surface. For me it resembles the harshness, the edginess and darkness of the world into which every child is born today.

I think it is a question many parents ask, why they have to bring their children into a world marred by conflict, violence and struggle. Yet for the majority of parents, children are the only hope they have that the world one day will become a better place. Every child born is a miracle and for parents who longed for their child, this child incarnates all the hope and future they have.

Every time I do a baptism I wonder at how deep the bond is between a parent and their child. A parent recognizes each smile, cry, touch, the first laugh, a cough; knows what it means. Full of amazement they look and hold their child. It is a “biological” wonder but also a human and spiritual wonder. In the West today some parents even make an idol of their child, a reality that later in the child’s life will have its consequences.

Writing this I think of the children born under the stars of Bethlehem, Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria where life has become a day to day struggle to survive, where the conflicts of the empire hit people the hardest – and treat everybody as less than human. Jesus was born into a world that was in turmoil and conflict; many people were on the move, and so it was for his parents Mary and Joseph. It is here that the angel announces good tidings to Mary and Joseph. Strangely enough by our human standards, God chose to come into the

world, into the flesh, just there, at the fringe of empire, in an ordinary yet unwedded soon to be homeless couple. God is making a point!

Yes, out of Christmas we have made another person’s birthday party with plenty of gifts, plates full of food, merry music and TV shows.

It takes courage to read the narrative in Luke's gospel, about this 'other' family's struggle to survive while fleeing to safety. It is about God choosing to come into the world, just like us born into that small miracle a baby – becoming like us.

Bonhoeffer writes: “*Aim your eye on the manger! In the body of a child, in the Son of God that became flesh, all your distress, taking on the flesh, the pain, the hunger, the anxiety, temptation, yes, all your sins carried, forgiven and sanctified.*”

Carved in the sculpture at St. Martins it is written “...and the word became flesh and lived among us.” This Word that we graciously celebrate each Christmas cries out to us to forgive, to be bearers of peace, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked... it is there that we meet God, where He lives among us.

Truly a child has been born unto us, his names will be Wonderful Advisor and Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:5)



Christ Child, sculpture by Michael Chapman, St. Martin's in the Fields, London

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Giuseppe Conlon House offers hospitality to destitute refugees. We also run the Urban Table soup kitchen. We organize regular acts of non-violent resistance and produce this newsletter

Urban Table Soup Kitchen:
Open Sunday 2:30 – 4:30 pm
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The Farmhouse offers hospitality to destitute women. We grow organic vegetables and have a poustina and hermitage retreat. Maryhouse also offers a home to four destitute women with children.

Glasgow Catholic Worker

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The Glasgow Catholic Worker offers a place of welcome for asylum seekers and destitute refugees in the centre of Glasgow at the Garnethill Multicultural Centre, open Saturday 9:00 – 1:00. and a soup kitchen on Friday nights. We keep a regular vigil at Faslane Nuclear Base as well as having monthly meetings and prayers.

When you have finished with this newsletter, please pass it on for others to read!

And wisdom asks...

Father Tom Cullinan

'So I decided there is nothing better than to enjoy food and drink and to find satisfaction in work'
Ekklesiastes 2:24

I am sorry to be so late, the traffic was terrible... And Wisdom asks: 'The traffic? Don't you mean the cars ahead of you? You, the innocent victim. Those behind you non-existent.' Er, yes maybe. I'm afraid most of my language is from my own point of view, my vested interests.

I go shopping. Am about to pick and choose as if food began its life on the shelves. And Wisdom asks: 'Weren't you going to use your LOAF and buy Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal-friendly, Fairly traded goods?' Er, yes, maybe. But it takes much more focus and care to do that. And what difference will little me make when all those with heaped-up trolleys don't care?

I buy a can of drink, interested in the drink, of course. And Wisdom whispers: 'What about that programme you heard on the radio about the dire conditions of miners in Latin American aluminium mines? And why, why are those at the beginning of tin can production on starvation wages when the director of the can company earns a fortune?' Er, yes, thanks. Can't do much about that. But I can live with the question and try to recycle more aluminium.

It's no wonder that Jesus urges us to take care of the way we see and hear things. He found, increasingly I think, that very gifted people (especially gifted with learning, wealth or social authority) often became so pre-occupied with their own way of seeing or hearing that they could not stand back and see what was really going on. Beware you who are wealthy, not because you are sinners but because you have created your own 'kingdom', your own self-justifying language and awareness.

One of his most striking parables is when the invitation goes out to enter the banquet of real life (Matthew 22:2-6) in which Jesus says, 'The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come.

'So he sent other servants to tell them, "The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!" But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them.'

If this were today, the first couple would be preoccupied by a newly bought house and so can't see further than that. The second would have just bought a new car and would be keen to take it out for a drive. The gospel Jesus lived and urged us to make our own is a radical

critique of the market economy as an ideology. Any idea that if we all look after our own, the common good will see to itself is a very plausible illusion. And, like all ideologies, carries within itself the seeds of its own downfall.

One possible reading of Jesus 'feeding the 5,000' (as recorded in John 6:5-13) is that he knew there was enough food in that vast gathering if only the families who had food could be persuaded to relinquish their hold on private property and learn to share. His initial act of blessing and sharing those few loaves was a trigger sacrament for all to do likewise. It would be wonderful indeed if our churches could teach and live like that. It is, in fact, in our social teaching down through the years that anything anyone has in excess of reasonable need belongs (in justice not largesse) to those in need. That truth is our best-kept secret.

There is a radical transformation of bread and wine

For many Christians the feeding of the 5,000 should be taken as the model for our Eucharist or Communion services. So we should keep an open table to anyone of goodwill who comes for Communion. In the Catholic faith, however, Communion at the Eucharist is more profound than that and if we read John's sixth chapter it seems to have been a real issue in the early church. Let me share some personal experiences as a Catholic priest. Each Sunday evening I celebrate the Eucharist with 100 or so Catholics in Crosby. I am deeply moved at the time of Communion by their 'Amen's' to the words 'the Body of Christ, the Blood of Christ'.

On the day before he was crucified at what is known as 'The Last Supper', Jesus was with his friends 'and he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

I know that the 'Amen' of each communicant is deeply personal but is not private. Each of us receives as a member of the Church of which we are members in our wider lives. There is a radical transformation of bread and wine into becoming the Body and Blood of Christ, not because I believe it, not because I understand it, or anyone understands it, but because it is the faith—knowledge of the Church.

It has come home to me more and more through involvement with Oxfam, CAFOD (the official Catholic aid agency for England and Wales) and the Justice And Peace Network over the years, that the special moment of our 'Amen' in Communion sends us out to break bread in our economic and political lives during the week. Would that all of us Catholics who say 'Amen' on a Sunday also said 'Amen' to our Church's true tradition.

Father Thomas Cullinan is a monk-priest of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

From "Faith In Food – Changing the world one meal at a time" published 2014 Bene Factum Publishing in cooperation with ARC (Alliance of Religions and Conservation). Printed with kind permission of the author and publishers.

My Camel

Nora Ziegler

Living at the Catholic Worker has caused me to reflect on and challenge aspects of my faith that I had taken for granted or at least never really thought about in this way. When I recently re-read a well known verse in Matthew 19, it struck me that I had grown up with a certain perspective and a certain interpretation of this verse that I was now not so sure about anymore. It was verse 24, "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

I probably assumed that Jesus was saying it is difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God because of their psychological attachment to wealth, or something along those lines. This is the kind of interpretation that makes sense when you are a white middle class Christian surrounded by other white middle class Christians. We know how it feels to worry about money but we also know that we care a lot less about money than people who are wealthier than us so we feel we are at least on the right path. We also tend to think of ourselves as the typical, average Christian and so, when confronted with a critique of wealth it is only natural for us to think "surely Jesus can't mean us! Then we'd all be wrong".

But the truth is the majority of Christians worldwide are not white or middle class. Living in community with men from different countries and cultures, who have lost their homes and are destitute, I realize that Jesus and his disciples were much more like them than they were like me. So when Jesus said it is impossible for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God it is quite likely that this includes me and that Jesus is talking about having wealth, as opposed to feeling attached to it.

If we stop thinking about the kingdom of God as a shining garden with pearly gates but imagine it as a place of justice and eternal peace, we also see how that makes sense. In our world, wealth and poverty are symptoms of injustice. If I am wealthy, it is because the bodies and minds of other people in this world are being exploited, abused and diminished. If I benefit from others being poor how can I pray for a kingdom that is just? If my wealth causes others to suffer, how can I say I obey God's commandment to love my neighbour?

We don't see this truth if our neighbour is white, European, wealthy and educated. It is easy to love someone whom we owe nothing. But if we let ourselves recognize our neighbour in the women who sew our clothes in dark steaming factories or the thousands of refugees drowning on our shores, Jesus's words become harsh and sorrowful.

If we let his words sink in and strike our hearts, we will respond as did the disciples: "then who can be saved?" Jesus looks on us lovingly and says "with people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." We cannot build the kingdom of justice and peace with our own bare hands. But we can let Christ change our hearts and minds so that we might begin to give up our riches and follow him. I'm not ready, I'm afraid. It seems impossible, almost like trying to fit a camel through the eye of a needle. But I want to learn to trust God because with him all things are possible.

Nora Ziegler is a live-in member of the London Catholic Worker

'My small way of being in solidarity'

Jonathan Tulloch

As you read these words, the chances are that Fr Martin Newell will be watching television. Depending on the time you get round to the article, it might be EastEnders, Ice Road Truckers or perhaps Gardeners' World. He will also be lying on a bunk. I know this because of what he told me the other week, two days before his arrest.

"The real problem with being in prison," explained the Passionist priest, a veteran of six jail sentences, "Is that every cell has a television set. Your pad mate usually wants to watch it, and I'm not one of those people who can ignore a TV."

Last week Fr Newell was sentenced to 28 days in prison for non-payment of fines arising from several non-violent peace protests against war and war preparations, including British involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and its use of drones and Trident. He will inform his fellow prisoners why he is there: "That's something I always do as soon as possible. Before anyone finds out I'm a priest." There is usually only one kind of crime that brings a cleric to prison these days, and things are not going to be pleasant if fellow prisoners get hold of the wrong end of the stick "When they find out what really brought me here," he said, "they're usually pretty respectful"

So what lies behind Fr Newell's sentence at HMP Wandsworth? The short answer to that is "God is Peace" words he wrote on the walls of the Ministry of Defence building in London's Whitehall on Friday last week, along with "Choose Life: No Trident says God". This followed on from his part in the Pax Christi and Catholic Worker Ash Wednesday service during which the pillars of the MoD were anointed with ashes. It was typical of the nonviolent, uncompromising peace activism that he has conducted for 17 years.

He told Westminster Magistrates' Court on 15 March: "Jesus taught us to love not just our neighbours but also our enemies. He showed us by his life and example how to resist evil not with violence but with loving, persistent, firm, active non-violence. It was this revolutionary patience on behalf of the poor and oppressed that, humanly speaking, led to him being arrested, tried, tortured and executed by the powers that be." I first met Martin as he asks me to call him just before Christmas in the beautiful Minsteracres Passionist Retreat Centre. Set in the rolling Northumberland countryside, nothing could be further from Martin's usual element of urban, disadvantaged London where until recently he helped run a Catholic Worker house for rejected asylum seekers.

Gentle, bearded, bespectacled and (to my Northern ear) cockney, the worker-priest faces spells in captivity like most of us take holidays. His longest stretch was in 2000, a 12-month sentence for burglary and criminal

damage when he cut the wire at RAF Wittering, illegally entered the base and disabled a nuclear weapons convoy vehicle, putting it out of use for six months.

Martin's most striking trait is his quiet courage and his gentle, though intense, demeanour. But it was not long before his sense of humour showed itself as we chatted about his forthcoming incarceration. "I once read that prisons are the new monasteries. Both have got regular hours, communal meals, cells and plenty of time for contemplation."

Behind the laughter, though, there is seriousness. For the Passionist, prison really is a place to meet God. As the celebrated Jesuit priest Daniel Berrigan said: "Faith is not a matter for the heart or the mind, but the backside: faith is where your ass is." During previous sentences, Martin found that faith is also a pair of ears. "You do a lot of listening. Prisoners tend to have lacked listeners throughout their lives' Warders often choose him to room with a suicide risk, and sometimes he shares with people clucking (coming off heroin). "In most cases the only time prisoners ever see the clergy is when they're inside

Given Martin's background, a very different life might have been anticipated. Inspired by a father who worked in London's financial "square mile", the north London lad did a degree in economics. So what made him choose to be a parish priest on humanity's skid row when the wealth of the City beckoned?

Born into a loving Catholic family, with two brothers and sisters, Martin was an altar boy and Spurs fan. As a youth in the 1980s, he would stand on the terraces of White Hart Lane through rain and shine and wonder whether anything else would ever matter so much as the magic of Argentinian geniuses Ossie Ardiles and Ricky Villa. The answer came when he volunteered with the Catholic Worker movement as a student, and experienced life in "basic communities". This helped confirm that he wanted to be a priest.

It was as he trained for the Brentwood Diocese that he encountered the person and writings of Fr Austin Smith, the Passionist famous for his work with the poor in Toxteth, Liverpool, described in his book, *Passion for the Inner City*. It led Martin to join the Passionists himself. "This was the religious order where I could live out the preferential option for the poor as a priest, in the way I felt called to." What captured his heart in particular was the Passionist conviction that Christ's Passion continues through history: "Look in the eyes of today's crucified: the poor, the oppressed, the asylum seeker, the sufferer, and you're looking into the eyes of the man at Golgotha."

Martin's path has certainly taken him alongside today's crucified. His first brush with law and order, when he scaled the fence of British Aerospace's Preston premises, was in the company of an East Timorese man called Kupa, whose whole family were among the 200,000 murdered by Indonesian dictator Suharto, in a genocide facilitated by British Aerospace firepower. "We carried a small coffin in memory of the murdered. Dropping to our knees, we prayed." For the young priest

this was a sacramental moment, as much an expression of his priesthood as celebrating the Eucharist. It was, he says, "my small way of being in solidarity with Kupa. My way of walking a few steps with him" His many years of working quietly in such ventures as the Catholic Worker movement hospitality home for refused asylum seekers in Haringey has also deepened his relationship with Christ's Passion. It is often a practical relationship: the same hand that disabled the nuclear weapons vehicle has performed the 101 no-nonsense tasks required in housing, feeding and clothing a group of destitute people who were given nothing to live on and refused permission to work "Most of the time we're bodging together plumbing parts to make a toilet. Or collecting out-of date food from the supermarkets."

Helping to give dignity to those whom our governments treat as non-people must often require that sense of humour of his. But in all our conversations, I never heard Martin laugh so loudly as when I said I thought he ought to be a bishop. I was not joking. To me, he is the kind of person that Pope Francis surely meant when he said priests ought to truly "smell" their flock; the kind of priest who, when he is not sacrificing his liberty for God's peace, quietly gives the rest of his life to the injured, the broken, the despised.

If he knew Martin, I feel certain Pope Francis would agree. In recent conversation with the Congregation for Bishops about selecting new bishops, Francis outlined his view of what makes a good pastor: "Humble and trusting sowers of the truth ... those who are patient because they know the weeds will never be so many to overtake the field ..." So far, so Martin Newell.

Bishops too, Pope Francis continued, need to safeguard doctrine not by continually measuring the world's shortcomings but by enchanting, seducing people with the beauty of love. Also, in a bold, radical statement that makes me picture Martin being led away in handcuffs from the MoD building, the Pope stressed that any bishop "must be willing to argue with God on behalf of their people".

The Church has nothing to fear from elevating Martin, and everything to gain. He is not remotely anarchic; on the night before his first non-violent action he even rang up his bishop for permission. He also has a bishop's vision. Whereas much of the hierarchy fears the future, and are hurt by the Church's demise in Britain, Martin believes it is full of hope and truth.

"As mainstream culture grows increasingly wealthy," he told me at Minsteracres, "Our churches are emptying and falling apart. We wonder why no one's interested in what we've got to say. But should we be surprised that the rich aren't interested in God's message? Jesus never said blessed are the wealthy. In fact, the opposite. He lived on the margins, with the criminals, the poor, the ill-reputed. As our Church is shunted to the margins, at last we can rediscover who he was, what he wants, what we can do."

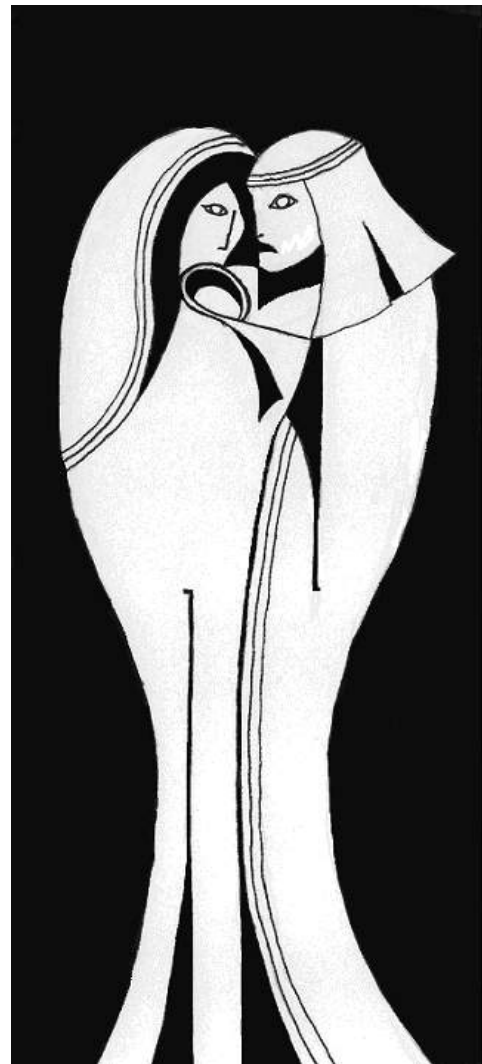
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New Society

Peter Maurin

To be radically right
is to go the roots
by fostering a society
based on creed,
systematic unselfishness
and gentle personalism.
To foster a society
based on creed
instead of greed,
on systematic unselfishness
instead of systematic selfishness,
on gentle personalism
instead of rugged individualism,
is to create a new society
within the shell of the old.

from Easy Essays



*Holy Family, gel pen on paper
by Jonny Mallam-Clark, a member of the live-in
community of the London Catholic Worker*

Search and Rescue

**“A voice was heard in Ramah,
sobbing and loud lamentation;
Rachel weeping for her children,
and she would not be consoled,
since they were no more.” –
Matthew 2:18**

Sarah Magno

In October the Foreign Office announced that the UK would not participate in any future search and rescue operations to help save immigrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean. This came on the heels of a decision by the EU to downsize the scope of its operations in the Mediterranean from search and rescue missions to a smaller patrol for border protection. These search and rescue operations, previously led by Italy with the support of other EU nations including the UK, saved the lives of over 150,000 people in the last 12 months, many of whom are women and children.

Which immediately begs the question: without search and rescue operations how many will die this year? And how could we possibly be willing to condemn so many to death by drowning? The answer to that second question comes easily from Foreign Minister Joyce Anelay, who claims that the search and rescue missions create a “pull factor”. The administration claims that by refusing to save the lives of a few they will discourage others from making the same dangerous journey.

In the United States a similar argument is being made as thousands of unaccompanied minors stream into the US causing one of the largest immigration crises in the country’s history. These children are immediately thrown into detention centers before being returned to their home countries in Latin America. Anyone who dares suggest that these children might be better served by uniting with family members they already have in the US or by being put into foster homes rather than prisons is shouted down by politicians claiming that they do this out of the best interest of the child. They claim that they are simply trying to dissuade other children from making what is one of the most dangerous journeys in the world.

The children crossing into the US have to ride what has been named the death train. They cross a barren and brutal desert, they are exploited by smugglers, and they hope they can get through the border fence without being shot by border patrol.

Those making the journey from the African coast to Europe are kept in cramped apartments, without permission to leave for months, or even years. Then they are stuffed into unseaworthy boats without enough water and food. They too are exploited by smugglers, and then abandoned if their boat hits bad weather or

runs out of petrol. As most can’t swim they drown. I can’t help but wonder why are they doing it? Could the pull of our western wonders be so great? Or could there be another reason?

As Christmas time approaches and I think of these immigrants desperately flocking to our nations, I can’t help but think of another family that became refugees: the Holy Family. When I read of the flight into Egypt the emphasis is often put on this being a fulfillment of the prophecies. But there was a real threat that the Holy Family was fleeing from. Herod had ordered the killing of every male child under the age of two. This slaughter left Rachel to weep for her children, her children that were no more. This massacre, this genocide that turned Joseph, Mary, and Jesus into desperate refugees is still happening today, all around our world. It is happening through female mutilation, through starvation and disease, through ethnic cleansing, through war, through gang violence. Around our world mothers cry out and cannot be consoled as their children are no more.

Perhaps it is this crying that is the true reason behind the willingness of so many to risk the horrors of migration. It is almost unimaginable for us that it might be better for some to die in desert and drown in an ocean then continue in their own home, but for so many that is the reality. This may speak to a larger problem we need to fix in our world: a greater need to end the wars, the violence, and the poverty that create refugees in the first place. The least we can do is send out boats to scoop up those who are trying to simply survive. We do not offer these people immediate status in our countries; they are not given permission to stay, or benefits. If they have an asylum case it will be a long process spanning years for them to prove. But they will be alive. After our silent complicity with the miserable conditions that force them to run, will we really stand by and refuse to rescue these refugees? Because:

“Truly I say to you when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.” Matthew 25:45

Fortnightly protest vigil on the steps of the Foreign Office.

Photo: D. Viesnik



Giuseppe Conlon House - update



*Community members from Giuseppe Conlon House joined the Catholic Worker Farm for two days of formation from Fr Martin Newell and Scott Albrecht
photo D. Viesnik*

Mirjam Johansson

As I write this I am sitting in my room, grateful for our friends, Ed and Fred, who installed a new, effective boiler in our house. We can no longer see our own breath as the 25 of us gather for dinner in Harringey's largest dining room. As we approach the darkest day of the year and it gets colder, it is a blessing to have somewhere dry and comfortable to rest. As requested by our guests, we will now open at 5pm instead of 7pm as an experiment for one month. Many of the day centres close around that time

Despite the cold it is our aim, every week, to wrap up, get out on the streets and bear witness. You can read in this newsletter about our regular vigil outside the Foreign Office where we demand that Government resume the search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. We have also been attending the G4S trial at the Old Bailey. The three guards are finally on trial for manslaughter, following the death of Angolan Jimmy Mubenga during his deportation four years ago. On Remembrance Sunday we followed the Veterans For Peace in a very solemn procession up to the Cenotaph. The wreath they placed there was made of mostly white peace poppies and a few red poppies, in remembrance of all the victims of war. Civilians as well as soldiers. Foreigners as well as British. We ended that day with a candle lit vigil across the street.

On Thursday evenings you are welcome to join us for alternating sessions of prayer, Bible study and 'Clarification of Thought'. This is often where we find the spirit inspiring us to speak up, open our hearts and do the Works of Mercy. It is inspiring as well of course to talk with people who have gone before us and acted with courage. Like George Mische from USA for

example, who paid us a short visit an afternoon last month. He shared with us some of his experiences. Among others the organizing of "Catonsville Nine" - nine Catholic activists who burned draft files to protest the Vietnam War.

To get away from the London bustle some of us have escaped a few times to the Catholic Worker Farm, our sister community near Watford, to relax and do some gardening. This has been especially appreciated by some of our guests who don't often get a chance to travel outside of the city. It always fills me with so much joy to see how enjoying the view of a lake, twittering birds, trees and cows can bring someone more peace and hope.

Another reason to be happy is that this year we have enough community members to be able to stay open during Christmas and celebrate together with our guests. So if any of you would like to contribute anything towards our Christmas meal or the additional costs that this will involve you are more than welcome to.

Lastly, thanks to volunteer, Savvi, we have a new friend to play with – Harakat, the kitten. When she grows older her task will be to keep the mice away.

Mirjam Johansson is a live in community member of the London Catholic Worker



Catholic Workers were among supporters who followed Veterans for Peace as they made a procession to lay a wreath of white poppies at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday. As it grew dark they held a candlelit vigil.



Catholic Worker attend London Anarchist Bookfair

Nora Ziegler



In October the London Catholic Worker ran a stall and workshop at the London Anarchist Bookfair. Alongside leaflets and newsletters, we displayed an abridged version of Ched Myers' *Binding the Strongman*, dvds of *Fool for Christ*, t-shirts, posters and books.

Mirjam Johansson, Sarah Magno and I *womanned* the stall. During the preparations I had been nervous about the negative reactions from other groups. However, we engaged supportive, curious, sceptical and, in some cases, slightly confused visitors. One man asked how I could be anarchist if I believed in a big man in the sky who controls all of us. I explained that, on the contrary, I believe that all people, of every age, race, gender, sexuality and physical appearance are made in God's image and for that very reason I believe any kind of human oppression and domination is sinful. There were also a couple of people who took our leaflets saying that, while not identifying as Christians, they found the idea of Christian Anarchism intriguing.

In the afternoon, Henrietta Cullinan and Mark Palframan led a discussion about Nicolai Berdyaev's book *Christianity and Class War*. After Mark's presentation of the book, we discussed the question, whether religious faith should provide a specific political ideology or the spiritual framework within which we engage politics.

The workshop was well attended. One young woman, though interested in our views, strongly opposed any connection between faith and politics. Some of the Catholic Workers expressed the view that the state is inherently oppressive and unjust and therefore any ideology it identifies with, whether religious or not, will inevitably be used to justify violence. And for that same

reason, perhaps our faith should provide a framework of values for political action, rather than be used to justify certain political systems or objectives.

Several weeks later, on Remembrance Sunday, we were joined at our prayer vigil by someone who had been part of that workshop and became interested in our movement.

Dorothy Day inspires West End Opera

Paul McGrail

For most, opera signifies fancy costumes, elegant singing and lush, melodious orchestral music. However, for one world-famous director and America's best-known living composer, opera must perform the role as a focus and projector for vital and urgent contemporary issues, societal as well as spiritual.

For six nights in November and early December, the English National Opera (ENO) performed the first staging of the Passion Oratorio, "The Gospel According To The Other Mary". The pulsating score was written by John Adams with a libretto collated by Peter Sellars from several sources including both Old and New Testaments, writers Primo Levi and Louise Erdrich and, most prominently, Dorothy Day. It is a work very difficult to describe and simply must be seen and heard to do it due justice. It's best deemed as a Bach passion for our times.

Sellars' work always challenges audiences to think about the world in which we live, often referencing history /real events and inviting us to question our morality and humanity. He has written that it was women who were closest to Jesus in his final days. Through his choice of modern writings, we are able to look at Mary Magdalene and her sister Martha in much more depth and relate their story, together with the restoration of life to Lazarus, to today's dispossessed and disempowered.

The opera's setting migrates from biblical times to today's Skid Row and a house of hospitality for homeless and unemployed women, which survives on small donations and small miracles. (A direct reference to the endeavours of the Catholic Worker Groups). Dorothy Day's radical convictions, raw honesty and unrelenting courage inspired Sellars and he contrasts these virtues with simply espousing nice ideas in a polite, non-disruptive manner.

This opera portrays the plight of migrant workers, the poorest and worst-treated employees in the U.S. Again and again, Sellars reiterates that the point about sacred material is that it's not something that happened 2,000 years ago. It's now. today, this very moment in our community, in our lives. All great art asks us where we stand, who we are, what we're doing right now. If we're not willing to be challenged,

we're missing out on what life is asking of us.

Sellers believes opera can make such a challenge beautiful. Adams' ravishing music takes a listener deep into a place one might otherwise hesitate to go. It's a mirror we all need; it's the artist's job to reflect back to society things that don't always get seen with sharpness or moral intensity. We desperately need a more spacious medium than newspapers or television to address truly critical issues.

As with Greek dramas, opera can raise and present difficult and dangerous topics, recognising that we can only face them if we face them as one. Employing music, poetry, dance and visual art, opera then puts them inside the experience. The poignant and deeply-moving "The Gospel According To The Other Mary" is a current example of this composite creation

Paul McGrail is a resident at Giuseppe Conlon House

Michael's Journey

Michael M

I am most privileged to be part of the family at the shelter. I have had to experience on a daily basis the challenges of sharing a room, lack of privacy, having to deal with people of different cultures and social needs. And this humbles me to imagine the things we almost take for granted in our daily lives when things are normal.

Living here with my new family I have had to take on personal responsibilities, such as cleaning, cooking and tidying, unlike in my home culture, where these things would be done for me. This has given me an opportunity to appreciate my new life in a sense of sharing, and appreciating the little we receive as a family that depends on charity.

For example, in May I was going to go to a funeral and I had no suitable shoes or clothes. Then one evening before the funeral I came back to the shelter and found someone had donated clothes and shoes. I could hardly believe that this could be true, as I was at the point of desperation. It's things like these that add value to our lives and which we are often denied because of our situation of homelessness.

I begin my day at the shelter with no plans or, if I have an appointment, wondering how I will even pay for my travel there, as I do not receive any government benefits. Every day when I leave the house, I carry all my documents, which have become part and parcel of my everyday life. Carrying all my documents all the time bothers me and keeps me wondering when I will ever walk freely without having to worry about my safety or the safety of my documents. I wonder when I will lead a normal life again without being asked all about my past experiences as a victim of torture and homelessness, which is very traumatic and brings more tears than joy.

It is my prayer and wish that one day I could be allowed to work legally and lead a normal life.

Pumpkin Ravioli

Catholic Worker style

Nora Ziegler

Makes 100 ravioli

Ingredients:

1 medium pumpkin

8 cups white flour

12 eggs

8 tablespoons olive oil

Grated cheese

Salt, pepper, nutmeg,

Parsley



Instructions:

Receive 50 pumpkins left over from the local Halloween event.

Phone your Italian neighbour and invite her over. Over coffee and biscuits from Yasar Halim, ask her innocently whether she thinks it's possible to make ravioli for 20 people. Hope she accepts the challenge.

To make the pasta, combine 8 Manchester United cups of flour and about 4 teaspoons of salt on a clean work surface. Shape the flour into a mound with a small hole in the middle. Crack an egg into the hole and scramble with a fork. Knead the flour with your hands, gradually incorporating more flour from the outside of the mound. Add 11 more eggs one by one using the same method, then add 8 tablespoons of olive oil. Make the dough into a ball and let it rest in a plastic bag for half an hour.

To make the filling, peel and chop the pumpkin into little bits. Save the seeds for someone else to roast, you don't have time for that. Boil the pumpkin bits, drain well and puree. The draining is very important because you don't want the mixture to be runny. Add salt, pepper, nutmeg, grated cheese and anything else you think might taste nice. Not oregano though, because your Italian friend will roll her eyes at you.

Now comes the hard part: forming the ravioli. Scatter some flour on the work surface to stop the dough from sticking. Take a handful of dough from the plastic bag and roll out as thin as possible. Now take a drinking glass and cut out circles of dough. Put a teaspoon of pumpkin puree in the centre of each circle and fold over one side of the dough, pressing the edges together with your fingernails. Repeat until all the dough is used up.

Arrange the ravioli on trays and sprinkle them with flour to stop them from sticking. Once you're done (it takes ages), leave the trays in the chapel, or the fridge.

To cook the ravioli, put a large pot of salted water to a fast boil and drop in about 10 ravioli at a time. Let them boil for 3 minutes, then scoop out and place in a bowl. The water needs to be boiling like crazy. If the ravioli do stick together, don't worry, pry them apart as carefully as possible and throw them in the water anyway. Tastes just the same.

Sprinkle olive oil, grated cheese and something green like parsley on the cooked ravioli.

Serve the ravioli, gloat and tell everyone you spent the whole afternoon making 100 ravioli. Your Italian friend had to leave early so you get all the credit. Save the leftover pumpkin puree and use it to make pumpkin soup.

Extract from Dorothy Day's diary

New Year's morning 1954

'As we are told by St. Peter to be ready to give reason for the faith that is in us, I must in all humility, as publisher of the Catholic Worker try to comment on it, and explain again, what 'anarchism' means to me and what I think it meant to Peter Maurin.

We often have been accused of taking the Pope's words out of context or of ignoring other words. Here are the words I will comment on.

Our Lord said, 'He who will be a leader among you, let him be a servant.' on washing the feet of the apostles, 'As I have done, so do ye also.'

'Christ became obedient unto death even to the death of the Cross. 'Be ye subject to every living creature,' Paul said.

To be a follower of Jesus, one certainly would not seek after authority, or if it were thrust upon one by ability and recognition of that ability by others, as it was in St. Peter, St. Ambrose, Pius XII, and so one.....

The problems of authority and freedom is one of the greatest problems of the day.

How to obey the laws of the State when to a man's conscience they run counter to the Divine law? Thou shalt not kill. 'A new precept I give unto you, that you love your neighbour as I have loved you.' (And Jesus laid his life for us.) St. Peter disobeyed the law and said he had to obey God rather than man. Wars today involve total destruction, obliteration bombing, killing of the innocent, the use of atom and hydrogen bombs.

When one is drafted for such war, when one registers for a draft for such a war, when one pays income tax, 80% of which goes to support such war, or works where armaments are made for such war, one is assenting to take the steps towards this war.

War involves hatred and fear.

Love casts out fear.

The social order which depends on profits, which does not consider men's needs, as to living space, food, is a bad social order and we must work 'to make that kind of society where it is easier for men to be good.'



Gerry Conlon: *presente*

The London Catholic Worker was greatly saddened to hear of the death of Gerry Conlon on June 21 2014 this summer. Gerry Conlon was one of the four wrongly convicted of the Guildford IRA pub bombing. He spent 14 years in prison before his conviction was quashed.

Shortly after the opening of the house, Gerry Conlon came to visit us. He spoke movingly to a small gathering of guests and friends about his experiences and in support of Shaker Aamer, the last British prisoner in Guantanamo. It was particularly appropriate given the Catholic Worker's solidarity with Chelsea Manning and other political prisoners. Many of our guests face possible detention or have experienced imprisonment and torture in the past.

The house of hospitality here in Harringey is named after Giuseppe, his father, who was arrested after he came to England to try and help his son and later died in prison.

Would you like a speaker from London Catholic Worker to give a talk in your area?

We are available to give talks and workshops on catholic worker spirituality, peace and justice, faith and resistance, hospitality, on our work with refugees.

Contact us : londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk

Regular events

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

Daily Prayers Monday – Saturday 9:00 am

Rosary of the Oppressed Last Friday of the Month 6:30 pm

Monthly Prayer Third Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm

Bible Study First and Fourth Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm

Clarification of Thought and Study Group Second Thursday, 7:00 pm

Vigil for Refugees outside the Foreign Office, every other Thursday 1-2 pm

All welcome. Call 020 8348 8212 for details

Support Our Work

with the Crucified of today's World

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 independent financially. There are no headquarters, nor is there a central organization. More information is available on the U.S based website www.catholicworker.com.

At Giuseppe Conlon House we run a house of hospitality for 20 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 50 people in Hackney on Sunday afternoons.

We need your expertise: Help us with:
DIY, building our website, with IT
with writing newsletter articles and pamphlets,
making banners
with prayers and liturgy

Cash Donations. We would be very grateful for any help you can give us. 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.

Heating We rely on our readers' donations to pay heating bills, internet, water and other costs. Please consider setting up a regular donation, or send your donation to:

**London Catholic Worker,
Triodos Bank
Account Number 20066996
Sort Code: 16 58 10**

A Standing Order Form is provided overleaf
Alternatively you can send a cheque, payable to
'**London Catholic Worker**', to **Giuseppe Conlon House, 49 Mattison Road, London N4 1 BG**

Our accounts are available on request.

'Prayer — without this all the rest is useless'

**Make a special
Christmas donation
to our wish list:
chicken
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Chilli Sauce
Rice, couscous
All kinds of pulses, beans and lentils
Olive oil, cooking oil
Vinegar
Tinned fish
Spice, Sugar
Low-fat spread
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Herbal teas,
Hot chocolate powder,
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Cereal, muesli, granola
Jam, marmalade,
Peanut butter, chocolate spread,
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Vegetable stock cubes
Tinned tomatoes
Tomato puree

Toiletries
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Deliver to **Giuseppe Conlon House, 49 Mattison Road, Londn N4 1BG**. We can also collect donations from north and north east London.
Call 0208 348 8212

Please no alcohol and no pork



