

THE LONDON CATHOLIC WORKER



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Ellul and the Catholic Worker

I am a retired Baptist pastor, belonging to that school of Christianity known as Evangelical. I came into contact with the Catholic Worker house through my former church's involvement in the local Justice and Peace Group. I was delighted to be invited by them to join a Radical Reading Group looking at a book on 'Christian Anarchism'.

One author quoted by that book is the 20th century French Protestant theologian Jacques Ellul (1912-1994), with whose thought I was already familiar. Ellul had been born into a poor family, near the docks in Bordeaux. He worked to support himself through university, where he studied law. He describes himself as being, at 19, an 'enthusiastic' reader of Marx's Capital. At 22, he started reading the Bible and was (in his own words) 'brutally' converted to Christianity (of the Re-formed variety). For a time he was associated with a group (mainly Catholic) that sought to accommodate Marxist insights into their Christian view of society.

He became a Professor of Law, until dismissed by the Vichy government. Following his leading role in the local Resistance, he was elected Deputy Mayor of Bordeaux from 1944 to 1946. He gave up conven-

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LINOCUT BY SARAH FULLER

Keeping our hands clean to resist the arms trade

Henrietta Cullinan

During the week before the DSEI arms fair, protests take place on the service road into the back of the Excel Centre, by London's Royal Victoria Dock. Lumbering up

the road, along with the low loaders carrying vehicles and boats, armoured, camouflaged, tied down with net, boats, along with the white vans of caterers, fitters, cleaners, carpet layers, is one huge elephant - capital and the work ethic that supports it.

The arms trade is harmful many times over. It makes conflict more likely in areas of the developing world where there is already tension. Poor countries are persuaded to spend millions on weaponry rather than on infrastructure for their own people. Its industry manufactures war and bloodshed.

The arms trade, like any other capitalist enterprise, and the industry that supports it, causes damage to the climate. It is a wasteful use of natural resources. It poisons the atmosphere and water supplies and lakes and natural habitats. It hoards the technological expertise amongst its employees that could be used in other creative sustaining ways and prevents progress in other areas.

But also, being a capitalist enterprise like any other, the arms industry depends on our wonderstrong work ethic. In his book S.O.S. Alternatives to Capitalism, Richard Swift points us to William Morris, one of the first socialists to oppose the ecological decay of capitalism and a society based on 'useless toil'.

He also directs us to Lafargue's "The right to be lazy". Written in the nineteenth century by Marx's son-in-law, this is a satire aimed at the bourgeoisie, who counted work as a

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DOVE BY RITA CORBIN

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The Catholic Worker in the UK and just across the Channel

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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.

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The Farm 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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Glasgow CW 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—1:00pm, and a soup kitchen on Friday nights. They keep a regular vigil at Faslane Nuclear Base and hold monthly meetings and prayers.

Maria Skobstova House

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Mother Maria Skobstova House is a residential community that serves people who have been pushed into the margins of society. We started working with refugees and migrants in the refugee camp called “the jungle” (February 2016) and as we discover homelessness in the city of Calais we are looking how to support homeless and poor people here and to build a community across the divide.

Ellul and the Catholic Worker

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tional politics in 1947. He also became a Professor of Sociology in Bordeaux, renowned for his analysis of the impact of ‘technology’ on society. Of far more influence on the wider world, however, were his writings as a ‘lay’ theologian.

When I settled in my first pastorate, in the South Wales ‘Valleys’ (a depressed ‘area of industrial decline’), I bought a number of his books, believing that he might speak to my situation. My involvement in the Catholic Worker reading group caused me to find those books in my personal library and reread them. I found them to be even more relevant now, so I happily responded to an invitation to submit this article on him to the London Catholic Worker.

I was already aware that Ellul, in his later years, considered himself to be a Christian Anarchist. Back in 2001, I had come across a paper by him - ‘Anarchy from a Christian Standpoint’ - and downloaded it. As he there stresses, his Christian Anarchism is distinctly different from that of secular anarchist thinkers. I will therefore begin by outlining the thought in his earlier theological work that led him in an anarchist direction.

A work that brought together his Theology and his Sociology was *The Meaning of the City* (ET, 1970). The first mention of a city in the Bible is in Genesis 4. Cain kills his brother Abel and is punished by God with banishment from his presence. This fills him with dread: ‘Whoever finds me will kill me.’ But God assures him it will not be so. In his grace, he puts a mark on him, to warn off anyone wanting to kill him, and promises to protect him. But that is not enough for Cain; instead, he builds a city (Genesis 4:17). Ellul points out that the word used here is ‘ir, a city as defensive military base, rather than qiryah, a city as community. Cain puts his faith in human armed force, rather than God’s gracious promise.

The culmination of this city-building associated with armed power arrives with Babel (Genesis 10:8-10; 11:1-9), Babylon, which throughout the Bible is a symbol of arrogant human power that seeks to put itself in God’s place. It is not, however, the city itself, urban life, that is at fault, for God’s promised new creation is portrayed as a city, the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21), but one that ‘comes down out of heaven from God’.

Against this background, it is easy to see why Ellul says, ‘By anarchy I mean first an absolute rejection of violence.’ He rejected political society, the organised state, as subordinating human life to technology (whether economic efficiency in a factory or the maintenance of armed de-

fence), rather than the other way round. Those who would seek to destroy that state by violence are seeking to impose their vision on others in precisely the same way. However, there are plenty of secular anarchists who would take a similar pacifist position.

What distinguishes Ellul from them is that he takes seriously the corrupting effect of human sin. While rejecting state structures, he does not believe that an anarchist society is humanly possible. It would soon be corrupted by the temptation to dominate others or covet what they have. So, it might be asked, what are we to do? Just sit around and wait for God’s Kingdom to come, as we pray the Lord’s Prayer?

He was beginning to move towards the answer in *The Politics of God and the Politics of Man* (ET, 1972). The original French title is more nuanced: *Politique de Dieu, politiques de l’homme* (1966), a series of extended meditations on passages from 2 Kings. He brings out two things in this that strike me as relevant to our theme.

The prophet simply gives God’s word, and leaves it to the one receiving it to do with it as he will; he has fulfilled God’s will by passing it on, regardless of any results. The prophet serves God by who he is and what he does, as well as by what he says. Elisha makes no prophecies of the coming Messiah, as later prophets do, but performs miracles that foreshadow those of Jesus: a multiplication of loaves, raising a widow’s son, etc.

Writing on Anarchy, Ellul suggests we should set up voluntary, alternative structures to those of the state. By their very existence, these will act as a witness against the state (as well as, a Christian would add, give a prophetic foretaste of God’s coming Kingdom of peace and love). As an example of this, he discusses the time he spent with the Resistance. He found refuge among rural villagers. When they discovered he was a lawyer, and a man of integrity, they began to use him to settle legal disputes. Although he had no official authority, no bailiffs or police to enforce his will, people voluntarily accepted his judgements. Thus, there developed a functioning alternative legal system to that of the collaborationist state.

In works such as *Hope in Time of Abandonment* (ET 1973) Ellul seemed to be moving towards a vision of churches as prophetic communities, embodying God’s grace as signs of hope to the world. This ties in with a developing interest among evangelicals, including me, in developing such communities. Maybe we can learn from the Catholic Worker movement about what this might look like in practice?!

Keeping our hands clean to resist the arms trade

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religious virtue and the path to salvation. Industrialists spurred country people away from their 'hearths' into the towns, causing the severe detriment of both their own health and that of their family. Once in the factory they had no time to tend their vegetable plots, which led to malnutrition, or else had to travel long distances to work, leaving no time to look after themselves and their children.

Lafargue describes conditions for factory workers in Alsace, who worked twelve hour days to produce stockings, which they themselves had no use for, and could never afford. The factory owner then had to find new markets for his products, leading to colonialist expansion. Seen in the context of the arms trade this is particularly apt. The arms companies make something far worse than useless; the only product of an arms company is bloodshed and terror. The arms trade constantly must find new markets so the factory can stay open and so the employees can travel to their full time jobs. Yet the factories must stay open, otherwise there'd be a riot. The employees of the factory must be kept busy. The devil makes work for idle hands.

This discussion often gets glossed over at protests. Disgruntled passersby shout 'get a job', not realising how ironic this is in the circumstances. MPs inevitably do all they can to protect jobs in their own constituency, for their own sake if nothing else. It would be impossible to tell someone to give up their job, when there is a dearth of manufacturing jobs, and when income is tied to work, but also while the work ethic is so fundamental to our culture. As Kathy Weeks shows in "The Problem of work", the work ethic extends far beyond simply surviving. Work defines us socially, intellectually, by class, even by race and gender. Where the work ethic is strong - for example, when there is a system of favours, a long hours culture, fellowship and rituals of office parties and outings, work itself becomes morally right. We've all experienced jobs where we have complied with dubious practices, and not until afterwards realized that our desire to maintain a positive attitude triumphed over our own integrity.

The work ethic even extends into our children's education - for example, teenagers trained to be 'work ready' - as well as our leisure and holidays. Who hasn't thought of conveyor belts when we step onto a plane or ferry? But above all the work ethic spreads into our homes. Someone has to be cleaning, whether this is the same person who goes out to work, a partner or someone paid to do it. However you look at modern employment, it relies on carers, cleaners, cooks,

mothers, those who care for the elderly, the very young, the sick, the destitute.

Weeks suggests that the discussion around wages for housework, while unhelpful and unsuccessful in the seventies, was a useful way of seeing how our lives are monetised, which parts of a mother's work is work, that could be paid labour, and which are simply love. She quotes Federici,

"For our aim is to be priceless, to price ourselves out of the market, for housework and factory work and office work to be 'un-economic.'

Or to put it in terms of the Gospel story we are all busy being Martha, but Martha herself has power in the work she does to resist. (Luke 10: 38 - 42) Arms work depends on housework. An employee of the arms industry, and therefore all of us, works a full day, picks up her children, keeps her house clean, and even does voluntary work at weekends. So I propose a dirty protest! Or even more drastic, a care work protest. Or even a birth work protest. Just when we thought housework was something that stays in the privacy of our own homes, we could refuse housework and smash the arms trade.

Recently in a horrible twist, cleaning products themselves have become a weapon. Not far from Giuseppe Conlon House, two young men on a scooter carried out 5 acid attacks in a single evening. In the discussions in the media afterwards, the pundits questioned the use of strong chemicals in household cleaning.

Henrietta is a core group member of the London Catholic Worker and (normally) editor of the newsletter

Love in activism

Nora Ziegler

I wrote an article for the previous edition of the London Catholic Worker, reflecting on the present situation of refugees and migrants in Europe through the work of philosophers Hannah Arendt and Giorgio Agamben. I described the "mere existence" (Arendt) of humans as an inherently vulnerable and unequal condition which, endowed with the rights and identity of citizenship, is made subject to the modern nation state. Stripped of rights and identity, undocumented migrants and asylum seekers are left exposed to state violence, unprotected and unrecognized as equal human beings.

Arendt goes on to say that "this mere existence [...] can be adequately dealt with only by the unpredictable hazards of friendship and sympathy, or by the great and incalculable grace of love" (The Origins of Totalitarianism). There is an aspect of the human condition, a common vulnerability, that can only be engaged through love. Love recognizes and protects those who have been stripped of all legal or moral means of recognition and protection. It can therefore act as a radical and subversive challenge to systems of oppression.

Love can build and restore relationship between people regardless of their identity or status. This is an appealing idea when dealing with people we might think of as "oppressed" or less privileged than ourselves. But the same holds for people who we perceive as our "oppressors". It is easy to take for granted the openheartedness with which other people accept our solidarity and hospitality while cultivating resent-



A PROTEST AT THE DSEI ARMSFAIR IN SEPTEMBER 2015

ment towards those more powerful than ourselves. Love subverts systems of oppression because it does not follow their logic. It does not differentiate between oppressor and oppressed, legal and illegal, victim and perpetrator.

For many Christians, this is the core of Jesus' teaching and lived example. Christian anarchist writer Jacques Ellul argues that acts of violence not only provoke but also legitimize further violence, resulting in a destructive cycle. Any use of force, including forceful resistance to oppression, reinforces the underlying logic of violence and therefore fails to break the cycle. The only way to break this cycle of violence and open up the possibility of reconciliation is a love which forgives and is willing to suffer injustice, giving up legitimate demands for the sake of restoring a relationship.

The willingness to suffer rather than inflict violence subverts the logic of violence underlying oppressive systems. Love does not justify itself by the dominant logic of the system, or by what is deemed effective or even possible in challenging injustice. Its subversive power is therefore founded in weakness. Yet, this is also what makes it a risky political position. Is it possible to advocate vulnerability and sacrifice to people suffering from brutal oppression? Can such a position be reconciled with a struggle for political rights and freedoms?

Judith Butler deals with this problem in *Precarious Life*. She writes that vulnerability and interdependence must be a normative aspiration for political activists. Articulating and defending bodily vulnerability is at the core of a way of life that becomes a "way out of the circle of violence". However, she acknowledges that claims to rights of autonomy are essential to political movements and that such claims can and must be made.

By contrast, some Christian anarchists advocate a willingness to give up legitimate political claims as a way to break out of the mutually reinforcing cycle of oppression and resistance. According to Jacques Ellul, people must choose between putting faith in force, and its underlying logic of violence, or in love. While love seems to be the weaker and less effective option, the belief that evil can be overcome by love rests on faith that God's love transforms people's hearts and relationships.

If love as a response to oppression can only be justified by faith in God, perhaps it can only be advocated among people of faith. However, according to Alexandre Christoyannopoulos, this is where Christian anarchist writers see the prophetic role of Christians. By putting non-violent love into practice, Christians are witnesses to God's love within a world that fears the weakness of love and instead seeks security in autonomy and force.

For Christians, activism based on love is then a witness to faith in God's love, challenging the normative faith in war, borders or arms trade. It is an activism that does not limit itself to achievable political aims but redefines the limits of the political space by representing and anticipating a radical alternative way of life. It involves a willingness to give up one's own right to justice, as the only way to achieve true justice for all. This means speaking out and taking action against injustice, but only as one aspect of a larger struggle against violence which begins with each one of us when, in Dorothy Day's words, we "begin to take the lowest place, to wash the feet of others, to love our brothers".

Nora is a live-in core community member at Giuseppe Conlon House

Stat crux dum bellatur Europa

Sam Hickford

In August 1945, Jewish refugees and stranded partisans occupied the unused cells of Farneta Charterhouse wearing the Carthusian habit: a white robe and a hair-shirt (worn perpetually by members of the Order.) Since the fourteenth century, few from the outside world had visited this monastery, which lies hidden in verdant oak-woods up in mountains of the Italian province of Lucca. They were sheltered by this enigmatic Order at the apex of conflict during World War II and were doubtless exposed to the peculiar customs of the Brothers: vigils every day at midnight ("keeping watch with Christ" in the most literal way possible), absolutely no talking apart from during the spatium on Sunday afternoon, meals consumed only in cells - not to mention daily praying of the Divine Office in addition to lengthy prayer and meditation exercises. Testimonies from survivors recount finding these rituals always confusing and that hearing the peal of bells during the night was occasionally quite irritating. However, these refugees were probably pretty happy to be alive.

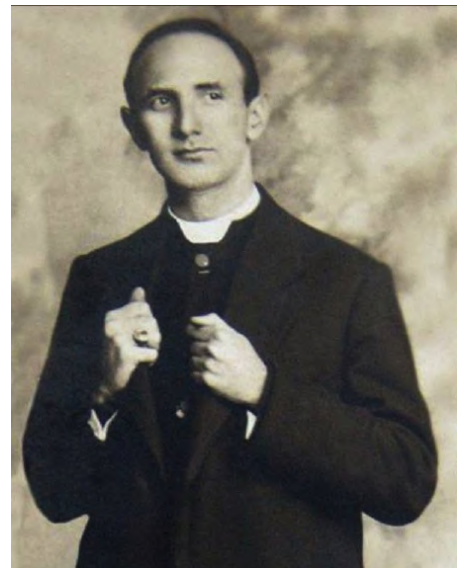
"But take heart, because I have overcome the world." (John 16:33.) The Carthusians take this as literally as possible, renouncing the world in favour of an interior experience of God and an absolute primacy of responding to God over all created things. Yet during World War II such purity became, for the very first time, impossible, and the Carthusians were forced into a slightly different vocation. Indeed, the Carthusians could not ignore the glaring reality of World War II, motivated by love of God and aware of how graceful they were to dwell in an unravaged monastic cloister. In 1943, Father

Costa - the only monastic who maintained a connection with the outside world - gave over surrounding buildings in Formentale, owned by the Carthusians, to house Jewish refugees and partisans, escaping persecution and forced enlistment. He worked with an order called the Zitines: he would come over to them and pick up refugees, housing women and children in their premises.

In total, one hundred people were housed. Since the Carthusians were the only people working the land during this war-stricken time, Father Costa gave anybody food who knocked on his door. The whole monastic community was of course engaged in this work of hospitality, preparing food and tilling the fields, but Father Costa was the only face that people in receipt of this hospitality would have cast their eyes upon.

Eventually, as the situation got worse, male Jews and Communist Party members began to be housed in the monastery itself. Father Costa brought them in: they were given highly ample food and shelter, and the lay-brothers - some of them German-speaking - looked after them. This was in deliberate violation of Republic of Salo law, and to ward off suspicion a sign read "Kartausser Kloster: Zone Neutrale". This kept the Nazis away to some extent, yet three members of a specialist SS unit came one day and stood in the stand during a closed-off conventual mass (in Carthusian rite Latin!) They surveyed the building, working out its pressure points and how to gain access. They were sighted, and when quizzed they adopted a surreal pretext of being deserted by their unit. Despite this, the monks saw the face of Christ in them, took them for granted and brought them some food.

The story does not end well. The SS mapped the place, found a potato patch that was vulnerable, and used it to gain access. During September 1945 they stormed in and arrested the monks, whom the survivors



SALVADOR MONTES DE OCA, ONE OF THE CARTHUSIANS KILLED BY THE NAZIS, BEFORE HE BECAME A MONK

(testimony of survivors can be found in *La Strage di Farneta* by Luigi Accatolli) called by far some of the most loving and holy people they had ever encountered. Twelve people were arrested and shot by a firing squad. The order they were chosen to be executed in was literally in terms of holiness, and the monks were mocked for their attempts to follow Christ so purely. The first killed was the Prior, who had commissioned the whole operation. He was acclaimed for his utter devotion to monastic life, an inspiration to all who met him. He spoke German. The next was Salvador Montes de Oca, a Venezuelan bishop who renounced his worldly title in favour of a closer realisation of the Gospels. Father Costa was next - the man who had braved war-torn Farneta to sneak refugees into the monastery, shot mercilessly at gunpoint. Then the Master of Novices, Pio Egger, followed by various other monks and lay-brothers, all of whom were connected to the monastery in pursuit of holiness.

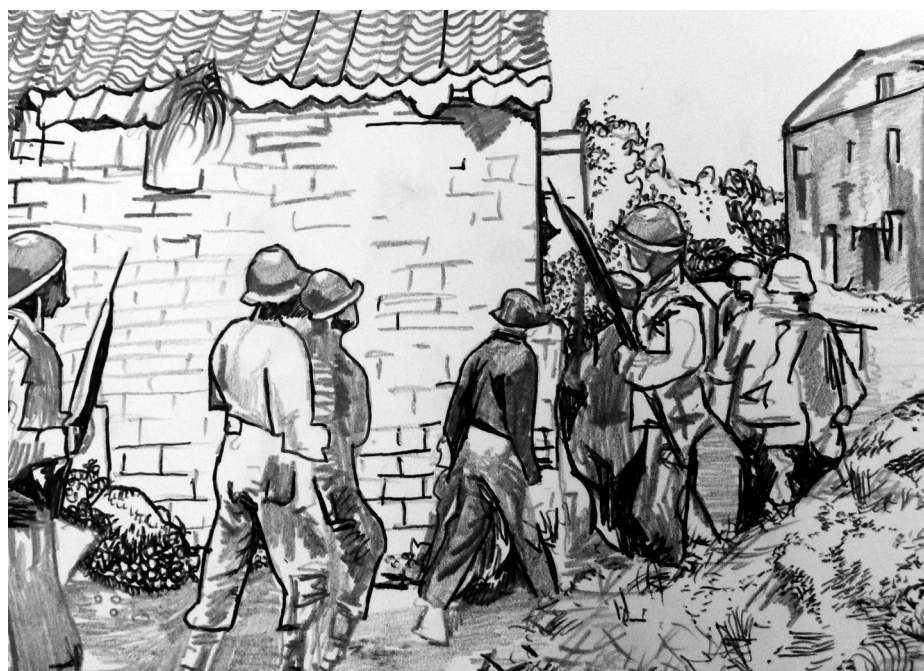
Accatoli tells us how Montes de Oca, previously caught up with worldly pride, grew flowers and vegetables in the garden of his cell, infatuated with the new turn in his faith journey. The idea of him being shot by firing squad is singularly sad, yet of course a moving testament to the power of the spirit. A monastery doing so much brave work of hospitality, at a time when it could have just retreated inwardly - as has been its *raison d'être* for its entire existence - gives us hope for a new vision of humanity. One in which it is capable of getting over

itself and sheltering the vast number of refugees who are coming to Europe. It is likely that, if we are not facing a "refugee crisis" on that kind of scale, one is assuredly imminent. As Catholic Workers, we are at the forefront of continuing the revolution of the heart embodied by these Carthusians..

Peter Maurin looked backward to sixth century hospices, which sheltered anyone who came to their doors, as institutions for a new way of organising humanity. It is from

such "institutions", as well as this monastery - whose survivors did not publish their cause and deliberately kept this episode quiet on humility grounds - which give us the strength to spread the teachings of the continuously-relevant Catholic Worker movement.

Sam currently lives at Giuseppe Conlon House. He edited this edition of the newsletter.



A SKETCH OF ITALIAN SOLDIERS DURING WORLD WAR II IN FARNETA ILLUSTRATION: FABIENNE KING

Politicians must rule in favour of God's will for planet Earth

Edwin Kalerwa

Researchers have concluded that industrial and agricultural emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, and other GHGs threaten to change the climate rapidly over the next 100 years and beyond. This may have dramatic consequences for both people and the environment. Much uncertainty remains, but the message is clear: climate change poses a risk to future generations, and this risk needs to be taken seriously. While the first steps to combat climate change have been taken, the most difficult decisions still lie ahead. It is not just governments that must act: progress will only be made if there is widespread support from all sectors of society, including local authorities, NGOs, relevant industries, communities, and individuals. For policy-makers it means incorporating climate change

considerations into their day-to-day and long term decisions. For corporate executives, it means including the potential costs of both climate change and actions to minimise them in their business and investment calculations. For individual citizens, it means favouring climate-friendly products and services and adopting climate-friendly habits and lifestyles.

Indeed, climate change exists here and now - there is mounting evidence that it may already be responding to humanity's greenhouse gas emissions. Thus, the issue of climate change is a reality for today's world. The international community must act, and we must reconstruct a reverence for God's creation that allows us to have the strength and courage to do everything we can to respond to climate change.

The international community has made some momentum on climate change, yet it must do more. The issue was addressed in the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Since the Convention entered into force in 1994, governments have been quantifying their national greenhouse gas emissions and developing strategies for dealing with climate change. Tougher emissions - control targets, more

rigorous national policies, and intensified international co-operation have been high on the agenda, especially since the Kyoto conference in December 1997 and the subsequent debates. Governments adopted the Convention in response to the dramatic progress scientists have made in understanding how the Earth's atmosphere system works. So while there has been some progress, it is a shame that Trump has taken the USA out of the Paris Accord, a revolutionary agreement. Clearly, certain politicians - even those who claim to be Christians - are not understanding the threat of climate change for what it is.

A religious perspective, then, might give policy-makers and politicians the incentive to act over the long-term to help resolve this critical issue. Genesis gives us two creation narratives - the first proclaiming, "and God called the Light Day" (Genesis 1:5) and the second stating, "Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew" (Genesis 2:5.) These both tell the story of creation, but with a contrasting style. In God, creation has a depth of meaning that shows that man-made climate change can-

not be declared as the work of God. Just as the scorching east wind, like the Arabian sirocco, destroyed plants and grass, so God was understood to destroy human pride (see Psalm 103:15-18; Jeremiah 4:11). Just as a plant springs up, fresh and green, only to be withered before the blast of the hot desert wind, so human empires rise, only to fall before the face of God.

Examining the Bible helps us to realise, then, that man's obsession with consumption is negatively affecting God's creation. Namely, our effect on the environment has led to pollution and a slow destruction of the environment. This moral failing and the immoral activities of humans on earth seems to be separating man from God. The failings involve extraction of natural resources without regard for future generations, and turn our resources into merely something to barter and exchange. For example, pollution is contributing to complications with our natural health. In addition, unsafe production methods - full of human errors due to use of artificial systems - create a mode of consumption which is certainly not compatible with what God intended.

The dogmatic notion that God has ceded the earth to man, and therefore it is the right of man to plunder and abuse the resources without concern for God's spiritual creations, can be interpreted as disobedience to God's will and what he had intended for mankind. We must understand the grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must intercede and assist in our personal decisions as well as those of policy-makers, moving the heart and turning it to God as well as opening the eyes of the mind and giving us joy. Surely this will allow Christians to long for truth as well as an understanding of it. Through looking after God's

creation and realising how we have affected our natural environment, we will be able to reconstruct our relationship with God.

Edwin currently lives at Giuseppe Conlon House

Faith and Resistance network launch

Henrietta Cullinan

A new project to support Christians involved in direct action was set up in July by a small group of activists, including Catholic Workers. The Faith and Resistance Network was launched at an event where fifty Christian activists pledged in person to take part in direct action for the sake of equality, an end to war and a commitment to protecting the climate.

Martin Newell cp, founding member of Giuseppe Conlon House, Henrietta Cullinan of the London Catholic Worker, and Joanna Frew of Martha House, have set up a network that will support Christian activists engaged in direct action on a wide range of campaigns, supporting activists who protest against war and campaign for social justice and climate protection.

The network was launched on Saturday 15th July at Friends House. Participants

heard from Andrea Needham, author of *The Hammer Blow*, Sam Walton and Rev. Dan Woodhouse, both contemporary ploughshares activists who earlier this year attempted to disarm a plane at BAE Warton. Woodhouse said, 'Evil prevails when good people don't risk arrest'. In the afternoon workshops covered the experience of doing prison time, sustainability of life as an activist and the limits of nonviolence. Symon Hill, the author of *The Upside-Down Bible*, gave a workshop on the scriptural motivations for nonviolent action. At midday some of the fifty Christians who have taken the Faith and Resistance pledge read out statements of support from Thomas McMahon, Emeritus Bishop of Brentwood, Martin Sheen, star of *Apocalypse Now* and *West Wing*, and Martha Hennessey, who is Dorothy Day's granddaughter. Martha wrote,

'Our tears are a form of prayer and protest in our awareness of the suffering we inflict on the so-called "other". Our position of privilege and power reminds us that we are complicit in the sins of violence. Our high standard of living relies on the exploits of war.'

After gathering feedback from those who attended, the network intends to provide nonviolence training, with an emphasis on faith and scripture. It is hoped that the network can reach out to Christian activists on other campaigns for equality. Depending on resources it is hoped that the network will be able to provide moral, legal and media support to affinity groups, to encourage those new to Christian nonviolent direct action and help them to find local affinity groups, of similar interests.



LAUNCH EVENT OF THE FAITH AND RESISTANCE NETWORK

Fiftieth birthday - a few thoughts

Martin Newell cp

In my last year at Seminary, I was in the staff room getting the key for the photocopy room, when a former staff member walked in. He saw me and said "Are you still here?" I'm from a slightly different mould from most priests, even most Passionists. I imagine he is not the only person who ever asked that question, or perhaps wondered what it is that keeps me "still here" all these years.

So what is it that has "kept me here"? It starts with my family, and particularly my parents. Their faithfulness to each other after 55 years of marriage, to their family, to their faith, kept by them through all the trials that have come their way that few people have any idea of, and which I won't go into. This was not helped by me following my conscience in and out of prison. Prayer has to be part of it too: I thank God that I met Fr Alan Griffiths who encouraged a group of us to learn to pray and meditate in silence when I was a student in Southampton, and the monks of Downside Abbey for allowing a group of us to share in their Holy Week liturgies, from which I learnt to love and also to pray the psalms. And the Jesuits for teaching me discernment, despite my reluctance.

When I was a deacon at Our Lady of Compassion, Upton Park, outside West Ham football ground, a Pentecostal church member came to our house. I remember he asked "Who started your church?" I was a bit puzzled as to how to answer this question, then I realised his church would have been started quite recently, probably by a particular individual minister. I thought about it for a bit, and said, "I think it was Jesus". This might have been a bit simplistic, but it contains some essential truths. And it reminds me that despite all my studies, experiences and friends with so many different beliefs, I still think that in Jesus we find the fullest revelation of the truths of God, and of God's love spoken of in today's Gospel, as the best understanding of what it means to be human. And this is fundamentally what the Church and our faith is all about: Jesus. "Where else shall we go?"

I am grateful for the Catholic Worker move-

ment, through which I have experienced whole new dimensions of our faith being brought to life. I was introduced to the CW through such people and places as the Ashram Community in Birmingham and the Simon Community in London where I first experienced life in a house of hospitality. The CW brought new life to my reading of the Gospels and the Scriptures. My time there actually brought to life and made real the drama of God's Word and action in the world: trying to see Christ in all people, especially the poorest: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless: loving enemies, turning the other cheek, beating swords into ploughshares: willing to be



FR MARTIN NEWELL AND FR JOE RYAN AT MARTIN'S PARTY AT GIUSEPPE CONLON HOUSE

arrested and imprisoned for the faith, and literally witnessing to the faith in the market square: living in community, having all things in common, sharing from each according to their ability, to each according to their need, including the poorest: communities where the last really are first, and the first last: challenging the powers that be. Being, as Pope Francis has said and we can see around us here, "a poor church for the poor".

This authenticity, including an honesty about failure and the inadequacy to live the vision, brought all this to life, as well as the idea of Rosemary Haughton's that Catholicism is more than the institution of the Catholic Church – it is a culture, a community, a movement. And yet the CW insists on the humility to recognise where our nourishment comes from, the tradition, the history, the sacraments, the scriptures of that institution. Even if we recognise too the words of Jesus about the scribes and Pharisees: "Listen to what they say, but do not necessarily do what they do".

I am also grateful to the Passionists, for giving me a place to feel at home and be supported as a priest in the Church. I am grateful to Austin, Nicholas and Joe, who

spent 45 years living in Toxteth, Liverpool, on the front lines where the riots happened (even if they don't like to call them that). They were involved in the local community there, as well as prisons and schools. I am grateful to John and Michael, who were doing the 'worker-priest' thing. John was a road sweeper, Michael a kitchen porter in Homerton hospital, living on a tough council estate in Hackney. Both ended up with responsibilities in their trade unions. In the 80's they ran a project for local young homeless people and John played a key but at the time undisclosed role in the anti-apartheid movement in the 80s. It was these men who inspired me to look into the

Passionists. I am grateful to be living now with John Kearns and with destitute refugees in Sparkhill, Birmingham – which enables us to continue that tradition, and also to bring some of the particular gifts of the CW to another part of the Church, and of my life. I am grateful too for the support of John and others for my continued involvement in direct action, with the CW and Christian Climate Action among others.

I realised in joining the Passionists, that the passion, suffering and death of Christ was always central to my personal

connection with faith and God. I remember as a teenager spending hours with those big old headphones on, sitting in the rocking chair in the corner, next to the stereo cassette player – remember them! (they were new back then). I listened to Jesus Christ Superstar – while knocking chunks out of the wall with the back of the chair! I realised years later this was really the Passion of Christ according to Andrew Lloyd Webber. So, finding myself at home, I have no desire to leave.

One of the particular things that I value about being Catholic, despite all the inconsistencies and failures – and again, its something I've found more through the Catholic Worker than anywhere else – is the witness of what has been called the "Consistent Life Ethic" or "Seamless Garment" approach. It is the conviction that all human life is sacred, from the womb to the tomb, from the moment of conception to a natural death. That the Divine Presence in each human life should be protected from every threat in between – including abortion, war, the arms trade, the death penalty, poverty, racism, sexism, war, euthanasia – you name it. And in addition, that this human life is a gift from God, neither to be

manufactured in a lab nor disposed of at will – but to be accepted as a divine gift when the moment comes.

Last but not least among the things for which I am grateful, and which “keep me here” is the last thing Jesus did, the last night before He voluntarily accepted, in the spirit of non-violent love – being arrested, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed (and I’ve been there in a small way, without the execution) – for our good. The last thing he said was “remember me when I’ve gone, by doing this in memory of me”: “eat this bread, drink this wine, my body and blood” share it, pass it around, together. “In memory of me”.

This reminds me of the importance of the Mass, the Eucharist. It reminds me that we cannot be saved alone, that it is not enough to pray at home, that it is not enough to follow Jesus without being part of His body, the Church, the community of disciples. There are failures and questions that can be asked. All the clericalism results in unnecessary exclusion of so many, and even the words we use around it. Yet I remain convinced that we, the people who are the Church, and the world, need priests and young people to open their hearts to God’s call to this vocation among others. They must be supported by their parents, by family and friends, where possible. We need priests to celebrate this sacrament above all, to gather a community of disciples ready to give their lives, their body, blood, sweat and tears for the sake of the Good News of God’s love – as Jesus lived and taught it.

So I thank God, and all of you here today, that I have been able to “keep on keeping on” these 20 years, and pray for the grace to continue.

Fr Martin is a founder and core group member of the London Catholic Worker.

Letters from readers

Dear London Catholic Worker,

Thank you very much for your quarterly publication of the LCW, in particular for Father John Dear’s piece on the Church’s turn to non-violence, issue no. 51 p. 6.

I would like to respond with one incident during Christ’s arrest immediately before his crucifixion, the cutting off of Malchus’ ear by Simon Peter, mentioned in all four gospels, Matthew 2: 47-56, Mark 14: 43-52, Luke 22: 47-53, John 18: 1-11.

In Matthew the account is as follows:

“While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.” Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. Jesus replied, “Friend, do what you came for.” Then the man stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus’ companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

In this crisis of his life, when his life is under threat, Jesus condemns violence in the clearest possible terms. I put “condemns” in the present tense because Jesus’ condemnation of violence is continuing and enduring, applicable everywhere and in all times.

Luke’s account runs: “While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, ‘Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’ When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, ‘Lord, should we strike with our swords?’” And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.

Jesus’ disciples actually asked him, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?” They thought that, at the very least, they should resist Jesus’ arrest with the use of violence. They may have wondered why Jesus had deliberately gone to the Garden of Gethsemane where Judas was expecting to betray him.

Jesus, for some reason, did not answer immediately, giving the disciples the time to strike Malchus’ ear. But his response to their violence was, “no more of this!”: only a tiny amount of violence was admissible. When his own life was at risk, he took the time and thought to heal the man’s ear. Jesus graphically showed that he condemned violence, that it would be better if it did not happen, by cancelling out its effects.

After Jesus’ death and resurrection, his disciples realised that the Gospel message was completely non-violent, indeed non-violence was part of its attraction. “Peace be with you” meant not only harmony and lack of quarrelling but also non-participation in warfare. As Father John Dear explains so clearly, this commitment to non-violence among Christians lasted till 313 A.D., nearly three centuries, when Emperor Constantine hijacked the Cross by taking it into battle and then incorporated Christianity as the official state religion. From 313 A.D. onwards, Christianity has been routinely and ruthlessly associated with warfare. It has been

Write in

We warmly invite you, the reader, to comment on what is written here. Please keep your letters topical and brief. We will be including interesting letters in our next issue, Winter 2017. We also welcome drawings and poems. Contact details: page 2

a devilish corruption which has endorsed so much death and destruction ever since, as in the Thirty Years war of religion, 1618-1648, and the First World War, 1914-1918, where the British bishops blessed the tanks and the German soldiers had “Gott mit aus” on their belts. The only Christian behaviour, the Christian truce of 1914, was ruthlessly crushed by the cynical establishment on both sides. So much for their nonsense of “giving” their lives. When the British and German soldiers saw a better future in Christian peace they were ruthlessly forced back to the fighting by their superiors who had all the power in their hands.

Joe Tatton-Brown

Giuseppe Conlon House update

We held a special Refugee Week vigil, with an exquisite liturgy designed by Nora. This follows on from Stations of the Cross, in which many poems and short pieces of writing were featured to accompany the Stations, calling the government to account on the heinous and ignorant way it treats climate change and migrant issues as well as following in Christ’s footsteps during the Passion. We are also preparing for substantial action against the DSEI Arms Fair, a rendez-vous for crooked arms dealers and their sordid customers held from 12-15 September which does not receive enough public scrutiny.

We gained inspiration from the annual European Catholic Worker gathering. It was held this year as a home fixture in Cudham, Kent this May. Undistracted by the idyllic forests which outlied that lustred village, we attended many interesting workshops on climate change, international networks for actions (for example, anti-nuclear action across Europe), and non-violent communication. There was also an inspiring workshop on Peter Maurin’s ‘green revolution’ and if he was talking about environmentalism or something a little different, which was appropriately held in a verdant field. It was as if we had stepped for an hour into a pre-industrial Garden of Eden.



VIGIL OUTSIDE THE HOME OFFICE DURING REFUGEE WEEK

Many other communities also attended the event. That the Catholic Worker movement remains alive and healthy in Western Europe is plain to see. We were heartened to see how many young people were there, testifying to the enduring intergenerational appeal of the movement. Incidentally, we heard of new Catholic Worker communities that are being established – one of these is a new community in Sweden. Amsterdam is particularly gluttonous – soon it will have two Catholic Worker communities to reckon with. Even in our global political climate, we have cause for optimism.

The gathering was also a powerful environment to share the frustrations of implementing Christian social teaching with others engaged in the same kind of work. Our work can at times be stressful – there’s no doubt about that. So we made provisions for emotional release and banter.

Our work of hospitality continues. Lately, our guests have accomplished many things. One of our guests took part in a walk all the way from London to Canterbury. Another guest recently performed in a play in Dalston. Since we last published our newsletter one of our guests has also managed to move on after being granted UN refugee status, and another has moved out.

A number of our guests were treated to a trip to The Grange in Norfolk, a mid-eighteenth century farm house. In a phantasmagoria we ran together along a wind-swept beach, catching sight of seals with some of us brave enough to swim. We played a game of football together, some of us revealing Premier League-standard skills. We returned to the clamour of London with peace in our hearts, still hearing the murmurs of the wind as furious cars staggered around us.

Interestingly, the place is surprisingly near Walsingham, site of the reported apparition of the Virgin Mary.

We have two new volunteers. Our first is

from Santiago de Compostela in Spain – Andres – having made a reverse-pilgrimage. The second – Clare - comes to us from the Los Angeles Catholic Worker and from a recent choir tour. Unfortunately we forgot to write a musical to herald her arrival.

Our Anarchist Book Group is studying Alexandre Christoyannopoulous’ “Christian Anarchism” a public reading group, reflecting on the theory of Christian anarchism and how we can connect Leo Tolstoy to Jacques Ellul. Father Martin celebrated his birthday as well as the anniversary for his ordination recently. He said Mass in the chapel, in close proximity to many tins of baked beans which hopefully are now blessed.

We held a Tea Party recently to commemorate the work of our loyal volunteers. We have also held many DIWO (do-it-with-others) days, where we collaborate with others to get some work done in the community. There are not too many trained electricians

in our ranks so the help of others is intensely useful.

We were blessed with a visit from our episcopal patron, Bishop John Sherrington. He was treated to some soup, a newsletter, a loaf of gluten free bread to take on his travels and even a copy of Day’s Loaves and Fishes for his perusal. While he ran out of time to perform a couple of miracles for us we are still grateful for his visit and look forward to seeing him again.

On top of all of that, Henrietta, one of our core members and the usual editor of this newsletter, is helping to launch the Faith and Resistance Network for Christian non-violent activists, and the Baisikel project which is based on our premises has shifted up a gear after being handed to a local volunteering organisation, Akwaaba, who intend to continue the work of providing bicycles for destitute people throughout London. So the momentum at London Catholic Worker has been large. Though we must press on.



NORA AND THREE OF OUR GUESTS AT WELLS-BY-THE-SEA

Poetry

Mr Horse

Westley Ingram

Mr Horse, you bow your head to nobody
as you bow your head,
fresh grass grazing your blazing nostrils.
Sir Brother Sun runs his fingers
through your hyacinth mane,
whispering your name
as you draw your quiet carriage
left and right,
tearing through your penny dreadfuls.
Has nobody told you mighty steed:
your split hooves were made for warfare.
Your glistening green teeth were for the
bridle.
Shoulders so proud and powerful were not
made to fit a yoke
if your humble shuttle were meet labour.
Your supple legs were made for racing and
I will take you on
Brother Horse, we will learn our place in
time I hope.
I will teach you war and industry
while we stand still together.
Amongst the wild flowers
with the sun in our hair
counting them one by one.

Christ's eyes

Sam Hickford

Passing along such forking country roads
His voice leapt from the silence. In dark I
strode –
One hand fixed on the clattering brougham
Slouching in grace. Those eyes were all too
known –
Silhouetted apses, enclosing all my senses
–
One day I'll meet his face, cast off the lens.
Those eyes will meet my own. Cries wran-
gling in the dark
Cries of, "go!", and, "do not fear!", will loose
Vanity from my trembling heart, and Truth
Will flood my eyes, and stretch the path
with light
Light from his eyes, unalterably bright.

From "Easy Essays"

Peter Maurin

When religion has nothing to do with
education,
education is only information,
plenty of facts
with no understanding,
When religion has nothing to do with
politics,
politics is only factionalism -
"Let's turn the rascals out
so our good friends can get in."
When religion has nothing to do with
business,
business is only commercialism.
And when religion has nothing to do with
either education, politics or business,
you have the religion of business taking the
place of the business of religion.

Londoners Now

Katherine Holmström

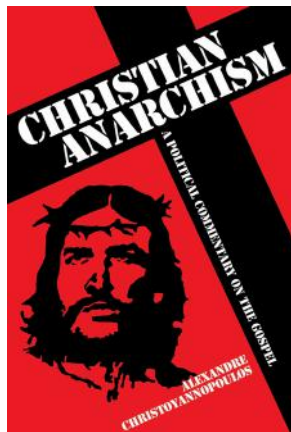
See! We come from many
countries,
for we stem from every race,
With the history of the nations
Written deeply on each face.
No, we do not all look English,
were not all born in this place,
But we know our presence here, together,
is a modern grace.

As we mingle in the crowds,
and while we share the daily toil,
As we join the busy hassle
and the purposeful turmoil,
When we would give this city's life
what some prefer to spoil
Then we know we do belong
to this most ancient, living soil.

Together when we work and vote
and shop, or rush around,
Together while we eat and talk
and memories abound,
Together, as we press towards
the pub or football ground,
We know we are one people, here.
Can unity be found?

Radical Reading Group

The next Radical Reading Book Group is on **28th September** @ 7pm. We will be reading Chapter Four of Alexandre Christoyannopoulos' 'Christian Anarchism'. We still have copies of the book, so contact us if you would like one. Suggested donation £18, which covers the cost of the book, postage and £3 for our community. Please send a cheque payable to the 'London Catholic Worker'.



Events

All events held at Giuseppe Conlon House, 49 Mattison Rd, London N4 1BG unless otherwise indicated.

Regular events

Daily Prayers Monday – Saturday 9:00 am

Clarification of Thought First Thursday of the month, 6:30 pm

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

Bible Study Second Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm

Radical Reading Group, Fourth Thursday of the month, 7:00 pm

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

Vigil for Refugees

First Tuesday of the month, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, King Charles Street.

Third Tuesday of the month at the Home Office, Marsham Street, 12:30pm

All welcome. Call 020 8348 8212 for more details and to let us know you are coming.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday 5th September 9am - 6pm

"No faith in war" day of action to show resistance to DSEI arms fair at Excel Centre in London. More info: www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk/events

Monday 11th September 6.30pm

Pax Christi silent vigil, London Excel Centre. More info: as above

Saturday 28th October 10am - 4pm

The London Catholic Worker is doing a workshop at the Justice & Peace Network human rights day - 'Human Rights in a post-Brexit era'. A day about the relationship between Catholic social teaching and human rights. For more info contact Westminster Justice and Peace.

Saturday 28th October 10am - 7pm

Anarchist bookfair at Park View School West Green Road, London, N15 3QR.

The London Catholic Worker will have a stall with books and other things and Alexandre Christoyannopoulos (author of Christian Anarchism) is doing a workshop on Anarchism and Faith.

Saturday 16th September 11am - 5pm

DIWO-day (Do-it-with-others). Come, help out or just hang out. This day is as much about building community as getting things done. Communal Lunch at 1.30pm All welcome!



GIUSEPPE CONLON HOUSE

IS LOOKING FOR LIVE-IN VOLUNTEERS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS!



Giuseppe Conlon House is a house of hospitality of the London Catholic Worker and part of the international Catholic Worker movement.

We are a young Christian ecumenical community based in North London where we live together with 18 male destitute asylum seekers and forced migrants. We help run a weekly soup kitchen, organise public talks and events, and publish a newsletter. We also take non-violent action against arms-trade, militarism, nuclear weapons and in-humane migration policies.

Community members and volunteers live and work full-time at Giuseppe Conlon House. Tasks are diverse and include housekeeping, repairs, gardening, administration, support work, organising events, taking part in meetings, creative projects and simply befriending and spending time with guests.

As a Christian community, our faith is at the heart of our work. Community members and live-in volunteers pray together every day. However, our house of hospitality welcomes people of all (or no) faiths

Live-in volunteers are usually expected to make a minimum commitment of 3 months. We provide free accommodation in a shared room, meals and a weekly allowance. We ask potential volunteers to complete a questionnaire and provide us with a reference. Please email us for more information.

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



Wish list

Food

- Tinned tomatoes
- Peanut butter
- Olive and vegetable oil
- Kidney beans
- Chickpeas
- Coconut milk
- Easy-cook rice

- Couscous
- Lentils
- Vinegar
- Mayonnaise
- Cheese
- Spreads - marmalade, jam.
- Spices
- Sugar
- Muesli

- Cereal
- Honey
- Fruit juice and squash
- Herbal teabags
- Instant coffee
- Chilli sauce
- Brown rice
- Nuts

Toiletries

- Toilet paper
- Deodorant
- Shampoo
- Shower gel
- Body lotion
- Liquid soap
- Tissues

Eco-friendly cleaning products, especially:

- multi-purpose cleaner
- toilet cleaner
- Laundry detergent
- floor cleaner
- Anti-bacterial spray

Miscellaneous

- NEW Men's underwear M-XL
- Men's shoes in good condition
- Tealights
- Paint
- Food Processor

Find our ethical shopping tips at www.londoncatholicworker.org/ethicalwishlist.pdf
Many of our guests do not eat pork for religious reasons so please do not donate pork products. In addition, please do not donate tinned soup, tinned spaghetti or baked beans as we already have enough.

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

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

<h1 style="margin: 0;">Standing Order Form</h1> 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: ____ / ____ / 17 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 _____