

CONTACT US

Postal Address:

16 De Beauvoir Road
London N1 5SU

Tel: 020 7249 0041

E: londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.londoncatholicworker.org

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

NAME

ADDRESS:.....

.....POST CODE:.....

Dorothy Day House & Urban Table Soup Kitchen Needs

FOOD:

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

OTHER

- Handyman / woman
- Soap, razors, shampoo & all toiletries.
- Men's Clothes
- MONEY! - see p11 for standing order form.

OFFICE:

- Help with IT maintenance
- Help with producing and sending out newsletters
- Guillotine for paper & fresh A4 paper

HOUSEHOLD GOODS:

- A working laptop
- Old mobile phones
- Bike locks & bike lights
- Small garden tables & chairs for café
- Double duvet covers

• New members and volunteers !

"Prayer - without this, all the rest is useless"

CW FARMHOUSE NEEDS:

- Food, esp. juice, milk, cheese, butter, cooking oil
- Toilet paper, nappies, baby wipes
- New members & help with gardening, cleaning, cooking, DIY
- People to take part in vigils & round table discussions
- Customers for our home grown organic local veg box scheme
- Visitors to use our poustinia (for a donation)
- MONEY! -and of course your prayers.

While our finances are improving, we continue to rely on our supporters and readers donations, to pay the rent on houses and other costs. We need a total of at least £33,000 a year. Currently we are still using up the capital that enabled us to begin. Please make out a Standing Order and give generously to support our work with the crucified of today's world. "You will have your reward". (Luke 16:39)

SUPPORT OUR WORK

The London CW is part of the radical, pacifist Catholic Worker movement started in 1933 in New York & inspired by the Gospel vision and practice of our founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. There are now over 150 CW houses and communities in the US and about 10 other countries. Check out US-based www.catholicworker.com website, and come visit us!

CW houses and our finances are independent. There is no 'headquarters' or central organisation. We in London are a network, not an organisation.

To donate: - to **Dorothy Day House** make your cheque to "London Catholic Worker".

To donate to the **Farmhouse**, make your cheque to "Catholic Worker Farmhouse".

Standing Order form overleaf.

OTHER CATHOLIC WORKERS IN THE UK:

OXFORD :

St Francis CW House, 227 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4
Tel: 01865 248 288 - and see their page on our website.

BEDFORD :

Clare Bissel wants to start a Catholic Worker in Bedford!
If you live nearby and have energy and passion to explore faith and justice in a practical way, please get in touch!"
Check out her Bedford CW webpage

<http://bedfordcatholicworker.blogspot.com>

or email her at

Bedfordcatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk



Autumn 2009

FREE / DONATION No. 27

THE LONDON

*Build peace -
Not war machines !*

CATHOLIC WORKER



A Painful Gift – The Journey of a Soul with Autism

By Christopher Goodchild

As far back as I can remember, I recall a deep longing to enter into the unity of all things, and to deeply connect with the world around me. I ached not only to feel the sun on my face, the wind in my hair, and the smell of the garden in springtime; I longed to be one with them. It seemed mysterious to me then, that the very things that brought me such joy would also bring me such pain. The sun and wind would bring blisters to my face, the may blossom would make my nose run and my eyes swell, and the kaleidoscope of colours would dazzle my eyes. It seemed I ached for what I could not bear.

When it came to the social world, I felt like a bewildered stranger, often drowning in a tidal wave of sensation. People, places and things would melt and blend like a surrealist painting. Words and sounds would scream at me and then like magic somehow melt away. Everything seemed transcendent and immanent all at once.

Welcome to my world. I have autism.

These are the opening words of my book, published on 6th July this year. It is an autobiographical account of my struggles in life, and my difficulties in forming relationships, and most important of all, my relationship with my son. For it was through his love for me that I was painfully led to the understanding of myself as a person in the autistic spectrum. This was formally confirmed when I was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome in the summer of 2007, which incidentally was a few months after Martin, Steve, Eddy and myself opened Peter's Café in Hackney. Cont'd Page 3

"Forgive Them For They Know Not What They Do" DSEi Arms Fair 2009

I am sitting on a wall watching the line of arms traders grow and grow. It seems as if they are coming from every direction; the hotel, the car park, the taxi rank, and even alighting the specially commissioned bus services. Two EXCEL staff are at the registration gate, so the queue is moving; but slowly. The majority of the arms traders look like sales reps, but there are a number in military uniforms. It begins to feel really intimidating, and I wonder if my legs will hold me if I try to stand up now. I doubt it.

Then I realise that Martin is asking me a question: 'Can you pass me one of the bottles? Are they open?'. Such practicalities quickly shake me out of my own thoughts and back into the moment.

Fumbling in my bag I manage to take one of the bottles filled with red paint and pass it to Martin.



Martin Newell and Katrina Alton pray and witness as arms traders enter DSEi

"My heart is really pounding" he says. I know exactly what he means: here we were just the two of us, with plastic bottles full of paint, a banner and some prayers. Here we are confronting the power and evil of the arms trade: I don't rate our chances!

Cont'd Page 2

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London Catholic Worker:

We are: Angela Broome, Simon Watson, Henrietta Cullinan, Chris Goodchild, Scott and Maria Albrecht, Zelda Jeffers, Martin Newell, Eddie Jarvis, Rosemary Gomez, Diane Walsh, Katrina Alton, Papa Mao Fall Ndiaye

Dorothy Day House

16 De Beauvoir Road,
De Beauvoir Town
London N1 5SU
Tel: 020 7249 0041
Email
londoncatholicworker@yahoo.co.uk

We are: Katrina Alton, Martin Newell & Papa Mao Fall Ndiaye

Dorothy Day House offers hospitality to destitute refugees, usually men. We run Peter's Community Café and the Urban Table Soup Kitchen. We organise regular non-violent resistance, as well as producing this newsletter.

Catholic Worker

Farmhouse:

Lynsters Farm, Old Uxbridge Road,
West Hyde, Herts, WD3 9XJ
Tel: 01923 777 201
Email:

thecatholicworkerfarm@yahoo.co.uk

We are: Scott & Maria Albrecht and family, Miriam & Anna

The Farmhouse offers hospitality to destitute women and children. We vigil regularly at the nearby Northwood Joint Forces Military HQ. We also grow organic veg which we sell through a local veg box scheme, and have a poustinia.

Peter's Community Café:

Open Mon-Weds 12noon-5.30pm
The Crypt, St Peter's Church,
Northchurch Terrace,
De Beauvoir Town,
London N1 5AT
Tel: 020 7249 0041

Urban Table Soup Kitchen:

Open Sun. 2.30pm-4.30pm
The Old School Rooms, The Round
Chapel, Powerscroft Road, Hackney,
London E5 0PU

Peter's Cafe and the Urban Table

are both attempts to imitate Jesus' practice of sharing his table with all comers. At the Café in particular we also hope to offer a space to build bridges between the disparate groups and individuals in our local community, as well as welcoming activists.

DSEi 2009 (cont. from p1)

What we did was simple:

We took the bottles of paint, representing the "blood" of the innocent victims of the arms trade, and poured them over the DSEi sign 'welcoming' the arms dealers.

I guess the sign was nearly as tall as me. In one corner it said **DSEi**. A code: and not one most people are familiar with. Certainly the announcements at the local train stations were *not* saying, "Next stop EXCEL for the Defence Services Export international, **DSEi**: the second largest arms fair in the world."

Every two years these powerful and greedy people come to trade in weapons and arms that they know end up killing, injuring and causing untold suffering and poverty to millions of the poorest and most vulnerable in our world.

In the bottom left hand corner of the sign is another logo:

"**Clarion Exhibitions**". The arms fair is organised by 'Clarion' on behalf of the Trade and Industry Department of the UK government (UKTI).

Yes, that's right, this is being paid for and organised by our government, using tax payers money. Again not a well published fact by Mr Brown or any other member of this Labour government.

As the 'blood' runs down the sign I pause, I focus, and I remember my sisters and brothers who live in fear every hour of every day because of the very arms being promoted, advertised and sold here today as if they were just another commodity: the level of disconnect from reality is quite mind blowing. Now I am more aware of all the eyes that are watching us: and the silence. No ones tries to stop us pouring the 'blood', no one asks us what the hell we think we are doing, no one says peace protests aren't welcome here; no one speaks.



**They have eyes:
Do they see?**

I know they are watching, but no one looks me in the eye.

There is no security or police to be seen, so quickly we get out our banner and place it on the ground in front of the sign. It simply says:

**"DSEi -Merchants of Death
Forgive Them They Know Not
What They Do"**

Kneeling we began to read aloud the "Litany of Resistance". My voice sounds thin and weak in such a vast arena, and with so much activity and noise all around I doubt people can catch every word we pray. But as they get closer surely they can hear some of it? Surely they begin to realise we are praying, and we are praying for them?:

"For the arms dealers and the merchants of death:

Forgive them for they know not what they do."

And I keep asking myself:

**They have ears:
Do they hear?**

As the three police vans come into sight I realise that my knees are numb from kneeling on the ground, and that I am beginning to lose my voice.

The police come over and ask Martin and I if we are responsible for the red pain on the signs. We say 'yes'. Then they ask if we have finished praying : and we say 'no'. So they leave us for another twenty minutes or more to pray.

A couple of arms dealers step out of the queue to take photos of us on their mobile phones. One man leans over my shoulder and says:

" I think what you are saying is probably right: it takes courage to speak the truth. Thank you."

Martin reads aloud from his statement: "What you can see reveals the truth: the DSEi arms fair is covered in blood..."

That 'blood' is on my hands too, and so I keep praying...forgive me for I know not what I do, forgive me...

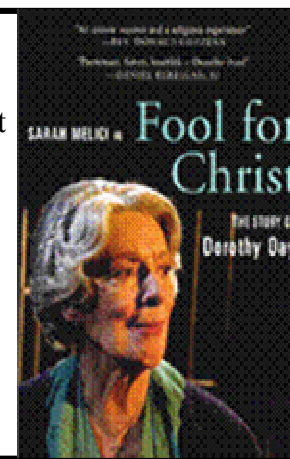
By Katrina Alton

Dvds for Sale:

"Fool for Christ" - the best introduction to Dorothy Day on film. 55 minutes.

**AVAILABLE from
LCW for just £13 + £2 p&p
& see p5 for**

**"Dorothy Day -
Selected Writings"**
at the reduced price of £ 5.00 + p&p



Dates for your Diary

Weekly vigils:

**Thursdays 2-3.30pm @
Northwood Town Centre**
Contact Catholic Worker
Farmhouse House for
more details

**Saturday 24th October
'Afghanistan: Bring The
Troops Home'**

National demonstration in
London.

**Saturday 24th October
10-7pm**

Anarchist Book Fair
Queen Mary & Westfield
College
Mile End Road, London
E1 4NS
www.anarchistbookfair.org

**12th December: Global
Day of Climate Action**

Tel 020 7833 9311 or see
www.campaigncc.org for
more info and many other
actions, protests and events
at the time.

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

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

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

Payments to be made monthly / other First payment to be made on: ... / ... / 09 and monthly thereafter.

Your Bank Name.....

Your Bank Address.....POST CODE.....

Your account name:.....

Your account number:..... Your sort code:.....

Please pay: Triodos Bank
Brunel House,
11 The Promenade
BS8 3NN

Credit of:
London Catholic Worker
Sort Code: 16 58 10

A/C No: 20066996

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

SIGNED:..... DATE:...../...../ 09

PLEASE RETURN TO "London Catholic Worker"
at: 16 De Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SU

YOUR NAME & ADDRESS:.....

..... POSTCODE:.....

TEL:.....

Two Angels In One Day

By Katrina Alton

(Cont'd from Page 7) Today we were 'angels', because 'angel' simply means 'messenger'.

As I write this, two months later, I am also very aware of the two 'angels' that brought a message that day to me: Natalie and Vince.

Natalie literally conveyed 'good news': we hoped to bring a message to Susan, but never imagined that news about Susan would be brought directly to us.

This 'angel' of peace came peacefully: and I didn't even have to leave my comfort zone!

And what 'message' did Vince bring? Where do I start?

In Vince I was truly challenged to see the 'Other'. Here I came face to face with so much I find hard to deal with in others, and more importantly all the things I find hard to deal with in myself: anger, aggression, prejudice...and so much more, and my initial response to Vince was one of 'fear'. This 'angel' didn't come peacefully, and his manner was anything but gentle. Yet the message he so powerfully conveyed was, "Do not be afraid..."

Susan served 12 days in Bronzefield prison because she wasn't afraid to confront the military powers of NATO and British armed forces at Northwood: that was her 'message'.

LCW UPDATE . . . UPDATE . . . UPDATE...

Dorothy Day House has seen a number of visitors come to share our life and our work over the last three months. Soo Tian joined us for a week, and will return to London in October to begin his post graduate studies. Phil Rivera made a return visit from the USA for five weeks, and Daniel and Simone made flying visits from Germany for a few days each to Dorothy Day House, the CW Farm, and St Francis House of Oxford Catholic Worker.

At Peter's Community Café we have changed our opening hours. We now open 12-5.30pm Monday - Wednesday. This is needed so that we can have a common meal time at Dorothy Day House on the days when the café is open. It has been great to welcome Miriam as a new volunteer to the Café. Thanks also go to Diane, Chris, Ronak, Sue, John and Dan who continue to be part of the work at the café.

The Farmhouse have welcomed two new interns Miriam and Anna, both from Sweden. Imke, from Germany, was also with them for five weeks. We have got to know them better since we have returned to joining the Farmhouse crew regularly for the weekly vigil at Northwood.

Chris Cole, friend of the Catholic Worker and Director of Christian pacifist movement "The Fellowship of Reconciliation" (FoR-UK) was arrested on Monday 7th September and charged with £2,000 worth of criminal damage following a protest at the 'UK Defence Conference', held at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre in central London, as part of the week-long Defence Systems Equipment International (DSEi) arms fair. He sprayed 'Build Peace not War Machines' on the conference centre doors, and "Arms trade=Death" on the steps. He then poured red paint, as symbolic blood and wrote, "Stop this bloody business". Chris was later charged with approximately £2000 worth of criminal damage and appeared at Horseferry Road Magistrates Court on the 17th September where he pleaded 'guilty' to the charges. Chris said: "Especially in a time of war, we are called to resist the great lie that our security and well being lies in bigger and better weaponry. The truth is that only justice and love will in the end bring real peace and real human security to our nation and our world as a whole." Chris will appear in court on the 6th October for sentencing.

Scott Albrecht and others from the CW Farmhouse and Dorothy Day House continue to vigil weekly in Northwood town centre.

'Army Show Rooms' Dalston: Protests to close the 'Army Show Rooms' continue in Dalston, Hackney. We at Dorothy Day House are hoping to do weekly vigils there, during Advent.

A Painful Gift - The Journey of A Soul with Autism

By Christopher Goodchild Cont'd from Page 3

(Cont'd from Page 3) Learning to befriend and accept my autism was why I wrote "A Painful Gift" and in doing so I have come to see that my struggle seems to be humanity's struggle, that struggle being to accept and befriend those parts of ourselves we would rather not look at, and in doing so, just like St Francis, we give birth to a deeper love of those we would not have dreamed possible to love - the poor, the sick, the refugee.

As I say in my book it is the inability to accept difference that cries out to be remedied. Working with the shadow is holy indeed.

My deepest prayer is that all who read this book, including my son, if he so wishes when he comes of age, will be inspired to see that, as was the case in my story, it is often that which gives us the deepest

Sorrow in life that can bring us the greatest joy Above all my son has taught me that great love and great suffering are part of the spiritual journey, and that it is only through great love and great suffering that human beings can be transformed, for it is, I believe, in my poverty and in my joy that God resides. The fact that love and joy bring me such intense pain can only truly be understood by traveling deeply into my inner landscape.

"...We are put on earth a little space
That we may learn to bear the beams of love."
(William Blake)

My greatest hope is that I can be of service to others through the fruits of my suffering

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"A Painful Gift" - cont'd from p1

Jean Vanier summed up my story in his foreward to my book in which he said,

*A painful gift
a book that wounds and reveals.*

*The story of a gentle man
who is constantly lost
yet found.*

*Lost,
because he never knew
he was sick with autism.
But found,
when it was diagnosed many years on.*

*It was no longer then a sickness
but part of his being.
A way of life
his way of life
and of relating or of fleeing relationships.*

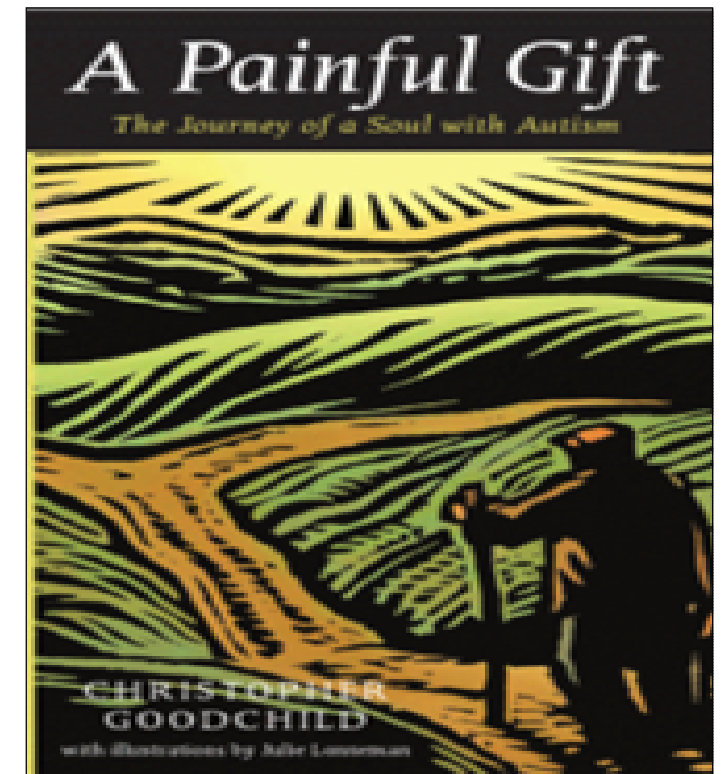
*Found and lost through relationships
found by Jesus
and by Daniel, his beloved son.*

*A moving, deeply moving story
that can reveal our woundedness but also our hope
how quickly we judge through the prism of our fears and
wounds.
Yet found by Jesus
who is always there - but so often silent.*

Our hope.

It's one thing to write a book and quite another thing to live a breathe through all that one has written, especially if the book, like mine, is autobiographical and includes emotionally complex and deeply painful material. From a young age I had to disassociate from my autistic/Aspergic self, with all my natural expressions and needs. This banishment of my natural orientation caused depression and difficulties for me in forming relationships. As I say in my introduction, this book is not so much about my autism, but about the struggle to be truly myself in the world. To be fully human, to touch people and to be touched by people in return. As the Cistercian monk Thomas Merton once said, 'To be a saint, is to be truly oneself.

I wake to a very new landscape. At times it feels as if I walk in a completely new country where the signposts of the past do not seem to apply any more. At times I feel a great fear, for as I take my first steps into the world as a person conscious of having autism, I can at times feel all the terror that drove my natural self into hiding in the first place. I feel many parallels could be drawn here with Henri Nouwen and how he had to wait many years until he felt "truly loved" and accepted by those who loved him at l'Arche, in order for him to transcend his persona and go deeper into his woundedness and his true self. In writing my story, as I explain in the introduction, I felt



A Painful Gift: The Journey of A Soul with Autism -
By Christopher Goodchild
Publisher: Darton, Longman & Todd

called to share my woundedness in full, so that others might be strengthened in the process of bringing to light their woundedness too.

Acceptance plays an important part in this process - acceptance both from others and from oneself. There is an extraordinary moment in the Franco Zeffirelli film "Brother Sun, Sister Moon", a film on the life of St Francis, where St Francis, before his conversion experience, sees Clare lovingly tending to the lepers. Francis's reaction to the sight of the lepers was profound, so shocked was he at their plight and poverty. It was so ugly a sight seen through his worldly eyes, he could not bear to look. He walked away.

I recall when I was a child of around twelve noticing in my neighbourhood a spastic girl with profound learning difficulties. I too was horrified and like St Francis would have nightmares and revulsion around seeing such a sight. My parents were never able to accept my autism - they wanted a "normal" child and my mother, told me daily that my behaviour was "odd", strange and mentally unbalanced. At times she would say I was "mad" and "insane". I have forgiven my parents, but only since my diagnosis with Asperger's syndrome have I been able to start the process of forgiving myself for my "hidden disability". I learnt to disassociate from my natural way of being as if my life depended on it... which it did as a child. However, concealing something so integral came at a great price - the cost being depression.

My greatest hope is that I can be of service to others through the fruits of my suffering.

(Cont'd Page 10)

3



Aims and Means of the Catholic Worker

Reprinted from *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, May 2002.

The aim of the Catholic Worker movement is to live in accordance with the justice and charity of Jesus Christ. Our sources are the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures as handed down in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, with our inspiration coming from the lives of the saints, "men and women outstanding in holiness, living witnesses to Your unchanging love." (Eucharistic Prayer)

This aim requires us to begin living in a different way. We recall the words of our founders, Dorothy Day who said, "God meant things to be much easier than we have made them," and Peter Maurin who wanted to build a society "where it is easier for people to be good."

In politics, the state functions to control and regulate life. Its power has burgeoned hand in hand with growth in technology, so that military, scientific and corporate interests get the highest priority when concrete political policies are formulated. Because of the sheer size of institutions, we tend towards government by bureaucracy-that is, government by nobody. Bureaucracy, in all areas of life, is not only impersonal, but also makes accountability and therefore an effective political forum for redressing grievances next to impossible.

In morals, relations between people are corrupted by distorted images of the human person. Class, race and sex often determine personal worth and position within society, leading to structures that foster oppression. Capitalism further divides society by pitting owners against workers in perpetual conflict over wealth and its control. Those who do not "produce" are abandoned, and left, at best, to be "processed" through institutions. Spiritual destitution is rampant, manifested in isolation, madness, promiscuity and violence.

The arms race stands as a clear sign of the direction and spirit of our age. It has extended the domain of destruction and the fear of annihilation, and denies the basic right to life. There is a direct connection between the arms race and destitution. "The arms race is an utterly treacherous trap, and one which injures the poor to an intolerable degree." (Vatican II)*

In contrast to what we see around us, as well as within ourselves, stands St. Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of the Common Good, a vision of a society where the good of each member is bound to the good of the whole in the service of God. To this end, we advocate:

Personalism, a philosophy which regards the freedom and dignity of each person as the basis, focus and goal of all metaphysics and morals. In following such wisdom, we move away from a self-centered individualism toward the good of the other. This is to be done by taking personal responsibility for changing conditions, rather than looking to the state or other institutions to provide impersonal "charity." We pray for a Church renewed by this philosophy and for a time when all those who feel excluded from participation are welcomed with love, drawn by the gentle personalism of Peter Maurin.

A **decentralized society**, in contrast to the present bigness of government, industry, education, health care and agriculture. We encourage efforts such as family farms, rural and urban land trusts, worker ownership and management of small factories, homesteading projects, food, housing and other cooperatives--any effort in which money can once more become merely a medium of exchange, and human beings are no longer commodities.

A "green revolution," so that it is possible to rediscover the proper meaning of our labor and/or true bonds with the land; a distributist communitarianism, self-sufficient through farming, crafting and appropriate technology; a radically new society where people will rely on the fruits of their own toil and labor; associations of mutuality, and a sense of fairness to resolve conflicts.

We believe this needed personal and social transformation should be pursued by the means Jesus revealed in His sacrificial love. With Christ as our Exemplar, by prayer and communion with His Body and Blood, we strive for practices of:

Nonviolence . "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." (Matt. 5:9) Only through nonviolent action can a personalist revolution come about, one in which one evil will not be replaced simply by another. Thus, we oppose the deliberate taking of human life for any reason, and see every oppression as blasphemy. Jesus taught us to take suffering upon ourselves rather than inflict it upon others, and He calls us to fight against violence with the spiritual weapons of prayer, fasting and noncooperation with evil. Refusal to pay taxes for war, to register for conscription, to comply with any unjust legislation; participation in nonviolent strikes and boycotts, protests or vigils; withdrawal of support for dominant systems; corporate funding or usurious practices are all excellent means to establish peace.

The works of mercy (as found in Matt. 25:31-46) are at the heart of the Gospel and they are clear mandates for our response to "the least of our brothers and sisters." Houses of hospitality are centers for learning to do the acts of love, so that the poor can receive what is, in justice, theirs; the second coat in our closet; the spare room in our home; a place at our table. Anything beyond what we immediately need belongs to those who go without.

Manual labor, in a society that rejects it as undignified and inferior. "Besides inducing cooperation, besides overcoming barriers and establishing the spirit of sister and brotherhood (besides just getting things done), manual labor enables us to use our bodies as well as our hands, our minds." (Dorothy Day) The Benedictine motto *Ora et Labora* reminds us that the work of human hands is a gift for the edification of the world and the glory of God.

Voluntary poverty . "The mystery of poverty is that by sharing in it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge and belief in love." (Dorothy Day) By embracing voluntary poverty, that is, by casting our lot freely with those whose impoverishment is not a choice, we would ask for the grace to abandon ourselves to the love of God. It would put us on the path to incarnate the Church's "preferential option for the poor."

We must be prepared to accept seeming failure with these aims, for sacrifice and suffering are part of the Christian life. Success, as the world determines it, is not the final criterion for judgments. The most important thing is the love of Jesus Christ and how to live His truth.

A Dose of Reality: A study in Contrasts

By Phil Rivera - an American in Hackney

At Home In The USA	Face to Face With Asylum Seekers in London
While watching TV... The Dow Jones is down again today, 3 points	Listening to an asylum seeker speaking broken English
MSNBC reports: Rush Limbaugh says Barach Obama is a racist	My father spoke out against the government policies Next I was hunted down by the police and the militia
"Sid, do you want to go with me tomorrow to the Columbia Free trade Agreement protest?"	As I walked down my street I joined in a peaceful protest. I spent two months in an Iranian jail
My friend Eddie, likes to joke. He gives me an ad to sign up for the 'Marines': next stop Afghanistan	A woman stops a guy begging in the street and tells him to go home. "I refused to join up in my country...now I don't have a home"
"Phil, have you seen the latest Michael Moore movie?"	Finally I broke out of prison, and hid. My family were killed
Eddie asks me about my trip to Amsterdam; I talk animatedly about the canals, the sites, the people, the great meals we had.	A man from Myanmar is left stranded on the streets: a strange language, Strange culture, People pass him by. No one asks how his trip has been.
I listen to my young friends tell me about their travels abroad.	I ask a young man of 26 how old he was when he had to flee is country, his home, his family: 15

Now of course many will say, "Come on Phil you are painting too negative a picture. There are a lot of good people, good things in life."

Of course there is. My daughter, my new son-in-law and his family. My dear friends and close family members. Little children, a walk in the country side, the kindness of a stranger, the genuine warmth and generosity of these same asylum seekers. People like Thich Nhat Hahn, Jim and Nancy Forest, Jimmy Carter, the Dalai Lama, Christ, to be sure. Dorothy Stang, Oscar Romero, Michael J. Fox, Tim Russert, and many others. Even holy but difficult people like Dorothy Day and Mother Theresa.

To find, appreciate and enjoy goodness, fun is not the problem. What I want to convey is just how good most of us have it, and how easily we forget that. Most of all I want us to do something about all the misery in life.

I, you, we must get off our collective duff and act. We must alleviate suffering and demand change in a whole that is full of ego.

Giving And Receiving

When catching the train back from London one Friday evening I sat in an over crowded carriage with lots of tired commuters all heading home. We all sat ignoring each other, lost in thought, magazines, books and iPods.

A man got on and after a minute spoke out loud. "Sorry, to disturb everyone, I know you're all probably heading home and are tired after working all week etc. and I do hope you all have a good weekend. Unfortunately, I am not looking forward to a good weekend, in fact, I am pretty desperate right now. I am feeling pretty bad and need some help if any one could give me some money or food, any left over sandwiches or drinks. I would be very grateful."

I sat up, turned and looked at him. I was surprised to see that I was the only one, everyone else continuing to read or look out the window as though he was not there. I guess that regular commuters get this a lot; beggars on the train. But this was a novelty for me and I was surprised at the courage or desperation it took to plead to a group of strangers. He looked pretty ill too, pasty, sweaty, unwashed and a bit strung out. I gave him a smile, thumbs up and Sainsbury's bag with half a sandwich, packet of crisps and a drink. He said thanks and got off the train.

When he left I put my headphones back in, stared out the window again and cried. I was not surprised at my reaction – I cry a lot. But I was interested in why. Was I sad about his condition, this poor

desperate man? Was I sorrowful about the condition of the citified commuters who comfortably ignore the

plight of the poorest among them, seemingly bored by the experience. Or did I cry because I so seldom witness humanity within myself and am grateful to be participating in an act, even one so small, that restores integrity to my life. Do I hear that voice inside me say 'Yes' this is the way to live, this is the source of the joy you seek. I still don't fully understand why this has so much meaning.

Perhaps because we so desperately hold on to what we have, what we feel we need and are so fearful of having things taken from us that the simple act of giving is a huge relief. Like carrying the burden of a lie and then finally admitting the truth.

I don't know what moves me; is it my brokenness, my Western guilt, my sinfulness and gluttony, contrasting with the beauty of the truth in the moment. How necessary it is that we enact restoration, reparation, the call to the 'rich man' to give what he has and follow after Christ. The truth is that nothing belongs to us, all belongs to God, and we are called to share, to give back to the poor what God would give; and how can God give if we keep it all. Do we understand that the only reason 'they' are poor is because 'we' are rich?

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Luke 3:38

If it is in giving that we receive, then what we receive might be seeing ourselves as God sees us – truly human - and we are profoundly moved.

So, here we are depending upon you once again, to help us care for these ladies, to join with us in supporting their recovery, restoring to them the dignity that they should have, and should never have lost.

By Maria Albrecht (CW Farmhouse Member)



Above: wood cut of Catholic Worker Farmhouse by Simone Kenny

Turn to page 12 to see how you can support the Catholic Worker Farm. We especially need customers for our veg boxes. Vegetables are organically grown in the garden and polytunnel. We also have a poustinia for people to come for short visits, retreats etc.

Easy Essay by Peter Maurin

The Wisdom of Giving

To give money to the poor is to enable the poor to buy.

To enable the poor to buy is to improve the market.

To improve the market is to help business.

To help business is to reduce unemployment.

To reduce unemployment is to reduce crime.

To reduce crime is to reduce taxation.

So why not give to the poor for business' sake for humanity's sake, for God's sake?

The Mystery of The Poor

- originally published as Dorothy Day's "On Pilgrimage" Column in the New York "Catholic Worker" paper, April 1964

"One priest had his catechism class write us questions as to our work...The majority asked the same

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

It is most surely an exercise of faith for us to see Christ in each other. But it is through such exercise that we grow and the joy of our vocation assures us we are on the right path.

Most certainly, it is easier to believe now that the sun warms us, and we know that the buds will appear on the sycamore trees in the wasteland across the Catholic Worker office. There are wars and rumours of war, poverty and plague, hunger and pain. Still, the sap is rising, again there is the resurrection of spring, God's continuing promise to us that He is with us always, with his comfort and joy, if we only ask.

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

making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge of and belief in love."



SPECIAL OFFER:

- end of print run -

"Dorothy Day - Selected Writings"
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(370 pages)

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" Reads like a sustained prayer - for peace, for love, for humility, and most of all, for activism. " - The Christian Century

"There is no better introduction to Dorothy Day" - Jim Forest

Please make cheques payable to "London Catholic Worker"

ALSO: See p11 for "Fool for Christ" DVD - best intro to Dorothy Day on film

Dorothy Day

Selected Writings

Edited and with an Introduction by Robert Ellsberg

Remembering the People of Senegal

When I wrote to Martin a little more than six months ago I did not expect it would be so big a deal volunteering with the 'London Catholic Worker'. I just wanted to see what it looks like living at 'Dorothy Day House'. I didn't think my stay at the London Dorothy Day House would help me understand better the situation of my people in Senegal.

Also I couldn't imagine size of the Catholic Worker Movement: USA, England, Australia, Germany, Netherlands: and perhaps very soon in Africa. The Catholic Worker movement is getting bigger and bigger – year after year because of the daily service of Catholic Workers to the poor and marginalized. It is in response to the alarming situation of destitute asylum seekers in London that a house of hospitality is run by Catholic Workers in Hackney to give shelter, as well as a listening ear, to homeless exiles. It's also about helping the marginalized to reintegrate into society that a community Café as well as the 'Urban Table' soup kitchen have been initiated by the Catholic Workers to 'share table' with homeless people.

As a volunteer at the London Catholic Worker, I have personally met and gotten to know destitute asylum seekers whose lives were in turmoil as they passed through the doors of the Dorothy Day House.

Person after person whom the London Catholic Worker welcomed into 'Dorothy Day House' began to change dramatically from when they first met them. They made it seem so easy to help homeless immigrants by giving them motivational opportunities they had never received before in Britain.

The first things that catches your attention when you get into 'Dorothy Day House' is the baskets of breads, fruits, and vegetables spread out in the kitchen. Food generously donated week in week out by a local organic health food shop. The London Catholic Workers are happy when the guests take what they want and even give foods to friends. "It's all right if our former guests come to visit and take home the food they need" says Katrina and Martin.

One homeless guy who comes into Peter's Café almost every day is really very happy to share London Catholic Worker's hospitality. He usually chats with us about his many problems, his depression and illnesses.

Another young man who started coming to the 'Urban Table' soup kitchen in December is from Poland. He has really appreciated the foods as well as the clothing usually provided by LCW. The Catholic Worker also dispense encouragement and sympathy and sometimes find shelter, extra foods and/or toiletries to share with those in poverty and need.

It's great to use the message spread over here, on this side of the globe by Catholic Workers to remember the many 'beggar children' I served while I was in Senegal. Here in London it seems relatively easy to

collect donations for homeless people. But it's much more difficult in Senegal where it's hard to find someone to give clothes or shoes to beggar children.

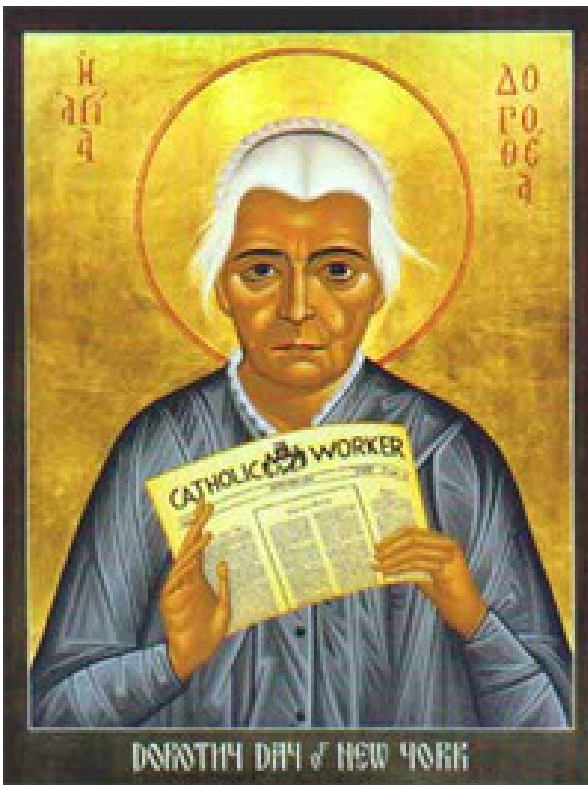
Over here in London Dorothy Day House - where we live, we try to spread the love of resistance, hospitality, and live together in community with exiles. Over in Senegal it's all about spreading the love of acceptance, tolerance, hospitality, and community.

So now, as I am sitting here in London, at Dorothy Day House, remembering the people of my community who experience the same humiliation homeless people and exiles face in London I reflect on the choices that face us all.

Will the message of the Catholic Worker reach into the hearts of young people in my country too and whisper to them this message of resistance, community and hospitality?

The Catholic Worker movement is showing us a different way, a different road: but each of us has to decide which way is for us, which road we are called to follow.

Papa Mao Fall Ndiaye
Catholic Worker Volunteer



Two Angels In One Day

On July 10th 2009 we received the following press release:

"Susan Clarkson of the Oxford Catholic Worker was sentenced to 21 days in prison at Oxford Magistrates Court this morning. She refused to pay fines of £1,235 for protests at Northwood military HQ in north London.

As two more British soldiers were killed in Afghanistan this morning, making nine this week, Ms Clarkson said in court that her "actions were both for the victims in Afghanistan and for the young soldiers sent there" and that she did not want to pay the fine because some of it would go to the military."

A week later I find myself protesting outside Bronzefield Prison alongside friends from the Catholic Worker Farm. Susan has been in prison for 7 days, and we are wondering how she is doing. The prison is in a quiet residential area; there are not many passers by to see our placards or take our leaflets; but there is a lot of traffic, and we can see drivers straining to see what we are about, and one or two wave in support.

Standing in the sunshine I gather my thoughts and try to pray. A young woman is walking towards us, and I wonder if she works here? She asks us what we are doing, and Scott explains about Susan, Northwood, the Catholic Worker. The young woman smiles enthusiastically and then to our amazement says, "I know Susan, she was on the same wing as me. I'm Natalie. Everyone thinks she is great for standing up for what she believes. It is crazy locking up someone like her. I was released on Tuesday." The relief that sweeps over me in this moment takes me by surprise. At best we hoped Susan would get to hear that we were outside, but we didn't for one minute think we would get news about her from the inside. Yet this young woman, with such compassion and warmth, brings us this 'good news'.

Sometimes it is hard to know just how frightened you are about something until that fear is removed. Now I realise that I had been fearing the worst for Susan.

Our spirits are raised, but before we can fully absorb this news a grey sports car screeches to a halt: we were about to meet Vince. Leaning against his car Vince announces that this is his 'patch', and wants to know who we are and what the hell we are doing on his 'patch'? Before any of us can answer Vince begins to look at our placards and tell us exactly what he thinks of them: 'That one is a load of shite, so is that, I

agree with that one, and who the hell is Susan?' I try not to catch his eye; I really don't want to deal with this guy. My fear is back: I am afraid. To my relief Scott steps forward and introduces himself, and again starts to tell the story of what Susan did on the feast of



Susan Clarkson of the Oxford Catholic Worker

'Holy Innocents' at Northwood as an act of non-violent civil disobedience against the war in Afghanistan.

Vince listens intently. Then he shares his story. Irish Catholic background, ex service man, now looking after his elderly parents and running his 'patch'. He pauses. The formal introductions begin and he shakes hands, very firmly, with each of us. "I respect anyone willing to go to prison for what they believe" he says.

Vince drives off at the same dangerous speed he arrived, waving and beeping his horn as he goes; quite an exit.

As we walk towards the prison entrance to pray before we leave, we hear a car stop alongside us. Vince is back. My heart sinks, what now?

Vince gets out of his sports car, and pushes the passenger seat forward. Reaching into the back to lifts out a tray, and turns to give it to us. 'I just had these sandwiches made for you. You have to eat as well as protest. Oh, there are some vegetarian ones too.' Amazing!

When we get to the prison entrance we find Natalie waiting outside. She is confident that Susan has heard we are here. We share our sandwiches with her, and she shares some of her story: how she ended up in prison, how as a child her grandmother always prayed with her before she went to bed. Natalie joins us as we pray for Susan, and for all the women prisoners at Bronzefield.

The journey back to Hackney gives me time to reflect. What had I hoped to achieve by taking part in this protest today? Well I guess the basic aim of any protest is to get your "message" across; and by that measure today had been pretty successful. Local people were made aware, the prison staff and the local police had seen us, and of course Susan knew we were there too. (Cont'd Page 11)