

MANNA *in the wilderness*

December 2007

The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

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A BANQUET OF LOVE AND HOPE

by Julia Occhiogrosso

This last year has been particularly challenging for Gary and I. For twenty five years our work has brought us close to the suffering of human beings that live in our hospitality houses and stand in our soup lines. We have gained a special insight and understanding of the struggles and trauma of the poor.

Ironically, parenting our adopted sons has awakened in us a deeper, more personal understanding of the pain and tireless struggles that we have seen plague many of the folks we serve. Our hearts are gaining a new understanding of the common knowledge that babies who are neglected do not attach well and develop severe trust issues that keep them at odds with all forms of authority. This wound devastates the trust bond which unhealed creates antisocial and defiant behavior. Lack of understanding and compassion of this condition by individuals and institutions leads to more suffering, prisons and soup lines. Our sons with loving intervention will hopefully find their way to joy and fulfillment in this life. Yet, I am particularly challenged this year to see through the rough, defiant exterior to the heart of the wounded child.

This season let us hold the image of the babe in the manger as a symbol of all the fragile vulnerable ones who when seen with loving eyes have a chance to become the treasures they were born to be in this world. Indeed whatever the cause, this time of hope and grace invites us to open our hearts and recommit ourselves to the mission of care and steadfast love to the wounded ones in our midst.

We are grateful to friends and family who have been there for us and we ask for your continued financial support to keep the Catholic Worker projects going strong. Through the generous support of our donors and the Empty Bowl fundraiser, we have been able to greatly enhance our soupline. Each morning we are able to provide condiments such as hot sauce, jalapenos, and salt and pepper. We have been able to provide parmesan cheese on the days we serve pasta. We have been able to put more meat in the pots. The Knights of Columbus have been cooking 600 pancakes and providing eggs and sausage once a month. Much gratitude for your part in providing these simple extras, a banquet of love and hope for the poor.

THE LAS VEGAS

CATHOLIC WORKER COMMUNITY

Julia Occhiogrosso

Gary Cavalier

MORNING KITCHEN CREW:

Gary Williams, Tim Underwood, Erik Velasquez, Warren Steffan, Robert Lares

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FLIGHT TO EGYPT BY FRITZ EICHENBERG (1953)

Thank You to our loyal volunteers:

WEDNESDAY MORNING SOUPLINE VOLUNTEERS:

Colleen Brown, Jim Dufault, Modesto Fernandez, John Hazard, Chunhwa Jeony, Andrew Kohl, Tony Mostajir, Greg Ramirez, Immer Liza Ravallo, Gloria Taylor

THURSDAY MORNING SOUPLINE VOLUNTEERS:

George and Peg Bean, Paul Colbert, Dale and Peggy and Andrew Devitt, Angie Fabrizio, Bonnie Johnson, Brenna O'Callaghan

FRIDAY MORNING SOUPLINE VOLUNTEERS:

Peter Daher, Jim France, Sally McDaniel, Dan Stegemann Sr. Megan Rice, George Soulner, Midgene Spatz, Anne Welsh, Fr. Albert and UNLV Catholic Newman Center

SATURDAY MORNING SOUPLINE VOLUNTEERS:

Lori Bossy, Ellen Bordinhao, Sonja Brouwers, Marcus Brouwers, Peter Ediger, Brock Fraser, Sonia Rojas, Miles Plannette, Anthony Smith, Ryan Taylor, Fr. Jerry Zawada

MONTHLY FOOD BASKET DISTRIBUTION VOLUNTEERS:

JoAnn Bingham, Lori Bossy, Dale and Peggy Devitt, Mario Intino, Dave and Carol Welch, Anne Welsh

ROOM FOR CHRIST

by Dorothy Day

It is no use saying that we are born two thousand years too late to give room to Christ. Nor will those who live at the end of the world have been born too late. Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts.

In Christ's human life, there were always a few who made up for the neglect of the crowd. The shepherds did it; their hurrying to the crib atoned for the people who would flee from Christ. The wise men did it; their journey across the world made up for those who refused to stir one hand's breadth from the routine of their lives to go to Christ. Even the gifts the wise men brought have in themselves an obscure recompense and atonement for what would follow later in this Child's life. For they brought gold, the king's emblem, to make up for the crown of thorns that He would wear; they offered incense, the symbol of praise, to make up for the mockery and the spitting; they gave Him

myrrh, to heal and soothe, and He was wounded from head to foot and no one bathed His wounds. The women at the foot of the Cross did it too, making up for the crowd who stood by and sneered.

We can do it too, exactly as they did. We are not born too late. We do it by seeing Christ and serving Christ in friends and strangers, in everyone we come in contact with.

All this can be proved, if proof is needed, by the doctrines of the Church. We can talk about Christ's Mystical Body, about the vine and the branches, about the Communion of the Saints. But Christ Himself has proved it for us, and no one has to go further than that. For He said that a glass of water given to a beggar was given to Him. He made heaven hinge on the way we act toward Him in His disguise of commonplace, frail, ordinary humanity.

Did you give Me food when I was hungry?

Did you give Me to drink when I was thirsty?

Did you give Me clothes when My own were all rags?

Did you come to see Me when I was sick, or in prison or in trouble?

And to those who say, aghast, that they never had a chance to do such a

thing, that they lived two thousand years too late, He will say again what they had the chance of knowing all their lives, that if these things were done for the very least of His brethren they were done to Him.

For a total Christian, the goad of duty is not needed—always prodding one to perform this or that good deed. It is not a duty to help Christ, it is a privilege. Is it likely that Martha and Mary sat back and considered that they had done all that was expected of them—is it likely that Peter's mother-in-law grudgingly served the chicken she had meant to keep till Sunday because she thought it was her "duty?" She did it gladly; she would have served ten chickens if she had had them.

If that is the way they gave hospitality to Christ, it is certain that that is the way it should be given. Not for the sake of humanity. Not because it might be Christ who stays with us, comes to see us, takes up our time. Not because these people remind us of Christ, but because they *are* Christ, asking us to find room for Him, exactly as He did at the first Christmas.

Dorothy Day co-founded the Catholic Worker movement with Peter Maurin in New York in 1933. This selection is edited from an article she wrote in December 1945.

EMPTY BOWL BENEFIT

Mark your calendar! The Seventh annual Empty Bowl Benefit will take place on Saturday, April 5, 2008

CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST

Our annual Christmas Breakfast will be served on Saturday, December 22. We need boneless cooked hams by Thursday, Dec. 20. Please call 647-0728 to arrange delivery.

WEBSITES:

www.lvcw.org

www.catholicworker.org

PRAY FOR
PEACE
IN OUR
WORLD!

(FOR
TAB)

**Thanks to all our
Donors who make this
ministry possible!**

**Into this world, this demented inn,
in which there is no room
for him at all,
Christ has come uninvited.
But because he cannot
be at home in it,
because he is out of place in it, . . .
His place is with those
who do not belong,
who are rejected
by power because
they are regarded as weak,**

**those who are discredited,
who are denied
the status of persons,
tortured and exterminated.
With those for whom
there is no room,
Christ is present in this world.
He is mysteriously present
in those for whom
there seems to be nothing
but the world at its worst.**

-Thomas Merton

PLEASE JOIN US:

Wed., Fri., Sat.; 6:00 a.m.:

Morning prayer at Catholic Worker.

Wednesday-Saturday; 6:30 a.m.:

Breakfast served at G & McWilliams street to the poor and homeless.

Last Saturday of month; 8:30 a.m.:

Deliver food to homes in need.

Wednesday; 8 a.m. -noon:

Hospitality Day, we invite 15 homeless men & women home for showers, to wash clothes, & lunch.

Thursday; 8 a.m. - 9 a.m.:

Vigil for Peace in front of Federal Courthouse, 333 S. Las Vegas Blvd.

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Las Vegas Catholic Worker

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