

MANNA *in the wilderness*

December 2009

The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

Volume 24, Number 2

Catholic Worker Hospitality: A Generous Tradition

by Julia Occhiogrosso

The Catholic Worker movement was founded in New York in 1933 during the Great Depression. Dorothy Day, a single mom with a young daughter, shared a tenement apartment with her brother and sister-in-law. Peter Maurin, a French peasant and Christian scholar was directed to this apartment on his quest to find someone willing to join him in his venture to bring to life a vision of the gospel which took seriously the Works of Mercy and the social teachings of the Church. From that meeting eighty-six years ago, a pot of soup was put on the stove and hungry, unemployed people were fed. The sharing had begun and the movement was born.

Like many who provide for the poor during these hard economic times, the Las Vegas Catholic Worker has experienced a decline in donations this year. Our biggest concern is a potential lack of funds that would limit what we can provide for recipients of our regular projects.

We currently serve a hearty soup line meal four mornings a week, manage two hospitality houses, and maintain a food pantry for the hospitality houses and monthly food box project. We also host Wednesday Hospitality Day which enables twenty to thirty guests to take showers, do laundry, and have a hearty home-style lunch. And even as the demands have grown this year, so far we have miraculously been able to stave off any major cutbacks.

But looking ahead to the next year, we will need an extra boost to keep serving at the level we presently are. The funds are getting used up and we depend on your financial support to avoid the need to cutback on any of our projects.

Even in these hard times we are heartened by the stories that preceded us and of which we are but a

chapter. We come to you with the faith that compassion fuels giving and that even in the most difficult times people have the capacity and

inclination to care and give from what they do have to give. Thank you for your continued support. Wishing you a blessed Christmas.



THE LORD'S SUPPER BY FRITZ EICHENBERG (1953)

What we would like to do is change the world- make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world. We repeat, there is nothing that we can do but love, and, dear God, please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as well as our friend. -Dorothy Day

Thank you to our soupline volunteers:

THE MORNING KITCHEN CREW

Mark Kelso, William Reid, Warren Steffen, Tim Underwood, Eric Velasquez, Gary Williams

WEDNESDAY MORNING SOUPLINE VOLUNTEERS

Jim Dufault, Modesto Fernandez, Jim Haber, Chunhwa Jeong, Andrew Kohl, Greg Ramirez, Immer Liza Ravalo, Karen Reeve, Steve Stefani, Gloria Taylor, Harry Williams

THURSDAY MORNING SOUPLINE VOLUNTEERS

George and Peg Bean, Jenna Bracken, Vikki Courtney, Dale and Peggy and Andrew Devitt, Ryan Osburn, Sal Rangel, Jimmeka Taylor

FRIDAY MORNING SOUPLINE VOLUNTEERS

Cindy Austin, Peter Daher, Sally McDaniel, Sr. Megan Rice, Anthony Smith, Midgene Spatz, Anne Welsh, UNLV Catholic Newman Center

SATURDAY MORNING SOUPLINE VOLUNTEERS

Lori Bossy, Ellen Bordinhao, Sonja and Marcus Brouwers, Denbe Cruz, Peter Ediger, Dr. Jerry & Julie Jones, Laurie Rivera, John Seli, Ryan Taylor, Greg Walker

MONTHLY FOOD BASKET DISTRIBUTION VOLUNTEERS
JoAnn Bingham, Lori Bossy, Dave and Carol Welch, Anne Welsh
we apologize for those we missed

Mark your calendars!
The Tenth Annual Empty Bowl Benefit
will take place on
Saturday, March 20, 2010
Last year's benefit raised over **\$34,000** for the Catholic Worker

The Scandal of the Works of Mercy

by Dorothy Day

The Corporal Works of Mercy are to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive, to harbor the harborless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead.

When Peter Maurin talked about the necessity of practicing the Works of Mercy, he meant all of them. He envisioned Houses of Hospitality in poor parishes in every city of the country, where these precepts of Our Lord could be put into effect. He pointed out that we have turned to state responsibility through home relief, social legislation, and social security, that we no longer practice personal responsibility, but are repeating the words of the first murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Works of Mercy are a wonderful stimulus to our growth in faith as well as love. Our faith is taxed to the utmost and so grows through this strain put upon it. It is pruned again and again, and springs up bearing much fruit. For anyone starting to live literally the words of the Fathers of the Church—"What is superfluous for one's need is to be regarded as plunder if one retains it for one's self"—there is always a trial ahead. "Our faith, more precious than gold, must be tried as though by fire."

Here is a letter we received today: "I

took a gentleman seemingly in need of spiritual and temporal guidance into my home on a Sunday afternoon. Let him have a nap on my bed, went through the want ads with him, made coffee and sandwiches for him, and when he left, I found my wallet had gone also."

I can only say that the saints would only bow their heads and not try to understand or judge. They received no thanks—well, then, God had to repay them. This is expecting heroic charity, of course. But these things happen for our discouragement, for our testing. We are sowing the seed of love, and we are not living in the harvest time. We must love to the point of folly, and we are indeed fools, as Our Lord Himself was who died for such a one as this. It is agony to go through such bitter experiences, because we all want to love, we desire with a great longing to love our fellows, and our hearts are often crushed at such rejections. But, as a Carmelite nun said to me last week, "It is the crushed heart which is the soft heart, the tender heart."

Dorothy Day co-founded the Catholic Worker movement with Peter Maurin in New York in 1933. This selection is edited from an article written in Nov. 1949.

WEBSITE: www.lvcw.org

PRAY FOR PEACE IN OUR WORLD!

(FOR TAB)

Pray the Rosary: Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m.
Prayer Services: Jan. 27, Feb. 24, March 24 (6:00 p.m., potluck following)
Call Mark at (702) 524-3714 to confirm.

Estimated Statistics for 2009:

Soupline:

Bowls of Soup served: 104,000
Cups of Hot & Cold Tea: 90,000
Loaves of Bread used: 2,496

Hospitality Day:

Lunches served: 1,300
Showers given: 936

Monthly Food Box distribution:

Food Boxes given out: 380

Hospitality House guests:

Room for 4-6 guests, average: 5

Morning Soupline Statistics:

Soup: Wednesday: Rice

Thursday: Mac & Cheese

Friday: Spaghetti

Saturday: Rice

Each morning we cook 40 - 50 gallons of soup (426 - 533 12 oz. servings each) Also provided each morning: Hot & Iced Tea, Bread, Sweets and Water. **Monthly:** Christ the King Stew (1st Thurs.) and Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast (2nd Sat.).

PLEASE JOIN US:

Wednesday-Saturday, 6:00 a.m.:

Morning prayer at Catholic Worker.

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

Breakfast served at G & McWilliams to the poor & homeless (about 150 people).

Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. - noon:

Hospitality Day, we invite 20 homeless men home for showers, to wash clothes, and to have a great lunch.

Thursday, 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.:

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

Thursday, 11:30 a.m.:

50 Bag lunches delivered to homeless.

Last Saturday of month, 8:00 a.m.:

Deliver food boxes to homes in need.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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