

MANNNA *in the wilderness*

March 2005

The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

Volume 19, Number 3

HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART

by Julia Occhiogrosso

Once again we are reading about the drama surrounding the homeless. The city representatives, social service agencies, homeless advocates and even land owners are all part of the discourse. All enter the debate, and for the most part, lock into their predictable positions.

The volunteers at the Catholic Worker have been providing a hot meal daily for the hungry and homeless in Las Vegas for the last twenty years. We have seen this drama played out year after year. As far back as 1987 a few of us were arrested for sitting in front of bulldozers that were clearing out an encampment by the old Salvation Army location. And while more services for the homeless have emerged since then, we are still having this conversation as if it were a new topic.

The conversations about the "homeless problem" take place in cities all over the United States. Different cities have faced the challenge with different degrees of success. But for the most part, across the country, there is a typical pattern found in responding to the homeless. It is to do as little as possible in the hopes that those who are here will go away and others will not come. And while without a doubt, there are many efforts to aid the homeless it has not been enough. All too often it is the ones who are

the most broken, the most in need who are the most despised and the most marginalized.

This approach is not working. Perhaps it is time to question the legitimacy of this logic. Human suffering does not disappear when it is ignored. Social wounds will not magically heal without proper attention.

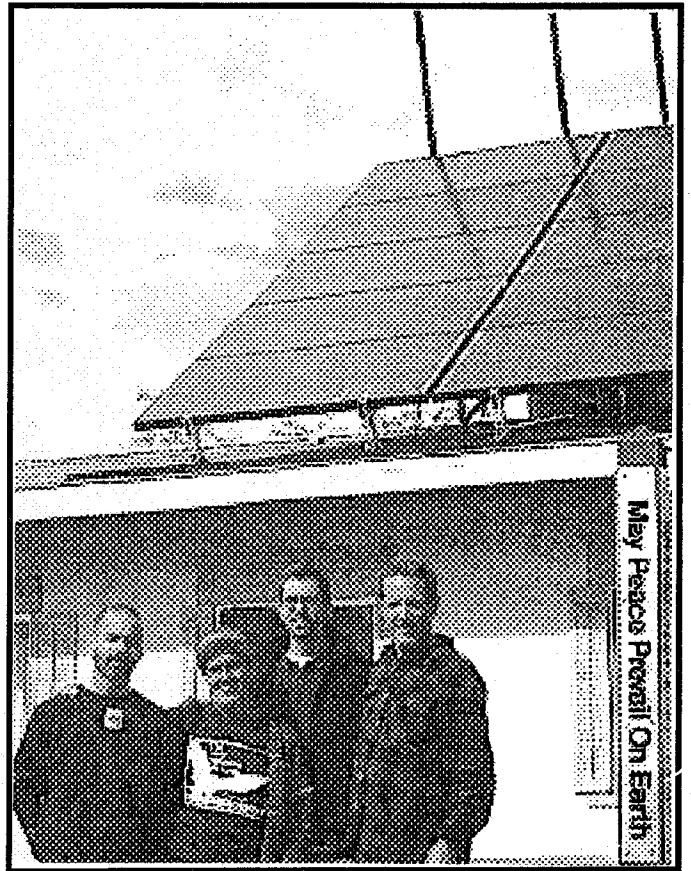
In Las Vegas we are capable of bringing together creative talents who can think outside the box about many projects. Why can we not apply the same genius to the "homeless problem," and have a different story to share next winter?

I believe it is possible. I believe that we have the expertise and talent to significantly better the lives of many of the poor and homeless in this city. We are not for want in this area. But, we must first cultivate an understanding that yields a deep compassion to guide the logic in our community response to their plight. We must mobilize a consensus of the heart that recognizes who the homeless are and where they have come from.

This is no easy task. It does not call for a sentimental view which is not willing to take in the shadows, the weaknesses and bad choices that are part of all human experience. But it does call for us to suspend judgment long enough to imagine what might have been. It challenges us to give mercy to the veteran who has come back from war too shattered to pick up the pieces. Or to accept the fragile soul who cannot stop the voices from pounding in his head. Are we willing to look beyond the anger and rage to see the hurt and frightened child turned man who

has been running from abuse and neglect his entire life. Can we respect the day laborer who tries to make what he can of the American Dream by standing on a sidewalk curb day after day begging for employment? Can we forgive the addict for his weaknesses? Would we be willing to at least attempt to understand why a person would perpetuate a cycle of self destruction?

Or, is it too difficult for us to look upon the suffering? Is it easier if the



FROM LEFT: EUGENE, JULIA, RYAN AND GARY WITH NEW SOLAR PANELS AT BARTLETT AVE. BUILDING.

Round Table Discussions

Come join us for Round Table Discussions the second Saturday of each month at the Catholic Worker House. From 8-8:30 a.m. refreshments will be served, from 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. will be the presentation. For info call 647-0728.

Saturday, April 9: Rick Kelley, Contemplative Meditation.

Saturday, May 14: Peter Ediger, "God in Politics by Jim Wallace".

Saturday, June 11: Gary Cavalier; Money, Security & Community.

problem is kept hidden or bulldozed away? Do we see too much of our own wounds underneath the soiled clothes and weathered faces?

It is only by bringing to the conversation this level of inquiry and empathy that we will be able to provide full and more humane possibilities for the most vulnerable in our community. If we, with receptivity and honesty embrace these questions then the voices of conscience will be heard over the din of complaints. Creativity, shared resources and ingenuity will rise to the occasion. Then, Las Vegas will be upheld as a model city in its unique way of caring for the poor.

How do we raise a family with no paycheck?

by Gary Cavalier

People sometimes ask Julia and me how we get by with no salary.

Each of the four of us in the Las Vegas Catholic Worker community (Ryan, Eugene, Julia and I) receive our housing for free and the use of donated food. Our (Julia and I) home costs total \$586 per month (maintenance, insurance, taxes, utilities, etc.), so Julia and I each earn the equivalent of \$293 each month from the Catholic Worker.

Eugene and Ryan currently have part-time jobs to earn money for their personal needs. How do Julia and I pay for our other expenses such as our personal car, health care and other needs of our two kids and ourselves? I do some book-

keeping for Pace e Bene which earns \$50 per month and we receive a low-income adoption subsidy from the state which totals \$705 per month until the kids are 18, as long as our income remains low. This subsidy is the blessing that allows us to not have to get part-time work. The state of Nevada gives the subsidy so parents with low-income will not be prevented from adopting children because they can't afford to. These two incomes take care of our family needs adequately.

We don't suffer living on a low wage, but most poor do. They get messages all the time that they are "less than", if they have less. True poverty is when we are enslaved by our need for more. When we realize we have enough, that is radical.

Annual Financial Report for 2004

INCOME (Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2004)	
Empty Bowl event	10,177
from IHN for utilities	4,800
Large Donations, \$500+	24,881
Catholic parishes	15,274
Other Income	785
Monthly Donations	3,895
Christmas Appeal	14,082
Other Donations	6,866
TOTAL INCOME	80,760

EXPENSES (Jan. 1-Dec 31, 2004)	
Soupline**	23,043
Food Box deliveries**	149
Help To Others	4,611
500 Van Buren*	10,205
500 " (new bathroom)	3,075
502 Van Buren*	6,347
Finish 502 Van Buren	7,315
Gary/Julia family home*	7,034
Bartlett & Wilson	278
Solar Panels, Bartlett	7,463
Hospitality Guest	2,220
Vehicle	3,125
Newsletter	951
Retreat costs	1,447
Other costs	1,993
Supplies & Postage	2,895
Volunteer Events, etc.	1,691
Salaries	0
TOTAL EXPENSES	83,842
TOTAL INCOME-EXPENSES	-3,082

*maintainence, utilities, insurance, taxes
 ** tons of food is also donated, this only shows cash transactions, we receive food, etc. from churches and individuals
 For a detailed financial report or info contact the Las Vegas Catholic Worker.

CATHOLIC WORKER CALENDAR

MARCH:

25, Friday: Nuclear Stations of the Cross, noon, Mercury Exit, US 95

APRIL:

2, Saturday: Empty Bowl Event, Green Valley High School, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

9, Saturday: RTD*, Contemplative Meditation, Rick Kelley.

9, Saturday: Dorothy Granada, Christ Church Episcopal, 12:30 p.m.

MAY:

1, Sunday: Catholic Worker Volunteer & Donor Picnic, details to be announced.

14, Saturday: RTD*, "God in Politics" (book by Jim Wallace), Peter Ediger.

JUNE:

11, Saturday: RTD*, Gary Cavalier, Money, Security, Community.

***Round Table Discussions**, 8 a.m. refreshments, 8:30-10:30 a.m. discussion, at LVCW house.

Dorothy Granada,

nurse & director of the Ortiz clinic in Nicaragua will visit Las Vegas on a 14 city fundraising tour.

**Authentic Nicaraguan Lunch
 Christ Church Episcopal
 2000 Maryland Parkway**

Sat., Apr. 9, 12:30 p.m., donation

PRAY
 FOR
 PEACE
 IN OUR
 WORLD!

(FOR
 TAB)

THANK
 YOU
 FOR
 YOUR
 SUPPORT

Empty Bowl Benefit Luncheon & Auction

Sat., April 2

11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Green Valley High School
 info: 647-0728 or lvcw.org

L. V. Catholic Worker Website:

www.lvcw.org

National: www.catholicworker.org

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Stations of the Cross Good Friday

March 25, noon

At the gates of the

Nevada Test Site,

Mercury Exit, US 95

(about 60 miles N of Las Vegas)

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, gather for reflection & prayer, call for info.

Wednesday; 8 a.m. -noon: Hospitality Day, we invite 7 homeless folk 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.

Second Sat. of month 8:30 a.m.: Round Table Discussions.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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