

MANNA *in the wilderness*

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The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

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I Shall Set a Banquet Before You

by Julia Occhiogrosso

Once a month for the last eleven years a group of volunteers from the Knights of Columbus have been providing a special pancake breakfast. This is a misnomer because in addition to pancakes we prepare scrambled eggs, sausage, cheesy potatoes, grits, coffee, tea and all the fixings.

All this is prepared in two hours. The pancake cooks arrive before dawn setting up the griddles in the 502 building. Four grills, eight pancakes per grill, 32 in a batch, 32 batches to make 1,000 pancakes.

Everything else is cooked up in the kitchen next door. The scrambled eggs and potatoes are cooking on the stove, while sausage warms in the oven. Coffee and tea are ready and kept hot, and last but not least, the grits are cooked up in a ten gallon pot of boiling water.

As I walk about with clipboard in hand ready to sign-up people for serving jobs, I am taken by the scene. I cannot help but be reminded of the feelings I had as a child on the occasions of a family gathering. Amid the labor of all the preparations is time for conversation. All ages share in laughter, storytelling and the cultivating bonds born out of common work. There was an understanding that we each had something of ourselves we could contribute, confident that each small role would finally coalesce to become a gift for one and all.

This family gathering will become a banquet for the poor, the crippled, the sick, deaf and the blind. A feast prepared intentionally to include the excluded. All who partake become administrators of the corporal works of mercy: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger.

By 6 a.m., more volunteers arrive to help load all the food and serve. A crew goes out ahead and sets up four serving tables for four lines. Meanwhile, we gather in a circle to recite a prayer before heading down to the field.

Each month people wait with anticipation for this feast. We always have a larger crowd. Word of the pancake breakfast has been spreading.

I stand by the condiment table and watch as people carry their abundant plates to-

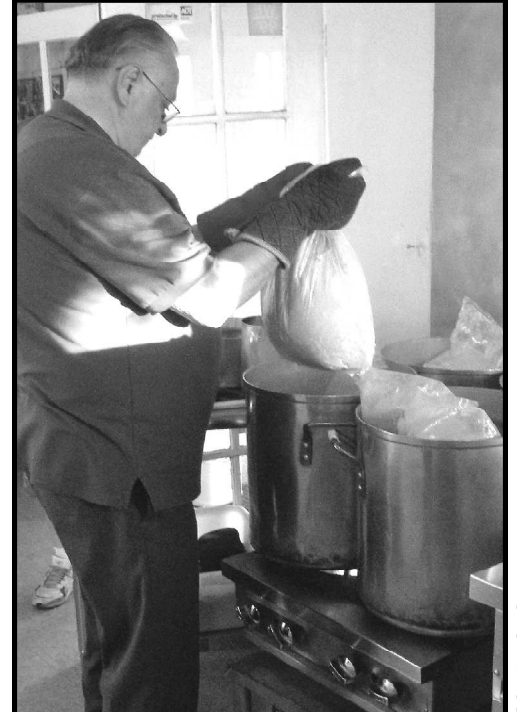
ward the syrup, butter and salsa servers.

The conversation is sweet and celebratory. People express gratitude and

joke with one another, and in those moments find a reprieve from life's stresses and sorrows.



Above: Jack Davis (left) and Ralph Luna. Right: Frank Holich cooks 100 pounds of "boil in the bag" eggs.



Above: Knights of Columbus volunteers frying pancakes. From left: Ben Kuesterstaffen, Edgar Castro, Dave Ryan, Lamar Johnson, Pat Christopher and Blair Wachob. Below: After all the food is cooked and the trailer is loaded, volunteers form a large circle and pray before carpooling down to an empty lot to serve the pancake feast.



PHOTOS BY JULIA OCCHIOGROSSO

PHOTO BY ROBERT MAJORS



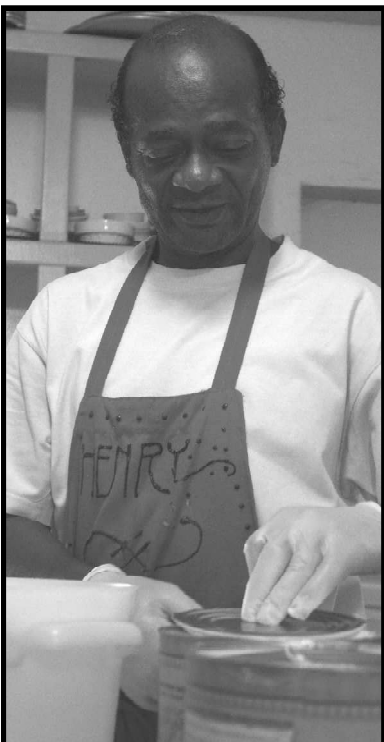
Anne Welsh, left, speaking at a Peace Vigil at the Federal Building before the first Gulf War. Former Bishop Daniel Walsh is on the right.

Anne Welsh, July 30, 1941 - March 14, 2017

Oh Loving Creator,
Your breath moved through
our dear Anne.
Generous, Faithful,
she emanated your divine presence
in her humble gestures
of kindness and compassion.
Let us take a moment to notice
the particular way your divine
breath moves and dwells uniquely
in each of us gathered here.

May we, like Anne, have the courage
to be true to this breath, this Spirit
which enables us to bring life and
hope to a suffering world. *Amen*

*This prayer by Julia Occhiogrosso
is from a memorial service at the
Catholic Worker held June 1, in
honor of Anne Welsh, long time
friend and volunteer with the Las
Vegas Catholic Worker.*



Each month, Henry Freeman makes the Cheesy Gravy for the 120 pounds (30 gallons) of Cheesy Potatoes we serve at the Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast.

PHOTO BY ROBERT MAJORS

Annual Christmas Breakfast for the Homeless: Sat., Dec. 23

We will be closed:

Wed., July 26 - Sat., Aug. 5

Thurs., Nov. 23 - Sat., Nov. 25



Michael Eagle

April 10, 1970 - February 24, 2017

Michael Eagle helped serve the Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast each month, even after illness made it very difficult. His wife Shirley still volunteers each month.

The Feast

by Robert Majors

Have you ever met a Knight?
They come off strong
but always kind.
I see a few from time to time,
But once a month they all unite.
They come to cook,
not joust or fight.
They live to serve the lord of light.
Fuses pop and pancakes fly,
Potatoes toss and sausage fry.
After all the food is gathered,
Slow but sure we stand together
In a circle where we pray
That we will not
forget our strength.
This day is known as
the big breakfast,
Pancake day, and celebration,
By the poor that hear the word
And line up to see the festive.
Butter spreads and syrup pours.
Sausage, eggs, and grits are served.
The coffee hot in steady streams,
The tea is cold and very sweet.
Heavy plates from line to line.
Eyes look wide at what they find.
Friends are found in this delight
To break the fast of desert nights.
So if you've wondered what it's like
To serve with Knights
and eat with Christ,
To love your neighbor side by side
Consider this as your invite.

The Empty Bowl Benefit raised \$28,594

for our projects feeding the homeless.
(Income of \$31,288 - Expenses of \$2,694) **Thanks for your support!**

PLEASE JOIN US:

- Wednesday-Saturday, 6:00 a.m.:** Morning prayer at Catholic Worker.
- Wednesday-Saturday, 6:30 a.m.:** Breakfast served to 150-200 poor & homeless people.
- Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.:** Hospitality Day, we invite 20 homeless men home for showers, to wash clothes and for a great lunch.
- Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.:** Vigil for Peace in front of Federal Courthouse, 333 Las Vegas Blvd. S.
- Thursday, 10:30 a.m.:** 50 lunches taken to the homeless.
- Second Saturday of the month:** Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast to the homeless.
- Third Saturday of the month:** Deliver food boxes to homes in need.

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