

# MANNA *in the wilderness*

February 2003

The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

Volume 17, Number 3

## Living in Stark Contradiction to the World

by Ryan Hall

Let me begin by introducing myself as young, foolish and idealistic. These are the world's labels for me, but I understand, the vision of the world and the vision of Christ are two very different ways of looking at life. My real name is Ryan Hall. I live at the Las Vegas Catholic Worker where daily myself and three other community members struggle to live out the Gospel by making our home with the poor and homeless. This is why I've been called a fool, but for me this is exactly what being Catholic is all about.

For me being Catholic means leading a life in stark contradiction to the way the rest of the world wants me to live. Being Catholic means knowing I am a part of a vast yet interconnected world where each human life is regarded as my sister or brother. And with that knowledge, being Catholic means knowing that I have a duty to serve those sisters and brothers who need someone to literally walk beside them in times of joy and trouble. Whether rich or poor, strong or weak, Christian or unchristian, holy or unholy, American or un-American, worthy or unworthy being Catholic means I am a servant to all and a brother to all. This can only be accomplished through Christ's most important commandment: Love!

It is through this love that Christ speaks of that we not only transform the lives of the poor, but also in a much more meaningful way we transform our own lives. Dorothy Day, one of the co-founders of the Catholic Worker used to talk about a 'revolution of the heart'. This is the type of revolution that changes our whole being; our eyes lose the scales that blind us to the kingdom of God and our ears become deaf no longer as they begin to truly hear the voices of those around us God uses to help us live Christ's vision of service and love.

Transforming my life is the most

important part of what I see being a Catholic is all about. As I grow in my faith and challenge myself to face that side of me that is not Christlike I sense God's presence growing nearer, but facing that side of myself is never easy of course. Living in constant interaction with the poor it becomes easy to blame them for their troubles, but in seeing their struggle my own faults become clearer. As a picture on our wall says, "It is the poor who evangelize through the testimony of their struggle." So I often wonder, was this part of Christ's plan, is this the reason he stressed working with the

poor so much, to transform our own lives. I'm sure we make a difference in the lives of those we serve, but too often I see the same faces year after year on the streets. There are no magic words, no secret recipe we can cook up to serve, not even the most generous amount of hospitality that can be done to change the lives of the poor, the only life we have some (and I stress some) control over is our own. Therefore perhaps this is what Christ wanted all along, the poor to transform us; to mend our heart and remove the blinders from our eyes. It's then that we become vulnerable to love even those we'd rather not. This is what it means to be Catholic for me.

The problem with seeing my faith in this light means that everyday begins a new challenge. Everyday as I encounter the poor and homeless folks in our house, and I begin to experience rising frustration at their situation, at their occasional apathy in looking for work and a home, at the way a parent negatively interacts with a child, slowly I stop and begin to ask myself, why. Why are these folks really in this situation, what were their parents like when they were growing up, is it possibly an economic situation. Do they not deserve my love and attention simply because I have judged them unworthy? It's during this time of questioning that my faith as a Catholic begins to show its understanding face. I remember that at Christ's table we are all equals, we all eat the same food and drink from the same cup, yet our differences are what we focus on. Being Catholic challenges me and encourages me to say to those I've deemed unworthy, "you are my brother or sister, you have worth, you have a purpose, your life is important to me." The hardest thing I've ever done in my life has been choosing to live as a Catholic. The mystery of our faith, as we say at mass, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again", is really all about love. In my *(continued on back page)*



DETAIL FROM  
THE LORD'S SUPPER (1953)  
BY FRITZ EICHENBERG

(continued from front page)

journey of faith as a Catholic I've chosen to try and discover this mystery within myself by following in the footsteps of so many who have mentored me in my 24 years of life thus far. Like that of a friend of ours at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker named Ladon who once decided after having really heard and understood the Gospel to give up his major worldly possessions and to 'experiment' as he called it with the words of Christ, to live in simplicity, service and love to all. And so, if I may add, I invite you all, my brothers and sisters to continue to try and do the same.

Ryan Hall is a member of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker community. This is the text of a speech Ryan gave at the annual Diocesan Conference.

# Annual Financial Report for 2002

by Gary Cavalier

We base our salary on Acts (4:34), taking according to our need as early Christian communities did. The four of us living in community realized that this year we didn't need any salary or other expenses as all four of us had other part-time jobs. In 2001, stipend, car and room and board expenses were \$9,306. Because we took no stipends this year, total expenses were lower in 2002 (\$35,388) than in 2001 (\$43,212), our contribution to the new building.

**Balance Sheet (Dec. 31, 2002)**

New Building Fund*:	\$55,039
Checking Account:	6,699
Other Assets:	919
<b>TOTAL CASH ASSETS:</b>	<b>62,657</b>
Total liabilities:	887
Equity:	61,770
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY:</b>	<b>62,657</b>

  

Empty Bowl Sales:	10,791
-Empty Bowl expenses:	-1,526
=Empty Bowl Income:	9,265

**Property owned (purchase cost)**

Hospitality House:	\$25,355
502 W Van Buren, lot:	12,000
710 W Wilson St, lot:	-gift-

\* \$50,000 coming in Feb. 2003 from IHN (Station Casinos donation), this will give us \$105,039 to build the new building, construction begins this month.

**INCOME (Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2002)**

Empty Bowl sales	9,265
from IHN for utilities	2,400
Large Donations	8,250
Catholic parishes	11,050
Other Income	909
Monthly Donations	4,230
Regular Donations	5,270
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>41,374</b>

**EXPENSES (Jan. 1-Dec 31, 2002)**

Food Box deliveries**	3,620
Help To Others	3,526
Maintain & Repair	3,832
Replacement Windows	3,721
1988 Dodge expenses	636
Newsletter	732
Retreat costs	544
Soupline**	12,605
Supplies & Postage	1,371
Utilities	2,629
Hospitality Guest	2,172
Stipends, Room & Board	0
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>35,388</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME-EXPENSES</b>	<b>5,986</b>

**BUILDING FUND INCOME**

Martin Sheen	10,000
Building Appeal***	31,268
From last year (2001)	13,771
<b>TOTAL RAISED:</b>	<b>55,039</b>

\*\* tons of food is also donated  
\*\*\* \$20,000 from Bishop (Catholic Campaign for Human Development) in response to our building appeal letter.

**Please Mark Your Calendars:  
Empty Bowl Benefit  
Saturday  
April 5, 2003**

**Vigil for Peace  
Every Thursday  
Noon - 1 p.m.  
In front of downtown  
Federal Building  
(Las Vegas Blvd. & Bridger St.)**

**PRAY FOR PEACE IN OUR WORLD!** (FOR TAB)

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

**Events this Lent**  
**Wednesday, March 5, Ash Wednesday:** 5:45 a.m. Mass with Fr. John McShane at the Catholic Worker house followed by serving our morning soupline breakfast in the parking lot of the old St. James Church.  
**March 14, 15 & 16:** Lenten Desert Experience and Catholic Worker weekend. Retreat on Saturday and witness at the Test Site gates on Sunday. Call 647-0728 for details.  
**April 18:** Eighteenth Annual Stations of the Cross at the Gates of the Nevada Test Site, call 647-0728 for time and directions.

**PLEASE JOIN US:**  
**Wed., Fri., Sat., 6:00 a.m.:** Morning prayer at Catholic Worker.  
**Wednesday-Saturday, 6:30 a.m.:** Breakfast meal served at old St. James Church parking lot (G & McWilliams St.) to the poor and homeless.  
**Vigil for Peace, Thursdays, 12-1 p.m.:** In front of downtown Federal Building, Las Vegas Blvd. & Bridger St.  
**Seven Days a Week:** Hospitality (IHN) to 3 to 5 homeless families, call 638-8806 to volunteer.  
**Last Saturday each month; 8:30 a.m.:** Deliver food to homes in need, gather for reflection & prayer, call for info.  
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PERMIT NO. 1979

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