

MANNA *in the wilderness*

June 2026

The Newsletter of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker

Volume 40, Number 4

Forty Years of Peacemaking in the Desert



Forty years ago, 1986: Fr. Don Kribs dedicated the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. Left to right: Jeff Dietrich, Julia Occhiogrosso, Fr. Don Kribs & Catherine Morris.

As we celebrate our Fortieth Anniversary, this article from the first issue of *Manna in the Wilderness* is still relevant.

by Julia Occhiogrosso

Pinned to the bulletin board above my desk is a card. On the front is a simple drawing of a very small person, looking quite distressed, as he stands with a huge rock on his head. Inside the card reads: "I hear you're under a little pressure lately."

This card was given to me as a supportive gesture when we decided to begin a Catholic Worker in Las Vegas. It certainly dramatizes a state of being which I can easily identify with. I must admit in attempting to meet this challenge there are flickering moments of doubt and insecurity. This flickering however, is rescued by the daily disciplines of prayer and service to the poor. Instead, what prevails in me, is a solid eternal flame, burning with the radiance and strength of the Catholic Worker vision.

A Catholic Worker in Las Vegas represents a blatant social aberration. Just outside of Las Vegas, nuclear bombs are detonated regularly. On the north edge of Las Vegas the homeless are harassed by arbitrary arrests. Meanwhile, thousands of tourists flock to fortune city, clinging to the illusion of slot machine glory.

Amidst all of this, the Catholic Worker moves to Las Vegas to offer an alternative set of beliefs and values. The Catholic Worker sees the Arms Race as a gross violation of Jesus' eternal law of love. The unwanted homeless poor are welcomed into the Catholic Worker Hospitality

Houses. And when confronted by consumerist, materialist lifestyles, the Catholic Worker proposes voluntary poverty.

Central to these values is the Catholic Worker's belief in the Mystical Body of Christ. We are all members of each other—part of one Body in Christ. The Mystical Body of Christ acknowledges the divine presence of God in all humanity. "The illness of hate, injustice, disunion, prejudice, class war, greed, nationalism and war weaken this Mystical Body just as the prayers and sacrifices of countless of the faithful strengthen it." (Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement.)

The Catholic Worker focuses on building up this Mystical Body, while resisting the forces which tear it down. Through the corporal works of mercy, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, we give substance to this utopian ideal.

The works of mercy challenges us to invite the rejected outcast back into the family of God. They require that we open our hearts to the suffering Christ, present in the faces of the poor and disinherited.

Like Veronica nudging her way through the uncaring crowd on Calvary, we frequently find ourselves on the periphery looking out upon the world's suffering. Yet the Gospel calls us to break through the momentum of the crowd and to reach out selflessly in acts of mercy and compassion. Although our acts may do little to eliminate suffering, they glorify God's loving presence in the world. In this, our simple acts

become the force behind the ultimate redemptive consequence.

As Christians, we believe that the road to Calvary will lead to resurrection and new life. In the same way the Catholic Worker challenge to live the radical Gospel message can give deep joy and liberation. Our life, our work, and our faith are integrated. Community, service to the poor, and prophetic action give us wholeness and hope. Living the values of the Kingdom here on earth we are freed from the heavy load of the world's values. Jesus' comforting words come to mind: "Come to me all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads and I will give you rest . . . For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the burden I will put on you is light."



August 1990: At a Federal Building protest organized by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker; Fr. Brian Flynn, OFM, pastor of St. James the Apostle Catholic Church speaks out protesting the first Gulf War as Bishop Daniel Walsh of the Diocese of Reno-Las Vegas looks on.

Donation Information: Thanks for your support!

Checks: Please make checks payable and send to:

Las Vegas Catholic Worker
500 W. Van Buren Ave.
Las Vegas, NV 89106-3039

Zelle: mail@lvcw.org (no fee)

Venmo: mail@lvcw.org

PayPal Giving Fund:

(no fees taken out)

<http://lvcw.org/giving>

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Click the "Donate" button above the credit card icons, click on the \$0 and type amount, then click the bottom "Donate with a Debit or Credit Card" button.

Pope Leo XIV: "Stop! It is Time for Peace!"

Excerpt from Pope Leo XIV's homily during a prayer vigil for peace, April 11, 2026, Vatican. VA

Enough of the idolatry of self and money! Enough of the display of power! Enough of war! . . . Dear brothers and sisters, there are certainly binding responsibilities that fall to the leaders of nations. To them we cry out: Stop! It is time for peace! Sit at the table of dialogue and mediation, not at the table where rearmament is planned and deadly actions are decided! Yet there is a no less significant responsibility that falls to all of us — men and women from all over the world. We are an immense multitude

that rejects war not only in word, but also in deed. Prayer calls us to leave behind whatever violence remains in our hearts and minds. Let us turn to a Kingdom of peace that is built up day by day — in our homes, schools, neighborhoods, and civil and religious communities. A Kingdom that counters polemics and resignation through friendship and a culture of encounter. Let us believe once again in love, moderation and good politics. We must form ourselves and get personally involved, each following our own calling. Everyone has a place in the mosaic of peace!

Save the Date
40th Anniversary
Celebration
Oct. 17, 2026



11 a.m.: Mass
12 p.m.: Lunch & Program
Christ the King Catholic Church

Archdiocese Responds after Trump's Post Criticizes Pope Leo

April 12, 2026

Archbishop George Leo Thomas released a statement from the Archdiocese of Las Vegas after President Trump's critical social media post calling Pope Leo XIV weak on crime and nuclear weapons, terrible for foreign policy, and only selected because of Trump's position. "Pope Leo is calling for dialogue over diatribe, prayer over politics, and diplomacy above de-

struction. We know that he will be unfazed by the President's ad hominem attacks and sophomoric rhetoric.

He is doing what every spiritual leader is called to do — to pray for peace, to call for the protection of helpless civilians, and to plead for world leaders to end mass destruction and armed conflict in every part of the world."



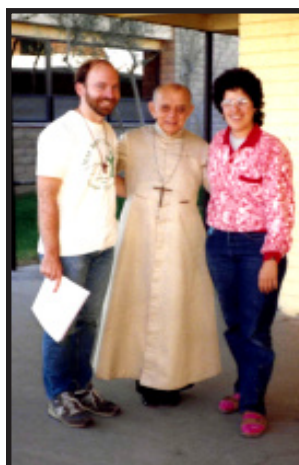
Early Catholic Worker presence in Las Vegas: 1957, New York Catholic Worker Ammon Hennacy protests outside the Atomic Energy Commission offices to stop atomic bomb tests.



Every Good Friday for the past forty years, the Las Vegas Catholic Worker has organized a Nuclear Stations of the Cross at the NNSS (nuclear weapons test site). Participants walk the Stations, depicted in fourteen large photos and accompanied by readings that chronicle the suffering inherent in living under the weight of the Cross of nuclear weapons.



In 1987, the Las Vegas Catholic Worker hosted over four hundred people at the first National Catholic Worker Gathering at Bishop Gorman High School. Saturday featured workshops and speakers including Archbishop Dom Hélder Câmara of Brazil. Sunday included a service and protest at the Nevada (Nuclear) Test Site (NTS, now NNSS). **Above:** Attendees gathered at the entrance of the NTS where the Archbishop spoke. **Right:** Fr. Chris Ponnet, Archbishop Dom Hélder Câmara, and Julia Occhiogrosso.



We will be Closed
June 17 - 20
July 15 - 25

Volunteer Scheduling
(702) 647-0728
or mail@lvcw.org

Thurs.-Sat., 6:00 a.m.
Morning prayer at the Catholic Worker
Thurs.-Sat., 6:15 a.m. Over 300 "To-go" hot meals served to the poor and homeless (6:15 a.m.: meal assembly, 7:00 - 7:30 a.m.: meal distribution)
Wed.-Fri., 8-10 a.m. Kitchen crew prepares for the next morning's meal
Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
50 lunches taken to the homeless prepared by Our Lady of Wisdom Italo-Greek Byzantine Catholic Church
Friday, 8-10 a.m. Clean the World Foundation shower trailer in our empty lot, up to 40 showers given. We provide clean clothing and hygiene supplies, Touro University students offer a monthly medical clinic.
Second Sat. of the month
Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast for the homeless
We are a Participating Member of Nevadans for the Common Good
(for info, contact Julia@lvcw.org)

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