

SAN DIEGO CATHOLIC WORKER



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Editorial Things people say about our Catholic Worker newspaper

As editor of the San Diego Catholic Worker newspaper, I sometimes hear what people have to say about some of the things that appear in the paper. Sometimes their comments are complimentary, and sometimes they are not. I'm sure I don't hear everything, and I suspect I don't hear the more critical remarks.

Personally, I am more interested in the critical ones, although I am sad when people ask—rarely, to be honest—to be taken off our mailing list because of something they have read in the paper. While it may be the role of the media, in the words of the 19th-century Chicago journalist F.P. Dunne, “to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable,” our intentions are far more modest: we just want to preach the Gospel, encourage people to live good lives and build a just society.

Sometimes people express real problems that they have with our paper. For instance, once a person, whom I had asked if he would distribute the paper to the catechists in his parish, said: “The Catholic Worker gets into politics and therefore it cannot be distributed in a Catholic church. There's the separation of church and state, you know.”

Right to address moral issues

To which I replied: “The Catholic Worker certainly addresses social issues, but from a moral point of view that is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and nobody can take this right away from us.” There are some groups that take a partisan political stance on some of the issues facing society today, but the Catholic Worker is not one of them.

Politics and religion make convoluted bed-fellows. But it would make absolutely no sense to expect the church to stop preaching social justice or the value of every human life just because it might offend some politician somewhere. Indeed, some politicians deliberately and cynically turn moral issues into wedge issues whose only purpose is to get people out to vote knowing they will vote for or against something completely different. In fact, it's sometimes hard to know who is using who: is the political party using religion to promote itself, or is the religious group using politics to push its agenda?

Which brings me to the second com-

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Souper will address San Diego homeless children

“Shadow Children: Five Stories from the Street,” a documentary film about children living by the banks of the San Diego River in Mission Valley, will be shown at the next Friday Night Souper beginning at 6:30 p.m., in Our Lady of Refuge Church Hall, 4226 Jewell St., in Pacific Beach, June 13.

The 28-minute documentary was written and directed by Alex Farnsley, a 64-year-old father of four and award-winning graduate of SDSU, who will be present to discuss the making of the film. We are hoping to have another speaker to address the question of homeless youth in San Diego.

Friday Night Dry Bread and Soup Suppers are a Catholic Worker tradition going back to the earliest days of its foundation.



Ade Bethune

They were all together in one place ...

“And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” Acts Ch. 2. vv 1-4.

Story of Samaritan woman breaks barriers that exclude other people

By Fr. Gil Gentile S.J.

Fr. Gil is the spiritual director of the San Diego Catholic Worker

In the summer between the two years of my novitiate I was sent to Chicago to the Jesuit Institute for Community Organizing training. As a kind of a field placement, I was assigned to the “Committee of United People” a Latino community organization made up of Mexican Americans. On my second day there, the president of this agency, a feisty Chicana woman, was assigning us to the areas of the neighborhoods we would canvas.

When she came to me, she said, “Well, since you're a white boy and it wouldn't be safe for you to go out alone, I'll pair you up with a Mexican.” I was very taken aback, first because I had always considered, in the way of thinking of the somewhat closed society of my Bronx upbringing, that the “Americani” as we called them, who had blond hair and blue eyes and light-colored skin were “white” and we were Italian. The second thing that I felt was that I was being disrespected and excluded.

Painful memories of segregation

Recently I was listening to a program on National Public Radio that is part of a series on the desegregation of the American south in the '50s and '60s. An African American woman was speaking about her experience of being one of a handful of black students who began to attend an all-white high school in the rural South. She told of how she was pushed and shoved, how the teachers ignored her and wouldn't even acknowledge her presence in class, how she was called all kinds of vile names, and how once some boys in the lunch room spat in her lunch. She began to cry as she told her story and she remarked that she was surprised how painful it was even after all those years.

I thought to myself as I listened, that being disrespected and being excluded were indeed painful realities. The woman then went on to tell the story of her brother who also began to attend that school and how he, because he was a very good athlete, was respected by the white students and staff. She said that one of the most amazing things she experienced during this very difficult time in her life was to see her brother, during a basketball game,

use the very same dipper as the white boys to get a drink from the water bucket. (No Evian or Gatorade in those days!) She said that, according to the rules and the practice of the day, that was, of course, unheard of. And she said that it gave her a sense of hope—hope that one day people would not be excluded because of the color of their skin and that blacks and whites could indeed respect one another.

A sect that was shunned

The story of the Samaritan woman is a story of a woman who had no doubt been disrespected and excluded for most of her adult life. Jesus alludes to this fact when he says “...you have had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband.” However, even before this fact is established in the story we have the surprising action of Jesus speaking with a woman who was not only a stranger but a member of a sect that the Jews shunned and looked down upon as ignorant and faithless. Jesus speaks to her not only because he is thirsty and wants a drink of water

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75th Anniversary

Movement born in New York is now worldwide

By Denys Horgan

Horgan is editor of the SDCatholic Worker

On the First of May, seventy-five years ago, the Catholic Worker, an eight-page tabloid with a circulation of 2,500, saw the light of day for the very first time. Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin and a handful of volunteers sold it on the streets of New York for one cent a copy.

By the end of that year, 1933, the Catholic Worker was being published every month, with a circulation of 100,000. Now it is published seven times a year, has a worldwide distribution, and still sells for only one cent a copy.

But that May Day is regarded as the day the Catholic Worker as a movement was born. The Houses of Hospitality, the soup kitchens and a series of farms, beginning with Staten Island, would come later.

Day, was born in 1897, became a journalist with a radical socialist bent, and in 1927 entered the Catholic Church, which she regarded as “the church of the immigrant, the church of the poor.”



Dorothy Day

In December 1932, she went to Washington to cover a hunger strike and march that was organized by the Communist Party which, of course, was at odds with all religion, including the Catholic Church. But all the marchers wanted was jobs, unemployment insurance, old age pensions, relief for mothers and children, health care and housing—the kinds of things that any self-respecting Christian with any kind of a social conscience should also want.

Day was perplexed. She went to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, prayed for guidance, and when she returned to her New York apartment, there stood Peter Maurin, a wandering Frenchman with a penchant for philosophy, living a life of voluntary poverty. It was he who convinced Day to publish a newspaper to promote Catholic social teaching and a peaceful transformation of society.

Maurin called for a renewal of the ancient Christian practice of hospitality saying every home and every parish should have a House of Hospitality to receive the “Ambassadors of God.” During the winter that followed, an apartment was rented with space for 10 women, then a place for men, then a house in Greenwich Village, two buildings in Chinatown. Their guests were surprised that,

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San Diego Catholic Worker
P.O. Box 127244
San Diego, CA 92112
(619) 298-3755

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From the Writings
of
Dorothy
Day
**What
we can
do about poverty**



War, and the poverty of peoples which leads to war, are the great problems of the day and the fundamental solution is the personal response which each of us makes to the message of Jesus Christ. It is the solution which works from the bottom up rather than from the top down, and makes for readiness to join in larger regional solutions like the organizing of farm workers with Cesar Chavez, community solutions of Saul Alinsky, village solutions like Vinoba Bhavé's in India, etc.

The wonderful thing is that each one of us can do something about the problem, each one of us can give his response and can go as far as the grace of God leads him; and God "ordereth all things sweetly," and there is no need to be afraid as to where such a response will lead us.

"Ask and you shall receive," Jesus told us, and this asking may be just that question "What shall we do?" Samuel asked it, St. Paul asked it: "Lord, what will you have me do?" and they seemed to get direct answers. Paul was struck blind, literally and to everything else around him except that one great fact, "whatever ye do to the least of these My brethren, ye do to Me." If you feed them, clothe them, shelter them, visit them in prison (or go to prison and so are with them!), serve the sick, in general perform the works of mercy, you are serving Christ and alleviating poverty by direct action. If you are persecuting them, killing them, throwing them in prison, you are doing it to Christ. He said so.

Don't expect thanks

When the crowd was moved by John the Baptist and asked, "What shall we do?" he said to them, "He who has two coats give to him who has none." He also said, "Do injury to no man. Be content with your pay." Or with no pay at all. If you are voluntarily giving away what you have, giving your coat, don't expect thanks or the reform of the recipient. We don't do it for that motive, with the expectation of reward. We must do it for love of Jesus, in His humanity, for love of our brother, for love of our enemy.

Charles Peguy in one of his poems, "God Speaks," tells the story of the prodigal son and comments, "That's the kind of a Father we have, who loves even to folly, who forgives seventy times seven, who rushes out to embrace and feast the prodigal son." This is the kind of love we must have for the poor. The kind of love which will give away a cloak also if a coat is demanded of you.

Nobody is too poor to help another. The stories in the New Testament are of the widow's mite, of the little boy's loaves and fishes, of the cloak, of the time given when one is asked to walk a second mile.

Scandal of wealth in the church

I am thinking of how many leave the Church because of the scandal of the wealth of the Church, the luxury of the Church which began in the very earliest day, even perhaps when the Apostles debated on which should be highest in the kingdom and when the poor began quarreling as to who were receiving the most from the common table, the Greek Jews or the Jerusalem Jews. St. Paul commented on the lack of esteem for the poor, and the kowtowing to the rich, and St. John in the Apocalypse spoke of the scandal of the churches "where charity had grown cold."

It has always been this way in the Church. There has always been the struggle for detachment, to grow in the supernatural life which seems so unnatural at times, when the vision is dim.

Thank God for the sacraments, the food of life which we can receive to strengthen us. Thank God for the Word made flesh and for the Word in the Scriptures.

Edited from "The Meaning of Poverty," which appeared in Ave Maria, Dec. 3, 1966. The writings of Dorothy Day can be read on the Web at <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday>

Evolution not a threat Creationists and atheists alike share a simplistic view of religion

GOD AFTER DARWIN: A THEOLOGY OF EVOLUTION

Westview, 2008

GOD AND THE NEW ATHEISM: A CRITICAL RESPONSE TO DAWKINS, HARRIS AND HITCHENS.

Westminster John Knox Press, 2008

Both books by John F. Haught

Reviewed by Bill Pease

Among the witnesses for the plaintiff in the case of *Kitzmiller et al. vs. Dover District School Board*, 2005, was one who must have created some surprise. The case concerned the policy of a Pennsylvania school board to include "intelligent design" in the high school biology curriculum. The witness in this instance was John Haught, professor of theology at a Jesuit institution, Georgetown University. Haught's primary objection to the inclusion of "ID" into biology classes was that it is not a scientific concept, no more than is creationism or atheistic materialism. These are all philosophical conclusions.

Biology, on the other hand, like all modern sciences uses a methodology whose only applicable concepts are those pertaining to tested observations in the laboratory or field. Within that discipline evolution achieves a good fit as an operative theory, that is, one that works uniquely well in going forward to further discoveries. For other derivative points of view the proper venue would be classes in philosophy or theology. It is in switching over to philosophy then that Haught provides a deeper critique that is really the basis of the second edition of his book, "God After Darwin." This same year, at another publisher's request, he has produced a second timely work, a shorter polemic, "God and the New Atheism: a Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens."

In Haught's opinion atheist popularizers share with creationists and ID promoters a simplistic, two-dimensional view of religion. They are ignorant of contemporary theology, not considering it worth their attention. For one thing they treat traditional scriptures as ethical textbooks. To quote Haught: "From a Christian theological point of view, however, the main point of the Bible is not morality anyway, but that we should never lose trust that our lives, human history and the universe itself are part of a momentarily meaningful drama of liberation and the promise of ultimate fulfillment."

Onewonders, though, if most of the people who frequent "Christian" bookstores and send their kids to "Christian" schools see things in the same way. Arguments to post the Ten Commandments and push Bible study in the schools are often based on the idea that only thus will moral behavior prevail, an idea that is an easy target if one reads Biblical stories carefully.

The chief flaw of current atheist writers is to treat God as a scientific hypothesis. The theory of intelligent design is an attempt to respond on that same plane. It is a renewal of earlier "clockmaker" theories and one might even find it in Aquinas' argument identifying God with "First Cause." The empirical process of verifying facts is only one way to tap into important truth. Our friendships, our awe of natural beauty, our experience of the arts are no less true than are scientific "facts." Awareness and trust regarding God are akin to all that. Moreover, it is not accurate to consider science as devoid of faith. Its basic premise that the world is coherent and knowable cannot be proven, and the moral outrage expressed by atheists goes beyond mere reckoning of data, based as it is on ethical traditions formed in a religious matrix.

We have been assured that the Catholic Church is not going to trip over evolution—of any species including homo sapiens—as it did over the astronomical discoveries of the 16th century. Most theologians have not given close attention to the implications of evolution. In "God After Darwin" Haught brings out a number of critical ways in which theol-

ogy must deal with the Darwinian revolution. Here are some of the conventional positions that he challenges.

(1) The myth of an historic Eden, a place of perfect peace and equilibrium, whose fall coincided with a breakdown both of human innocence and cosmic order. Paleontology requires a very different chronicle. The condition of original sin might be characterized, as did G. K. Chesterton, as the only empirically verifiable Christian doctrine, but as history it is no longer credible. Paradise continues as an anchoring standard, but it does so in the context of eschatology, the future toward which we are moving. The "original sin" is our too habitual diversion from that goal.

(2) The dichotomy of natural and supernatural. "Nature's God" is the God of only one nature. It is only because we grow up under the influence of Newtonian science that we have come to think of nature as a predetermined mechanical process and feel it necessary to categorize surprises as supernatural. Events or experiences that seem supernatural are merely exceptional, not presently explicable. That divine grace is transcendent and unearned does not require it to be interruptive of nature.

(3) Creation as retrospective. God is creating at this moment no less than was done at the Big Bang or in the Genesis story. We too easily concede to a bankrupt deism,

when we speak of something "since the time of creation." Evolution/creation is happening as we speak.

(4) God is absolutely All-Knowing, and

(5) God is Omnipotent in the strictest sense possible.

These latter two combine to provide the sharpest arrows in atheism's quiver. The corollary of the former is that since God knows the future, the future must, in a Platonic sense, be somehow already in place. Hence, the sentiment of fate, predestination, kismet that weighs down every theistic religion. The related tenet of unalloyed omnipotence must eventually hold God accountable for whatever happens, good or evil.

But do these concepts, accommodated to Greek philosophy, really represent the Biblical God, Yahweh/Abba? In the Bible God is presented as All-Wise. In other words whatever really is, is known by God and that includes the building blocks of the future, but not the concrete future itself. In

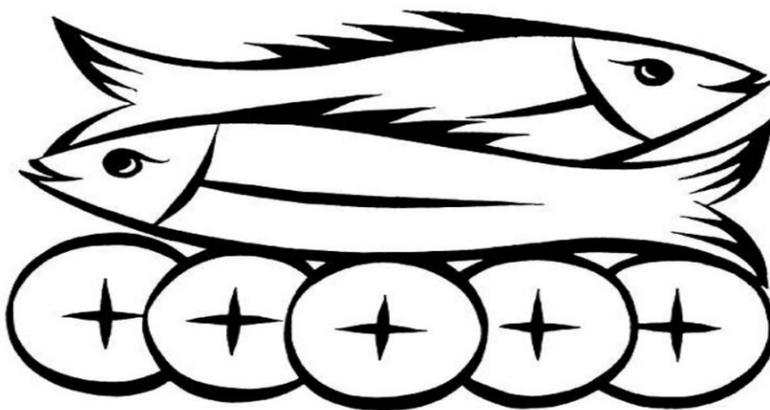
our liturgy we praise, as does the Bible, the "God of Power and Might." The "Almighty" is empowering creatures at every moment—empowering them to move forward in co-creation.

The toughest nut to crack for any theologian is the problem of evil—theodicy. Haught does not try to offer any perfect

intellectual answer to the crushing experience of massacres, torture, natural catastrophes, or private desolation. If it seems that God sometimes intervenes, then why not always in the face of such evils? I would interpret Haught's message to be that God is not an intervener but an interactor. Our prayer expresses an urge to join in that interaction. At times we are conscious of the divine presence in this process. At other times we feel that the world has been left to its own devices, unable as we are to understand the interaction in that particular part of cosmic history.

Haught finds his primary mentors in Teilhard de Chardin and Alfred North Whitehead: de Chardin, with his sense of the unfolding of Spirit, Whitehead with his "panexperiential" view of reality whereby the least unit of energy/matter is endowed with an interior sensitivity and purposive drive. But many other writers are called on. Just recently I encountered an extract from Claremont professor Philip Clayton's "The Emergence of Spirit: From Quantum to Culture," who speaks in exactly the same terms. It is probably too much to expect that the writings of Haught and his like-minded colleagues will suffice to accommodate popular Christian thinking to evolution, seeing how the Copernican revolution has never made full-inroads in some Christian circles, but they are making a brave start.

Pease is a retired college librarian and a volunteer in earlier years with the Catholic Worker in New York and San Diego.



Candidates must be crazy to want to tackle insanity at home and abroad

By Mike Flaningam

Flaningam is a member of the San Diego Catholic Worker

Reviewing the situation in our country and around the world, I find it difficult not to believe that the main candidates for our presidency have to be somewhat crazy, or at least major masochists to want this office at this time.

Why, well, let's look at the situation that Mr. Bush has created and is leaving for the next poor soul:

The war in Iraq: Bush and many of his aides, through falsehoods and mistruths, have created a quagmire, and now we have another place that is uncontrollable and provides fertile ground for the training of terrorists against us and anyone involved with us. The Iraqi economy, health system, educational system, its entire infrastructure, are in ruins and rife with corruption. It will continue to be a black hole for our gallant young people and other resources for years or decades to come. We also continue to support dictatorial regimes in the Middle East (e.g. Saudi Arabia) that crush any thought of democracy, and yet we wonder why so many of their youth feel a sense of hopelessness and are more than willing to sacrifice their lives in suicidal killings.

The war in Afghanistan:

Because. Bush and Mr. Cheney became distracted by the oil riches in Iraq, the Taliban has returned and Al Qaeda and the tribal leaders have taken over vast areas of the country. The only thing we can really claim as a success is that Afghanistan, once again, is the leader in the producer of opiates.

Our economy: Our president has bankrupted and severely corrupted our economic engine—the only real growth industries are now at two ends of the economic spectrum: at

the upper end the financial institutions have been permitted to grow a higher tower of cards with financial packages (e.g., derivatives, derivatives of derivatives) that no common person really understands, but which greatly benefit brokers and others at the top. So much money is built on non-productive elements, that we are a nation based on tissue paper. At the lower end, we have moved from being a nation actually producing things to the top of the heap of consumption and food services; in many parts of the country, a job at Walmart has become the primary goal of many.

In the midst of all this, the major defense industries have grown exponentially. Our current defense budget (not even counting the funds outside of this budget for the actions in Iraq and Afghanistan) is as much as the rest of all the nations of the world put together. Even in spite of this, our armed forces are still dealing with inadequate and worn-out equipment. Key expert and experienced civilian and military people have left the government either out of disgust at such waste, or, have sold out to the industries.

These all accumulate in a debt of nearly 10 trillion dollars (and growing) that will place severe burdens on future generations. So much of our economy, public and

private, already is spent servicing debt and is not available for needed programs. Our infrastructure will continue to deteriorate, our educational system will continue to deteriorate, our sense of hope will continue to deteriorate.

So why would anyone want the presidency? Why? Do we really need a sanity test? Or, is it we who are in need of a reality check and a realization that we need to become more involved in our present and our future?

“St. Peter was ordered by lawful authority not to preach in the name of Jesus, and he said he had to obey God rather than man, and he left prison to go out again to the market place and preach the Gospel. Over and over again, men had to disobey lawful authority to follow the voice of their conscience. This obedience to God and disobedience to the State has over and over again happened through history. It is time again to cry out against our “leaders,” to question whether or not, since it is not for us to say that they are evil men, they are sane men.

—Dorothy Day

Editorial

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plaint that I've heard: “I like what Dorothy Day did and what the Catholic Worker does for the hungry and the homeless, but I don't go for all that other stuff, like supporting strikes and protesting the war.” This gets to the heart of the mission of the Catholic Worker. Dorothy was not satisfied—nor are we—with simply feeding and housing the poor; she and Peter Maurin (who was, if not the brains, certainly the mind behind the Catholic Worker) had a vision of a society devoid of exploitation where everybody would be treated with the respect due to the Sons and Daughters of God. They challenged the forces in society that take what rightfully belongs to the poor and use it in the service of war.

And so Catholic Workers, as loyal members of the church and citizens of the United States, and in the company of innumerable other groups of all faiths, support the right of workers to form trade unions and demand a just and living wage. We are reminded of the words of the great Brazilian archbishop, Dom Helder Camaro: “When I give food to the poor, people call me a saint. When I ask why the poor are hungry, they call me a communist.”

And we protest war, every war, because of the suffering it inevitably causes to innocent people. We oppose this never-ending “War Against Terrorism,” because it is not only futile but counter-productive. We protest the war in Iraq as a complete waste in terms of dollars and lives, ours and theirs, that more and more appears to have no positive outcome for anybody. We do not accept the dismissal of the more than 100,000 Iraqis who have been killed in the past five years as collateral damage. Their deaths were an inevitable and, in the minds of our leaders, expendable consequence of our war.

Perhaps President Dwight Eisenhower put it best in a speech he gave in 1953, when he said. “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children... This is not a way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.”

Samaritan

Continued from page 1

but even more because he wants to include her in his kingdom and give her “a spring ... welling up to eternal life.”

Because of the way in which the story unfolds, it becomes a story of respect and connectedness, or as I read in a commentary on this passage, a beautiful example of “astounding, even shocking inclusiveness.”

One of the details in the account of Jesus' exchange with the Samaritan woman that caught my attention was the fact that after Jesus asks her for a drink of water there is an important parenthetical remark from the person who wrote down this story, Matthew the Evangelist: “For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.” He no doubt was referring to some sort of dipper that Jesus and the woman would both have used in getting a drink of water from the bucket that she would have pulled from the well.

As I read these words I thought of the woman from the radio story watching with awe and hope as her brother used the same dipper as the white students to get a drink from the water bucket during a high school basketball game.

This gesture is at once both simple and profound. It is a proclamation of connectedness, of “astounding inclusiveness.” of our common humanity. It is also a proclamation of hope—hope that life (and all the things that are life-giving such as human respect and brotherhood and sisterhood) is stronger than death (and all the things that are death-dealing such as prejudice and hate).

We have hope because, even as we become more aware of our tendency toward sin and of our need for repentance and reconciliation, we are clearly shown how God in the person of Jesus invites us to drink of his life-giving water.

Because of our “fallen” human nature we can all build walls around ourselves—walls that separate us from God, from others and from our true selves. I read in a reflection on the story of the Samaritan woman, “Whenever we build a wall around ourselves that excludes anyone from our charity and concern, Jesus is always on the other side of that wall.” That is so true and so we must tear down those walls that divide and separate us and allow Jesus to raise up our fallen human nature and to turn us into godly people. Our Catholic Worker way of proceeding offers us a way to do that, so that truly we may be holy as our God is holy.

Miscellaneous

“What the world expects of Christians is that Christians speak out and utter their condemnation in such a way that never a doubt, never a single doubt can arise in the heart of even the simplest person. That Christians get out of their abstractions and stand face to face with the bloody mess that is our history today. The gathering we need today is the gathering together of all people who are resolved to speak out clearly and pay with their own person.”

—Albert Camus addressing the faculty of the Dominican house of studies of Paris in 1948 when asked his opinion on the controversy whether Pope Pius XII and the Catholic Church did enough to resist the crimes of the Nazi regime in Germany.

We call barbarians people living on the other side of the border. We call civilised people living on this side of the border.

We civilised, living on this side of the border, are not ashamed to arm ourselves to the teeth so as to protect ourselves against the barbarians living on the other side.

And when the barbarians born on the other side of the border attack us, we do not hesitate to kill them before we have tried to civilise them.

So we civilised exterminate barbarians without civilising them and we persist in calling ourselves civilised.

—Peter Maurin



Friends of Sabeel North America, the voice of the Palestinian Christians, is co-sponsoring an educational conference with the Joan Kroc Institute of Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego on June 27 and 28. The purpose of this conference is to educate North American Christians, Jews and Muslims on ways to promote peace in the Holy Land. For information on Sabeel, see their Website: www.fosna.org.

75th Anniversary of Catholic Worker will be celebrated worldwide

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in contrast to some other organizations, they were accepted as they were, nobody was trying to reform them.

The Catholic Worker preached pacifism which was not a problem until 1936 when, during the Spanish Civil War, the Fascist Franco presented his side as the defender of the Catholic faith. Most bishops rallied to his side, but the Catholic Worker refused to support either side. The newspaper lost two-thirds of its readers. Even when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the paper maintained its pacifism, a stand that virtually every Catholic Worker group maintains to this day.

By 1936 there were 33 Catholic Worker houses spread across the country. One did not have to be “deserving” to be welcomed. A visiting social worker once asked Day how long the “clients” were permitted to stay. “We let them stay forever,” Day said. “They live with us, they die with us, and we give them a Christian burial. We pray for them after they are dead. Once they are taken in, they become members of the family. Or rather they always were members of the family. They are our brothers and sisters in Christ.”

Today there are an estimated 185 Catholic Worker groups in North and South America, Europe, and Australia and New Zealand. There is no hierarchy—Day considered

herself a Christian anarchist—no central authority, not even a licensing body, with the result that every single Catholic Worker group is *sui generis* responding to local needs to the best of its ability.

The original New York group now has two houses where the homeless are given a roof and the hungry are fed and where every Friday night there’s a discussion that is open to the public, “in keeping with Peter Maurin’s recognition of the need for ongoing clarification of thought.” There is also a 50-acre farm, 65 miles north of New York City, which is primarily a place for people to live, but also a cell of a new society, based on “creed, not greed,” and a retreat house.

That same New York model is replicated to one degree or another in many parts of the world. For instance, a new house has recently been

opened in London, England, and they also have a farm, but the variety is endless. There may be as many different versions as there are Catholic Worker groups.

The Des Moines, Iowa, Catholic Worker operates four Houses of Hospitality with a core community of 16 people serving meals, distributing fresh produce, and providing shower and laundry facilities for homeless people five days a week. Acting on the principle that it is not enough to feed

“The works of mercy are the opposite of the works of war: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, nursing the sick, visiting the prisoner. But we are destroying crops, setting fire to entire villages and to the people in them. We are not performing the works of mercy but the works of war.”

—Dorothy Day

The San Diego Catholic Worker will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Worker at its Annual Gourmet Spaghetti and Meatball Dinner and Silent Auction in the Parish Hall of St. Mary Magdalene Church on Iliou St., on a date yet to be determined in October.

People who wish to donate items for the Silent Auction are invited to contact Tina DiStefano at (858) 552-0817.

The 75th anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Worker will be celebrated in North America with a National Gathering in Mt. Carmel Recreation Center, Worcester, Mass., from July 9 to 12. For more information contact Mike Boover at (508) 753-8974 or the Schaeffer-Duffys at (508) 753-3588.

A European Gathering, hosted by the Kana Catholic Worker Community in Dortmund, Germany, is being held April 30 to May 4 in Haus am See, Dulmen, Germany.

Remembering Tamar Hennessy

Dorothy Day’s daughter, Tamar Hennessy, died March 26, a few days after having a stroke. The following are extracts from the eulogy given at the funeral by her daughter, Kate Hennessy.

Much of my mother’s life has been written about by her mother, Dorothy Day. Many stories have come down through Catholic Worker history, beginning with the story of Tamar’s birth, a birth that led Dorothy to convert to Catholicism, which then led to the founding of the Catholic Worker movement. And throughout the following years, my grandmother continued to write about my mother—her childhood, her marriage, the birth of her children, her farm in Vermont.

The basic details of my mother’s life are known to many—married young, had nine children, and after a failed marriage led a difficult life as a single mother. These facts don’t reveal what to me is the kernel of her story—her dreams, her desires, her motivations, and ultimately what her gifts have been not only to us, but to the greater community, for I know there are many people who came to know and to love my mother.

She accepted everyone for exactly who they were. This ability of hers to love unconditionally and to accept unconditionally lies at the heart of her lessons to me. We often speak of “tolerance” and a “willingness” to accept others when we are trying to be good. Tamar didn’t need tolerance or willingness. She didn’t need to decide to be kind; she was innately so. Her favorite phrase was “loving kindness.” “All we need is loving kindness,” she’d often say

She was a person of gentle humor and loved to laugh. She had an abiding curiosity and thirst to learn; there was always something new to explore, to discuss, to research, even in the face of constant physical pain. She had an eye and a love for the details of life. As her children, we learned to spin and weave, to plant and harvest, to observe and love the natural world around us.

Her mother, Dorothy, was the one who chose to go out into the world to make change. She was the speaker, the writer, the doer. My mother was in so many ways the exact

opposite—quiet, shy, loved to stay at home and refused to write anything. There are few people who are called to meet the challenge that Dorothy presented. The truth is we all cannot follow in her footsteps, which is what my mother was often asked in her youth. Instead, my mother carved out a life of her own—a life of family and of the land and of home.

It would be easy to say that yes, Tamar was a good woman, a good daughter, a good mother and leave it at that. This implies that her world was small, her influence narrow in scope, but I believe the lessons she has for us have no such boundaries. I say that if we, as a family, as a local community, as a culture and as part of the larger world, ignore what she teaches us, it is at our peril.

Tamar’s way is the quiet way, but it is a way that each of us can learn from and follow—no matter who we are or who we aren’t, what we have or what we don’t have, what we feel or what we don’t feel. That whatever bit of earth we live on, we must and can care for it, encourage it and share it with those creatures and plants who also belong here. And in this moment, where we are now, with whomever walks through our front door whether adult or child, daughter or stranger, human or creature, that this is the divine moment, the moment in which we are given the opportunity to give, to help, to love and to create.

Spring is almost here. I think of spring as my mother’s season. Last week she had already begun planting in the small way she could while being confined to her wheelchair. Soon her front garden will be blooming—first the snowdrops and crocuses followed by the magnolia trees. And then the wisteria, violets and forget-me-nots will blanket the lawn in shades of blues and purples, and people will slow down as they drive by on Valley Street to gaze at this patch of beauty. Tamar knew how to do this—how to invite beauty, how to see beauty, how to delight in beauty. What a gift.

the poor without challenging the structures that keep people impoverished, the Des Moines group recently attempted a citizen’s arrest of Karl Rove for his complicity in the war in Iraq, when he was speaking in Iowa City.

The Casa Juan Diego in Houston, Texas has grown from one small house in 1980 to 10 houses today, serving immigrants, refugees and the poor, and publishing the Houston Catholic Worker six times a year. The Women’s House of Hospitality serves 50 immigrant women and children, especially pregnant or physically battered women and their children. The Padre Jack Davis Men’s House provides hospitality for immigrant men new to the country, and the Casa Don Bosco serves sick and wounded men. They provide food for 500 families every week.

There’s The Fig Tree Catholic Worker ecumenical community of four people in Gothenburg, Sweden, living in two apartments in one of the city’s more ethnically diverse neighborhoods. They offer hospitality, support programs that assist immigrants and addicts, hold discussion groups and organize resistance to the Swedish arms industry.

The question arises: What do all Catholic Worker groups have in common? The answer of course depends on the viewpoint of the person who responds. However, the vast majority of Catholic Worker groups have Houses of Hospitality and do not register as not-for-profit organizations, a move that would enable donors make tax-exempt donations. But all Catholic Workers are inspired by the Gospel of Jesus and Catholic Social teaching to set the downtrodden free and to build a society based on social justice.

Catholic Worker Meetings Schedules

Please note that SD Catholic Worker meetings are open to the public and begin at 6 p.m. on the second Monday of every month in the Sacred Heart Parish Hall on Sunset Cliffs Blvd. at Saratoga in Ocean Beach. Next meetings will be held May 12, June 9, July 14 and August 11.

The Ade Bethune images on pages one, two and three are reproduced courtesy of the College of St. Catherine Library, St. Paul, Minn.

Mission Statement

The San Diego Catholic Worker is committed to the following actions that imitate Christ: a call to service, a belief in the human dignity of all, and an interrelationship with a compassionate God and one another.

As Catholic Workers, we struggle to carry out our double mandate: to minister to the needs of society’s forgotten people, and to challenge and offer alternatives to the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and perpetuate suffering and violence.

Following Christ’s example, we also believe it is our duty to spread the word of our work and provide others with the opportunity to serve.

The San Diego Catholic Worker will achieve its goals by the grace of God and by working together to bring about a world of peace and justice as envisioned by our founders, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin.

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President

Michael Jennings

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Tina DiStefano Jackie Smith Nancy Green

Editor

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San Diego Catholic Worker

P.O. Box 127244

San Diego, CA 92112

Tel. (619) 298-3755

You may also contact the editor at dhorgan230@earthlink.net

Please note new Web Site: www.catholicworkersd.org

