



Suffering with Mexico

Drug wars, corruption and now the flu afflict an already impoverished people

Fr. Gil Gentile, SJ
Spiritual Director of the San Diego Catholic Worker

When Mexican people ask me where I am from, I reply: “*Soy gringo pero de corazon Mexicano*,” “I am an American but I have the heart of a Mexican.” As many of us who have ministered with and to the Mexican people, especially on their side of the border, I have developed a deep and abiding affection for Mexicans and for their culture. And so, when I hear about all of the agony of the current drug wars, and the violence and corruption that are so much a part of it, and now the unsettling news reports of this whole influenza crisis, it breaks my “Mexican heart.”

A few weeks ago I was brainstorming with Sister Armida, the director of the *Casa de los Pobres* in Tijuana about raising money in order to possibly reinstate at least one or two days of the lunch meal that was suspended a few months back owing to a lack of funds. She explained that one of the consequences of the violence is the fear that is keeping people from crossing the border into Mexico, including the groups who in past years would come from all parts of the United States to volunteer at the *Casa* and bring donations with them. And when they returned to their parishes and their communities in the United States, they would tell others about the *Casa* and they in turn would become benefactors. That has just about totally stopped.

During this conversation, Sister Armida began to tell the story of one of the frequent guests at the morning meal. The other guests

call him, not too kindly, “*Calambres*”, which means “spasms” because he shakes constantly possibly due a neurological condition. He had come late, after the meal was finished, and he asked for something to eat. There was a supply of donated day-old bread from which one of the women volunteers gave him a loaf. He was eating it inside the patio area of the *Casa* when another younger man from the street demanded that he share it with him. “*Calambres*” refused and the younger man said, “You’re just lucky that you’re inside the patio because if you weren’t I’d take it from you and you’d be sorry.”

The volunteer who had given “*Calambres*” the bread went to get one of the sisters, and fearing that a violent situation was brewing, they gave bread to all of the men who were hanging out on the street in front of the *Casa*. Sister Armida ended the story with the words, “Padre, we know very well that a plate of food or even a loaf of bread is an act of peace.” I added, “And it is also an act of love and hope.”

I was mulling over all this, as I often do while I’m waiting in that infernal line to cross the border back into the United States, and I realized that the sisters and the *Voluntarias* know that they can’t do much about the drug wars, but they can still be peacemakers and a source of love and hope to the people they serve by doing what they do best: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick and proclaiming the Gospel. And they do it all with deep compassion and respect.

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Just War Theory

Classical criteria to justify war not particularly applicable today

By Denys Horgan
Horgan is editor of the San Diego Catholic Worker

While the Just War theory—the set of moral principles that have been used in the past to justify many wars—may be as valid as ever they were—in theory—they are more likely today to condemn any attempt to wage war as utterly immoral.

In theory, it’s still a good theory, but in practice, it’s practically useless as a justification for one country taking up arms against another.

The Catholic Worker, in the company of any number of unabashedly pacifist movements, believe that absolutely no war or any act of violence is ever justified. Dorothy Day, the co-founder of the Catholic Worker, went so far as to say that even after Pearl Harbor it would be better if Houses of Hospitality closed down rather than justify war. What else could Jesus have meant when he told us to love our enemies, turn the other cheek when attacked, and that those who live by the sword will die by the sword?

Pacifists of course are in the minority these days, but even those who prefer to abide by the “Just War” theory might be surprised to find themselves arriving at the same conclusion as pacifists after they have measured modern warfare with all its weapons of indiscriminate mass destruction, its countless refugees, and its hundreds of thousand of in-

nocent victims against those criteria.

The Just War Theory was born in the era of classical Greek and Roman philosophy and evolved with Christian input from St. Augustine who believed war could be justified only if it was waged in self-defense and intended to end in peace with the enemy. The theory was refined by St. Thomas Aquinas and we know it today as a set of criteria, every one of which must be met before a war can be considered just.

First of all, there must be a Just Cause: Nations cannot go to war on the whim of a ruler. War must be in response to an aggressor who attacks another nation or a group within his own nation, causing death or at least grave suffering on a grand scale.

There must also be Right Intention: A nation cannot go to war on the whim of a ruler, or to grab territory, or natural resources such as oil, or to exact revenge, or simply to extend one’s power or influence over another.

War must be declared by the Proper Authority: This is normally taken to mean a legitimate ruler in accordance with whatever process is laid down by the state.

The decision to wage war must be taken as a Last Resort: This presumes that all peaceful means to avoid war, especially diplomatic negotiations, have been exhausted.

There must be a Probability of Success:
See **Just War** page 3

Taking time out to examine the present and plan for the future

With lots of faith in the Risen Lord of Easter and fortified with the Holy Spirit of Pentecost, San Diego Catholic Workers are taking time off this spring to see where we are at the present time and how we can improve on our service to the poor in the future.

We hope that at the end of the process we will live more fully the Catholic Worker ideal and to respond to more opportunities for ourselves—and for others who wish to share that life with us—to serve our neighbors in need. As the *de facto* heirs to the

Catholic Worker movement in San Diego, we acknowledge our responsibility to realize the ideals of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin as well as we possibly can.

With these goals in mind, we have already spend one entire day, with the help of Sister Ann Flynn, reflecting on the importance of prayer as a basis for everything we do; one half day reflecting on peace with the help of Fr. Bill Headley, CSSp, dean of the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the
See **Strategic Planning** page 3

San Diego Catholic Worker

**Traditional Friday Night
Free Bread-and-Soup Dinner and Discussion**

Regarding the Future

San Diego Catholic Workers and Friends Take Stock of Their Resources and Make Plans Help More People in the Future

Friends and Supporters

We have spent the past three months planning the future of the Catholic Worker in San Diego and we invite all our friends to join in the discussion

**Beginning 6:30 p.m., June 12
Our Lady of Refuge Parish Hall
4226 Jewell Street, Pacific Beach**

For information call (619) 298-3755 or e-mail denyshorgan@att.net

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Items for Auction

Although a date has not yet been finalized, we will have our Annual Gourmet Meatballs and Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction as usual in St. Mary Magdalene Church on Ilion St. sometime around the end of September or beginning of October. In the meantime, we would urge people who want to donate items for the Silent Auction to contact Tina DiStefano at (858) 552-0817. This is our main fundraising event and we appreciate the generosity of the many people who donate items for the auction every year. Many thanks.

From the Writings of Dorothy Day

Keeping House Is Not Easy



The following is excerpted from a letter Dorothy Day wrote in reply to an inquiry about how to run a House of Hospitality. It was published in a January 1948 issue of *The Catholic Worker*

Dear Fellow Worker in Christ:

"Unless the seed fall into the ground and die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." So I don't expect any success in anything we are trying to do, either in getting out a paper, running houses of hospitality or farming groups, or retreat houses on the land. I expect that everything we do be attended with human conflicts, and the suffering that goes with it, and that this suffering will water the seed to make it grow in the future.

I expect that all our natural love for each other which is so warming and so encouraging and so much a reward of this kind of work and living, will be killed, put to death painfully by gossip, intrigue, suspicion, distrust, etc., and that this painful dying to self and the longing for the love of others will be rewarded by a tremendous increase of supernatural love amongst us all. I expect the most dangerous of sins (will be) cropping up amongst us, whether of sensuality or pride it does not matter, but that the struggle will go on to such an extent that God will not let it hinder the work but that the work will go on, because that work is our suffering and our sanctification. ...

Dangerous work

What are we trying to do? We are trying to get to heaven, all of us. We are trying to lead a good life. We are trying to talk about and write about the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes, and the social principles of the Church, and it is most astounding, the things that happen when you start trying to live this way. To perform the works of mercy becomes a dangerous practice. Our Baltimore House was closed as a public nuisance because we took in Negroes as well as whites. The boys were arrested and thrown in jail overnight and accused of running a disorderly house. The opposition to feeding the hungry and clothing the naked is unceasing. There is much talk of the worthy and the unworthy poor, the futility of such panaceas. And yet our Lord himself gave us these jobs to do in his picture of the Last Judgment. ...

Yes, we have only nine houses and four farms. Before the war we had thirty-two houses, but the young men were all taken—literally every one. At the same time, we have several other houses in Rochester and Philadelphia which are badly in need of help and no central authority to say "Go here or there."

No way to run a railroad

One of the reasons we have so much help is that it is voluntary and there is no "boss." Of course I have the right to say who cannot be head of a house, and the groups accept my authority there. But at the same time, I can pass a judgment and say "so and so does not represent the movement," and so and so will go right on representing the movement, and there are quite a few who believe themselves to be the only surviving Catholic Workers. Oh yes, our movement is full of generals, and full of Pecksniffs to such an extent that the air positively reeks with piety and smugness and self righteousness at times and I wonder people do not flee from us in disgust. I keep taking vows of holy silence to escape it, but I reek of it too. Alas.

It is so easy to talk, and so hard to do. It is so easy to love people in theory. But anyway, we do hang on to those principles that each should be the least, should take the least place, that each should take less, so that others can have more, that each should regard himself as the worst. And then we go ahead and fall seven times daily, and seven times seven.

The original full text of this letter can be found at the "Dorothy Day Library on the Web" at URL: <http://www.catholicworker.org/dorothyday/>

Biographical Survey

Little written about Peter Maurin, the poet philosopher who co-founded the Catholic Worker

By Bill Pease

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

On some unaccountable occasion one is drawn to the bookshelf to blow the dust off an old friend and investigate why one acquired a certain volume in the first place. Alongside various other books on the *Catholic Worker* I recently pulled out two having to do with Peter Maurin. One is his compilation of so-called "easy essays," titled "The Green Revolution," and published as a revised edition in 1961, having appeared under other titles in 1936 and 1949. Most of the essays had appeared previously in the *New York Catholic Worker*. The other book I have is "Peter Maurin," the biography by his friend, Arthur Sheehan, published in 1959. Following the name of the biographee, the latter book bears the now distracting subtitle, "Gay Believer." (At that time the later usage of that adjective was just being developed and had not emerged as a word in common parlance.) Sheehan was referring to Maurin's jovial quality that some people found endearing, while others, or maybe the same people, must have found his persistence annoying.

"The Green Revolution," whose woodcuts by Fritz Eichenberg deserve special mention, has a revealing introduction by Dorothy Day and a preface by John Cogley. Day says that there will be many biographies of Maurin. That now seems doubtful. The only other book of length that I could find is by Marc H. Ellis, "Peter Maurin: Prophet in the Twentieth Century," Paulist Press, 1981. Ellis is a Jew who was for a while an editor of the *New York Catholic Worker* newspaper. Among his many books is one about that experience. He is now a professor of Jewish Studies at Baylor University and his spiritual development is an interesting story in its own right. For this article I had to acquire Ellis' life of Maurin on interlibrary loan. No copies were available in San Diego.

There are various reasons to doubt that Maurin will be the subject of several extended biographies. One is that documentation is not easy to come by. He was a speaker, not a writer, not a diarist, not even much of a correspondent. When he traveled away from New York, as he often did, he was not always easy to track and went where the Spirit called. The later biography repeats much of what appears in the earlier one, mining the same material regarding Maurin's early life. It does add a few discovered details. Sheehan, perhaps because he actually spent time with Maurin, provides a fuller, more lively story.

It is correct to call Maurin the co-founder of the *Catholic Worker* but in a sense that should not be misunderstood. Day acknowledged that he seldom worked on the paper. He had preferred that it be called "The Catholic Radical." The title chosen by Day deliberately evoked *The Daily Worker* put out by the Communist Party, a connection she intended as counterbalance but one that made the "co-founder" uncomfortable. Maurin deserves credit as the one who brought to younger convert Day a full menu and bibliography of Catholic social justice doctrines and the optimism to put them into action.

Military service changed his life

Aristide Pierre Maurin was born May 9, 1877, on a farm in the Languedoc region of Southern France. His mother died when he was seven. His father remarried and there were to be 24 children in all, of whom Pierre/Peter was the eldest. It was a devout prayerful family and so it was no surprise when the firstborn entered the Christian Brothers. After seminary training he became a teacher in various religious schools. His work was interrupted by a year's required military service, an experience that bolstered his lifelong opposition to militarism. He returned to teaching but his restlessness was enhanced by his attraction to a movement becoming popular among Catholic youth, *Le Sillon* (The Furrow) with a publication of the same name, under the leadership of Marc Sangnier. In 1903, prior to his final vows, Maurin left the Christian Brothers and dedicated himself to the new movement. After a few years Maurin and *Le Sillon* drifted apart. Its egalitarian stance moved more to politics as did Sangnier himself, against Maurin's community-based principles. In 1909 Maurin, for reasons he himself could never explain,

decided to emigrate—to Western Canada. A year later Pius X condemned and effectively closed down *Le Sillon* for "modernist" tendencies. The royalists of France (*L'Action Française*) rejoiced, but themselves were to suffer later condemnation for their collaboration with the Nazis. Sangnier lived on as a force in the Christian Democratic political movement after the Second World War.

As one among a wave of French immigrants to North America, Maurin experienced years of severe hardship. He tried homesteading through extreme winters with a partner who died in an accident. He gave that up and headed east taking odd jobs in coal mining and whatever else he could find. He rode the rails, he worked as a freight handler, as a janitor, and was even arrested as a vagrant. Meanwhile he was struggling to master English.

At last, in 1925, he was able to put his native language to good use. He accepted an invitation to move to Woodstock, New York, to teach French. This situation provided him the bare living that he required. About this same time, according to what he told Day later, he renewed the devout Catholic faith neglected for the past few years and began to formulate his little doctrinal statements which were later called "easy essays." He gained very little attention from the Franciscans toward whom he turned with his Franciscan ideals. He was better received from his soapbox in Union Square and Columbus Circle—and by his prospective co-founder as arranged by the editor of *Commonweal* magazine.

Peter the Speaker

Only his contemporaries could experience what they deemed to be one of his primary traits, as an irrepressible talker, one with a thick provincial French accent. Those of us who encountered the *Catholic Worker* later (I volunteered at the New York house two years after his death) know him only through his condensed writings, which may have been distillations of longer speeches. He was for most of his adult years a forceful speaker. Was he also a good listener? Probably not.

Maurin was described as always cheerful and courteous, but he was a man on a mission. Yet he did include Round Table Discussion Groups among his projected program and the *New York Catholic Worker* has followed this up ever since with its Friday evening discussions. His personal contacts were often fruitful; the same could

not be said for his bigger projects. With help from Jesuit activists he started at one time a storefront in Harlem to attract "Negro" inquirers. He and a Protestant "co-agitator" even lived there for a time. That soon failed, unlike Baroness De Hueck's Friendship House that offered social services of Catholic inspiration in Harlem.

A similar meeting-place in Manhattan to engage in friendly discussion with Jews also did not last long. Maurin was a passionate fighter against anti-Semitism. However, his interpretation of papal protection of the Jews over time was more generous than historical. In these efforts Maurin, despite his "radical" Catholicism, came to favor pluralism, under suspicion at the time, the precursor of our current ecumenism.

Peter the Poet

Poetry, so difficult to define, began as an oral craft and the best poetry is best heard. Maurin's writings are usually called "essays" perhaps because they are directly didactic, not a good quality for adult poems. For example, read this segment quickly and silently first as an essay: "Freedom is a duty more than a right. Man has a duty to be intelligent. Man has a duty to choose intelligently between two alternatives. Man has duty to act intelligently using pure means to reach pure aims."

Now read it slowly aloud, taking a pause at each line break: "Freedom is a duty / more than a right / Man has a duty / to be intelligent / Man has a duty / to choose intelligently / between two alternatives / Man has a duty / to act intelligently / using pure means / to reach pure aims." Delivered this way you can hear the poet's voice.

Maurin did not use rhymes as such but, as just heard, there is a great deal of alliteration and word repetition be-

THE CATHOLIC WORKER

The aim of the Catholic Worker is to create order out of chaos.

The aim of the Catholic Worker is to help the unemployed to employ themselves.

The aim of the Catholic Worker is to make an impression on the depression.

The aim of the Catholic Worker is to create a new society within the shell of the old with the philosophy of the new, which is not a new philosophy, but a very old philosophy, a philosophy so old that it looks like new.

Peter Maurin, 1933



Homes for Socks

The children of St. Michael Academy in Paradise Hills collected 270 pairs of new socks that were distributed to homeless people attending the Catholic Worker Friday Lunch in Christ Lutheran Church in Pacific Beach. For Thanksgiving the students collected 25 dinners complete with turkeys that we distributed to needy families. Pictured above are Grade 1 students at St. Michael's.

Mona Ohlin

Indefatigable Catholic Worker to the very end

By Nancy Green

Nancy is secretary of the San Diego Catholic Worker

I chuckle as I remember the first time I met Mona Ohlin. It was in our little church of Our Lady of Refuge shortly after we arrived in San Diego in 1985. She was seated in front of us and when Mass ended, she came to me and said our church needed a choir and that I was the person to make it happen. That was my introduction to this attractive, loving, intelligent, petite five-foot-tall human dynamo.

She soon discovered I was a fellow teacher and began bombarding me with information about the latest reading program for my school. Invitations to meetings for getting out the word about the best school board member or rallies to change the system followed.

Parish Council meetings gave her an opportunity to promote social justice or spearhead a drive for a particular need in our community. And always, needs were followed by possible solutions. "Let's get this done" was her manner and method. She became my greatest ally and supporter.

At social events she would be busily scurrying around introducing people whom she thought were perfect matches for interesting conversations, beginning with introductions so glowing and sparkling that one couldn't wait to become engaged if only to find out whether all this could be true.

As the years passed we talked often about the things of the heart: our families, loving husbands and children and grandchildren. She had tremendous love of her family and it was never more evident than when her parents, as octogenar-

ians, required her attentions. At this point her health was not good but she didn't let that stop her from giving them the love and care they had given her, their only daughter.

It was through our work together as Catholic Workers that I learned the true gospel message of charity. I recall her saying emphatically that she could not enjoy Christmas with her children and grandchildren knowing that there were parents with children in homeless shelters and she had done nothing for them.

She fought long and hard for the less fortunate, working for social justice. For years, she and her husband, Jerry, allowed their garage to be used as a storage area for the many bags of clothes that she and a few others sorted and distributed to people in need downtown. To the very last few weeks of her life, her mounting health problems never stopped her from continuing the activities so close to her heart.

Like a soldier, she fought the crippling and painful effects of arthritis and finally cancer. She never complained about the pain or the inevitability of her impending death. Her final submission to the disease was a most beautiful act of courage and faith in God's will.

Three weeks before she died she made her way to our last Catholic Worker board meeting. We all marveled at her tenacity and held back tears as she told us this was her last meeting. She, in her usual forthright way, told us of the plans she had made to keep the clothing distribution program going after she was gone. Her tenacious will to see that things were organized stayed with her to the end.

Mona died peacefully on March 7, 2009.

Strategic Planning

Continued from page 1

University of San Diego; and another half day reflecting on the demands of social justice with the help of Lee Van Ham, director of Jubilee Economics Ministries, and Rosemary Johnston, director of the Interfaith Shelter Network.

Two more half days are planned, one (May 23) when we will look at the needs of the homeless and hungry in San Diego and how we might respond to them, and another (June 5), when we will look at and see how we can improve our communications, including our outreach to parishes and schools.

The half-day sessions are held in the Old School Building attached to St. Agnes Parish in Point Loma and everybody is invited to participate. They begin with continental

breakfast at 9:30 a.m., followed by presentations and discussions until 1 p.m.

Finally on June 12, we will hold one of our regular Friday Night Soupers (see notice bottom left of this page) when, with the help of our many friends and supporters, we will begin to pull together all of the new ideas we have come up with and make strategic plans for the future.

As a result of our day-long retreat, we have decided to begin again our customary monthly Mass with Fr. Gil, which had been part of our program in the past, but somehow had lapsed. For the moment, the Mass will be celebrated immediately after our monthly meeting in Sacred Heart Parish Hall in Ocean Beach, but that may change in the future.

Just War

Continued from page 1

Nations cannot resort to war if they cannot foresee a positive and measurable impact on the dispute.

And finally, there must be Proportionality between the harm that inevitably results from war and the good that is expected to come from it: For this criterion to be met, the plight of innocent victims on all sides of the war must be taken into account.

As regards the conduct of a nation during war, another series of principles apply—international laws on weapons and torture, humane treatment of prisoners, and no reprisals, for instance—and after war—peace settlements should be measurable and reasonable, a condition that effectively rules out unconditional surrender.

In recent years, some countries, including the United States, have claimed the right to wage a pre-emptive war. International law makes an allowance for such a war, but only

if it is authorized in advance by the U.N Security Council.

Based on these principles it is hard to see if modern warfare is ever justified, if only on the basis of the suffering inflicted on an innocent population as a result. But if it is morally justifiable, it can only be because a particular war is waged in response to mass death or suffering, declared publicly as a last resort following a statutory process, with a probable chance of success, and using means that are proportional to the desired result, taking into account all the victims, innocent or otherwise, on all sides of the conflict.

In hindsight, it would be difficult to deny that the Vatican got it right when it condemned from the outset the invasion and subsequent war in Iraq, and Paul VI was prophetic, when in 1965 he declared at the United Nations, "No more war! War never again! If you wish to be brothers, drop your weapons."

Day by Day

A selection of thoughts that readers bring to the attention of the editor from time to time. To submit a thought of your own, please e-mail denyshorgan@att.net

Never too late

I was 40 years old when I finally heard the cry of Christ to serve poor people. It took me that long to awaken to the call of the Gospel to make a preferential option to be with poor people. I went to live with poor and struggling African-Americans in New Orleans, and from them I began to learn the life-and-death struggle for justice. Unexpectedly, joyfully, out of solidarity in struggle, I learned to pray in a way I had never prayed before.

—Sister Helen Prejean, C.S.J.

So you think you know who homeless people are?

Q. How many people does our government say are homeless in the United States on any given day?

A. About 750,000. Some 338,000 homeless people live on the streets, in cars, or in abandoned buildings, and 415,000 are in shelters on any given night.

Q. What percentage of people in homeless shelters are children?

A. HUD reports nearly 1 in 4 people in homeless shelters are children 17 or younger

Q. How many veterans are homeless on any given night?

A. Over 100,000 veterans are homeless on any given night.

Q. In how many of the over 3,000 cities and counties in the United States can a full-time worker who earns minimum wage afford to pay rent and utilities on a one-bedroom apartment?

A. None

Church renewal

Many things often thought of as typically Catholic—an authoritarian style of teaching, centralized control, a legalistic approach to morality, suspicion of the body—are, perhaps, a result of our church's conformity to the culture of the Enlightenment. As we move into another moment in humanity's history, we may find the church renewing itself, liberated from the confines of a way of thought that, though hugely beneficial to humanity in many ways, cramped the church's life and obscured its visibility as a sign of the Kingdom.

—Timothy Radcliffe, O.P. in America Magazine, April 13, 2009.

Catholic Worker Interships

People seeking an immersion in the Catholic Worker experience are invited to join the Des Moines Catholic Worker community for nine days of living and working with the poor and reflecting on ways to respond to social justice. The program is free of charge and includes room and board (and a great deal of fun) for nine days June 12–21. Those with no experience and those with much experience will be equally welcomed. To apply, write:

(Phil Berrigan CW House, 713 Indiana Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50314), or phone: (515. 282.4781), or e-mail: (Tracy Robson, tracy.robson@gmail.com) by June 1, and include your name and contact information.

Love of Mexico

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And now, my poor, beloved Mexico has a new challenge, the flu that is causing much suffering and pain and threatening the health and wellbeing of its already beleaguered people. I received an e-mail from the Mother General of the sisters, Sister Maru, in response to one that I had sent inquiring about how they were dealing with this new crisis. She and Sister Armida were on a trip to visit some of their communities in the interior of Mexico. She wrote: "Excuse the bad writing but we are in an Internet café in Guadalajara. We are very concerned with what is happening and we are taking all of the necessary precautions, especially given the fact that people come to us from all parts (of Mexico). We will return to Tijuana on Friday but we will continue to be in touch. We are very worried. Would you prefer not to come for Mass on Thursday? Dr. Rodriguez (the doctor in residence for many years at the *Casa*) told us that the governor of Baja California has not sent out an alert and everything should continue as normal. However we are still concerned since, as I mentioned, people come to us from all over Mexico. We just have to pray a lot!"

I received another e-mail on Wednesday: "We're now in Tijuana. We returned Monday. There was a lot of alarming news on the radio and television and they said that it is best not to travel and to stay at home. We decided not to go to Leon, in the state of Guanajuato, and to return, feeling better to be prudent. About tomorrow, if you don't come for Mass that is all right, we understand. The doctors are asking us not to let the people into the dining room but rather to give

them their breakfast in a bag at the door. Until today of this week we were serving the food on paper dishes and we have been providing hand sanitizers for everyone to disinfect their hands before they came in for breakfast. We're also giving out face masks to all the people."

"Dr. Rodriguez recommended that we not allow the people to come into the dining room and that everything should be done outside so that it is better not to have Mass tomorrow."

I wrote back that I was still planning to go the following day to celebrate Mass and asked what the doctors thought about having the people in the chapel and what they, the sisters, thought. Sister Maru wrote back: "Dr. Rodriguez recommended to us that we not allow the people to come into the dining room and that everything should be done outside (in the patio area), so that it is better not to have Mass tomorrow."

I wrote back that it was all so sad but it seemed it was for the best. However, as I have been thinking about all of this, I keep remembering the words of Sister Maru, "We have to pray a lot." And what better way to pray than

to celebrate the Eucharist with our people. So, I decided that if things did not improve by the following week, I would suggest to the sisters and the doctors that we have the Mass outside in the patio so that together as a community we could pray for an end to this crisis. We would also continue to pray for an end to the violence as we do every week.

Just as a plate of food or a piece of bread can be an act of peace, hope and love, so is our coming together to celebrate Eucharist. In this way we will continue to proclaim the Gospel with compassion and respect.

Philosopher Poet

Continued from page 1

tween lines, much like internal rhyme. In most of the poems there is a definite structure, a cumulative building up to the conclusion. It should be no surprise that Sheehan speaks of him chanting to his audience.

Maurin's more concise summaries of his philosophy are very close to those that appeared every year or so in the New York Catholic Worker, but other writings indicate variations that were there from the beginning. It is a compliment to the founders and continuing leaders of the Catholic Worker that these various strains have not led to a splintering into competing sects as so often happens in idealistic groups. Despite the papal support in the social encyclicals for trade unions and the right to strike if need be, Maurin was distrustful of unions. The only strikes he would support were passive sit-down strikes. In this he weighed in against another Catholic Worker pioneer, John Cort, founder of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists.

The original principles of the Catholic Worker include the medieval opposition to investment interest, something dropped by the church at large, though continued by orthodox Islam. Maurin carries that farther. "Money" is almost a swear word in his vocabulary. Giving is the norm; selling an anomaly. He writes of the "fallacy of saving," that is to say, one may rightly retain some necessary supplies for one's craft and household but that does not include bank accounts. In other words, he urged us to return to a society of subsistence farms, manual workshops, open-air markets and minimal villages centered in sheltering churches. A few followers have undertaken to form the sort of "Christian communes" he promoted. Of these a few survived but more as hospitable family farms than as effective communities.

In all of this one cannot help but note that Maurin was a single man, not a husband, not even a parent as was Day herself. Also he had left his own village behind and had the chance to experience a larger world unknowable to his fellow villagers. Advanced telecommunication could hardly be his answer, since he was observed to use a telephone only once in his life, under duress. Yet looking at it from a dif-

ferent perspective, all civilizations must end, and as we see the fault lines in our own capitalist civilization deepen, we may wonder if it might not be superseded at some point by a decentralized society not too unlike Maurin's Christian communism.

There are those who acknowledge Original Sin as a condition but not as an event. So ebullient and sanguine was Maurin that it might be said that he, devoutly traditional, believed in Original Sin as an event but never allowed for it as a condition. How doubly ironic and tragic it was then that his man of indefatigable action and speech fell increasingly silent and dependent during the last five years of his life. He died May 15, 1949. He had not been forgotten. Hundreds of friends and sources as different as the Vatican and Time magazine noted his passing and recognized his rare spirit.

San Diego Postscript

A final word of local historical interest in the Catholic Worker is revealed in Maurin's biographies. Sheehan tells us that the May 1937 issue of the New York Catholic Worker already reported Catholic Worker "cells" in 13 cities. Among cities listed was East [?] San Diego. Ellis has more details based perhaps on the same contact: "By March [1939] Maurin was in San Diego with Carrie A. Cassidy ... His visit occasioned three long letters to the editors from Mrs. Cassidy."

In response to a request from Day "Mrs. Cassidy replied, 'Do not expect Peter to write. It is not his vocation to write the ordinary correspondence which passes between ordinary people and some unusual people. Peter uses his forces intelligently and economically.'" Under the pen name of Mary Macard, Cassidy even wrote a laudatory poem about him, which is found in archival papers but apparently did not make it into publication.

The editor of the San Diego Catholic Worker would be happy to hear from any reader who has further knowledge of these early local contacts.

Send us your E-mail Address

The San Diego Catholic Worker is in the process of compiling a list of e-mail addresses so that we can disseminate information about Catholic Worker events in a more timely manner. If you send us your e-mail address, we will add you to the list. We promise that we will use this list only for Catholic Worker purposes and will never provide it to anybody else. Send the address to: info@catholicworkersd.org

Semi-Retired? Eager to Volunteer?

If you are 50 or better, the Jesuit-sponsored Ignatian Volunteer Corps may be for YOU! Our volunteers serve the needs of local people who are poor, work for a more just society, and grow deeper in Christian faith through reflection and prayer. Contact Pat Doyle, Regional Coordinator (858-715-0900, pdoyle@ivcusa.org) or Margie Carroll, Regional Director (619-881-9509, mcarroll@ivcusa.org).

Visit our website at www.ivcusa.org

Catholic Worker Meetings

There has been a change in the format of the San Diego Catholic Worker monthly meetings. For the foreseeable future we will celebrate a Eucharist with Fr. Gil at 7 p.m., immediately after our Board Meeting. Everybody is invited to this Mass. People are still invited, if they wish, to attend the Board Meetings, which begin at 6 p.m., when Catholic Worker business is being discussed. The meetings will be held and Mass will be celebrated in the Sacred Heart Parish Hall on Sunset Cliffs Blvd., in Ocean Beach on the second Monday of every month beginning at 6 p.m. The next meetings will be held June 8, July 13 August 10 and Sept. 14. Our next Friday Night Souper will be held in Our Lady of Refuge Parish Hall, June 12. See notice on page 1. All are welcome.

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.

The San Diego Catholic Worker Newspaper is published three or four times a year and distributed free of charge to anybody who requests it

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The San Diego Catholic Worker welcomes everybody and provides services to all, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, national origin, age, handicap, sex, or sexual orientation.

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"NEVER AGAIN, WAR!"