

NEWSLETTER

LOAVES AND FISHES

DULUTH MN



AUTUMN 2010



MOZIRI
CENTAURUS
LUPUS

Important!

Let us know if you want to keep getting our newsletter!

The mailing of our newsletter is one of our biggest regular expenses here at Loaves and Fishes, and we've recently had several discussions on how to whittle down our mailing lists and costs. We don't want to cut people off who enjoy receiving and reading the newsletter, so we are asking that you **let us know** if you'd like to continue receiving it. Please give us a call or drop us a note or email if you would like to stay on the mailing list. You can also choose to read the newsletter online - our website is duluthcatholicworker.org. Folks who've responded to our previous efforts to decrease our mailing list need not take action - we'll keep you on.

If we don't hear from you, we'll send you a postcard letting you know you've been removed from the mailing list. At any point you can contact us and we will happily put you back on.

Please contact us at your earliest convenience:


Phone us! (218) 728-0629

Write us! 1614 Jefferson Street, Duluth MN, 55812

Email us! loavesfishesduluth@riseup.net

Live nearby?

You are also welcome to pick up the newsletter at Dorothy Day, Olive Branch, or at the Peace Church.



Loaves and Fishes is a Gospel-based community residing in the Endion neighborhood of Duluth. We share three houses, out of which we offer hospitality to individuals and families who are homeless and marginalized. We embrace the Catholic Worker movement and its tradition of service, prayer, simplicity, communal living and nonviolent resistance. We believe in taking personal responsibility for the needs of the world. We are not a tax-exempt organization. We depend entirely on our own work and gifts from friends. We who live in the houses, cook meals, house-sit, counsel and care for our guests, do so on a voluntary basis. We dream of and work to build the kin-dom of God- a world free of hunger, war, racism, homelessness and other such crimes. We invite you to join us in whatever way you can. We are :

GREG SCHULTE, EMILY DERIKE,
SADIG SIGFORD, JESSE PETERSON,
MICHELE NAAR-OBED, RACHEL
OBED AND GREG BOERJE-OBED,
HOLLAND WILCOX AND TEGAN
WENDLAND



Past and Present

By Michele Naar-Obed

Seventy seven years ago a vision some describe as divinely inspired, others as a universal truth, rooted and took shape on earth. It is a vision of community, justice and love. Philosophers, theologians, sociologists and the like try to make it more complex than it is. As Peter Maurin put it; "We are simply trying to create a society where it is easier for people to be good."

In 1940, Dorothy Day wrote; *"Together with the works of mercy, feeding, clothing, and sheltering our brothers and sisters, we must indoctrinate. If we do not keep indoctrinating, we lose the vision. If we lose the vision, we become merely philanthropists doling out palliatives. The vision is this; we are working for a new heaven and a new earth where justice dwells. We are trying to say with action, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'."*

"We must 'give reason for the faith that is in us', otherwise we are scattered members of the Body of Christ. We are not all members one of another. Our religion is an opiate for ourselves alone, for our comfort or for our individual safety or indifferent custom...."

"This teaching involves today the issue of unions, racism, cooperatives, credit unions, crafts, houses of hospitality and farming communes. It is with all these means that we can live as though we believed indeed that we are members one of another, knowing that when' the health of one member suffers, the health of the whole body is lowered'." (Excerpts from Dorothy Day, Selected Writings)

And so it is today, that we at the Loaves and Fishes Catholic Worker in Duluth Minnesota, continue to give

flesh, bone, blood and soul to "the vision." Times have changed drastically since 1933, the year the Catholic Worker came into being in New York City. The crises we face today seem to be spinning out of control and more than we can handle but face them we must, because we are all in this together and we are rooted in something deeper than ourselves.

This edition is an attempt to see ourselves through the lens of the wider Duluth community, our guests, our neighbors and our friends. We asked several people what they believe the Catholic Worker to be, what the community means to them and if we have been faithful to their expectations and of course, to the vision. A common theme ran through many of the responses.

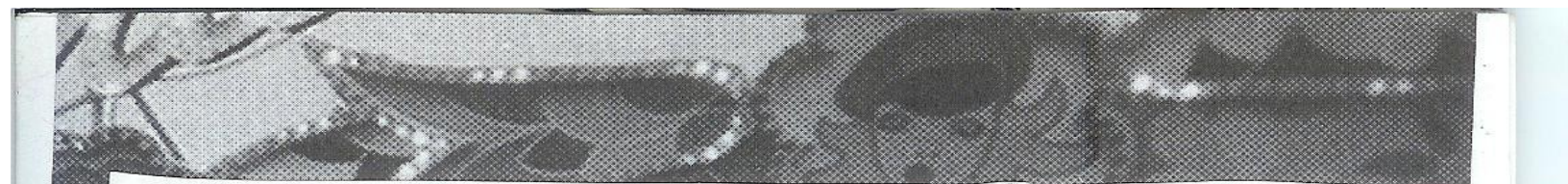
We are strengthened and nourished by so many people and we are grateful. We only hope that we can do the same in this circle of life.



We
Remember...

Two extended friends of the community passed away this summer. Kathleen Schulze used to stay at Olive Branch with her partner, Steve Louderbach. We send our deepest condolences to Steve and his family during this time of loss.

A long-time Duluth mover and shaker, Susan Askelin, also left this earth recently. Susan helped organize the Whole Foods Co-op and Builders and Laborers Commonwealth in the 1970's, recruited women to the CAP Weatherization Program so they could learn construction skills in the 1980's, served as the Director of PAVSA and worked for Legal Aid before moving to the Twin Cities and later, to Texas.



Einstein, Rainmakers and Perspectives

By Rick J.

Albert Einstein had said that life cannot be simply all this crude matter around us, but that it lies instead in our perspectives. He imagined what would happen if we rode on a beam of light, flying away from the earth. Answer? Our perspective would change. $E=MC^2$ is a cornerstone in our understanding of the universe, and our understanding of the universe is exponential.

Just like our perspectives of our lives is exponential. Every event in life, every moment that passes bring new perspectives and has to be examined.

I believe in God and his physical manifestation on earth, and so I do not believe that we can change the ultimate destiny of mankind.

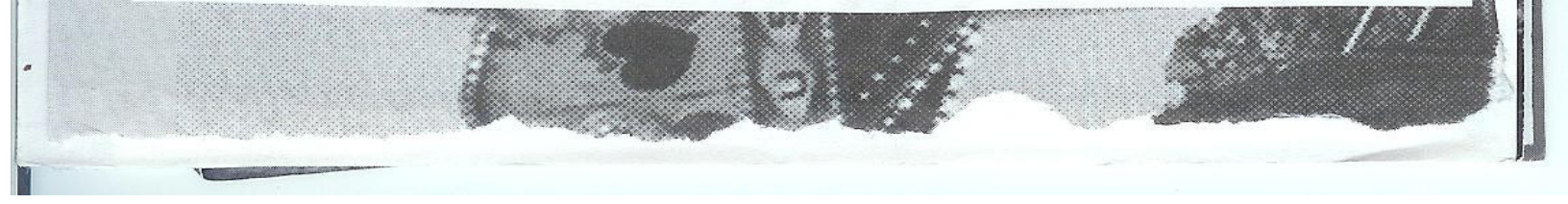
So what do we do? Well, the only thing we can do. We help life up individual people as we go along. We be Rainmakers. Rainmakers change lives, and they change perspectives.

They stomp the earth, (so to speak) in a sometimes frustrating and seemingly futile attempt to bring blessed rain to crack the desperate situations.

At first glance, it does seem like today that the only Rainmakers that exist are those that bring us acid rain. Rain that burns away at every testimony that said man might have been good and might have had a chance. But, look closer.

There are good Rainmakers in the world, building things back up again if you see it from the right light, and from the right perspective.

Where are they? Well, if you listen, some are stomping the ground right now...taking in strange homeless people and feeding them, by working at food shelves and in lunch lines, working in community gardens and hauling food donations by bicycle IN THE WINTER (and crashing into cars and getting tickets) and by volunteering at Catholic Worker communities everywhere, helping individual people change their lives their lives and change perspectives.



Voices of Our Guests

By Elizabeth Wray

Here at Loaves and Fishes, the primary focus of our work and lives each day is the opening of our doors to offer hospitality to friends, neighbors, and strangers who have no other place to stay. Some guests stay only a few days; others stay for months or even years. They are our friends and teachers, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. These relationships form the backbone of our community. In an effort to better know ourselves, we asked a few guests to share their experiences with the Duluth Catholic Worker.

“The Catholic Worker means to me to love the unfortunate, to feed those who are hungry, to love those who seem unlovable, embrace man, woman, child, or beast,” says Roxanne Johnson, who first learned about the Catholic Worker when she found a home here a number of years ago. “Just to let people know that I love them, to even give them the clothes off of my back. Do this with a smile, and not with judgment in my eyes. To treat them as the Lord would. As the scriptures say 'Do this unto the least of them, and you have done this unto me'.”

Prior to living at the Duluth Worker, Roxanne was homeless and received our phone number from the CHUM shelter where she was staying. “And I called. I talked to Mrs. Michelle. She asked me various questions, and she told me to call her back within the hour, and I was accepted in.”

After her first stint at Loaves and Fishes, Roxanne also stayed at Safe Haven and Harbor House in Superior, WI, and later moved into her own apartment with her husband Timothy.

When faced with financial difficulties again in March of 2010, Roxanne and Tim returned to the Loaves and Fishes Catholic Worker. She says that although the community does not offer many of the social services available at other places where she has stayed, it offers something more important: a home. “I consider myself part of a great big old family.”

Charles Covington also found new family at Loaves and Fishes. He and his son Terrance, age 12, came to the Catholic Worker soon after moving to Duluth from Chicago, where there

were too few human service resources available. "It takes a community to raise a child," he told Holland in an interview, describing how everyone has helped teach Terrance to love others, to be responsible, and to know the difference between right and wrong.

Living here provides a space where Charles too can develop responsibility as he learns to be a better father. "I'm a runner. I like to run, but God put Terrance in my life for a reason. I have to take care of him, and he needs me. I have to be a dad."

Charles and Terrance were recently joined at Dorothy Day house by their son and brother Tyrae, age 11. Charles wants his sons to have the chance to learn who they really are, and he says that the Catholic Worker is a place where they can do that. "Don't be victims, stand up when you're put down, and keep trying!!"

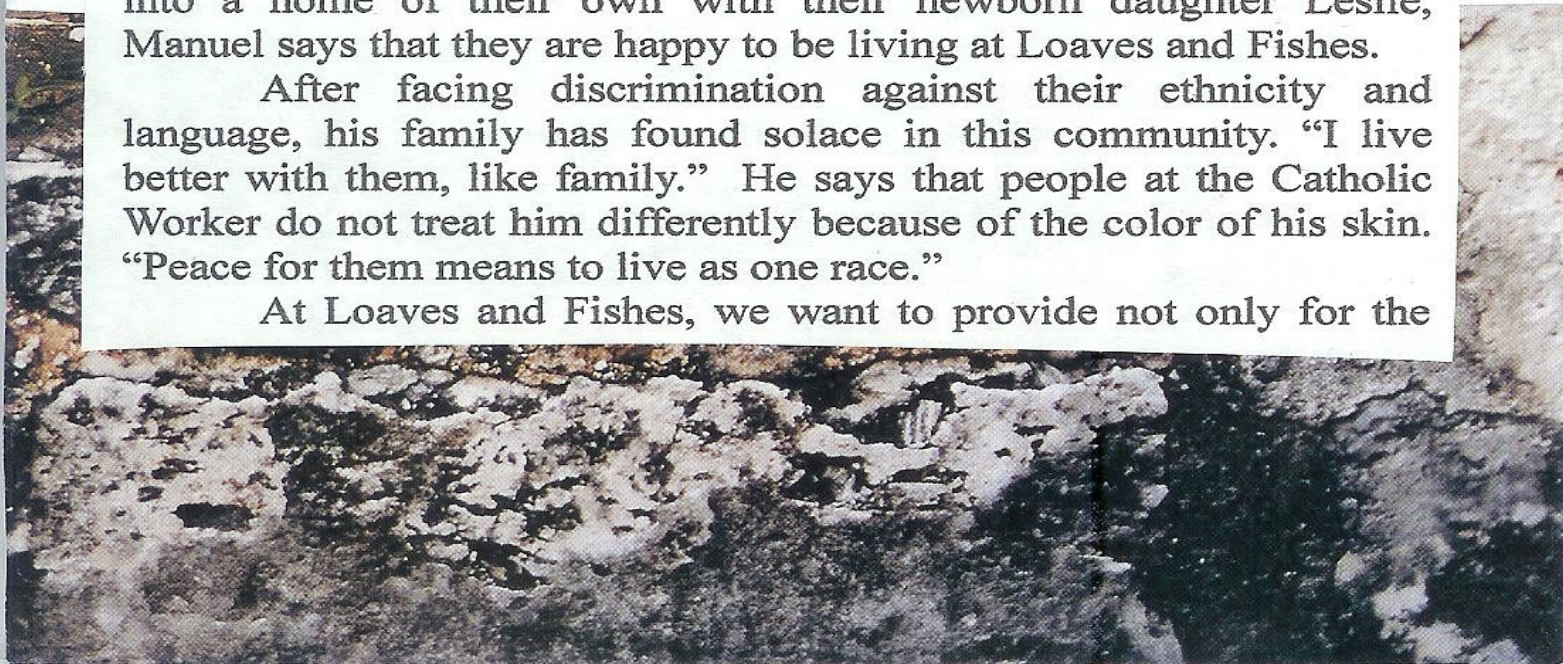
At Loaves and Fishes, Charles knows he is depended on, not only by his kids, but by community members who rely on him to help out around the house. He feels involved in projects and included in decision making.

Other guests expressed the honest request to play more active roles in the community, to be included in everything that we do together. "Take the time to just sit with guests and talk to them. Learn our stories," one guest said, sharing that if she were a community member, she would hold cooking classes, gardening classes, and other workshops so that guests could learn to do new things. She would do more to help guests get connected with social services in Duluth, to the point of riding the bus all over the city with them if necessary.

Manuel wishes that he too could do more to help the community. Although he and his partner Aurelia hope to soon move into a home of their own with their newborn daughter Leslie, Manuel says that they are happy to be living at Loaves and Fishes.

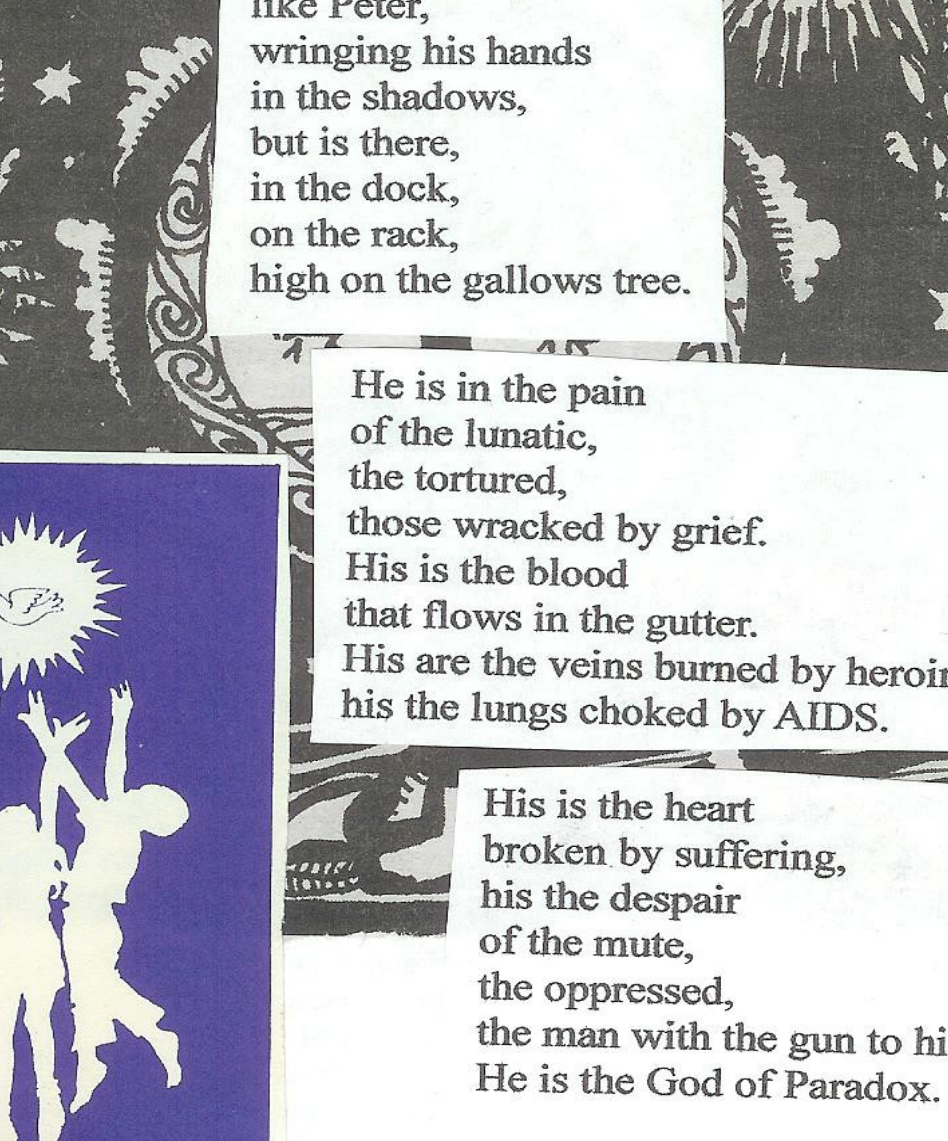
After facing discrimination against their ethnicity and language, his family has found solace in this community. "I live better with them, like family." He says that people at the Catholic Worker do not treat him differently because of the color of his skin. "Peace for them means to live as one race."

At Loaves and Fishes, we want to provide not only for the



material needs of those who come to stay with us, but for their spiritual and emotional needs as well. We aim to create a space which guests enter not as items of charity, but as members of a family. As such honored family members, our guests have much to teach us about how we can be better Catholic Workers. As workers, it is our job to learn from and listen to those who define so much of who we are.

I believe that God
has the whole world
in his hands.



He is not a bystander
at the pain of the world.
He does not stand
like Peter,
wringing his hands
in the shadows,
but is there,
in the dock,
on the rack,
high on the gallows tree.

He is in the pain
of the lunatic,
the tortured,
those wracked by grief.
His is the blood
that flows in the gutter.
His are the veins burned by heroin,
his the lungs choked by AIDS.

His is the heart
broken by suffering,
his the despair
of the mute,
the oppressed,
the man with the gun to his head.
He is the God of Paradox.

-Shelia Cassidy, England



WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

By Michele Naar-Obed

"Much as we want to, we do not really know ourselves. Do we really want to see ourselves as God sees us, or even as our fellow human beings see us? Could we bear it?" (excerpt from Dorothy Day: Selected Writings)

There are so many ways that people from the extended community have volunteered or donated their time, money and talents with such open and grace-filled hearts that we wanted to know what moved them to do so. We interviewed a few folks in town and found a common theme that ran throughout. The following are quotes and paraphrases from 6 friends and donors:

"Feed my lambs, feed my sheep". "Being a meal angel for 21 years is a way for me to do this". "The Catholic Worker lifestyle of simple living and helping others is something my family and I believe in". "I've done this for 21 years because I don't change very much". "I've always been a gleaner of food; rhubarb, raspberries, vegetables grown in our garden. I like to share it with others". "In my 21 years of being a meal angel for the Olive Branch house, I've seen a number of community members come and go. I'm amazed that the different people have taken such good care of the house and have remained faithful to the mission and the work". "I appreciate the educational aspect of the newsletter and the Catholic Worker analysis of local and world events". Although I don't always agree with the types of protests the CW has participated in, I appreciate the writings and rationale for different peace actions".

Roger Mattson

"After being introduced to the Duluth CW, I was surprised that it was nothing like a traditional shelter. It's like a family house and there is a sense of community that offers a more nurturing environment for people to make positive changes in their lives. After being a community member for 2 years, I wanted to stay involved by helping with the food run. I like being the person who brings the food to the curb every Monday morning"

Melissa Boyle

"I moved into L & F the day after I graduated from college. I thought it was a revolutionary idea to live out the works of mercy and actually practice the Catholic doctrine that I learned growing up. I wouldn't want to live in a world where people don't take care of each other. There are so many ways to plug into the community. Some have no resources and need a place to stay. Others have lots of resources and need a place to share. The lights are on, the doors are open, the houses are still standing and we have a chance to come full circle with each other".

Liz Carlson

"When I retired, I needed something to do with my life. I had learned about Dorothy Day and admired the things she stood for; her deep faith, compassion and love. I learned about L & F, toured the houses and asked to be a meal angel. My husband and I enjoy eating the meal with the community. Then I started doing house duty shifts and I find the guests to be most wonderful. I started looking at my own life through different eyes. I feel like I'm part of something important here; service is a wonderful and blessed opportunity".


Mary Kay Thornton

"As a pastor of a local congregation in Duluth, I've given sermons on love of God and neighbor and I ask who is our neighbor? How do we follow the example of the good Samaritan? Our church contributes to L & F because the community picks up the wounded people off the street that most of the world would walk around. With L & F our church tries to make sure that no one is left out on the road and with humble efforts, we try to help fix the road to justice".

Pastor Kathy Nelson

"I came down to L & F with my school volunteer group to cook a meal and eat with the community once a week. I wanted to be part of something bigger than me. I was apprehensive about the Catholic label because I had a very strict Catholic upbringing but I saw that the Catholic Worker is about love and that is very beautiful. It's not about saving anyone or judging anyone. It's about love and being a helping hand, a listening ear and a helping presence. If I can't do that, I'd just be another selfish soul that contaminates".

Florencia Matamoros



Dorothy Day House Notes

Polyurethane smells *really* bad! We've scrubbed, sanded, and put down a coat of polyurethane on the first floor of the Dorothy Day House. It's sparkling demeanor has changed the atmosphere. More improvements are in the works as we brainstorm the possibilities of a \$500 grant that Erin accidentally, but serendipitously, got the community.

Erin, a familiar face from last summer, was welcomed back to Duluth and Dorothy Day House by receiving the heimlich after choking on a rather large bread chunk at dinner. We're excited to have Erin back this summer, healthy and happy. Along with working at the house and in the community Erin's also been working with a new gardening program in town, Seeds of Success. We're anticipating her possible return again, for good, next summer. In addition to Erin we are joined by a fresh batch of house members. Alice, our tall bike outlaw, finally made her way upstairs from the Bike Cave to

help with the house for the summer. If Alice isn't found at the house or the Bike Cave, she's at work on a boat turned seafood restaurant (on one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world). Sadly, she's returning to the Twin Cities in the fall for school.

Claire, vegan baker extraordinaire, is helping and observing for a month at the house. She's also Sadie's little sister. Aww !

Since our last update one house member, Tina, has departed and moved out of town. Jesse, who arrived around the same time is sticking

around. He's hoping to start school soon, but in the meantime volunteers at a new art store. Sadie and Greg started their summer building muscles in a 1400 mile bike tour around Lake Superior. Returning earlier than expected, they've been keeping busy in the house, Bike Cave, and work endeavors. Greg's creating hand made messenger bags from recovered materials, while Sadie's been turning trash into treasure by making jewelry and belts from recycled bike parts.

Lake Superior has been record-breakingly warm, making it possible and enjoyable to swim. Over the course of the summer two of our liveliest and youngest guests, Terrance and Tyrae, and Sage, the house dog, have learned to swim. Terrance and his father, Charles, moved to Duluth and into the house from Chicago in mid April. Since then his younger brother, Tyrae, came up in June, and the rest of the family has recently joined us. We're happy to finally meet the boys' sister, Alisha, and the kids mom, Amy.

Like most summers the house is a bustle with transition, drop-ins, and travelers, and now Rick, who has had a stable and helpful presence in the house, is preparing to move out. He's been our friend, chef, and comedian through the past year and although it's sad to see him go we know we've formed a lasting friendship. The overflowing abundance of raspberries in the backyard has brought by many drop ins and old friends. We've discussed past, present, and future happenings at the Dorothy Day House over tasty treats, jam, and of course, coffee. And, as usual, the Bike

Cave Collective is packed during summer months. We've extended the open shop days to Monday through Thursday, and officially made Wednesday the open shop day for women and trans folk only. Terrance and Tyrae have been learning a lot about bike mechanics and work trade as they make up for lost and broken bikes. The Bike Cave Collective continues to be an important resource for people living in the house, dropping by, and the Duluth community. We're just happy we get to be a part of it!

Needs:

Community members
Volunteers for house duty
Meal Angels
Bus passes
Coffee
Sugar
Toilet paper
Crafting materials (yarn, scraps of fabric, etc.)
LOVE



EVENTS:

SEPT. 22 - BENEFIT AT ST. MICHAEL'S
MUSIC AND FOOD. 4:30 - 7:30 PM

SEPT. 23RD - HUMAN RIGHTS WORK IN KURDISTAN,
IRAQ
PRESENTATION - MCCABE RENEWAL
CENTER
7-9 PM

DEC. 5TH - ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY!
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH - 2-5 PM



Olive Branch House Notes

A basic message of the gospels is that God's Kin-dom has arrived or is arriving. Day by day we see signs of hope that God's ways are spreading. The meals that are lovingly provided by our "meal angels" give us encouragement and nourishment. Some people and groups continue to give us financial and spiritual support which allows us to keep going.

Some of our guests have gone with us to Linda Ward's Grassroots Farm and have had their eyes opened to the beauty and joy of nature and life in the country. We were able to gather a bountiful crop of strawberries at the farm and heaps of fruit in town from the raspberry bushes planted years ago by people who came before us.

A beautiful child, Birdie, that came to live here learned to walk here before her family moved to transitional housing. A new baby was born last month to parents living with us.

Two volunteer interns learned about Olive Branch and joined us for the summer. Elizabeth Wray came from Tennessee and Tegan Wendland joined us from Duluth. They gave fresh perspectives to the challenges here and helped immensely by pitching in with cooking meals, doing house duty, and interacting with guests and visitors. Elizabeth aided Rachel in repainting our van, and Tegan blessed us with a new porch swing and many occasions of making home-made ice cream.

In addition to the positive signs that we see, we are also aware that God's Kin-dom is sometimes revealed in acts of resistance to ways of injustice. A passage that sometimes comes to mind is Jesus saying that the world hated him because he kept testifying that the works of the world are evil (John 7:7). Or another translation says Jesus continually exposed the injustice of the world's ways.

A recurring theme at the recent Midwest Catholic Worker Resistance

retreat was that the U.S. is in the process of collapsing as an empire, largely due to the enormous sums of money that are going to the building of new weapons and the military. Some reports have emerged that Obama approved the construction of three new nuclear weapon factories. Over \$6 billion is to be spent on the weaponry and infrastructure, to be built in Tennessee, Missouri, and New Mexico.

At the same time, many mothers fleeing domestic violence have called us, needing a place to stay as the other places such as Safe Haven and CASDA were full. Two such families with young children have lived with us recently.

In April seventeen people were arrested at the federal building in Chicago protesting exorbitant military spending. At the trial in June, the judge expressed concern that if the 1st Amendment was allowed to protect symbolic speech such as the non-violent demonstration, then chaos might break out in our society. He stated that he believed the U.S. is the most peaceful nation in the world, unlike Somalia....

Here in Duluth, about 10 of us held signs and vigiled at the entrance to the recent event which sought to impress people with the high technology ways of killing and destroying from the air. We exhibited a banner that proclaimed "Celebrate An Airshow Not A Warshow." Another sign stated "Love Your Enemies." Many people going past gave signs of encouragement such as peace signs or thumbs up, but one some people did express disagreement.

Our roving Catholic Worker friend, Michael Walli, went to the School of Americas action last November and has served his jail sentence for crossing the line in resistance to the school's teaching of torture and assassination. He has a trial in September for trespassing at the nuclear weapon facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and he may return here to help out after dealing with the consequences of that witness.



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