THE Round Table

Autumn '88

"...a path from where we are to where we should be." --Peter Maurin

WHY THIS ISSUE?

Peacemaking. It is a term we hear daily. It is a term that is defined in a myriad of styles. We hear of peacemaking forces in the Middle East and of our weapon systems being introduced as peacemaking tools. The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to UN military peace keeping forces.

Those of us with the St. Louis Catholic Worker have chosen to illustrate peacemakers in yet another fashion.

We have chosen eight people, whose lives have served as witness to us. Eight people who offer another definition of peacemaker. To be honest it was difficult to select only eight. So many have served as inspirations locally and historically.

They offer eight different messages - all of them connecting to the same basic need of responding to the call of our brothers and sisters with respect, dignity and love. They echo each other with the responsibility to practice peace. They speak of the message of love and the need for conversion in our hearts. They talk of influencing others by witnessing and the importance of affirming each other as we work for change. They stress the urgency of continuing to ask questions.

Share in the stories of Claudia, a Guatemalan refugee; of Dan, a physicist who has dedicated his life to peace; and of Pius, a Dominican sister involved in prison ministry. Partake of Hershel's rich history in Civil Rights; in Jane and Bob's amazing energy with their third world witness; and of Teka's call to serving on a personal level. Learn from Rich's Mennonite tradition and Hedy's call to peace as a survivor of the Holocaust.

We offer responses to our last issue in Mail bag. We bring you a message from Mary Dutcher in Nicaragua, as she continues to keep us connected with Central America. Lee Carter, a long time community member, offers the Karen House article. Mary Ann McGivern continues to share reflections from the Little House. Jim Plato gives us a poignant Round Table Talk in which he reflects on his personal experiences with family and friends. The center spread offers original graphics from Genevieve Cassani and Scriptures for thought as we approach another election day.

I am reminded of the prayer "In the stillness of my heart your voice beckons, urging me always to a deeper response." In this issue which highlights local peacemakers, we urge you to read and to digest the witness of these and the many peacemakers who continue to call us to a deeper response.

✝ Barbara Prosser

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"I was ostracized in my profession . . ."

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAN BOLEF - Sixty-seven, physicist, on-going participant in peace, Central American and environmental issues for forty years.
Conducted by: **Virginia Druhe**

R.T.: In what way do you consider peacemaking part of your life? How did it become important to you?
Dan: I think probably it's been important to me from the very beginning - just from the influence of my family. Their experiences in many ways affected my views. My mother was a garment worker and my father was a draft resister who left Russia at the turn of the century to avoid going into the Czar's army. During WWI he went underground and refused to fight in the US Army because he thought it was an imperialist war. My step-mother, with whom I lived mostly, was head of her garment workers union in Philadelphia and she was arrested on picket lines during my childhood perhaps three or four dozen times.

So a sensitive attitude toward other people, toward people who are oppressed, is certainly part of my childhood. Another influence was being Jewish. I was not brought up in a religious atmosphere but nonetheless one feels one's uniqueness.
R.T.: And what are the ways you have chosen to live that out?
D.: Actually, I'm a good or bad example - because all such compromises in many ways turn out to be bad - of the professional person who attempts to stay within the system as far as one's profession is concerned, and then make up for it, as far as conscience is concerned, by engaging in life-saving activities after work. For twenty or thirty years I was a physicist, did research, taught. First I did research in a corporate environment at Westinghouse Research Laboratories in Pittsburgh, then as a professor at Washington University.

In a career like that, in a country like this, in a system like ours, there can be only one result of the work that you do: that is to help destroy, humiliate, oppress, and increase the sufferings of people around the world; because within the system if one works as a physicist or any other type of scientist, you are inevitably supporting the growth of that system and increasing the effectiveness of war-making apparatus.

Even if I don't do war work, which I refused to do, there is the fact that your students go out and don't make the same choices you make, or that others can point to you and say, "Hey, if that guy whose an obvious radical nut can be a physicist, it must be all right." So that the compromised position I was in for most of my life was an extremely stressful and unhealthy one.

Stressful also because if you work part of your day in the system and yet in other ways you attack the system - like participating with students and supporting them in anti-Vietnam war activities and defending those who burn down ROTC buildings as I did-you then are viewed as a serious threat to the system. You're looked at askance by others who expect you

to behave like them. And so I was ostracized in my profession, in my own milieu as well. So you aren't effective under such circumstances really as a peacemaker except as a role model and support for younger people. And you suffer the consequences in your career nevertheless.

R.T.: The next thing I wanted to ask you is at what point did you become a Christian and what effect has the Gospel had on you as a peacemaker?

D.: I was a St. Louis co-worker with the Berrigan group. The chief activist with the Berrigans here was a young Sister of Loretto named Joann Malone. Joann got me involved. When Dan Berrigan would come here, he would stay at my house.

The first thing Dan would do was organize us for a picket line outside the cathedral because he said that was the most important thing to do for a good radical Catholic. He would give us compelling reasons for why he did it. He felt strongly that the hierarchy needed some educating and that one of the better ways of educating them was to hold placards in front of their faces as they came into the cathedral.

The influence of those people, the priest at Lewis Hall and others affected me. You might say that I became a "Catholic sympathizer" just by the nature of my interaction with these people and knowing their motives and their deep, deep understanding of why human beings refuse to kill. That was very meaningful to me.

I became a Catholic when I married Regina, but our agreement was that I would become an R.C. - which meant "radical Catholic." Because I have very little liking or tolerance for dogmatic theology, for sexism or elitism and anti-Semitism, all of which are part and parcel of the Catholic hierarchy, I have to overlook all those dreadful aspects of the Catholic church in order to understand the really marvelous aspects of the gospel of Jesus, of the true peace church, the church of the oppressed. I haven't read much liberation theology but enough to realize that my thoughts are consistent with that.

R.T.: How do you think social change happens?

D.: It doesn't happen through political parties, it doesn't happen through Marxism, it doesn't happen through books being written by scholars. It certainly doesn't happen in those ways. That I know. It doesn't happen in any of the conventional ways that we are taught to admire in college.

I think social change happens through people influencing other people both as models and by working with others. I think it happens through interacting with people like Bill Ramsey and Mary Dutcher and Maggie Fisher and yourself. In my case, as you remember very well, it happened on the ride back from Cairo, IL with Julio and Maria, because in my pidgin Spanish I was able to converse a little bit with them and I realized after five minutes with those two youngsters, refugees from a poor country, that I was a child compared to them. They were here as missionaries to educate us to the realities of their world and their lives.

R.T.: It sounds like you're saying political change and social change happen through people's hearts being changed and by experience of other people and a process of people taking responsibility in their own lives?

D.: I think you've said it very well. But there's a difficulty there. The difficulty

is that men are much less likely to do that. Men love to orate, like I've been orating, they love to be professorial, they love to lecture, they love to write. Women do it too, but men do it in such overwhelming numbers that I can say it without exaggeration. It's much less comfortable for men to learn from personal interaction, in fact to personally interact at all, much less learn from women who are so capable of teaching us.

I've lived a middle class life all my life, I still lead one. But my heart has changed. I know where change comes from. I'll say it dogmatically. It doesn't come from Pope John Paul II. Real social change comes from little folk like Francis and people at the Catholic Worker House.

Two things I'm proud of. You know in my generation it's awfully hard not to have grown up and remained extraordinarily sexist. If you're professional and aggressive and ambitious as I was, if you relate to males in your profession, it's almost impossible to get away from it. But I have found myself since the middle 1970's working with and for women. You know Kay Drey - I've helped in her effort on nuclear safety for fifteen years and found it the easiest thing in my life to do because men have so much to learn from women in the way of communication and how to relate to people. It's much more difficult than most people realize. It's a hard struggle to get even as far as I've gotten! As far as social change is concerned that's where I would look. Because if a man envies, distrusts and hates women, then he envies distrusts and hates all humankind. That's a banality but nevertheless I'll say it. And if he hates and distrusts, then he'll commit violence.
R.T.: Will you answer one more question, please? I was told that you are a world-known physicist. Is that true? Yes, or no?
D.: Yes. But it means nothing among those creeps. You must include that!

AN INTERVIEW WITH TEKA CHILDRESS
Conducted by: Barbara Prosser

R.T.: How do you believe social change can happen?
T.: I can't work for theoretical things. I need my life to be involved on a very personal level. I also have hopes for change on a greater scale - for change in the institutionalized blocks, for peace and justice, for structures such as laws and social injustices that make people suffer. I believe in a very basic way this can be done by speaking out for peace and by resisting against war.

One thing that is important is to resist the benefits that we gain by our acts of violence as a country. There is a need for refusal to participate in any acts of violence. I see overt violence as only one type of violence. There is also economic injustice in institutions that causes people to suffer other acts of violence.

I always have hopes that we will actually stop these acts of violence. I don't want to be "pure" myself. It is unbearable for me to know how people who are violated are suffering.

I can't determine for sure if we will stop these things, but I can resist them and work in creative ways to help stop them. I can ask those in decision making positions to stop these things and not participate in these things myself. I can do everything I can to be courageous and ask others to join me in putting ourselves between our government's acts of violence to try to stop them.

We must always believe our acts of love will bring about the reign of God. We must always know that even where we can't see love, it is at work.

"I was eight years old, living in . . . Southern Germany when Hitler came to power . . ."

AN INTERVIEW WITH HEDY EPSTEIN
CONDUCTED BY: JIM PLATO

R.T.: Could you give us a brief description of the work you are involved in now?
Hedy: Professionally, I'm working as a legal assistant in a law firm that practices civil rights law. Probably 90-95% of our cases, conservatively speaking, deal with employment discrimination cases; discrimination based on race, sex, age, national origin or religion. I'm a firm believer in not living a bifurcated life - in which one believes one thing and practices something else which may be in conflict with what I believe. I've been doing this kind of work for almost fifteen years.
R.T.: How has your experience as a Holocaust survivor influenced your personal development in terms of your motivation for being involved in your present day work?
H.: I was eight years old, living in the Black Forest region of Southern Germany when Hitler came to power in 1933. I remember a boycott of all Jewish establishments then in which a Nazi would stand in front of our stores and bar people from entering. This was my first experience of being discriminated against and knowing the dreadful pain of being singled out for being different. I can really empathize and understand what that means.

We all are very aware today of what happened then and that not only six million Jews lost their lives, but six million others also died who had the "wrong" sexual preference, political beliefs, etc. One of the things I hear very often is: "If only the world had listened or if only the world had known of their brutalities, they could have done something about it; and so many people would not have suffered." That's true. But there are similar problems around today. Maybe it's not as blatant as during the Nazi regime but there's genocide in many countries. And it behooves especially those of us who have survived oppression of this magnitude to do what we can to help alleviate their suffering. I want to remember my family. How could I honor them more than by doing something for someone else?
R.T.: What role do the scriptures play in your life?
H.: None. I don't formally practice the Jewish faith - nor keep the dietary laws. I see my work in aiding those who suffer discrimination as practicing my religion.
R.T.: What sustains you in peacemaking? Where are your sources of hope?
H.: I'll answer the last question first. I guess I'm basically an optimistic person - I guess I'm also a realist. If I hadn't been hopeful all along at different times of my life - I don't think I would be here talking with you today. I have to always hold out something of my own because I

"I refuse to give up . . . there are small victories"

left home when I was fourteen years old and my first hope was that I would someday be reunited with my parents. I expected that to happen after a few months and it did not. But it was still something that I was holding out for myself.

After the war I found all kinds of excuses as to why my parents and I would

not be reunited. But I think if I had resigned myself in the very beginning to the fact that I would never see my family again, that I would never see my friends again, it would have devastated me and I would have died right there. I guess that's become a pattern in my life - that I always hold out something that I'm going to strive for. It's something I may or may not achieve - but I've got to walk towards that goal. I refuse to give up.

You know there are small victories. As families come to this country as part of the sanctuary movement from Central America and are united with other loved ones who have come before - the look of gratitude on their faces is unforgettable. I know that I haven't personally brought them together but I've been supportive of them and helped in ways that I could. And I can't help but think: "That's a reunion I've never experienced," but I can vicariously enjoy their experience. It's a priceless gift. It's wonderful. +

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICH HOWARD-WILLMS

Conducted by: Barbara Prosser

R.T.: Could you reflect on the role of the poor in your life?

R.: The Mennonites have a tradition of sharing their resources, labor, food and moneys with the poor. Our store, Plowsharing Crafts, is a witness in its success. In selling third world products, remaining non-profit and running on volunteer help we are able to serve a lot of people. I've been with the store for three and one-half years, and feel it has been very right for me to have ben here these years.

We need to share what we have in whatever way we can. That is the way I like to work.

There are many ways to help. Peppie and I see one way we can help is with foster children. We bought a larger house with the idea of opening up our home to children in need. Peppie's life has always been centered around kids with special needs. She's been a major influence in our family in her response to these children.

Peppie and I realize there is a need for a lot of education with others. We hope that in beginning a family of our own

and by opening our home to other children we can provide an opportunity for others to learn. I recognize that change occurs slowly, and therefore, touching children's lives takes on a greater importance. +

"Some people just need some rest"

AN INTERVIEW WITH HERSHEL WALKER – LABOR DAY, 1988 – At the age of seventy-nine, Hershel Walker is still working for peace and justice. A fixture at his church, the first St. Louis congregation to offer sanctuary to Central American political refugees, Hershel also works on criminal justice issues and in the campaign to end apartheid. He is the father of four and the grandfather of twenty-five. When asked if he would consent to these interviews of local peacemakers, he declared: "Oh, of course, I'm interested in anything that has to do with peace."
Conducted by: **PATRICK COY**

R.T.: When did you become active in peace and justice organizing?
Hershel: In the 1930's, the struggle wasn't for peace and justice, it was justice for black people's rights. It didn't include peace as far as I was concerned. Most black people were unemployed in St. Louis then, and those who did have work had poor jobs. That's how I got involved when I was very young. As time went on other goals got added to the struggle, like peace and justice for all people.
R.T.: Did you work for a particular organization or movement as an organizer?
H.: No, I was fortunate to have a job and to be active in the struggle too. I worked in the defense plants and in the late 1930's, when the CIO was being organized, one of its main goals was to raise the state of the lower workers. Well, naturally I was one of the lower workers, all Blacks were one of the lower workers in the plant. When I started at Wagner Electric there were only two jobs for Blacks: common laborer and porter. We also struggled to get black women hired in the industry. As long as I can remember white women were hired but Wagner refused for quite some time to hire black women.
R.T.: You have been involved in many campaigns over the years. What have you learned about how social change happens? What are some effective means for bringing about change?
H.: One of the reasons we made progress in the civil rights era is because we were lucky enough to have one top leader that people supported and could depend on: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I feel that is needed at this time again, a leader that the grassroots people can depend on. Our leadership has not been very strong and dependable. For whatever reason, people seem to depend on strong leadership, and without it, it has been difficult to make progress.

Dr. King, for instance, helped us to broaden the struggle, to see that it is not just local, narrow struggles, but that all people have to become a part of the struggle. He was able to win people over to the idea that peace is the key to everything else. We are making war in so many countries, but if we made peace, we would join in with the workers in the other countries to raise their working conditions and their democratic rights.

At one time we felt that the whole struggle for rights was around black people, but he made it clear that it was not, that it was just a part of the struggle. Now, while we have not learned that yet, we're much farther along with it.

Most people have been brainwashed to the point of saying: "My country right or wrong," but he made it clear that has to be stopped in favor of all people joining together to work to make their country right, not right or wrong. To me, this is the key to progress throughout the world.
R.T.: You have said before that working people are the key to change. Why?

H.: Well, working people, in my opinion, are about the only people that have - I hate to use the word - real conscience. Many people don't. You might find one out of a million, I'm not saying absolutely that many people don't. At the least many people don't have the kind of conscience to see that all people live decently.

We fail to look at the fact that the world doesn't have the kind of resources to produce millionaires, while at the same time other people are able to live. So, people have to learn, as Dr. King effectively taught, that we have to create ways that allow everyone to live, not just a handful. This is a major part of the struggle because if you provide everyone with a good living, then you have to eliminate your millionaires. You cannot have both at the same time.

R.T.: What role has your faith played in your activism?

H.: I've always had a problem, since I was very young, with the church on these issues. The church's position, to me, has always been wrong. And one thing that gives me a lot of hope and confidence today is that I feel the church is changing. More and more people are able to see the other side. To me this is a great hope.

R.T.: What advice do you have for those activists who are burned out and ready to quit the struggle?

H.: Well, some people just need some rest. I think it's necessary to study history to see where we have made progress. Some people think we haven't made progress but they fail to look at how the world and change develop. Now I would love if the world developed differently but I have no control over that. Since way back in history we have lived in a male-dominated society, where people want to take advantage of other people, having others work for them while they live a luxury life. We've made some mistakes in trying to change this, but we have to look at our overall progress, from where we started to where we are today. This gives people an insight into life. It's easy to assume you can, say, turn the world around in a short life span, but it's one of those things you can't do. So this in itself helps individuals to become better people because your struggle is not for yourself. Your struggle has to be for the next and future generations, which you are involved in anyway. ✝

Wood engravings by Boyd Hanna. The Peter Pauper Press

"We Have to Keep Asking the Questions But Without Condemnation"

AN INTERVIEW WITH PIUS FAGEN, O.P. - FEAST OF ST. ANNE, JULY 26, 1988
Conducted by: **PATRICK COY**

R.T.: Would you describe your apostolic work for us?
Pius: I entered the Dominicans in 1954 and spent many years in education, especially teaching in residential centers for juvenile delinquents. But two events led me to St. Louis to criminal justice ministry.

I was considering a call to the contemplative life. I made a directed retreat to finalize that decision. When I arrived the good father who was the director said that if I had brought any questions with me, I was to leave them at the front door. So, being a very practical German, I didn't like that very much, but I can sometimes be docile, so I did what he told me.

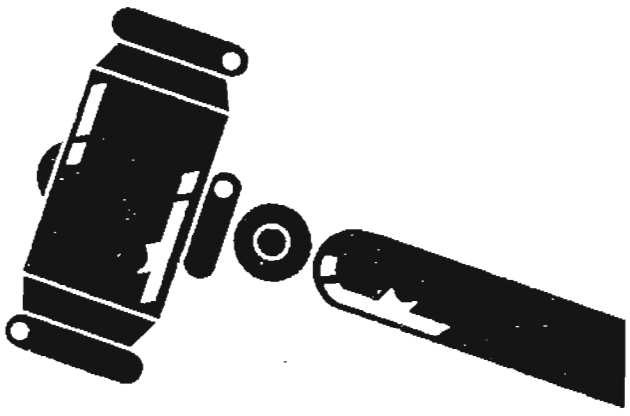
About midway through the retreat it became very clear that I was not called to the contemplative life, so I told my Maker that if this is not it, then you had better make very clear very quickly what you want me to do.

Within two weeks Armondo Morales visited me. Wherever he is today, probably dead or in prison, I'm really grateful to him for his calling me to the next step of my life. I taught Armondo, a Puerto Rican from Manhattan, in the eighth grade. He paid me a wonderful visit and then went home to New York city. I happened to pick up the paper the next day and read that he had been picked up in a small suburb for carrying a concealed weapon. I was concerned: he was a Puerto Rican in a white county, and my hunch was I needed to go see him to be sure his rights were not being violated. I went over to the Rockland County Jail, and when I walked in, something happened. It is hard to explain but I knew, intuitively, through my whole being, that God was calling me to this.

My overall feeling in the jail was, "People should not have to live like this." I wanted to do whatever I could to make sure people did not have to live like that. Doors opened quickly for me and I spent two years volunteering in jails in New York.

Then I came to St. Louis to study and do jail ministry.

People in jail, as opposed to prison, are pre-trial; about 80% of them are there simply because they do not have enough money to make bond. So they are truly poor. As long as you have money, or know somebody, you can pull the strings and have a favorable outcome. When you don't have money, don't know the power brokers, then you have to sit and sweat it out in jail. And so we began the jail ministry here in 1979.



R.T.: How has the experience of ministering in the jails with the poor affected your views of U.S. society? What have these people taught you about the nature of our social problems?
P.: Well, they are the bottom of the rung. They are poor, disenfranchised, and have no name or title that's recognized. Most have not had - from day one - good housing

or adequate health care, so there is a deterioration of the family. They certainly have not had access to a good education. I did a study: 80% of those in jail in St. Louis have not finished high school. So they do not have job skills. They don't have any of the tools or background that society tells them will bring

them happiness - they have no legitimate way of obtaining it. All of these factors and social problems fester, and so we have crime as a result.

Yet people believe the media message that these people all committed terrible crimes, they're guilty, and we should just forget about them as they're not worth it.

But we put forth an alternative view: No matter what, these people are still created by God; they still deserve respect and dignity. We speak the message of love, mercy and compassion. God has raised up volunteers to speak it. Their hearts have been turned around. We have six hundred on a legislative network working to change public policy as well.

R.T.: What role do the scriptures and the gospels play in your work, and how has your work informed the way you read the scriptures?

P.: It is the basis. In the Hebrew scriptures the judges were there to protect the little people. It is now just the opposite. All of the scriptures say that God is life-giving; and if you go in a jail or prison, you know it is not a life-giving environment. The passage from John, "I come to give you life, and life more abundantly", is one I frequently reflect on. To me, the whole life of Christ was one of reaching out. The two most obvious stories are of the prostitute and the tax collector. In both cases, Jesus did not put them away, but rather invited them into friendship. And it was that very act of being invited into friendship that was the basis for their change.

So hopefully our ministry is reaching out and offering friendship; maybe it will help someone turn their life around.

R.T.: Is there anything you would care to add?

P.: Over the years of working for social change my questions to others have become softer. People tell me I am not the same person I was twenty years ago when I often asked damning questions. I think it is because I've understood my own limitations, my own inability to achieve the results I wanted to. I understand that there are others, people in public policy-making positions who may want to achieve certain changes and just aren't able to. We can't make everything right today or tomorrow, we've got to keep chipping away an inch a day. We have to keep asking the questions that need to be asked without condemnation. I think that if there is anything the peace movement has taught me, it's taught me that. It's what Jesus teaches too. You hate the sin but love the sinner.

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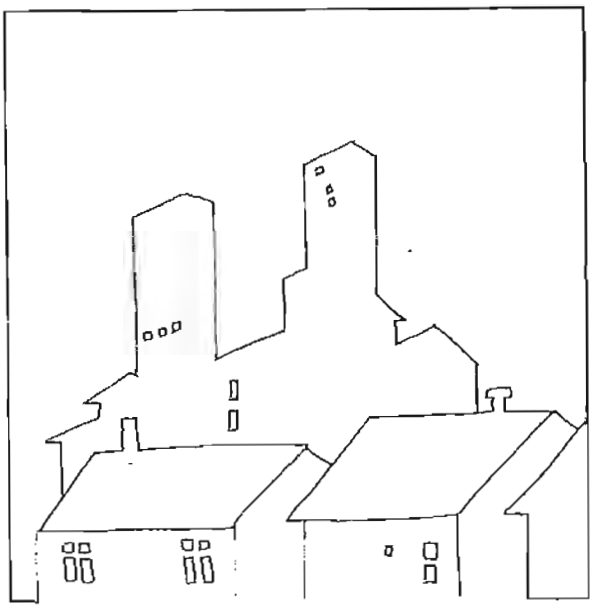
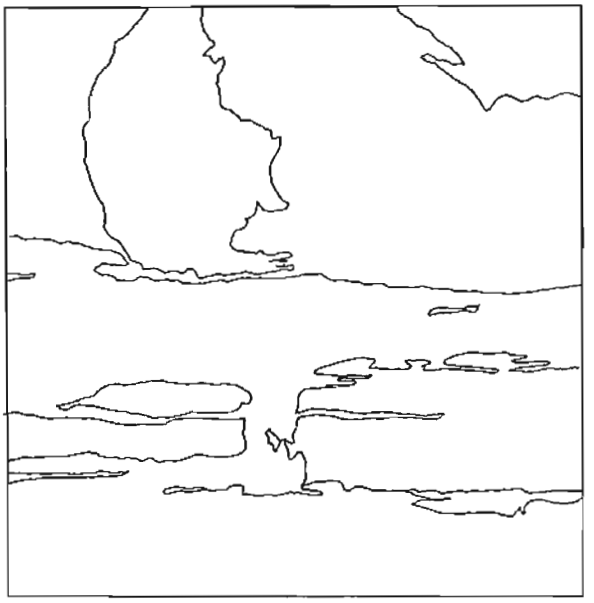




Be on your guard
against the yeast of the Pharisees-
their hypocrisy.
Everything now covered up
will be uncovered,
and everything now hidden
will be made clear.
For this reason,
whatever you have said in the dark
will be heard in the daylight,
and what you have whispered
in hidden places
will be proclaimed from the housetops.

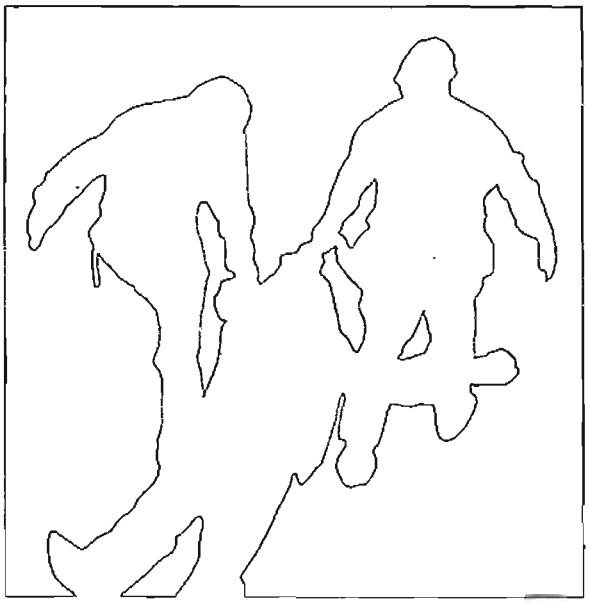
Luke 12:2-3

He said again to the crowds,
'When you see a cloud looming up
in the west you say at once
that rain is coming,
and so it does.
And when the wind is from the south
you say it's going to be hot,
and it is.
Hypocrites!
You know how to interpret the face
of the earth and sky.
How is it you do not know
how to interpret these times?'

Luke 12:54-56

Yahweh is about to try the elders and the princes
of the people,
'You are the ones who have ravaged the vineyard,
the spoils of the poor are in your houses.
By what right do you crush my people and grind the faces
of the poor?'
says Yahweh Sabaoth,

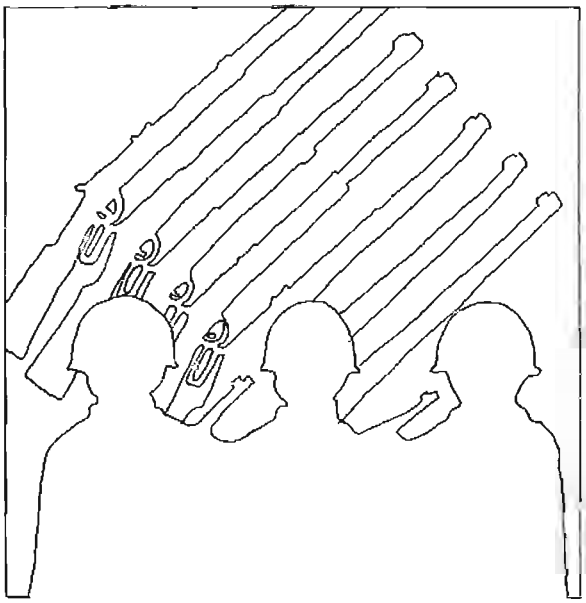
Is. 3:14-15



Be prepared
for people to hand you over
to sanhedrins
and scourge you
in their synogogues.
You will be brought before
governors and kings
for my sake,
as evidence
to them and to the gentiles.

Matt. 10:17-18

drawing & design by
Genevieve Cassani, SSND



He said, 'This is what the king
who is to reign over you will do.
He will take your sons and direct them
to his chariotry and cavalry,
and they will run in front of his chariot.
He will use them as leaders
of a thousand and leaders of fifty;
he will make them plough his fields
and gather in his harvest
and make his weapons of war
and the gear for his chariots.
He will take your daughters
as perfumers, cooks, and bakers.
He will take the best of your fields,
your vineyards and your olive groves
and give them to his officials.
He will tithe your crops and vineyards
to provide for his couriers and his officials.
He will take the best of your servants,
men and women,
of your oxen and your donkeys,
and make them work for him.
He will tithe your flocks,
and you yourselves will become his slaves.

I Som. 8:11-18

"The Central thrust in our work is trying to make it easier for middle-class folks to get involved in the lives of the poor."

AN INTERVIEW WITH BOB AND JANE CORBETT - Co-Founders and Organizers of The Haiti Project, and People to People.
Conducted by: **Katrina Campbell**

R.T.: Please start by sharing some of your life story leading into your present commitments.

Bob: Jane and I met in 1962 when we took the Peace Corps exam the first time it was ever offered in St. Louis. We then started dating and decided to marry. We ended up taking a job for the bishop of the Bahamas where we worked at a school on a remote island. So we were already into that desire to do some service work with people.

In 1965 I accepted a position at Webster University and we moved back to St. Louis. Almost immediately Jane got involved in direct service work. In the 70's Jane got the family and friends involved in a day camp she was responsible for at Bob Gettinger's place when he was at St. Bridget's. People in the community began to look at Jane as providing opportunities.

I found after teaching as a philosopher and leading talks on ethical responses to the poor, people would come up after class and ask, "How do you get going? Where do you go?" I'd frequently say, "My wife is doing this or that, why don't you join her?" Then I'd see these people change. I began to see the necessity of connecting thought and act and that I had a certain kind of talent at being able to connect people.

Jane: One of the things we were struggling to do at the day camp was work with people who wanted to get involved and didn't know how. So often people, when they hear about the poor, are just willing to give a check. That's comfortable and safe but what we've been encouraging people to do is "hands on." You know, get down there and meet these little kids at the day camp, be with them, stay with them all day, work with them, meet their parents. It seems to open up all kinds of new doors. The prejudices we might have are broken.

We find the same thing with our work in Haiti. When people go with "hands on, people to people, face to face," they come home with a whole new feeling. The same thing happens at the big dinners we put on. We were really excited when we started taking young people who had never done this before to St. Peter and Paul shelter. We saw them not only serving nicely but also sitting around the tables deeply involved in conversations with the homeless. That is peacemaking. It puts happiness in your own heart as well as hopefully the people you're with.

B.: One of the biggest areas of our lives is our work in Haiti. That began in 1982 when Jane went down to Haiti.

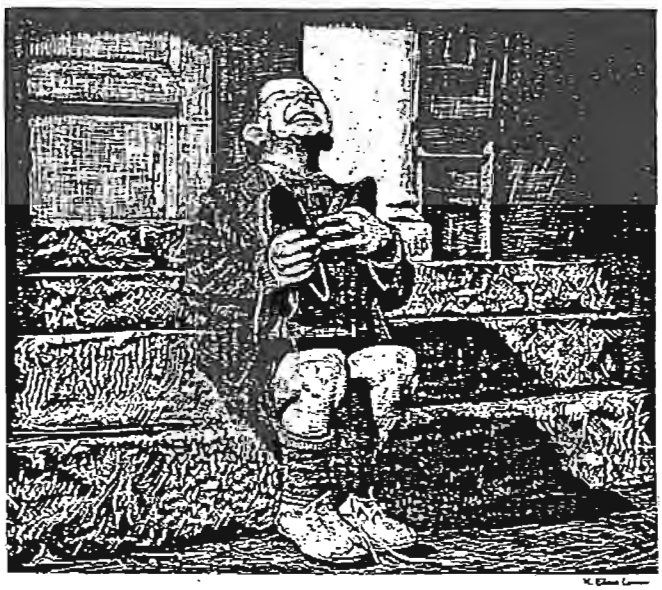
The really central thrust in our work, as Jane was talking about, has been trying to make it easier and more comfortable for middle and upper class folks to get involved in the lives of the poor. Haiti provided an opportunity to take people to a third world country where the contrast between life here and there is <u>so</u> overwhelmingly stark that it was incredibly more powerful and effective than even taking people to the city shelters.

R.T.: How have you experienced social change or how do you think it happens?

B.: I like to just jump in and begin wherever I see a need or a place <u>I</u> fit,

and to develop organizational skills or analyses as I am involved. It's in that kind of thing I first of all change. And for me, given the way I operate, it always means bringing other people with me. I prefer developmental work to basic charity but I prefer basic charity to political work. I intensely dislike the political mode of operation. It's my inability to believe that humans can affect many positive changes through the political means. Almost universally the rascals are in politics to hold on to power, greed and wealth. No matter how hard you struggle to throw one set of terrible rulers out, I think you're just going to get another set. I do political work, but I don't take much leadership in it. My preferred way to struggle for social change is through some sort of direct action, preferably developmental.

Alleluia!



R.T.: Does faith in God and the Scriptures affect your life?
J.: I know faith has a lot to do with my life. It is central. I really believe the scripture, "When I was hungry, you gave me something to drink. When I was thirsty..." (Mt. 25). I really believe that God for us is the real person, like you sitting there, like my husband sitting there. That is God for me. You are my brother and my sister, if I don't tend to you then I might as well not believe in God at all.
B.: I'm not a religious person and don't have any beliefs in transcendentalists. For me the motivation to act comes from people alone. I don't know what it is about humans but there's a special call when they're in misery that seems to call for response from others who aren't.
R.T.: What sustains you in the direction of work you're in?
B.: That's easy. There are three things really. First, the work I do gives me a sense of meaning, that's crucial. Second, when I work with people who are suffering injustice of want, there's a real sense of worth answering their need. Third, it's fulfilling when I'm able to work with people who are not in material need but who are suffering from inner hurt because they don't have an adequate sense of their own meaning. It's this call from the materially and spiritually disadvantaged where I get my sense of meaning by responding.
J.: God is my greatest sustainer. So often when I get into situations that are overpowering in any way I have to stop and pray and talk to God about it. I do that alot, especially with the work in Haiti.

Another basic sustainer is this one right here (pointing to Bob).

Our kids are also supportive or at least will let us run with whatever we're doing and then will come to our rescue. And our family and friends around us, especially our parents who thought, "What went wrong with our genes!", but they are now our biggest sustainers.

Plus, what comes back to you from the poor is just phenomenal. You think you're going into the home for the dying, say, to care for people in need and it turns around it's their smiles, their warmth and their gratitude that just overwhelms you. You walk away taller than when you came in. ✚

...The majority of them asked the same questions, "How can you see Christ in people?" And we can only say, it is an act of faith, constantly repeated. It is an act of love, resulting from an act of faith. It is an act of hope, that we can awaken these same acts in their hearts too, with the help of God, and the works of mercy.

Dorothy Day
On Pilgrimage, April, 1964

"The hope of us refugees is to help change people's minds so that we become a united continent, north and south"

AN INTERVIEW WITH CLAUDIA - Twenty-nine, is a Guatemalan widow and mother of three children. Her involvement in the postal union in Guatemala resulted in persecution and exile.
Conducted by: **VIRGINIA DRUHE**

Claudia: I belonged to the postal union in Guatemala. I fled on May 11, 1986. First I was in Mexico for three months. I worked on a farm there picking grapes, digging potatoes, caring for cattle. After six months there I became sick. The Mexican family helped me get to Tucson through relatives. I was lost three days in the desert without water or food. Completely lost. And when I was on a freight train once I had to jump off while it was travelling to get away from Mexican immigration officials and I was injured. I worked three months in Tucson but I continued to be quite ill. I went to Phoenix and spent four months at a refugee house there, still sick. I got here in January and had surgery.

R.T.: What does it mean to you to be a peacemaker, to struggle for peace?

C.: Peace is a great hope that we always maintain. I have felt obliged to go on, even though it is very difficult for me because sometimes I feel discouraged. It's like a psychological torture. But when I think of what I left behind, and what is still happening in my country that gives me the strength to go on because if I had continued working for peace in my country, it's possible I would be dead now. Here I have more protection. I am not free here, but I do have the opportunity to keep working for peace - not just for my situation, or my family, but for my people. For me it's very important because there are many children who are suffering the consequences. I have children. They are the future. For me that is very important.

R.T.: How did you work for peace in Guatemala?

C.: In Guatemala I worked in the post office and belonged to the union. I only began to protest that we had a right to a just salary. I didn't want to be very involved because I knew there were many consequences to that. But I worked twelve hours a day there and was paid for eight. I think the troubles we had were not just because I belonged to a union, but also my brother who was tortured had belonged to a union. Another brother disappeared and is certainly dead and members of the army tried to kidnap my sister. My brother who disappeared was a campesino and only demanded the right to his land and that they let him live in peace on his farm.

R.T.: And here in the U.S. how do you work for peace?

C.: I try to speak openly with people. I want to be heard. I want people to listen. I think the most important way to bring peace to my country is to change policies here and to build peace here. I realize that there is not peace in this country either. There is so much poverty, so much misery. I have had opportunities to visit many places and I have become aware of how much poverty there is, not only in St. Louis but in other places as well.

Many people aren't aware of this, or want to close their eyes to the poor here. I want to make people see this and that my people are crying out for peace, and no more intervention in our country by yours. I want people to see that in our country there are no human rights, there is no freedom and that, practically speaking, all of Central America is being manipulated by this government. We have to change policies here to change the situation

there.
R.T.: What sustains you in doing this work?
C.: My children. And all the suffering I endured. The suffering I can see in my brother, the suffering of my family. There are many people who don't know this and don't believe this happens. I have the hope that when people hear me, they will become more interested in our situation and will work to change it.
R.T.: How do you think we help society change?
C.: With solidarity, with unity. The hope of us refugees is to help to change people's minds so that we become a united continent, north and south.
R.T.: What do you think is the role of the poor in the search for peace?
C.: I think this is a very important and valuable point because the rich are never going to struggle for peace, they struggle only for their own convenience, at the cost of deaths and injustice. So for me it is good to be poor. I am glad to be poor. Sometimes I am proud to be poor. Because I am working for peace and I can think more about God. Maybe I have fewer worries, even though I am fleeing. Perhaps I have less distractions than a rich person because my only concern is to create peace - to make peace without hurting others.

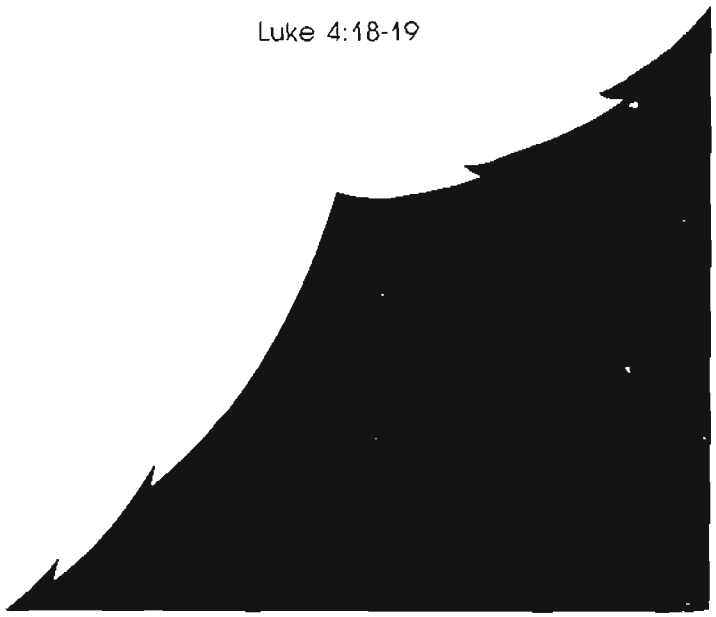
In Guatemala we say we are seeking peace and justice. Where there are campesinos and indigenous peoples you hear this especially. I'm from the capital in Guatemala and I was raised with the idea that the poor had the bad luck to be born poor, but the rich were good and you had to love and respect them as if they were gods. It's an ideology we've been raised with.

Then I lived in the countryside and in my own flesh suffered the injustices, so I was able to know better.

We have not had peace in Guatemala in my lifetime. We've always had the rich and the army over us. Now the churches are rising and trying to support peace, but before, the priests always told us you shouldn't look the wealthy in the face because God will punish you. If the landlord strikes you with a stick or his hand, you have to turn the other cheek because that's what Jesus did. If the landlord tells you not to go to school, you have to not go. He is your boss. But little by little people are getting tired. They have begun to learn to read, to have catechism. They are developing after years of being kept down.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me,
anointing me
to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty
those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year
of the Lord.

Luke 4:18-19



FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

by Mary Dutcher

Dear Ones,

I've been here working at the Proyecto Cristo Rey (Christ the King Project) since mid-February. The Proyecto is part of the parish of the same name, which covers a large expanse - most of the chapels receive two visits a year by the pastor, Father Jim Feltz, who spends most of his time on horse or mule-back. The Proyecto attends about fifteen resettlement villages of people displaced by the war: providing material and technical help to build houses, latrines, schools, health centers and potable water systems, as well as helping women to organize economically because there are so many single women with children (either widows or women whose men have left for one reason or another, the war being the big one).

My specific zone, is Mulukuku , which comprises four resettlement villages. One of these communities, 21 of Noviembre, was attacked by Contra forces on June 29 - two days, let it be noted, before the end of the bi-lateral cease fire. A thirteen year old boy and a twenty-three year old woman were killed. Yesterday's news that the Senate voted more money to the Contra to support this kind of activity reminds me of the quote, "I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just." Because of the usual confused state of communication, I arrived at the 21 of Noviembre on July 1 for a meeting with the women, unprepared to attend the funeral of the two victims which was just beginning. Whether from shock or from too much sun, I fainted about three-fourths of the way through (which is really acceptable and even expected behavior on the part of Nicaraguan women, I consoled myself).

The mother of the thirteen year old boy is a friend of mine, and she thought I had come especially to attend the funeral. (I had once talked a big highway department dump truck into giving her and her three pigs a ride, and we'd shared a tense but hilarious time as the engineer and highway department workers struggled to lift the fat, squirming, squealing pigs into the dump truck.) This mixture of laughter and tragedy I fear may sound disrespectful when read in the United States, but I find it somehow characteristic of my experience in Nicaragua.

The parish here felt a special responsibility to help the war refugees because many of them became involved in revolutionary activities (such as teaching or organizing health projects) because of their Christian faith. The church leaders - Delegates of the Word, catechists - were often also the community leaders in education, health cooperatives, etc. So when the Contra began persecuting and killing community leaders, it was the Church leaders they were looking for... people who had gotten involved based on their faith. The parish felt a special responsibility to help them escape and start a new life. Many of the people had to hide in the wilds from the Contra, constantly moving, for three months before the helicopters came to evacuate them. Many of them had never even seen a car before that date, let alone a helicopter!

We had two ugly ambushes during July, on the 9th and 19th, respectively, each about eight to ten miles outside of town. The first was an ambush of mothers and a dance troupe going to visit the draftees at the military training school just outside of Mulukuku . The second was of a family returning to Boaco in their pick-

Mary Dutcher, a member of Karen House, is expected to return to St. Louis for a Christams visit, and to be joined by Ann Manganaro - our own seasonal homecoming.

up. The father and two of the four children were killed, along with four of their farm workers. The Project is called on to provide transport in such emergencies because there is only one, often non-functioning, Red Cross ambulance in Rio Blanco. I face a recurrent crisis of conscience when I go to Mulukuku , about thirty-five miles from Rio Blanco, because there is no ambulance there; and I am invariably faced with a choice of either abandoning my work or leaving a medical emergency without transportation. The last three times I have arrived, I had scheduled meetings with people who took off from work in the fields for a morning or day, only to have to cancel to transport a gravely ill patient back to Rio Blanco. Thirty-five miles takes two hours because of the condition of the highway. Today, the road to Mulukuku is closed (read: Contra nearby) so although it means another delay in my work, it gives me a chance to write this letter at some leisure. My work, by the way, is entitled "Social Promoter", which at first gave me visions of organizing dances, shuffleboard tournaments, Caribbean cruises, etc. But it's really much more mundane, helping the war refugees identify the needs of their communities and plan to respond to them. (Recent experience is even more mundane: driver of a vehicle.)

The lack of lights in Rio Blanco has also freed me from my other work as English teacher Monday and Tuesday nights at the local high school. Really, it's more mutual than that: the students help me with my Spanish, as well. (And are so polite when I err, as the time I wrote on the board, "Tengo 13 anos." I cross my t's and dot my i's, but don't always remember to put the '~' over the n's. "Tengo" means "I have." "Años" means "years." "Anos" means rectums. I was explaining to them that in English we say, "I am 13," while in Spanish we use the verb "to have" when talking about age. But that's not the point that any of us remember from that class!)

Although we are separated by light years in some ways, I feel very connected to the St. Louis Worker in many ways. With this letter I'm sending off a pair of booties to Clare and Joe for Christopher Isaac (begun one "ordinary time" in January with Ellen and finished, rather absurdly, in a semi-tropical jungle). Pete's visit in May, receiving Ann's letter and looking forward to a possible visit by Virginia after her work with Servicio Justicia y Paz in South America all combine to make me feel close to you. I have the community picture originally taken for John Kavanaugh's year in Zimbabwe hanging over my little prayer space, so don't doubt that you're receiving my highest quality attention! As for me, I feel it is a privilege to be here in Nicaragua representing so many people in the United States like yourselves, of faith and conscience. It is an honor I try to live up to and ask for your prayers in the effort.

Con mucho cariño,

Mary +

Rita Corbin

FROM LITTLE HOUSE

by Mary Ann McGivern, S.L.

The book Pat Coy's been editing for the past three years has just been published: A REVOLUTION OF THE HEART. It is a very fine book, with essays reflecting on Peter's and Dorothy's and Ammon's lives, and essays that look further into the spirituality and politics and every-day practice of nonviolence of the houses across the country and across fifty years.

The index (this is a scholarly work with scores of footnotes and a thorough and useful index) indicates seventeen references to the corporal works of mercy. The list in the first chapter on Peter had caught my eye; then Flannery O'Connor referred in passing to their importance in her LETTERS. "Doing these things [writing reviews and letters] is doing the only corporal work of mercy open to me. My mother takes care of all the visiting the sick and burying the dead that goes on around here [because Flannery was ill with lupus]... Every opportunity for performing any kind of charity is something to be snatched at." (p.214)

I went back to Matthew 25:31-46 and I was astonished by how personal the acts are: "You gave me something to eat;... you gave me something to drink;... you invited me in;... you clothed me;... you looked after me;... you came to visit me." The New English Bible says: "You took me into your home." Peter and Dorothy and Flannery are right. These are not injunctions to build housing projects or to find a cure for cancer or to free political prisoners or to write glorious fiction about moments of redemption, but to share physically what we have and who we are. We can't recognize political prisoners, much less free them, until we have visited some jails.

That's how Pat Coy's book got under my skin, by pushing my own examination of my spirituality. His and Angie O'Gorman's essay on the practice of nonviolence in "Houses of Hospitality" quotes Ann Manganaro and Zack and me, so I read it first and was deeply moved that they had put into words some of the reasons why I live here. But I think my own growing commitment to nonviolence is only a fruit of the daily practice of the works of mercy -- and I don't do much. I don't feed the hungry or clothe the naked at Karen House. I don't go over there to work at all any more. Once every few years we take in a stranger here at the Little House, but then we get acquainted and aren't strangers any more. Thanks to Pius Fagan and Jackie Tobin at St. Vincent de Paul I visit the workhouse two or three times a year.

I do visit hospitals a lot. Jackie who lives here and BJ who used to live here have both been hospitalized most of the summer. As I write this Jackie is home for the week and BJ should be released tomorrow. They've been sick cookies and are grateful for all the prayers and support people have given. I visit Hazel who is in a nursing home. I'm mindful of Stanley and I hear tell of him, but I don't go to see him.

This summer about the only corporal work of mercy I've done is to visit the sick; (One day I went to four hospitals!) but I can feel myself grow, change, a little, from just sitting with BJ and Jackie and Hazel and chatting about the dog and the cat, about the weather, about my garden and how we got the back porch repaired. I can't cure them or carry their pain; the change is in me, gives me some energy to fight Medicaid (Do I have some horror stories!) and to go to the Economic Conversion office and to count weapon sales to the Middle East.

I think the ordinary corporal works of mercy enable us to see structural violence and institutional sin and to see some ways of resisting them in our ordinary lives. ✚

Mary Ann McGivern has traveled enough the past four years to amass sixty thousand frequent flyer miles which she just exchanged for two tickets to Crete. She admits to guilt feelings at the memory of Dorothy's bus rides and frets that mileage credit may be linked to interest. But she's going.

From Karen House

by Lee Carter

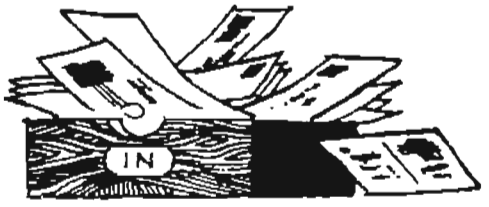
This August I left Karen House. I came to Karen House as a guest about six years ago, intending to be here about two weeks. I stayed on and eventually became a community member. I ended up taking charge of the kitchen and did most of the cooking the last several years. Time has a way of catching up with a person, and I decided it was time for me to slow down, so my dog, Bear, and I got ourselves a small house in Carondolet. I'm taking it kind of easy (but Bear's not!). I still consider the Karen House Community my family which I love very much. Maybe everything didn't always work out like it was planned, but I believe everyone tried. I just hope they don't forget where I live - they are always welcome.

It's been so long since I've lived alone - it's really going to take some getting used to. I've got so much cleaning to do. It will take a while to get through it all. I'll keep plugging along, and I'll take this time to thank everyone for all of the help that was given to me.

Yesterday I raked leaves and when I finished, I set out about forty tulip bulbs. The cats haven't followed me here, but I hope the birds do. I've got my feeders and the bird bath set up in the back yard. Even when life changes, some things remain the same - thank God. +

Lee Carter, for years past the member of the community in charge of food preparation, continues in this vocation in her new home, inviting friends down for dinner. Such invitations are rarely declined.

From Our Mail Bag



Editors:

Hooray for your recent issue on Merton. I loved it, applaud the work you do, am cheered by your columns on life in your various houses.

Tell us more about your guests - do their lives change enough to notice? Do your lives change because of them?

Enclosed please find a small sum which will change no one's life, but may buy a postage stamp or two.

Cheers -

Janice Falcone
Maryville, MO

Dear Sir/Madam:

I was recently given a copy of the Summer issue of The Round Table, and I especially enjoyed the articles on Thomas Merton, and the piece by Mary Ann McGivern.

I would like to be included on your mailing list, and hope the enclosed donation, small though it is, can be of some help.

Sincerely,

Tom Eschen
St. Louis, MO

Dear Friends,

I have just finished your remarkably sensitive issue dedicated to the memory of Thomas Merton, and felt compelled to make contact with your community. It has been several years since I visited Karen House as an idealistic seminarian infatuated with the Catholic Worker movement. My experience as a Catholic Worker, and later as a prospective Trappist monk left me searching for a direction in life, and I came to you with the idea of beginning a CW community in the East St. Louis area.

The Spirit has moved me more and more in the direction of diocesan priesthood, and as I enter my second year of theology at St. Meinrad Seminary I find my heart still so inexplicably pulled toward the Catholic Worker. I tell my friends that I would like to retire to a CW community some day, but know deep down that the day may come sooner than I think. The Round Table has been a constant and positive source of contact for me with the ideals and realities of the movement, and for that I thank you.

Merton and Day were prophets in that they were able to articulate the ancient truths in a contemporary way. But further work needs to be done. They simply laid the foundations upon which our own prophetic voices must build. Relationship is the essence of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures—the relationships we have with one another and with our God. We see that it is the continual deterioration of relationships which constitutes the deterioration of our world and ourselves. We look upon our relationships with objects as having more importance than our relationships with others. Fear has become our god, and we invest more time and energy in that relationship than any other. The ageless and prophetic voice of Christ still rings true—"Fear is useless, what is needed is trust."

Thank you for your continued commitment to the poor and oppressed. I pray that the Spirit of Truth will continue to flood your heart with wisdom, grace and courage to speak with the voice of love to a world that no longer remembers the language.

Yours in Christ,

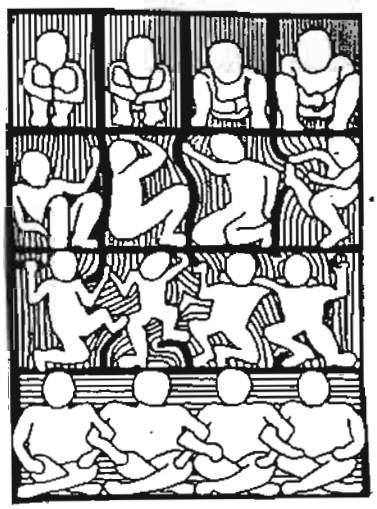
Jon O'Guinn

Round Table Talk

by Jim Plato

Recently during one of those rare gifted moments of quiet solitude while I was on house one morning, I paused to reflect upon the connection between that moment and the rest of the day, with all of its comings and goings. I found myself wondering what significance, if any, do these moments have in terms of the rest of my busy, working, action-oriented life? As I sat there, I thought of the time earlier in the morning of coming downstairs for my usual cup of coffee and passing by the guests and their children on the way to the kitchen with a simple hi or good morning. It seems that such simple, open affirmations of our neighbors are just where the contemplative experience is most genuine. Solitude must inform action and vice versa. I thought of the instances when children came to me with arms spread, waiting for a hug. I also thought of those times of quiet which I have consciously sought out and made time for. I couldn't help but conclude that it is the same vulnerability I say yes to in a hug or greeting that I bring to my moments "away" with God. Speaking from my own past experiences I know that if I pass by others, be they community, guests or friends, and chose not to reach out, then I can never hope to come to liturgy and expect to enjoy a fruitful Eucharist.

This exercise in vulnerability to others became very clear to me in a recent phone conversation I had with my youngest brother, Steve. In the course of the conversation, he told me he had passed the required tests to enter the officer program for the Marine Corps (following my next youngest brother's chosen field). I have been honest with him about my personal questions and views concerning the military and the role it plays in protecting economic exploitation of the Third World. He was well aware of them. We started talking about the moral questions involved and he became very defensive. I quickly became aware of the tendency within myself -- the older, more experienced one who has thought all of these things through, has them all figured out, has seen the "light" -- to impart this knowledge to the younger, less experienced, confused one. I also realized that all my words about the issues which we had discussed so often before would ring hollow if I were not genuinely interested in his thoughts and feelings.



Maybe the "truth" is found in the mutual, honest sharing of ourselves, our thoughts and feelings - but most especially in our weakness. I know when my life becomes too action-oriented, I find myself listening less and less to others and their views and more to my own "correct" way of thinking. It seems that only to the degree that we are open to others can we be open to God. We must somehow learn to integrate the embrace of a child and the embrace of Christ in vulnerability and gratitude.

+

Jim Plato, member of Karen House, is affectionately known as "Alabama", "JimBo", "Jimmy", "James" and "Gentle Jim" among the guests.

A ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

"Adjustments in Reality:

U.S. News Coverage on Central America"

Bill Ramsey has been on a research sabbatical from his AFSC position. He will present his preliminary findings concerning the convergence of U.S. policy in Central America and the presentation of the Central American conflict by U.S. media. How does it happen? Why does it happen? Is it a major obstacle to peace...?

Please join us for this provocative discussion, for the "clarification of thought" our co-founder, Peter Maurin, counseled us to pursue. Snacks and refreshments will be served.

KAREN HOUSE, FRI., DEC. 9, 7:30 p.m.

Don't Throw This Away!! Pass It On . . .

Please pass this issue on to a friend when you've finished it, with the suggestion that they subscribe; or, just send us their name and address and subscribe for them.

Karen's House Needs:

- Refrigerators
- Picnic Tables
- Blankets

The Round Table is the quarterly journal of Catholic Worker life and thought in St. Louis. Subscriptions are free. Please write to The Round Table, 1840 Hogan, St. Louis, MO 63106. Donations are gladly accepted to help us continue our work with the poor. People working on this issue include: Margaret Boyer, Katrina Campbell, Pat Coy, Zack Davisson, Carol Donohue, C.PP.S., Virginia Druhe, Jim Plato, Barb Prosser, Ellen Rehg and Mark Scheu. Letters to the editors are encouraged; we'll print as many as space permits.

THE ROUND TABLE
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